

THEMATIC STRATEGY PAPER

SHAPING THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA II:

Progress on raising women's voices in intergovernmental forums



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report, *Shaping the international agenda II: Progress on raising women's voices in intergovernmental forums*, is based on the responses of 30 members of the United Nations Governing Bodies Secretariats (UNGBS) to the survey circulated in February 2020 via SurveyMonkey. It updates the findings and recommendations of the first edition.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) acknowledges with appreciation the 30 entities that responded to the survey:

European Space Agency (ESA); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); International Labour Organization (ILO); International Maritime Organization (IMO); International Telecommunication Union (ITU); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); Department for General Assembly and Conference Management - United Nations (DGACM); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC); UN Women; Universal Postal Union (UPU); World Food Programme (WFP); Secretariat of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC Secretariat); World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); World Meteorological Organization (WMO); World Bank; World Trade Organization (WTO).

The report was prepared by the following UN Women staff and consultants: Jean-Luc Borjes, Verona Collantes, Asmae Ibrahim, Katja Pehrman, Hannah Phillips and Priyanka Teeluck. Editing and design were done by Strategic Agenda and Dammsavage Inc.

The views expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

THEMATIC STRATEGY PAPER

SHAPING THE
INTERNATIONAL AGENDA II:

Progress on raising women's voices
in intergovernmental forums



UN WOMEN

New York, December 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
-------------------	---

THE WAY FORWARD: Key recommendations to multiple stake- holders to improve women's participation in governing body meetings	3
--	---

INTRODUCTION	6
--------------	---

PROGRESS MADE AND GOOD PRACTICES	8
-------------------------------------	---

I. Explicit policies and mandated targets	9
---	---

II. Tracking and reporting	10
----------------------------	----

III. Training and capacity-building	11
-------------------------------------	----

IV. Financial support	11
-----------------------	----

V. Advocacy and networking	11
----------------------------	----

VI. Communications strategies	12
-------------------------------	----

VII. Initiatives addressing sexual misconduct	13
---	----

ANNEX I. United Nations Governing Bodies Secretariat (UNGBS) entities	14
---	----

ANNEX II. Comparison of results with previous surveys	15
---	----

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women’s full and equal participation in all decision-making processes is necessary to achieve gender equality and drive progress towards sustainable development. In 2017, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the International Gender Champions–Geneva published *Shaping the international agenda: Raising women’s voices in intergovernmental forums*¹ (hereinafter referred to as *Shaping the international agenda*) to empower a wide range of gender champions and stakeholders in advancing gender equality and parity in intergovernmental processes. Since its publication, it has served as a useful tool to raise awareness and promote gender parity in intergovernmental bodies and processes. For example, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution that “encourages Member States to seek gender balance in the distribution of the Chairs and bureau members of the Main Committees as well as the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, where applicable.”²

In 2020, the international community commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). Women’s equal access to and full participation in decision-making processes was one of the 12 critical areas of concern of the BPfA, which urged governments and stakeholders to “aim at and support gender balance in the composition of delegations to the United Nations and other international forums.”³

Gender equality, the rights of women and girls and their empowerment are critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Within the United Nations system, the United Nations Secretary-General has made gender equality and parity one of his top priorities, with the roll-out of the [Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#),⁴ the launch of [Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System](#),⁵ and the publication of the [Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, at UN System Events](#).⁶ Furthermore, United Nations Member States have underlined the

importance of accelerating efforts to reach gender parity through the recommendations of the System-wide Strategy and Enabling Environment Guidelines.⁷

The second edition of *Shaping the international agenda* updates the findings and recommendations based on survey responses received from members of the United Nations Governing Bodies Secretariat (UNGBS) in 2020. The survey results demonstrate progress made by the secretariats of the United Nations governing bodies on implementing actions under seven categories of recommendations: (i) explicit policies and mandated targets; (ii) tracking and reporting; (iii) training and capacity-building; (iv) financial support; (v) advocacy and networking; (vi) communications strategies; and, a new area of focus since the previous report, (vii) initiatives addressing sexual misconduct. The results highlight examples of good practice by members of the UNGBS, and areas where further work is needed.

As in *Shaping the international agenda*, this report concludes with recommendations to further enhance gender parity goals directed at three important groups of actors: the UNGBS; Member States of the United Nations; and ministers, ambassadors, heads of organizations and other senior officials.

A knowledge product and an advocacy tool, this report is intended to raise awareness, share lessons and inspire others to commit to action that improves and strengthens women’s participation, which is critical to shaping an inclusive international agenda.

1 Available from the digital library of the UN Women website (www.unwomen.org/).

2 A/RES/71/323, para. 44.

3 Para. 192 (i).

4 2017. Available from the United Nations Gender Parity website (www.un.org/gender/).

