![UN Women logo]

TRANSFORM

The Women's Political Participation and Leadership Issue

Dear Readers,

Whereas women's political participation has increased around the globe, women are still under-represented in political life. Promoting women's political participation is vital because it improves outcomes at all societal levels.

As part of its implementation of the UN Women Corporate Evaluation Plan, the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service assessed UN Women's contribution to women's political participation from 2011 to 2017 through a systems thinking lens.

This issue of *Transform* magazine summarizes the main evaluation results and captures learning from past practices that can inform and strengthen future work in this area. It also examines UN Women's position and strategic niche in promoting women's political participation in the context of the Secretary-General's call for the United Nations Development System reform to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. The evaluation emphasizes finding improved ways of working in partnership with UN agencies, civil society, regional organizations and governments to enhance the level and sustainability of results. It also highlights the need for prioritizing and increasing efforts to address marginalized communities and social norms change as vital parts of women's political participation programming to address the structural causes and power imbalances that lead to women's under-representation in political life.

In addition to the support of UN Women staff at Headquarters, Regional and Country Offices and other partner agencies, Independent Evaluation Service wishes to express appreciation for the support of UN Women Political Participation Unit and the leadership of the evaluation managers, Shravanti Reddy and Alexandra Capello, throughout the evaluation process.

Verasak Liengsririwat

Verasak Liengsririwat
Director a.i, Independent Evaluation Service

The Women's Political Participation and Leadership Issue

Women's political participation and leadership: a fundamental human right and a potential driver for transformative change

Summing it all up: conclusions for the future

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MOVING FORWARD

Six ways to advance women's political participation and leadership

LEARNING FROM THE EVALUATION:

Response from management

EVALUATION APPROACH:

Incorporating systems thinking and intersectional analysis

ON THE COVER Voters turn out in Dili to cast their vote for the parliamentary elections in the morning. A voter displays proof of having expressed her voice at the ballot box in Timore-Leste's parliamentary elections.

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WOMEN LEADERS AT DEMOCRACY DAY CELEBRATIONS

WOMEN LEADERS OF ALL AGES AT THE DEMOCRACY DAY CELEBRATIONS IN 2011. THE CELEBRATION WAS ORGANIZED BY UN WOMEN AND THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES TO RECOGNIZE THE WORK OF ELECTED WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES AROUND INDIA. THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA MANDATES THE RESERVATION OF ONE-THIRD OF SEATS FOR WOMEN IN LOCAL BODIES. MANY STATES NOW HAVE 50 PER CENT RESERVATION FOR WOMEN.

Women's political participation and leadership:

a

fundamental human right and a potential driver for transformative change

From the local to the global level, opportunities for women's participation in political life are restricted. Women are underrepresented in parliaments, local governments, constitutional drafting bodies, political parties, executive branches and as heads of state and/or government despite their proven abilities, their positive impact for development and their right to participate equally in governance and decision-making bodies. Aside from political institutions and processes, there are a number of other public and civic spaces, such as the judiciary, civil society and the media, that influence women's political participation opportunities.

EXPERT'S VIEW

Pippa Norris, Professor of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney

"In a time when further progress in gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights are under threat, the work of UN Women has never been more timely or relevant. Women's political participation is critical for development and for advancing women's rights. The vital work of UN Women leads the world on these issues. To paraphrase Martin Luther King, the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards gender justice."

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Women face multiple obstacles to participating in political life. Cultural norms; structural barriers (e.g., possession of identity documents required for voter and candidate registration); mobility or security challenges; child care and domestic work; discriminatory laws; disparities in financial resources and networks; and gendered institutions (e.g., male-dominated political parties) limit women's opportunities to run for and to be elected to political office. Gender bias in the media and violence against women in politics represent additional impediments to participation. Challenges and opportunities for gender equality also are shaped in large part by political context, making tailored interventions important.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (UN Women) has a universal mandate to lead, promote and coordinate efforts to advance the full realization of women's rights and opportunities. UN Women supports Member States to address structural barriers to women's political participation by leveraging its integrated mandate.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5:

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Indicator 5.5.1: Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments

Women remain underrepresented in leadership positions. While quotas have been implemented to boost women's participation in politics, parity is far from reality and women remain underrepresented in leadership positions.

Summary:
UN Women Integrated Mandate

UN Women provides a **normative support function** through policy support for the advancement of normative frameworks and inter-governmental processes, including implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on Target 5.5
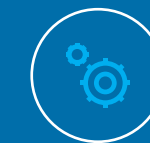
Through its **operational activities**, UN Women provides demand-driven policy advice, technical assistance and comparative knowledge to key national partners like constitutional committees; legislative drafting and electoral management bodies; parliaments; women leaders; and political aspirants. This involves partnerships for developing knowledge products and tools for country implementation. Support can also include capacity development to translate global norms into national policies, programmes, plans and practices.

Through its **UN system coordination function**, UN Women provides gender equality expertise to inter-agency coordination mechanisms, such as the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism on Electoral Assistance and substantive contribution to policy papers issued by the UN Focal Point on Electoral Assistance, the Department of Political Affairs. Global advocacy and partnerships are integral aspects of this work, particularly in the areas of violence against women in politics and discriminatory laws.

UN Women's response to the under-representation of women in political life is defined within its Strategic Plans, covering the period 2011-2017 and was one of six core thematic areas that UN Women aimed to contribute to at the global, regional and national levels with an estimated investment of US$203.5 million in 100 countries. Its work focused on five sub-thematic areas:

- 📄 constitutional and legal reform, including temporary special measures;
- 🗳 inclusive electoral processes;
- 🏛 parliamentary support;
- 🚩 local government;
- ✊ and violence against women in politics.

The work also addressed one cross-cutting area of leadership in political life. In 2015, UN Women developed the Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership Flagship Programme to deepen the transformative potential of UN Women interventions in this area. Key partners in this work include United Nations entities, intergovernmental mechanisms, international organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector, and bilateral donors.

As a driver for change, UN Women committed to evaluate its global contribution to women's political participation from 2011 to 2017 to support learning and accountability. The aim is to strengthen organizational performance by assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of its contributions and to analyze UN Women's positioning and strategic niche in this area. The results of the evaluation are meant to support decision-making and implementation of the current Strategic Plan, within the context of the 2030 *Agenda* and the *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all* (A/72/684–E/2018/7).

Women's political participation
sub-thematic and cross-cutting areas

📄 Constitutional and legal reform, including temporary special measures (TSM)

🚩 Local government

🏛 Parliamentary support

✊ Violence against women in politics

🗳 Inclusive electoral processes

👥 Leadership

EXPERT'S VIEW

Aili Mari Tripp, Wangari Maathai Professor of Political Science and Gender & Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"UN Women has been the most important international actor in influencing changes in women's political participation. Today, the gender gap in political participation is larger than the gap in education, health or even economic opportunity. Yet women's presence in political leadership influences peacebuilding, the shape of social policies, economic development and many other areas of UN activity and concern. This makes UN Women's efforts in this area all the more significant. As a voice for global change, it has transformed global norms regarding gender equality in politics. It is a source of pressure on Member States. It serves as a coordinating body for various UN agencies working in this area. The work of its country offices and the funding UN Women provides result in a wide range of activities that enhance women's political leadership – from support for constitutional and legal reform and women's capacity building in parliament to the creation of more inclusive electoral systems, and more recently, raising awareness of violence against women in politics. In all of these activities, the agency has worked at both national and local levels, seeking to cast the widest net to include women who fall to the margins of their societies, either as a result of ethnicity, race, caste, class or other differences."