5 UN Women, 2019. www.unwomen.org/-/media/head-quarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/gender-parity-enabling-environment-guidelines-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1535.

6 United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), 2019. Available from the United Nations System Code of Conduct website (www.un.org/en/content/codeofconduct/).

7 A/RES/74/128, para. 33.

THE WAY FORWARD:

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS

As in the first edition of this report, the survey focused on progress made within the secretariats of governing boards in their efforts to improve women's participation and leadership in governing body meetings and processes. Given that multiple actors play a role in reaching the goal of gender parity in intergovernmental forums and processes, recommendations are also addressed to Member States and high-level officials. Ultimately, it is joint, complementary, sustained and coordinated efforts that will help achieve the full, effective and equal participation of women in decision-making processes. The following recommendations reinforce and expand upon the recommendations from the first edition of *Shaping the international agenda*.

The secretariats of United Nations governing bodies can support the efforts of Member States and other stakeholders to improve women's participation and achieve gender equality through following actions:

1. Continue to collect sex-disaggregated data on the composition of delegations attending conferences and meetings, heads of delegation, Chairs, Co-Chairs and facilitators, interventions in high-level openings of governing body meetings, interventions on specific agenda items, and panellists in side events, preparing regular reports on these for broad dissemination.
 2. Create and maintain a readily accessible, regularly updated and centralized database of women experts and speakers as a readily available resource to ensure gender parity in panels and meetings.
 3. Increase visibility of the importance of gender parity and improving women's participation by:
 - i. including in meeting notifications and event invitations any decisions, directives or similar measures encouraging or mandating the inclusion of women in delegations to meetings or their nomination as panellists in events
 - ii. providing information to Member States, proactively and systematically, when they are constituting bodies and informal groups or appointing facilitators and Chairs, on available measures to promote gender parity
 - iii. preparing fact sheets and guidance, in advance of meetings, on measures that are put in place to encourage and support women's participation in intergovernmental bodies (for example, nursing spaces, childcare, training, mentoring and networking opportunities and sexual harassment policies)
 - iv. undertaking specific communication campaigns to encourage the participation of women in governing body meetings.
4. Become familiar with and implement, to the extent possible, the [Enabling Environment Guidelines](#) and its [Supplementary Guidance](#) in support of the [Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#).
 5. Create a community of practice among UNGBS members as a means of regularly exchanging information, best practices and opportunities, and a platform for mutual encouragement and support towards advancing gender parity and women's participation in intergovernmental meetings. Engage with Gender Focal Point(s) (GFPs) as a source of information on good practice.
 6. Build capacities of GFPs, for example by connecting them to the office of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations System at UN Women.⁸
 7. Continue to explore collaboration among organizations, including with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and UN Women, to develop capacity-building and training programmes, and mobilize funding with the aim of promoting gender parity within governing bodies and at international conferences and meetings.

⁸ Contact: focalpoint.forwomen@unwomen.org.

8. Support and propose initiatives to Member States, such as the appointment of GFPs in delegations, to serve as strategic partners to implement gender-specific measures.
 9. Systematically use gender-neutral terminology (such as Chair(person) instead of Chairman), disseminate the information and encourage their use.
 10. Lead in addressing sexual misconduct and the prevention of sexual misconduct by:
 - i. disseminating to meeting participants the [Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, at UN System Events](#) published in 2019 by, for example, including it in information provided about meeting(s), integrating it into staff training and displaying it at meetings
 - ii. disseminating the [Guide for Managers: Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#)⁹ and any other guidance produced by the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System
 - iii. implementing comprehensive training to address sexual harassment¹⁰
 - iv. establishing and communicating clear guidelines, codes of conduct and/or rules with regard to sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct, ensuring zero-tolerance and victim-centred approaches¹¹
 - v. ensuring that there is a channel available to staff or delegates to report sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct perpetrated in a governing body session.
1. Institute and implement temporary special measures or a similar mechanism through an inter-governmental decision and/or resolution that will ensure that women's representation in delegations to governing bodies is at least 30 per cent, aiming for a gradual increase to 50 per cent.
 2. Apply quotas, as necessary, to their own national delegations to ensure at least 30 per cent of their delegates to conferences and meetings are women, with a gradual increase to 50 per cent.
 3. Build support for women's leadership and full, equal and effective participation through:
 - i. training and awareness-raising directed at both women and men delegates on issues related to gender equality and gender parity to enhance their understanding of and responsiveness to these issues
 - ii. targeted training and capacity-building activities for women delegates to increase women's participation in leadership and technical positions.
 4. Expand leadership opportunities for women by:
 - i. supporting the practices of co-leadership of one woman and one man, rotating leadership, where no consecutive terms are held by persons of the same gender, or alternate Chairs of the opposite gender
 - ii. creating opportunities for mentorship, networking and collaboration among women delegates as well as between women delegates and representatives from women's organizations.
 5. Dedicate travel and capacity-building funds to enable women delegates to attend intergovernmental meetings.
 6. Build awareness of the goal of gender parity by including key resolutions and decisions related to gender equality and gender parity in invitations to conferences and meetings, notifications for nominations, elections and appointments, and other forms of communication, including official websites.
 7. Establish and communicate clear guidelines, codes of conduct and rules with regard to sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct, including with reference to the [Code of Conduct to Prevent](#)