LIBERIA - MAKING ELECTIONS COUNT FOR WOMEN

World and regional averages of women in parliament

Global level and regional level

- ■ **Single house or lower house**
- □ **Upper house or senate**
- ▦ **Both houses combined**

Regions are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in unicameral parliaments or the lower house of parliament. The regional groupings used herein are those of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

World Average
- 23.4%
- 22.9%
- 23.3%

Regional Averages

Nordic Countries
- 41.7%
- -

Americas
- 28.3%
- 27.5%
- 28.1%

Europe (Nordic countries included)
- 26.4%
- 26.0%
- 26.3%

Europe (Nordic countries not included)
- 25.0%
- 26.0%
- 25.2%

Sub-Saharan Africa
- 23.8%
- 22.1%
- 23.6%

Asia
- 19.6%
- 16.3%
- 19.3%

Arab States
- 18.9%
- 12.6%
- 18.0%

Pacific
- 15%
- 37.1%
- 17.4%
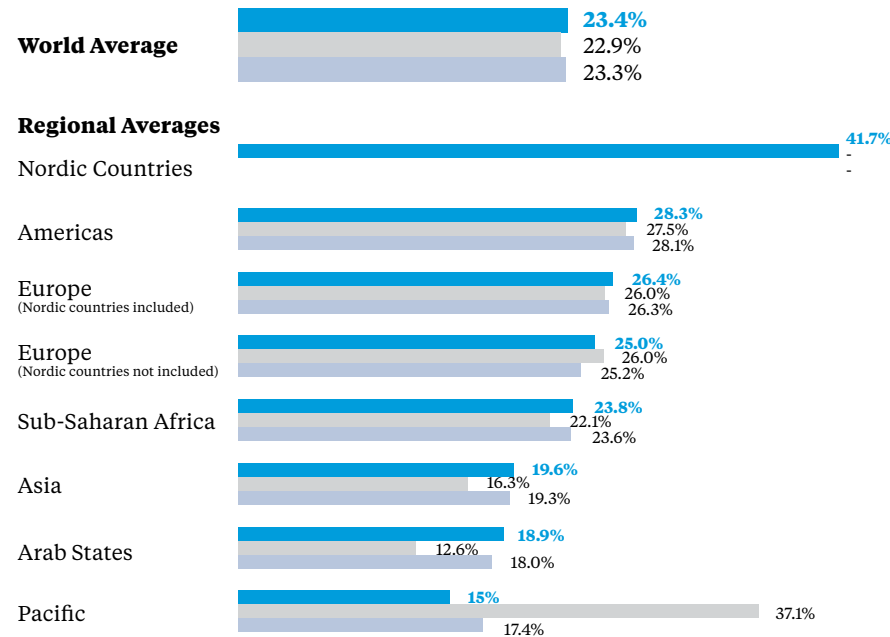
Country level

Women heads of state[1] (11/152 = 7.2%) and women heads of government (11/193 = 5.7%)

- Bangladesh (HG)
- Chile (HS/HG)
- Croatia (HS)
- Estonia (HS)
- Germany (HG)
- Liberia (HS/HG)
- Lithuania (HS)
- Malta (HS)
- Marshall Islands (HS/HG)
- Mauritius (HS)
- Namibia (HG)
- Nepal (HS)
- Norway (HG) Poland (HG),
- Republic of Korea (HS/HG)
- Switzerland (HS/HG)
- United Kingdom (HG)

Note: (HS/HG) = The head of state is also the head of government.
[1] Only elected heads of state have been taken into account
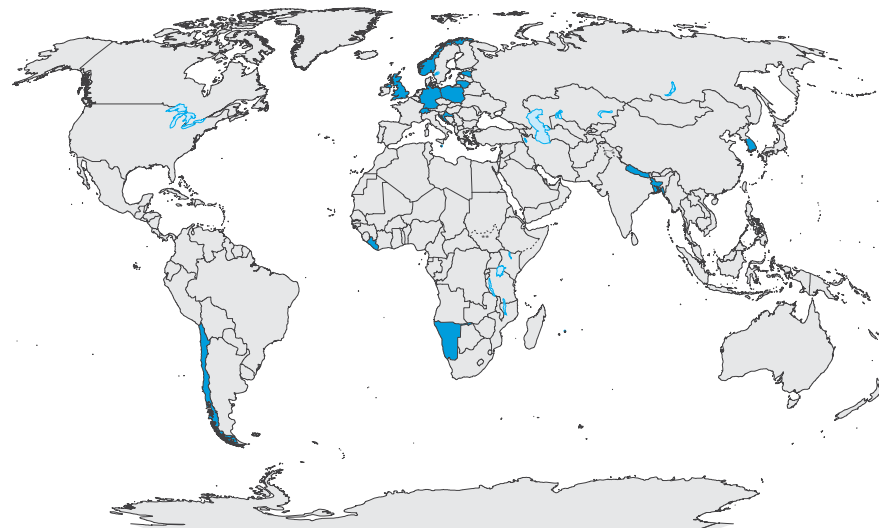
Source: *Women in Politics 2017 Map*, created by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women

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WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW TO MANAGE OR CONDUCT AN EVALUATION AT UN WOMEN?

HOW CAN EVALUATION BE A DRIVER FOR CHANGE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

HOW IS GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION DIFFERENT FROM OTHER EVALUATION?

HOW TO MANAGE GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

EVALUATION HANDBOOK

Find out how UN Women manages gender-responsive evaluation with the new UN Women Evaluation Handbook: *How to manage gender responsive evaluation*.

The Handbook is available at:
http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org

⊕ UN WOMEN

Evaluation findings at a glance

✅ FINDINGS

Relevance

1. Women's political participation is a highly relevant area of work and will remain so during the era.
2. Women's political participation programming is not sufficiently relevant to the needs and interests of marginalized women.
3. Corporate vision and strategy on WPP is clear, while sub-thematic areas may require further clarity.
4. UN Women has been responsive to country contexts by successfully adapting to political opportunities and challenges in many countries (with room for risk management strengthening).
5. UN Women draws its relevance for working on this politically sensitive thematic area from its position as both an impartial actor and the global lead agency on gender equality and women empowerment.
6. A focus on women's political empowerment is essential and important, but sustaining gains requires addressing and influencing social norms on gender equality.
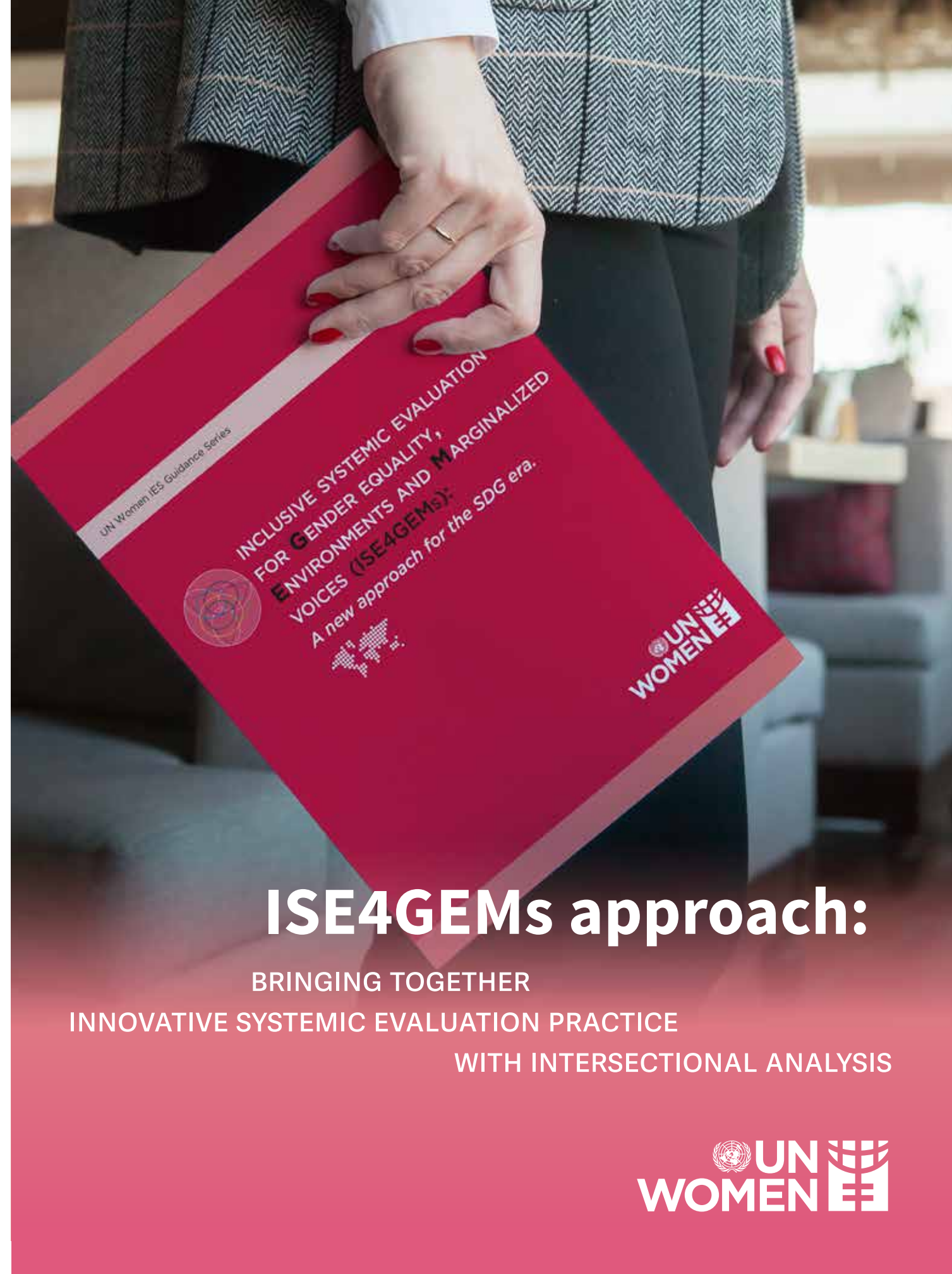
Effectiveness