In their efforts to increase women's participation and achieve gender equality, Member States should consider the following measures:

⁹ Published in 2019. Available from the CEB website (www.unsceb.org/).

¹⁰ For more guidance on training, see: UN Women (2020). *Stepping up to the Challenge: Towards International Standards on Training to End Sexual Harassment*. Available from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/discussion-paper-towards-international-standards-on-training-to-end-sexual-harassment>

¹¹ For more information, see UN Women (2019). *What Will it Take? Promoting Cultural Change to End Sexual Harassment* Available from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/discussion-paper-towards-international-standards-on-training-to-end-sexual-harassment>

Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, at UN System Events published in 2019.

Ministers, ambassadors, heads of organizations and other senior officials – both women and men – should consider taking the following actions:

1. Develop a gender equality policy, strategy or action plan for the organization or office, identifying specific objectives, measures, actors, deadlines and resources. Ensure implementation through gender-responsive budgeting, regular reporting and a review mechanism.
2. Lead by example, including by:
 - i. becoming an International Gender Champion or a member of related advocacy groups supporting gender parity and women's empowerment (such as the Group of Friends for Gender Parity)
 - ii. participating in panels only when gender parity is assured – when organizing events, ensure that there is gender parity within panels
 - iii. systematically using gender-neutral terminology (such as Chair(person) instead of Chairman) and encouraging staff and others to do the same.
3. Lead in efforts to strengthen gender-specific references (strong wording on gender equality and women's empowerment) in resolutions, decisions, official statements or interventions and remarks in events and other gatherings.
4. Support efforts to ensure gender parity in intergovernmental processes by:
 - i. disseminating information on intergovernmental commitments, initiatives and best practices on promoting gender equality, women's participation and gender parity to colleagues, staff and in their capitals, and work towards their implementation
 - ii. advocating for dedicated travel and capacity-building funding for women delegates and proactively mobilizing resources to ensure fund availability.
5. Expand leadership opportunities for women by:
 - i. investing in the career advancement and leadership of women colleagues, including through leadership training and mentorship programmes,

and reviewing recruitment practices and organizational culture

- ii. creating opportunities for discussion, networking and collaboration among women staff and delegates and their male counterparts on leadership and negotiations in intergovernmental processes.
6. Address and prevent sexual misconduct by:
 - i. disseminating to meeting participants the [Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, at UN System Events](#) published in 2019 by, for example, including it in information provided about meeting(s), integrating it into staff training and displaying it at meetings
 - ii. disseminating the [Guide for Managers: Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#) and any other guidance produced by the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System
 - iii. implementing comprehensive training to address sexual harassment¹²
 - iv. establishing and communicating clear guidelines, codes of conduct and rules with regard to sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct, ensuring zero-tolerance and victim-centred approaches¹³
 - v. ensuring that there is a channel available to staff or delegates to report sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct perpetrated in a governing body session.
 11. Contribute to creating an enabling work environment. Please see recommendations and examples from the [Enabling Environment Guidelines](#) and its [Supplementary Guidance](#) in support of the [Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity](#), as referenced by United Nations Member States in resolution 74/128.¹⁴

¹² For more guidance on training, see: UN Women (2020). *Stepping up to the Challenge: Towards International Standards on Training to End Sexual Harassment*. Available from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/discussion-paper-towards-international-standards-on-training-to-end-sexual-harassment>

¹³ For more information, see UN Women (2019). *What Will it Take? Promoting Cultural Change to End Sexual Harassment* Available from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/discussion-paper-towards-international-standards-on-training-to-end-sexual-harassment>

¹⁴ A/RES/74/128, para. 33.

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the International Gender Champions–Geneva published *Shaping the international agenda: Raising women’s voices in intergovernmental forums*¹⁵ (hereinafter referred to as *Shaping the international agenda*). The publication made targeted recommendations to enable women’s participation and strengthen their leadership roles in national delegations to meetings of international organizations’ governing bodies. It also suggested actions to be taken by Member States, secretariats of United Nations governing bodies, ministers, ambassadors, heads of organizations and other senior officials.