7. UN Women has been very effective in assisting Member States in strengthening inter-governmental norms, policies and standards at the global level.
8. The challenges UN Women faces at the country level to implement its coordination mandate on women's political participation are connected to competing interpretations of mandates and roles, as well as priorities and capacities.
9. UN Women has contributed to strengthening normative frameworks at the country level; further monitoring for signs of regression and implementation extending to the sub-national level would support the sustainability of these gains.
10. UN Women has contributed to strengthening women's capacity and influence in parliaments; there is scope to work with partners to increase constituency outreach capacity and shift parliamentary procedures and norms.
11. UN Women has been effective in supporting gender mainstreaming in a number of electoral management bodies, a more consistent application of an electoral cycle process would further strengthen and sustain results to support inclusive electoral processes.
12. UN Women has contributed to raising awareness on the emerging issue of violence against women in politics at the global level and is well positioned to build on some early operational responses and lessons to accelerate progress.
13. UN Women has shown leadership in establishing a global methodology for tracking SDG indicator 5.5.1b on women's representation in local governments that can be leveraged to bolster its coordination and operational work at the country-level, and synergies with local governance.
14. Corporate frameworks to guide UN Women's efforts on transformational leadership would strengthen efforts to develop women's capacity to engage as leaders in political life and facilitate synergies across thematic areas.

Efficiency

15. Shortage of staffing in terms of overall numbers and varying levels of specialized expertise at the sub-national, country and regional levels affect UN Women's ability to plan for and deliver results.
16. Despite recent increases in funding and pledges demonstrating potential donors' interest, women's political participation work is under-re-sourced and could benefit from a more, comprehensive thematic fundraising strategy that addresses regional differences.
17. UN Women's external women's political participation knowledge products are highly valued. At the same time, there is demand for increased cross-country, cross-regional and cross-thematic communication and internal knowledge management on women's political participation to share experiences, lessons learned and strategies for addressing challenges.
18. Closing corporate gaps identified in reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation systems would allow for better assessment of women's political participation results.
19. UN Women can build on and improve its strong partnerships on women's political participation by coordinating at the country level and expanding outreach to organizations of marginalized groups, regional and sub-regional organizations and political parties.

Sustainability

20. There is no explicit definition of sustainability for women's political participation, and it is not consistently prioritized or incorporated in planning documents.

UN Women IES Guidance Series

INCLUSIVE SYSTEMIC EVALUATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENTS AND MARGINALIZED VOICES (ISE4GEMs): A new approach for the SDG era.

UN WOMEN

ISE4GEMs approach:

BRINGING TOGETHER

INNOVATIVE SYSTEMIC EVALUATION PRACTICE

WITH INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

UN WOMEN

SENEGAL - COUMBA DIAW - FROM WHERE I STAND

Summing it all up:

Conclusions for the future

Harness UN Women's comparative advantage to contribute to the 2030 Agenda

1 The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals framework's systemic approach situates UN Women as the key UN actor and thought leader for providing integrated policy advice on women's political participation.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals framework are systemic in nature and highlight the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of the 17 goals, with gender equality and women empowerment as a cross-cutting issue throughout. For the UN system to be 'fit-for-purpose' to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, there is widespread recognition that it should adopt a more systemic (as opposed to a siloed) approach to its work. One of the core functions identified for UN Development System support to the 2030 Agenda is to provide Member States with "integrated policy advice, including 'thought leadership' and analysis on critical policy issues, working across governments and societies to address and respond to cross-cutting challenges."

Grounding its work in international frameworks and commitments related to women's political participation, UN Women is seen as an impartial and highly credible actor. It has been able to position itself and contribute results to women's political participation during the evaluation period by leveraging its integrated mandate on gender equality and women empowerment to make progress on normative, coordination and operational results. It also has demonstrated the potential to adapt to emerging political opportunities. UN Women's mandate and six thematic areas of work (↻) situate it

> *UN Women is seen as an impartial and highly credible actor; however, it must adopt a more systemic approach.*

UN Women has the potential to draw on internal synergies within and across three main areas:

1. It's Strategic Plan's outcome areas.
2. Cross-cutting areas for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (e.g., social norms, transformative leadership and marginalization).
3. It's integrated and universal mandate to coordinate work on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, as well as undertake normative and operational work.

to act as the key agency and thought leader within the United Nations Development System to provide integrated policy advice on women's political participation.

A more systemic approach to addressing women's political participation would include strengthening existing internal and external synergies and forging new ones relevant to the cross-cutting dimensions for sustainable development.

UN Women has made progress in this direction in some sub-thematic areas (e.g., local government and violence against women in politics) and with new internal and external frameworks supportive of strengthening synergies. However, it has not yet optimized its potential to do so. It would also include communicating its work on women's political participation, as part of a broader policy framework for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment, and highlighting the key connections that can be leveraged internally and in leading the way for partners to better understand, think and act systemically in their own women's political participation efforts.

ENDORSEMENT OF SYSTEMS THINKING APPROACH BY UN CHIEF EXECUTIVES BOARD FOR COORDINATION (CEB/2017/1), 20 JUNE 2017.

"The interconnectedness and indivisibility of the 2030 Agenda and the realities of the world in which we work require us to deal with complexity at an unprecedented scale. As such, we need to identify, understand and develop appropriate ways of applying systems thinking to collectively define and address the challenges that we confront. We need to think across and beyond one area of expertise or mandate and to understand how our actions contribute to the overall United Nations objectives. We need to analyse the environment as a set of complex, live ecosystems and to understand underlying organizing principles, as well as the linkages, interactions, dependencies and power distribution among components and constituencies. And we must strategically identify leverage points in these systems to achieve maximum impact. United Nations leaders, therefore, must shift from linear thinking to non-linear systems thinking."

UN Women six thematic areas of work from 2011 to 2017:

1. Women's voice, leadership and participation

2. Women's economic empowerment

3. Ending violence against women and girls

4. Women's peace and security

5. Governance and national planning

6. Global and normative framework

Match desired impact with delivery capacity

2 In order to be 'fit-for-purpose' to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, UN Women would benefit from adopting a thematic lens for strengthening its internal capacities and resources to match desired impact with delivery capacity on women's political participation.

Women's political participation is one of the key 'drivers' for enhancing progress across all other UN Women thematic areas, as well as across the Sustainable Development Goals.

This evaluation demonstrates that UN Women has been able to achieve relevant results on women's political participation with current capacities, resourcing and organizational structure. It has not, however, been able to demonstrate that it has achieved and sustained the level of results needed to generate the broader impact on women's political participation as expected, let alone be a driver for wider gender equality and women's empowerment impacts.