The launch of the publication was received with appreciation by the Member States of the United Nations and the United Nations system. Interventions during the launch event noted the utility of concrete recommendations directed at actors at all levels given the cross-sectoral nature of efforts to promote women’s participation. Among the lauded outcomes of bringing attention to this issue was a resolution in the United Nations General Assembly that “encourages Member States to seek gender balance in the distribution of the Chairs and bureau members of the Main Committees as well as the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, where applicable.”¹⁶

These commitments are based on the long-standing commitment of the United Nations to gender parity. Article 8 of its Charter stipulates that “the United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.”¹⁷ The international community’s commitments to women’s equal participation at all levels of decision-making is reflected across several international agreements, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), United Nations General Assembly resolutions, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The BPfA in particular called on United Nations entities to “implement existing and adopt new employment policies and measures in order to achieve overall gender equality, particularly at the

Professional level and above.”¹⁸ It also urged governments and stakeholders to “aim at and support gender balance in the composition of delegations to the United Nations and other international forums.”¹⁹

A review and appraisal of the implementation of the BPfA for the sixty-fourth session of the CSW²⁰ found that women remain significantly underrepresented in all aspects of decision-making. The global median representation of women in national parliaments is just 21 per cent, and only 17 States have achieved or surpassed the target of gender balance in their parliaments (meaning at least 40 per cent women). In January 2020, there were 22 women Heads of State or Government and women made up 21.3 per cent per cent of government ministers, an all-time high.²¹ Only four women have served as President of the United Nations General Assembly over the past 74 sessions.

The review of the implementation of the BPfA identifies enabling conditions for increasing women’s participation. Of the 17 States that achieved gender balance, 15 use proportional or mixed electoral systems and 8 employ gender quotas. In countries where the representation of women in local government is higher, they tend to be better represented in national parliaments, suggesting the importance of an enabling context and the use of legislated gender quotas at the

15 Available from the digital library of the UN Women website (www.unwomen.org/).

16 A/RES/71/323, para. 44.

17 www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/.

18 Para. 193 (a).

19 Para. 192 (i).

20 *Report of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York, United States of America, 9–20 March 2020* (E/CN.6/2020/3).

21 UN Women, “Women in Politics: 2020”, map, 1 January 2020. Available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/women-in-politics-map-2020>. Interparliamentary-Union, “In 2020, world “cannot afford” so few women in power”, 10 March 2020. Available at <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2020-03/in-2020-world-cannot-afford-so-few-women-in-power>.

national and local levels. The following trends in implementation are identified: (a) the growing participation of women through temporary special measures; (b) the strengthening of gender-responsive institutions; and (c) enhanced accountability for gender equality.

Within the United Nations system, the current Secretary-General has made achieving gender parity a top priority since taking office. Since the launch of his *System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity*²² in 2017, significant progress has been made on women's representation. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, parity was reached in the Senior Management Group and among Resident Coordinators in 2019 and among all full-time senior leaders in January 2020, with 90 women and 90 men at the level of Under- and Assistant Secretary-General. The most recent *report of the Secretary-General on the improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system*²³ shows that women's representation in the Professional and higher categories has increased from 42.8 per cent to 44.2 per cent since 2017. However, beyond the senior levels, the rate and pace of progress has been uneven. Women's representation continues to be highest at the entry levels, decreasing progressively with higher grade levels, with the slowest rate of change at non-headquarters locations.

To further accelerate gender parity efforts, the report offers several recommendations, including the implementation of temporary special measures by United Nations entities, and encourages Member States to nominate qualified female candidates for senior level positions in the United Nations system. To support the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, in 2019, UN Women prepared the *Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System*²⁴ and its *Supplementary Guidance* in support of the Secretary-General's *System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity*²⁵ with concrete recommendations for United Nations entities on areas such as recruitment, standards of conduct and workplace flexibility. Leadership networks such as the International Gender Champions and the Group of

Friends for Gender Parity continue to advance the importance of women's participation and gender-responsive institutions for achieving gender equality. Furthermore, United Nations Member States have underlined the importance of accelerating efforts to reach gender parity, including through the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity and Enabling Environment Guidelines.²⁶



In 2020, the international community commemorated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the BPfA and the United Nations system accelerated its efforts towards gender parity. It is therefore timely to reflect on women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making processes. A knowledge product and an advocacy tool, this report is intended to raise awareness, share lessons, and inspire others to commit to action to improve and strengthen women's participation, which is critical to shaping an inclusive international agenda.

The report summarizes the progress made and good practices on the following thematic areas: (i) explicit policies and mandated targets; (ii) tracking and reporting; (iii) training and capacity-building; (iv) financial support; (v) advocacy and networking; (vi) communications strategies; and (vii) initiatives addressing sexual misconduct. The report then outlines actions to take going forward. While the focus of this report is on progress made within the secretariats of governing boards, building on *Shaping the international agenda*, recommendations for action are also addressed to United Nations Member States, senior officials including ministers, ambassadors and heads of organizations, and all others who have a responsibility to address and advocate for gender equality, empower women and girls, and support women's participation and engagement in intergovernmental forums.