The prioritization of women's political participation over a broad geographic scope and the political complexities this work entails are part of the issue. This is despite ample evidence of how UN Women has successfully leveraged partnerships – which in itself requires a certain level of investment - both within the United Nations Development System and with other global, regional and national partners to enhance its reach.

Despite possessing the building blocks for becoming "fit-for-purpose" on women's political participation, persistent staffing gaps and under-resourcing at the global,

regional and country levels affect UN Women's ability to meet demand for support. Most significantly, gaps in terms of thematic policy expertise and variations in the skills of country leadership have meant that UN Women is not always able to meet the demands or expectations of partners.

External stakeholders, especially civil society organizations, remain particularly keen to work with UN Women given its specialized gender mandate. Strong policy expertise at the global level and in the two regions with dedicated Regional Policy Advisors (i.e. Americas and the Caribbean and Arab States) combined with flexible funding mechanisms have enabled UN Women to adapt to overcome capacity constraints somewhat but the structural human resource constraints remain in the long-term.

INTERESTING FACT:

Women's political participation was a priority area of work in

91 UN Women Country Offices in 2016.

More investment needed:

Externally

- Funding.
- Support for the coordination mandate on women's political participation.

Internally

- Knowledge management.
- Training.
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Partnership management.
- Decisions around staffing, and roles and responsibilities.

UN Women faces persistent staffing gaps and under-resourcing at the global, regional and country levels affecting its ability to meet demand for support.

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

A new strategy and step-by-step framework for integrating equity-focused and gender-responsive evaluations into national Sustainable Development Goals reviews

MORE INFORMATION AT:
evalpartners.org/evalgender/no-one-left-behind

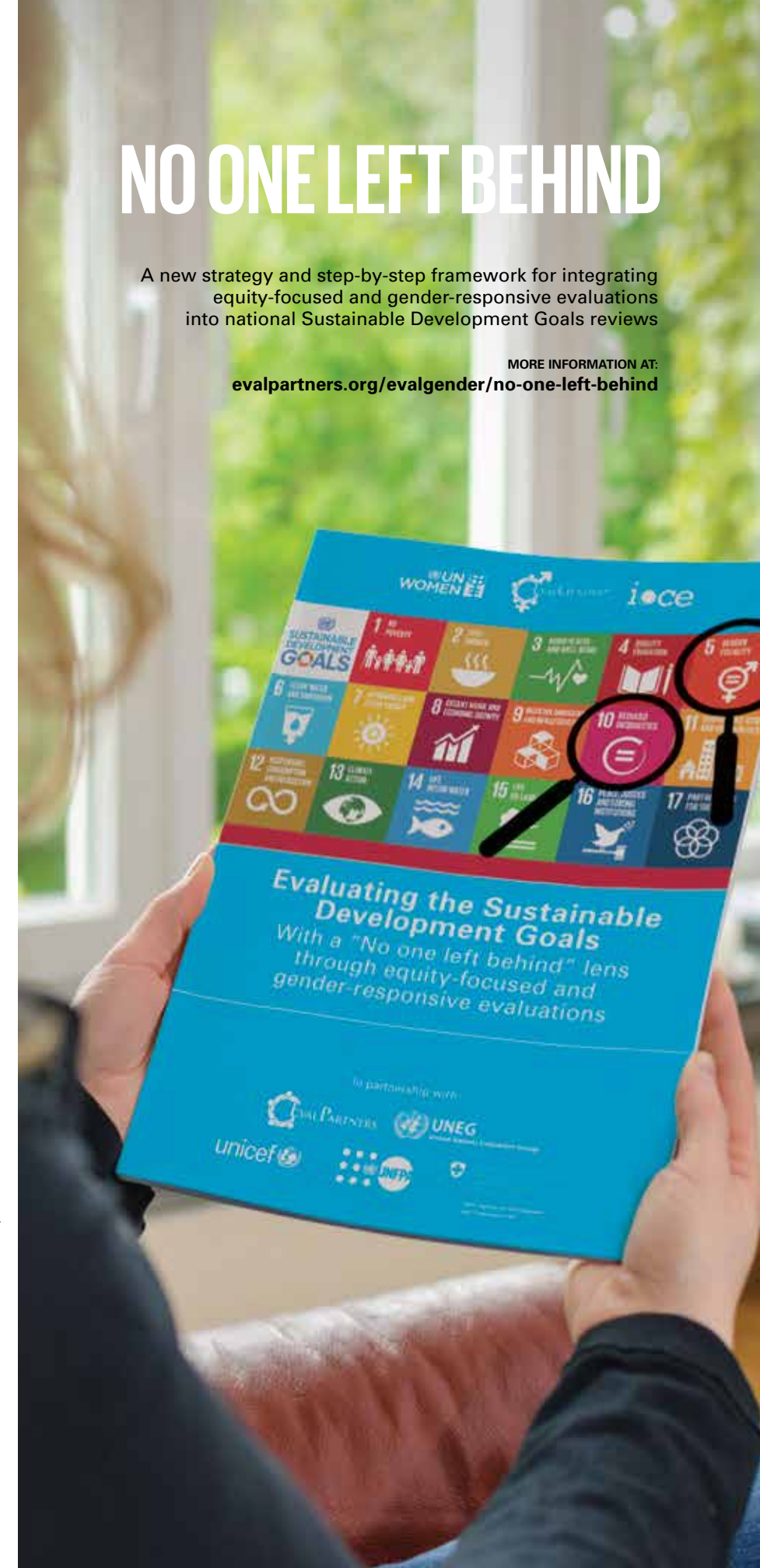# Assessing the challenges and opportunities of the United Nations Reform

3 Reform efforts provide new opportunities, as well as challenges to implementing UN Women's coordination mandate on women's political participation, especially at the country level.

UN Women's ability to effectively implement its coordination mandate has been hindered by factors that are inherent to the United Nations System and largely outside of UN Women's sphere of influence. Addressing these factors requires joint UN system dialogue and action to resolve differing interpretations.

The UN reform efforts to reposition the system elevates focus on coordinated support to countries and opportunities to further contribute to system-wide accountability on gender equality. Though efficiency may increase as UN entities' coordination improves, there is also the danger

that 'one voice' might stifle creativity, enforce conservative policies and prevent visibility and resources for UN Women. It could also present challenges for UN Women's positioning particularly in countries where it has no presence or a significant resource imbalance vis-à-vis the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Issues of visibility can arise with co-location models. On the other hand, relations might improve with UNDP in some countries to allow for more joint programmes and basket-funds on elections through a pooled funding mechanisms. A strengthened

WHAT IS THE COMMON CHAPTER TO THE STRATEGIC PLANS OF UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA AND UN-WOMEN?

Collaboration by UN entities is needed more than ever to support Member States as they implement landmark agreements on sustainable development such as the Agenda 2030, the Sendai Framework, the Paris Climate agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. A common chapter was included in the Strategic Plans 2018-2021 of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women that defines common principles and provides a strategic vision for collaboration across the four entities in terms of adopting harmonized approaches, timelines and coordinating deliverables.

Factors affecting coordination in the area of women's political participation:

1. Differing interpretations among United Nations actors, regarding their respective mandate and role division.
2. The lack of policy framework (aside from electoral assistance) or other agreements, regarding role division.
3. Resource imbalances, especially at the country level.