22 Available from the United Nations Gender Parity website (www.un.org/gender/).

23 A/74/220.

24 Available from the digital library of the UN Women website (www.unwomen.org/).

25 UN Women, 2019. www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/gender-parity-enabling-environment-guidelines-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1535.

26 A/RES/74/128, para. 33.

PROGRESS MADE AND GOOD PRACTICES

As a follow-up to *Shaping the international agenda*, this report uses results from the survey conducted by UN Women in 2020. Members of the UNGBS²⁷ were invited to update the knowledge base on efforts to improve women’s participation in intergovernmental forums, and assess awareness of and capacity needed for the implementation of the Secretary-General’s System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System and its Supplementary Guidance.

The survey was circulated via SurveyMonkey in February 2020 to the UNGBS community and remained open for responses until May 2020. The response time was extended due to work disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 36 member entities that received the survey, 30 submitted responses, resulting in a response rate of 84 per cent. Annex I lists the entities that participated.

Compared to previous data collection – in 2016 for *Shaping the international agenda*, and in 2018 for a UNGBS meeting background paper – the 2020 results suggest progress in implementing the six types of action to improve women’s participation in governing body meetings. Annex II provides a full comparison of the three survey results. The categories of action are: (i) explicit policies and mandated targets; (ii) tracking and reporting; (iii) training and capacity-building; (iv) financial support; (v) advocacy and networking; (vi) communications strategies; and (vii) initiatives addressing sexual misconduct.

The last category was developed for this updated survey and report, reflecting a new area of focus. While sexual misconduct is not a new issue, there has been growing awareness and action within

the United Nations system since 2017. For example, in 2017 a Chief Executives Board (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System was established, which, among other important actions, has created a [United Nations System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment](#),²⁸ the Screening Database “ClearCheck”,²⁹ a [Guide for Managers: Prevention of, and Response to, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace](#)³⁰ and the [Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, at UN System Events](#).³¹



²⁷ The United Nations Governing Bodies Secretariat is a network of specialized agencies, programmes and departments of the United Nations that meets annually in an informal session to discuss issues specific to the governance of their respective organizations. Meetings are attended by high-level representatives from secretariats of governing bodies of the United Nations system’s organizations, those responsible for formulating policy and/or directing the affairs of the institution in partnership with senior management and stakeholders.

²⁸ Published in 2019. Available from the CEB website (www.unsceb.org/).

²⁹ Published in 2019. More information available from the CEB website (www.unsceb.org/).

³⁰ Published in 2019. Available from the CEB website (www.unsceb.org/).

³¹ Published in 2019. Available from the United Nations System Code of Conduct website (www.un.org/en/content/codeofconduct/).

I EXPLICIT POLICIES AND MANDATED TARGETS

II TRACKING AND REPORTING

III TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

IV FINANCIAL SUPPORT

V ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

VI COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

VII INITIATIVES ADDRESSING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

I. Explicit policies and mandated targets

As noted by the recommendations of the previous report, explicit policies and mandated targets are powerful tools for improving women's participation and achieving gender parity. Of the 30 survey respondents, all but one organization reported that they had or would soon have a gender equality and/or parity strategy. However, while most (23) of these strategies refer to the staff, only a small number (eight) refer to members of the governing bodies, which demonstrates the need for a more concerted effort to address women's participation in intergovernmental forums.

Less than half (14) of the respondents reported that they had adopted or had initiated the adoption of specific resolutions, decisions, policies and/or legislative mandates on improving women's participation or achieving gender parity in attendance to governing body meetings. Of these, four had set a specific target to encourage women's participation in governing body meetings. For example, The International Labour

GOOD PRACTICE

ILO has set a target of 45 per cent of women participants at the International Labour Conference.

Organization (ILO) has a target of 45 per cent of women participants at the International Labour Conference.

GOOD PRACTICE

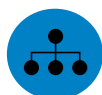
OHCHR is in the process of implementing the recommendations of the Enabling Environmental Guidelines. It has updated its gender equality strategic plans to introduce indicators relating to gender parity in senior positions and organizational culture.

The number of UNGBS members that indicated reporting to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and women's empowerment has increased from 16 in the previous report to 24. This is in line with a system-wide increase in entities reporting to UN-SWAP, from 55 to 68 between 2012 and 2019³². The UN-SWAP was created to support systematic and measurable mainstreaming of a gender perspective throughout the United Nations system, by establishing an overarching framework of performance indicators with requirements that all United Nations entities are expected to meet or exceed within a set time frame. This increase signifies a positive trend in system-wide accountability in terms of documenting progress on mainstreaming gender throughout all institutional functions.

³² E/2019/54, para. 15; E/2020/50, para. 25.

This positive trend is further reinforced by the widespread familiarity of respondents with the Enabling Environment Guidelines and its Supplementary Guidance. Twenty-four organizations reported familiarity with the Enabling Environment Guidelines, 19 of which specifically indicated that they had implemented or would implement the recommendations set out in the guidelines. For example, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has updated its gender equality strategic plans to introduce indicators related to gender parity in senior positions and organizational culture. According to OHCHR, measures to improve gender parity, including the promotion of flexible working arrangements and efforts towards a work environment that is free of bias, have increased women's representation in senior positions (P-5 and above levels) from 18.2 per cent to 38.8 per cent between 2008 and 2017.

KEY RESULT



THE NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE SET A SPECIFIC TARGET TO ENCOURAGE **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS INCREASED FROM **2** (2016) TO **4** (2020).**

II. Tracking and reporting

Tracking and reporting of women's representation in governing bodies is a crucial first step to reveal nuances in gender dynamics and inform more effective targeted policy and actions. Increased tracking and reporting in this year's report compared with the previous report may be viewed as recognition of how collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data functions as an enabling condition for women's participation.

Of the respondents, 18 reported that they formally monitored women's participation in their annual meetings, nine of which also monitored the gender parity of council or board meetings. A few boards

indicated informal or one-off monitoring. The detailed information available as a result of this increase in formal tracking and reporting indicates that only two entities – the Secretariat of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and UN Women – have recorded 50 per cent or more women participants in recent meetings, nine entities have recorded 30–49 per cent, and three entities have recorded under 30 per cent.

KEY RESULT

18

ORGANIZATIONS REPORTED THAT THEY FORMALLY **MONITOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AT THEIR ANNUAL MEETINGS**

Regarding collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data, results show that leadership positions in bodies and committees is the most monitored item (by 15 entities) and facilitators and co-facilitators is the least monitored item (see table).

Number of organizations monitoring sex-disaggregated data by item (2020)

Item	Number of organizations
Leadership positions in bodies, committees	15
High-level participation	10
Composition of bodies created to support the work of the intergovernmental body	9
Heads and deputy heads of delegation	8
Panellists in side events	8
Interventions in high-level openings of governing body meetings	7
Interventions on specific agenda items	6
Facilitators/co-facilitators	5
Other	10

III. Training and capacity-building

Training and capacity-building activities are key for raising awareness and building the skills necessary to support women's increased participation in governing body meetings. Just over half (16) of respondents reported that the secretariat of their organization had taken concrete actions to encourage women's participation in governing body meetings. Five organizations reported taking specific actions to improve the gender parity of panels, including the Panel Parity Pledge which all International Gender Champions commit to undertaking. Furthermore, the ILO has encouraged delegations to achieve gender parity through a specific letter from the Director General requesting countries to explain why gender parity has not been met.

GOOD PRACTICE

At the end of ILO Conferences a letter is sent to countries that have not achieved gender parity in their delegations to provide an explanation for not doing so.

Building the capacity for women delegates to participate in these meetings is crucial, because women are often faced with disproportionate access to the knowledge and networks that can facilitate entry to participation. This is especially true for so-called technical fields, where women officials at the national level may not be afforded the same exposure to issues as their male counterparts.³³ Three organizations – the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Bank, and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) – reported organizing such training and capacity-building activities for women delegates. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reported offering training to both men and women National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points, whose role could encompass advocating for gender parity within their delegation and regional group.

³³ UN Women, *Shaping the international agenda: Raising women's voices in intergovernmental forums* (Geneva, 2017).

IV. Financial support

Sustaining training, capacity-building activities and initiatives to collect, analyse and disseminate sex-disaggregated data is a financial challenge. Very often, funding is ad hoc and extrabudgetary. Two organizations have provided funding support specifically to women delegates; they are the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and UNFCCC. In 2017, UNCTAD included gender-sensitive criteria in the organization of intergovernmental expert meetings: preference is given to a woman candidate to receive funding to participate in the event as an expert, and gender-equitable representation in expert meetings is encouraged. Meanwhile, the Women Delegates Fund, under the auspices of the UNFCCC, is administered by the non-governmental organization Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). The fund was set up as a voluntary fund by the government of Finland to provide women delegates with financial support to travel to intersessional meetings and the Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC, enabling their participation. Other countries have since contributed to the fund.

GOOD PRACTICE

UNCTAD and UNFCCC have provided funding support specifically to women delegates.