Resident Coordinators' system and United Nations Development Assistance Framework process could prevent the current dispersed approach experienced at the country-level. Also, the current Strategic

Plan 2018-2021, which now includes both a common chapter and an outcome on strengthened UN system coordination, commits agencies, such as UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women, to work together on issues of marginalization and gender equality and women empowerment. For these coherence efforts to be effectively implemented as a means of jointly producing results in the field of women's political participation, the common chapter of the Strategic Plan (2018-2021) would have to be complemented in the long term with women's political participation's specific targets across the relevant UN agencies and an inter-agency mechanism at the highest level to monitor implementation and joint reporting, as well as to make decisions on corporate 'memoranda of understanding' on women's political participation to be implemented at the country level.
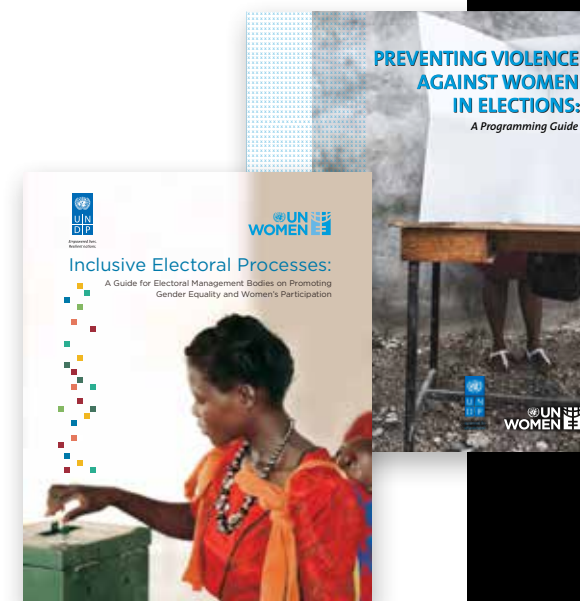
UN coordination perspective

NIALL MCCANN, POLICY ADVISOR, ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE DIVISION, UNDP

The UNDP-UN Women Partnership
UNDP Electoral Assistance Division

UNDP places significant emphasis on the partnership with UN Women for delivering gender results at the country level. As articulated in the common chapter of the Strategic Plans of UNDP and UN Women, key areas of partnership are: promoting women's participation and leadership in political institutions and processes, and preventing and ending gender-based violence by addressing harmful practices and changing social norms, attitudes and behaviors. In Moldova, for example, UN Women and UNDP have worked and achieved significant results by supporting the electoral reform that led to the inclusion of:

- Temporary special measures to support gender balance in parliament.
- Candidate training and mentoring for women in political office at different local and national levels.
- Voter education targeting women voters.
- A comprehensive effort for having sex-disaggregated data on voters, candidates and elected officials collected by the electoral institutions.

UNDP and UN Women work together to support global networks and learning, and to advocate for equal women's political participation. Some resources include:

- iKNOW Politics http://iknowpolitics.org/
- Inclusive Electoral Processes: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/7/inclusive-electoral-processes
- Preventing violence against women in Elections: A programming guide http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/11/preventing-violence-against-women-in-elections

Adopt more systemic and holistic programming approaches to increase sustainability

4 Although UN Women has demonstrated effectiveness across its normative and operational work, it could increase the level and sustainability of its results by adopting a more systemic and holistic approach to its programmatic work.

UN Women has achieved results across its normative and operational mandate. Normative results were particularly prominent regarding the adoption of inter-governmental norms. Operational results were found across all sub-themes and countries due largely to UN Women's advocacy capacity, convening credibility and strong partnerships.

UN Women's normative and operation work related to women's political participation also presents some challenges. In certain countries, linkages between policy and operational work remain weak, and operational results

Operational results enablers:

Advocacy

Convening credibility

Partnerships

have been uneven across sub-themes or within sub-themes. This may be due to the wide range of activities implemented that makes difficult the:

- Development of specific strategies to operationalize normative outcomes.
- Achievement of shared institutional learning.
- Development of common branding around innovative models.

Consequently, some sub-thematic areas would benefit from the definition of a few key 'signature' products around which UN Women could invest in specialized monitoring and evaluation, internal learning, knowledge production and branding.

Meanwhile, challenges to sustainability, specific to women's political participation and corporate limitations identified, include:

- Political volatility.
- Entrenched nature of social norms.
- Long-term and regressive nature

What does a longer-term systemic and holistic perspective for women's political participation include?

1. Prioritizing projects based on scale-up and sustainability potential (e.g., electoral context vs. election period; de jure vs. de facto laws; descriptive, as well as substantive representation).

2. Balancing and sequencing efforts across UN Women's integrated mandate of normative coordination and operational work.

3. Gauging and mitigating potential negative reactions that might arise in the form of violence, public opinion or public policy backlash.

of the change processes UN Women is working towards.

- Limitations of monitoring and evaluation systems including nascent risk management system.
- Short-term approach to the conceptualization and operationalization of results.

While UN Women's ability to respond to emerging political opportunities is a strength, it is important that the organization balances adaptability with a longer-term systemic and holistic perspective.

THE ALOLA FOUNDATION OBSERVATION TEAM AND A LONG LINE OF ENTHUSIASTIC VOTERS

© UN WOMEN/BETSY DAVIS COSME

Prioritize efforts to reduce marginalization

5 UN Women needs to prioritize and increase its efforts to address marginalization within its women's political participation work.

There was strong demand by both internal and external stakeholders for UN Women to strengthen further its support to marginalized groups, likely given the additional impetus provided by the 2030 Agenda. The evaluation found that UN Women programming has supported the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) agenda in a number of country offices, but that progress is uneven and limited. However, there was also widespread understanding of the real difficulties and complexities of doing so in a meaningful way given the level of capacity and resources available for women's political participation work and the existing gaps. On the positive side, the evidence shows that UN Women has a number of strengths on which it

Challenges to engaging with marginalized groups:	Strengths to draw on to improve outreach to marginalized groups:
Data gaps.	Strong partnerships with civil society groups, as part of its overall implementation of a human rights-based approach widened to be more inclusive of marginalized groups.
Strategy gaps.	Existing partnerships expanded and sustained for more systemic inclusion across thematic areas.
Limited partnerships with groups representing marginalized communities.	Leverage its convening power to ensure inclusion of marginalized groups in national or local dialogues or processes related to women's political participation.

WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING: BUILDING A DIFFERENT WORLD

© UN WOMEN/CAROLINA SAINZ

can draw to improve outreach to marginalized groups.

Several areas were identified where UN Women could strengthen its attention to marginalized groups, including within specific sub-thematic areas and targeting of those groups prioritized for attention within Strategic Plan 2018-2021, i.e., young women, indigenous women and women with disabilities.

Developing stronger synergies with Sustainable Development Goal 16 on broader inclusive governance processes is also connected to and would be supportive of this work. Finally, UN Women's knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation systems need to be strengthened to support learning about how best to identify and engage marginalized groups and accurately capture and record results.

Opportunities for closer engagement with and inclusion of marginalized groups:

- Citizenship programming, local government and violence against women in politics.
- Constituency engagement with parliamentarians.
- Civil society grant modalities.
- Development and dissemination of inclusive electoral processes and quota/parity laws to local levels.
- Advocacy efforts with electoral management bodies and regional and sub-regional organizations engaged in elections monitoring.
- Capacity building efforts, especially related to developing young women's leadership skills.
- Research.

Changing social norms

6 Work on social norms change to support women's political participation work is a promising, yet under-developed area of programming.

Social norms work underscores all women's political participation sub-thematic areas, is included in Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership Flagship Programme and is considered an essential aspect of UN Women's work overall. As the evaluation findings have noted, the political empowerment of women might not be sustained unless there are real shifts in social norms around women entering and staying in politics.

Yet, the evaluation found that social norms change remains a relatively under-analysed, under-developed and under-measured area

The challenge for UN Women will be to find innovative ways to tackle social norms change on women's political participation 'upstream' and link this with new strategies for addressing social norms change 'downstream'.

of programming. Given the scale of the challenges for supporting women's political empowerment and UN Women's resource levels and accountability to demonstrate results, this is not surprising. However, the evaluation findings also point to the need to redirect energies to develop more concerted and specific programming around social norms change that will complement the women's political empowerment strategies undertaken. This requires deepening the analysis of then targeting context-specific attitudes, stereotypes and perceptions held by men, women, boys and girls of women in

politics and women as leaders that work to prevent women's political participation and empowerment.

The evaluation noted the largely 'upstream' nature of the work by UN Women, which aligns with its mandate and capacity levels. Yet, social norms change, like work with marginalized groups, is mainly 'downstream' work that involves engaging at the local or grassroots level. The challenge for UN Women will be to find innovative ways to tackle social norms change on women's political participation 'upstream' and link this with new strategies for addressing social norms change 'downstream'. For the former, it may be possible to better leverage the symbolic representation of women leaders for social norms change. Advocacy and communications work on women's political participation – and more broadly across thematic areas by UN Women – could be better leveraged for social norms change impact. The evaluation found that several good examples already exist, which can be better leveraged for women's political participation work.

Social norms change remains a relatively under-analyzed, under-developed and under-measured area of programming

VARVARA DUMINICA 57 Y.O. IS ONE OF TWO ROMA WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES IN THE VILLAGE COUNCIL OF CHETROSU VILLAGE (DROCHIA, MOLDOVA). VARVARA ADVOCATES FOR ROMA RIGHTS AND ALSO SERVES AS ADVISOR TO LOCAL ADMINISTRATION ON EDUCATION, PUBLIC HEALTHCARE, CULTURE AND OTHER ISSUES.

For the latter, the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality, grant-making modality to civil society groups was effective in addressing social norms change and provided useful learning. New partnerships may need to be explored and may be possible if UN Women strengthens its work on women's political participation at the local level.

Overall, social norms change efforts need to go beyond general or ad hoc awareness-raising activities to develop more long-term and sustained programming that targets not only men and boys, but also women and girls, with specific

outcomes, outputs, indicators, baselines and targets. This will require putting in place long-term monitoring methods that track change beyond a specific programme lifespan and leveraging new and innovative monitoring methods (e.g., big data) that can expand possibilities for monitoring and assessing results. This would help UN Women to better understand and leverage its social norms change work on women's political participation and increase the possibilities for reporting on sustainable change and impact on this important issue over the long-term. Given evidence that similar challenges with social norms change are experienced across UN Women's areas of work, corporate frameworks or guidance might support and enable leveraging of work across all thematic areas for broader impact.

Reflecting on opportunities

The evaluation identified four issues that were relevant to raise for corporate reflection based on the evidence collected and analysis conducted. These are forward looking considerations for women's political participation engagement and/or issues that have corporate significance for organizational strengthening.

1 **Further explore the connection between women's political participation and environmental sustainability to increase relevance to stakeholder demands and interests in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.** The nexus between environmental sustainability and women's political participation is still nascent, but important given the rising political priority around decision-making on environmental policy. Several UN Women Country Offices have demonstrated interest in further exploring links between women's participation in local government/governance and environmental decision-making (e.g., disaster risk management, climate change legislation, local water committees).

Response	UN Women staff	External partners
Strongly agree	41%	48%
Somewhat agree	37%	32%
Somewhat disagree	12%	11%
Strongly disagree	3%	4%
I don't know	3%	3%
No opinion	3%	2%
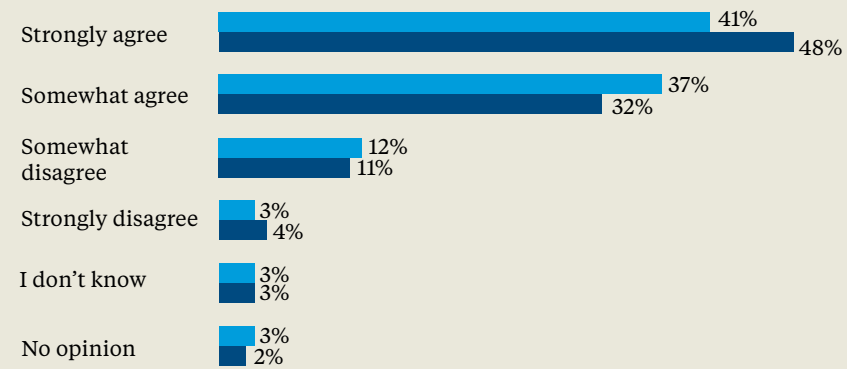
■ **UN Women staff respondents: 211**   ■ **External partners: 100**

Source: Survey to UN women staff and External partners for corporate evaluation

2 **Consider whether there is value in maintaining a strong distinction between local government and local governance work** in an era of systemic frameworks that emphasize interconnections and synergies. Given the inter-relationships between local government and governance, there are strategic opportunities for strengthening this synergy and potential benefits as a signature area of work for UN Women.

3 **Further investing in monitoring and evaluation systems to capture the sustainability and impact of women's political participation results.** A broader reflection on how to capture the sustainability and impact of women's political participation results would be a useful focus. Systematic post-training assessments and surveys, periodic country surveys, ex-post evaluations, big data methods and partnerships with research institutes are some potential ways to improve information on women's political participation change processes. This would better enable UN Women to demonstrate long-term results, as opposed to short-term output results that have immediate expediency for reporting, but might not be as useful in helping the organization achieve its overall mandate.

4 **UN Women's women's political participation work would likely benefit from overall corporate harmonization and strengthening around cross-cutting programmatic issues,** such as transformational leadership, capacity development, advocacy and communications for programmatic implementation and knowledge management. These areas would benefit from the development of corporate definitions, strategies, indicators and tools that could better leverage work across the organization.

WHAT WORKS FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION?

Selected Promising Practices	Two Applicable Lessons
The evaluation identified promising practices for future women's political participation work that have the potential to lead to real change, impact the policy environment, introduce innovation, or demonstrate promise for replication and sustainability.	The evaluation offers two lessons for future women's political participation work
Promote cross-country and regional knowledge exchange and mutual support in contexts of closed political systems or gender backlash.	
Use 'citizenship' programs to support the political participation of marginalized women.	**Long-term strategic vision is often required to influence women's political participation normative work at the global level.**
Design locally appropriate protocols, codes of conduct, awareness campaigns, and monitoring mechanisms to address violence against women in politics particularly when facing challenges to secure legislative reforms.	**Training local institutions so that knowledge is institutionalized and can be replicated with regular intervals shows promise for sustainability.**
Develop social norms programming via media campaigns to track shifts in media coverage and public opinion.	
Develop multi-country Flagship Programme Initiatives to promote greater programming coherence and more effective fundraising,	
Use of specialized knowledge products — such as creative infographics or radio/TV in local languages — appropriately tailored to and effective with target audiences.	

MOVING FORWARD

Six ways to advance women's political participation and leadership

SPECIAL PUBLIC PROSECUTION BODY OF FEMALE PROSECUTORS KATICA JANEVA (CENTER), FATIME FETAI (LEFT) AND LENCE RISTOSKA WERE TASKED WITH INVESTIGATING CORRUPTION AND ABUSE OF POWER CASES FOUND IN WIRETAPPED CONVERSATIONS LEAKED TO THE PUBLIC IN MACEDONIA.

PROUD VOTERS IN THE 7 JULY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE

1

Recommendation 1: In a context of wide-ranging demands and limited resources, UN Women needs to strengthen its prioritization capacity at the country level to contribute strategic and sustainable results on women's political participation.

Such capacity can be strengthened through the use of evidence-based programming, investment, communication and fundraising around:

- **Learning and advocacy in the emerging areas of violence against women in politics and local government** to provide integrated policy advice to Member States and to further enhance UN Women's strategic niche and added value.

- **Selecting one or two strategic 'signature' programming models** within the sub-thematic areas that are innovative, low-cost, and with potential for scale-up and sustainability and provide potential to apply UN Women's universal mandate. Examples that could be explored include:

– Institutional support for caucuses and committees to engage on post-legislative analysis and monitoring, including via outreach and constituency engagement for women Members of Parliament and local government officials.
– New approaches for registration of ID cards for the most marginalized women and identity management (in partnership with UNDP).
– Exploring the use of new technologies for civic education.
– Linking women to different forms of public decision-making (in formal and informal settings).
– violence against women in politics protocols developed with electoral management bodies and others.

– As an advocacy tool and global knowledge product, a replication of the *Women in Politics Global Map* for local government, in partnership with the relevant organizations.

- **Strengthening partnerships with organizations involved in party system** strengthening and institutional capacity building. This could include inter-governmental institutions like the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), regional organizations and associations of mayors or local government officials, as well as a strengthened partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to engender parliament procedures.

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VILLAGE ACTIVIST (GET NAME FROM BISHKEK) IN EMGEK TALAA VILLAGE DISCUSSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH WOMEN MEMBERS OF SELF-HELP GROUPS.