V. Advocacy and networking

The establishment of mechanisms and platforms centred around advocacy for gender parity are key to raising awareness and facilitating information exchange. At the United Nations in New York, a coalition of 148 Member States under the banner of the Group of Friends for Gender Parity actively engages to advance women's leadership and gender parity within the United Nations. These platforms provide opportunities for like-minded Member States to network and generate concerted political effort and action towards these commitments.

The International Gender Champions network of senior leaders, including Permanent Representatives, Permanent Observers, heads of United Nations agencies and other international organizations, and leaders from civil society and the private sector,

requires its gender champions to sign the Panel Parity Pledge committing them to strive for gender parity in all panels and discussions, and to make two additional commitments focused on advancing gender equality, either in the executive management or programmatic work of their organizations. The survey indicates that the leadership of 19 organizations are now also members of the International Gender Champions network, ensuring opportunities for senior leaders to consolidate cross-sectoral efforts to ensure more balanced delegations.

KEY RESULT

The leadership of 19 out of 30 organizations are members of the International Gender Champions network.

Survey respondents noted other forms of advocacy undertaken, such as the development of further technical guidance for improving women's participation which build on the recommendations of *Shaping the international agenda*. As part of its Lima work programme on gender, the UNFCCC Secretariat published a technical paper on improving women's representation and participation, and included this topic in its workshops held at intersessional meetings. The UNFCCC also launched a senior women's leadership network and an informal mentoring scheme for junior female negotiators with WEDO and the European Capacity Building Initiative. The World Bank Board's Gender Diversity Working Group developed a fact sheet collating key data and a compendium of gender diversity readings substantiating the business case for improved gender parity on corporate boards. The Working Group will develop a Gender Toolkit for encouraging gender parity in delegations for the spring and annual meetings of the Board of Governors of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

GOOD PRACTICE

The Gender Diversity Working Group of the Board of the World Bank has developed a fact sheet collating key data and a compendium of gender diversity. This has substantiated the business case for enhanced gender parity in corporate boards.

VI. Communications strategies

Disseminating information on efforts to enable women's participation facilitates knowledge sharing and awareness-raising and provides a means for accountability. A most common action reported to encourage women's participation in governing body meetings is to specify in meeting notifications that women delegates are particularly encouraged to attend. Six organizations (UN Women, UNFCCC, ILO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, WIPO) reported undertaking specific communication campaigns to encourage women's participation in governing body meetings. One organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), also includes details on nursing facilities in the meeting information note. The language used in these communications can reinforce this effect: for example, most (19) respondents noted systematic use of gender-neutral terminology (such as Chair(person) instead of Chairman).

KEY RESULT

Only seven organizations reported that they shared the separate recommendations contained within *Shaping the international agenda for Member States, ministers, ambassadors, heads of United Nations entities and other senior officials to those concerned.*

In terms of disseminating such information, most of the organizations that reported formal monitoring of women's participation at annual and other meetings do not disseminate these data internally or externally. When data are shared, they are more frequently disseminated internally rather than publicly. Half (15) of the respondents disseminate information about gender-neutral terminology internally. Ten respondents reported that they publicly disseminated information about gender-neutral terminology. In a similar vein, only seven organizations shared the separate recommendations contained within *Shaping the international agenda* for Member States, ministers, ambassadors, heads of United Nations entities and other senior officials to those concerned, and six reported that they were monitoring their implementation. Clear and transparent channels should be established for communicating such information between United Nations entities and Member States, as well as among United Nations

GOOD PRACTICE

UNODC includes details on nursing facilities in the meeting information note.

entities, to help ensure that all parties have the information needed to develop, implement and monitor policies and plans to enhance women's participation and achieve gender parity.

VII. Initiatives addressing sexual misconduct

This year's survey included new questions to assess respondents' familiarity with the [Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, including Sexual Harassment at UN System Events](#), which was developed through the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System and adopted by the High-Level Committee for Management (HLCM) in 2019. The code is intended to be disseminated to share expectations of standards of conduct in advance of an event and to make clear that sexual harassment is not tolerated at United Nations system events.

KEY RESULT

Most (24) respondents are aware of the Code of Conduct, yet only 13 have disseminated it to meeting participants.

GOOD PRACTICE

The ITU disseminates the Code of Conduct prior to events and delegates are invited to confirm the receipt at the registration.

While most (24) respondents are aware of the Code of Conduct, only 13 have disseminated it to meeting participants including the ITU, which will invite delegates to confirm at registration whether they have read the Code of Conduct. Thirteen governing bodies reported that they had established guidelines, codes of conduct or rules with regard to sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct, with some organizations noting that these were implemented alongside existing guidance. Twenty-two organizations reported an available channel for staff or delegates to report sexual discrimination, harassment or misconduct perpetrated in a session of the governing bodies. In line with the previous section, clear and transparent channels should be established for communicating such information between United Nations entities and Member States, as well as among United Nations entities, to ensure that this vital information is readily accessible and widely disseminated.