2

Recommendation 2: To strengthen implementation of its coordination mandate, UN Women should establish a clear division of labour with other UN agencies around potentially overlapping mandates and provide thematic operational guidance on planning and implementing its coordination role at the country and regional levels.

UN Women should clarify and formalize its role and coordination function relative to other UN agencies, with regard to the Strategic Plan's joint chapter and UN reform, concerning a joint vision, targets and implementation framework for women's political participation. It should establish a division of labour with UN Women as a full partner throughout the project cycle, in resource mobilization efforts and reporting of results. The UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on the gender equality and women empowerment model could inspire ways of working with a similar accountability framework for UN System-wide performance and joint delivery on women's political participation.

UN Women should provide operational guidance on planning and implementing its coordination role at the country and regional level, across sub-thematic areas and across different types of partners. This would clarify for partners how to engage and support UN Women and UNDP in the country context, drawing on each organization's comparative strengths. It would also institutionalize the process instead of relying on the goodwill of individual staff members.

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3

Recommendation 3: UN Women should develop a long-term women's political participation capacity-strengthening plan to enhance its ability to deliver results and meet stakeholder requests.

In light of the limited women's political participation human resources, UN Women should undertake a capacity-strengthening plan of existing resources. This would ideally include the elements below:

- **Conduct an organizational staff mapping and capacity assessment** to provide accurate data on the number and level of staff working fully or partially on women's **political participation**, their technical capacity strengths and weaknesses, identifying hubs of expertise that can be leveraged and areas for targeted training or specialized recruitment (e.g., knowledge management).

PORTRAIT OF MEHREZIA LAABIDI, PARLIA-MENTARIAN AND FORMER VICE-PRESI-DENT OF THE PARLIAMENT, TUNISIA

CITIZENSHIP INITIATIVE QUALYOUBIA VISIT

- **Clarify roles and responsibilities** at headquarters (HQ), regional and country-level staff working on **women's political participation** and prioritize capacity strengthening at the regional and country level with a multi-year recruitment plan for progressive strengthening in terms of numbers and seniority.

- **Develop and regularly update policy and programmatic guidance notes** that provide a strategic vision for each sub-thematic area with priority activities, role of UN Women vis-à-vis other actors, possible risks and potential mitigation strategies drawn from experience, and specific indicators and monitoring tools to support documentation of sustainable results, including post-training assessments and surveys. The programmatic guidance should include: strategies for sequencing normative, operational and coordination work; targeting marginalized

groups; work with political parties; engaging men and boys as part of broader social norms work; maintaining impartiality and avoiding reputational risks both within and outside the UN; and in adopting a more systemic approach by way of mapping synergies with other thematic areas.

- **Complement with online and/or face-to-face technical trainings** for staff responsible for undertaking this work, leveraging the Training Centre's and iKNOW Politics' capacities and resources.

- **Develop communities of practice or shared staff resources** (across countries) on highly specialized subjects that support cross-country and cross-regional exchange, and establish periodic teleconferences for information exchange and policy discussion between HQ and field-level advisors.

- Strengthen corporate capacities and systems to **manage and mitigate risks** related to women's political participation in different political systems and contexts, including how to identify and deal with potential backlashes to engendering political participation.

Recommendation 4: UN Women should invest in a thematic resource mobilization approach that builds on existing innovative, flexible and longer-term funding mechanisms that address regional priorities.

To this end, UN Women can pursue the following:

- Develop a **thematic resource mobilization strategy** and invest in **donor relationship management** in conjunction and with the support of the Strategic Partnership Division (SPD), that should be rolled out at the country level with Regional Policy Advisors' support. This strategy should:
  - Provide a clearer articulation of UN Women's added value to women's political participation for strategic funding opportunities in terms of how its normative and coordination work can support operational activities and prioritization, as well as how its work across descriptive, substantive and symbolic representation initiatives

can act as a driver for progress on gender equality and women empowerment.
  - Illustrate the complementary impact and enabling nature of women's political participation work with other thematic areas – in particular in relation to a broader governance agenda.
  - Demonstrate human resource capacity and thematic policy expertise at regional and country levels to effectively deliver on all aspects of the mandate, including programmatically.
  - Demonstrate a stronger evidence base to make the case for strategic funding opportunities, including thematic human resources and financial data to make the case for the level of resources and staff capacity requested.

  - Communicate the need for more holistic or full-cycle approaches to achieve sustainable results (moving away from *ad hoc*, seasonal and sporadic funding support), as well as the steps being taken to improve UN Women's administrative track record in terms of responsiveness and timeliness to help attract more funding.

- Develop regional Women Political Empowerment and Leadership programmes to support targeted and tailored **resource mobilization at the regional level**, building on the recent success in West and Central Africa Regional Office and aligning with the thematic resource mobilization strategy.

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"More women of all ages fully participate, lead and engage in political institutions and processes. This includes support for stereotypes that work against women's leadership be addressed, including through the engagement of men and boys; and for young women, indigenous women and women with disabilities to reach decision-making positions."

UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Output 2 on Area on Women's Political Participation

5

- Use both **innovative and flexible funding mechanisms** administered at corporate level to stay adaptive to shifting political opportunities and contexts (e.g., the Women in Politics Fund mechanism) and **longer-term national and regional-level** funding strategies that can help ground activities in a broader and more systemic governance agenda.

- **Advocate vis-à-vis UNDP** (Recommendation 2) for an increased share of external resources leveraged in women's political participation.

Recommendation 5: UN Women should prioritize Leave No One Behind within its women's political participation programming consistently at the global, regional and country levels, and build an evidence base that can feed into its global normative and advocacy work.

This can be pursued through:

- Strengthening and increasing partnerships and networks with marginalized groups at the country level to better enable inclusion within UN Women's women's political participation work areas.

- Developing tailored strategies seeking to fill basic data gaps on marginalized voices and vulnerable groups at country level that include both quantitative and qualitative data, such as systematically recording and using marginalized women's voices and testimonies. These efforts should be sensitive to and engage in national data collection efforts to disaggregate gender data.

- Implementation of programming models that are particularly relevant to marginalized groups' needs as outlined in Conclusion 5 (e.g., citizenship/voter registration, violence against women in politics protections, dialogue with local governments, constituency engagement).

- Strengthening knowledge management and results management systems to better plan, document and report on work with marginalized groups, as well as how best to engage and support their political empowerment.

- Supporting learning about prioritization through development of strategic pilots, careful testing and scale-up, as necessary.

WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING: BUILDING A DIFFERENT WORLD

6

Recommendation 6: UN Women should invest in new programming on social norms change that complements its women's political participation work and develop effective methods to monitor and report on progress in the long-term.

To do so, UN Women should:

- Select specific sub-thematic areas and activities within which to focus social norm change strategies, prioritizing those that may allow for leveraging of work in other areas for maximum effect. Possibilities include:
  - violence against women in politics, which already has a strong social norm component and possibilities to leverage or coordinate with work in related Ending Violence Against Women initiatives and address new issues such as online harassment.
  - Local government, which may allow for new partnerships with civil society groups that will allow for downstream work on social norms change.
  - Parliamentarians, who can act both as targets and contributors to social norms change.
  - Leadership work, which provides possibilities for engaging in corporate efforts that can be leveraged for women's political participation and other thematic areas.

- Build on existing upstream and downstream work to effect social norms change, identifying the appropriate sequencing of activities for mutual reinforcement of symbolic, descriptive and substantive representation work to achieve greater effectiveness. Possibilities include:
  - Expanding work on masculinity studies and other approaches for engaging men and boys.
  - Making use of campaigns and awareness-raising activities in a more programmatic and sustained way for continuous advocacy (e.g., voter registration) that is both linked to and independent of individual programming efforts in partnership with the communications division.
  - Grant-making modalities that allow for engagement on social norms work downstream.

- Strengthen and adopt new monitoring methods that will provide evidence of the effectiveness of social norms change efforts for women's political participation over time. This would require training and guidance to staff and could make use of new technologies, such as big data in partnership with the Innovation Facility, the Strategic Planning, Programme and Effectiveness Unit, and the Data and Statistics Section for potential synergies or links to Sustainable Development Goals monitoring efforts.