ANNEX I. UNITED NATIONS GOVERNING BODIES SECRETARIAT (UNGBS) ENTITIES

The survey was circulated to the UNGBS community in February 2020 via SurveyMonkey, and remained open for responses until May 2020. The response time was extended due to work disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 36 member entities who received the survey, 30 submitted responses, equating to a response rate of 84 per cent. Entities that responded to the survey are marked with (R).

- **ESA** (European Space Agency) (R)
- **FAO** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) (R)
- **IAEA** (International Atomic Energy Agency) (R)
- **ICAO** (International Civil Aviation Organization) (R)
- **IFAD** (International Fund for Agricultural Development) (R)
- **ILO** (International Labour Organization) (R)
- **IMF** (International Monetary Fund)
- **IMO** (International Maritime Organization) (R)
- **IOM** (International Organization for Migration)
- **ITU** (International Telecommunication Union) (R)
- **OECD** (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (R)
- **OHCHR** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) (R)
- **DGACM** (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management - United Nations) (R)
- **UNCTAD** (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) (R)
- **UNDP** (United Nations Development Programme)
- **UNEP** (United Nations Environment Programme) (R)
- **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) (R)
- **UNFCCC** (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) (R)
- **UNFPA** (United Nations Population Fund) (R)
- **UN-Habitat** (United Nations Human Settlement Programme) (R)
- **UNHCR** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) (R)
- **UNICEF** (United Nations Children's Fund) (R)
- **UNIDO** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) (R)
- **UNITAR** (United Nations Institute for Training and Research)
- **UNODC** (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) (R)
- **UNOPS** (United Nations Office for Project Services)
- **UNSSC** (United Nations System Staff College) (R)
- **UN Women** (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) (R)
- **UPU** (Universal Postal Union) (R)
- **WFP** (World Food Programme) (R)
- **WHO** (World Health Organization)
- **WHO FCTC Secretariat** (Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control) (R)
- **WIPO** (World Intellectual Property Organization) (R)
- **WMO** (World Meteorological Organization) (R)
- **World Bank** (R)
- **WTO** (World Trade Organization) (R)

ANNEX II. COMPARISON OF RESULTS WITH PREVIOUS SURVEYS

A survey conducted in 2016 contributed to the first edition of the *Shaping the international agenda* publication in 2017. A follow-up survey of UNGBS members was conducted in 2018 and the results were presented as a background paper. Below is a comparison of the survey results for similar questions. Data on information requested for only one survey (for example, in relation to sexual misconduct) are not reflected. “N/A” denotes unavailable information (either the information was not requested, or the specific numbers were not reported).

Item	2016	2018	2019
Number of entities that completed the survey	23	24	30
Have (or will soon) have a gender equality strategy in place	21 (91%)	23 (95%)	29 (97%)
Report to UN-SWAP	16 (70%)	17 (71%)	24 (80%)
Have a specific target to promote women’s participation at governing body meetings	2 (9%)	7 (29%)	4 (13%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation at general conferences/ annual meetings	13 (57%)	16 (67%)	18 (60%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation at leadership positions in bodies, committees	2 (9%)	13 (54%)	15 (50%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation at a high level	1 (4%)	7 (29%)	10 (33%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation in composition of bodies created to support the work of the intergovernmental body	2 (9%)	8 (33%)	9 (30%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on participation of women as heads and deputy heads of delegation	3 (13%)	10 (42%)	8 (27%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation as panellists in side events	4 (17%)	11 (46%)	8 (27%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation in interventions in high-level openings of governing body meetings	N/A	7 (29%)	7 (23%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation in interventions on specific agenda items	2 (9%)	2 (8%)	6 (20%)
Gathered sex-disaggregated data on women’s participation as facilitators/co-facilitators	2 (9%)	6 (25%)	5 (16%)
Have implemented training or capacity-building for women delegates	N/A	3 (13%)	3 (10%)
Provide financial support specifically to women delegates	2 (9%)	2 (8%)	2 (7%)
Have undertaken specific communication campaign(s) to encourage women’s participation in governing body meetings	N/A	10 (42%)	6 (20%)
Specify in meeting notifications that women delegates are particularly encouraged to attend	N/A	6 (25%)	12 (40%)
Disseminate data on women’s participation (internally or externally)	11 (48%)	N/A	12 (40%)
Make the sex-disaggregated data of meeting participants publicly available	N/A	9 (38%)	5 (16%)

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND
THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017, USA
Tel: 212-906-6400
Fax: 212-906-6705

www.unwomen.org
www.facebook.com/unwomen
www.twitter.com/un_women
www.youtube.com/unwomen
www.flickr.com/unwomen