Perspectives from country offices

UN Women Zimbabwe Country Office: supporting women's political participation through constitutional reforms

UN WOMEN ZIMBABWE COUNTRY OFFICE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TEAM

"The evaluation was critical in terms of providing insights on where our work has had the most impact and areas where we can improve in terms of our programming. It was very important for us to receive the findings of the evaluation to assist us with current and future programming," says Maureen Shonge, Programme Specialist in the UN Women Zimbabwe Country Office.

The Zimbabwe Country Office has worked with women in leadership and politics since 2010. Significant growth has been witnessed in terms of programme strategy and implementation. Specifically, the Gender Support Programme implemented through the Joint Programme for Gender Equality was instrumental in creating a gender-responsive constitution that included critical provisions on women's quota. With support from UN Women and UNDP, a very influential lobby group, the G-20, was formed to monitor inclusion of women's priorities in the constitution-making process. Further, the office's support of the establishment of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission was also
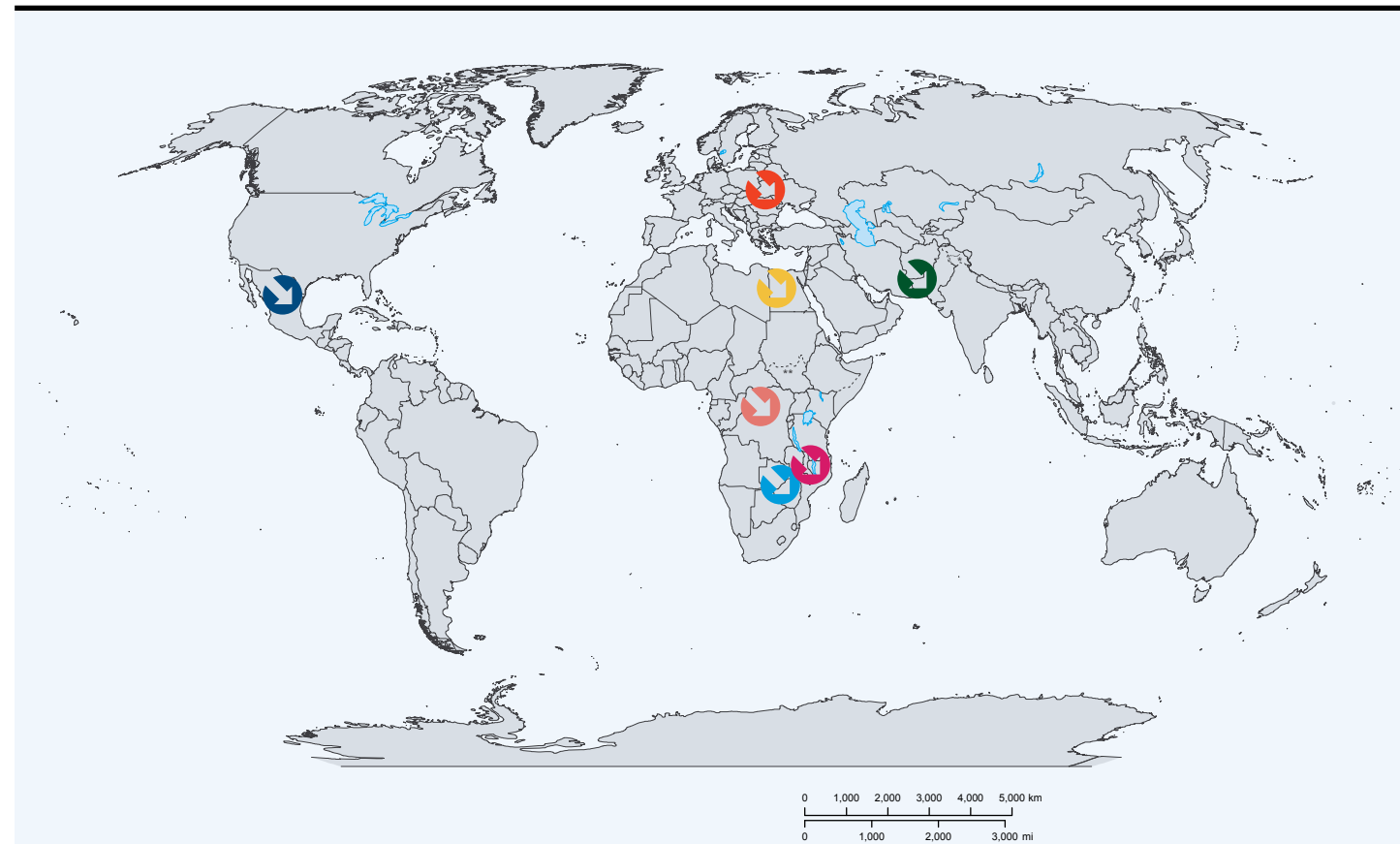
pivotal in promoting women's political participation.

A key lesson from the corporate evaluation on women's political participation is to further address marginalization. As a result, the office will use its convening power to ensure inclusion of women from marginalized groups, such as young women and women with disabilities, in dialogues at the national and community level.

UN Women Malawi Country Office: working with the Parliamentary Women's Caucus

"We find the evaluation very vital for us in the Malawi Country Office. The findings will aid in our future programming to ensure that our work continues to be relevant, efficient and effective in the pursuit of women political participation, especially in our parliamentary support work," says Clara Anyangwe, Representative, Malawi Country Office.

The UN Women Malawi Country Office established a partnership with the Parliamentary Women's Caucus in 2015 that contributed to developing a four-year strategic plan and a number of achievements. The Parliamentary Women's Caucus successfully lobbied for an increase in the number of female parliamentarians in constitutional committees. Thanks to these efforts, the chairperson of the Defense and Security Committee of the Malawi National Assembly has its first-ever female

chairperson and the number of women in the Legal Affairs, the Budget and the Public Appointments committees has doubled. UN Women's support for two members of the caucus to attend the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) regional parliamentary forum led to their election as Chairpersons to the SADC Gender Committee and Women's Caucus. The caucus also conducted an analysis of the national budget for 2015-2016 which highlighted gaps. Subsequent lobbying led to an increase in funding to the ministry responsible for gender equality.

Similarly, the country's women parliamentarians have been instrumental in passing different human rights and gender-sensitive legislation for the benefit of Malawian women, girls and their families. They played a critical role during the advocacy initiatives and the subsequent enactment of the Prevention

UN WOMEN MALAWI COUNTRY OFFICE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TEAM

of Domestic Violence Act, the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act, and the Gender Equality Act, as well as the constitutional amendment that raised the age of marriage from 16 to 18 years, thus banning child marriages. The caucus also played a vital role in the revision of the Anatomy Act which strengthened penalties for violations against persons with albinism. The most recent achievement was the enactment of the

Political Parties Rules and Regulations Act that eliminated handouts during political campaigns – one of the impediments to women's political participation in Malawi, considering the general scarcity of financial resources for women campaigning. UN Women continues to support the popularization of these laws and raising the profiles and visibility of women parliamentarians with constituencies.

UN Women Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Country Office: working in collaboration to build more inclusive electoral processes

UN WOMEN DRC COUNTRY OFFICE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TEAM

The evaluation report is very timely as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) will hold its elections in December 2018," says Catherine Odimba, Programme Manager for Leadership and Political Participation at UN Women DRC Country Office. "It will help the office to elaborate a more long-term capacity strengthening plan to improve the office's ability to deliver results and meet stakeholder requirements."

The UN Women DRC Country Office has been committed to supporting women leadership and political participation at all levels, including continuing efforts to enact legislative reforms that will enable enforcement of the parity principle stipulated in the constitution.

This evaluation report helps re-establish the relevance of UN Women's coordination role within overall UN system support to inclusive electoral processes. It also helps clarify the division of labour with other UN agencies in the UN Electoral Task Force, where UN Women is responsible for the thematic group on Gender and Elections. A good example of the office's inter-agency collaborations was the posting

of a UN Women consultant to work with the Independent National Electoral Commission for promoting gender issues and building capacity for inclusive electoral processes, as part of a UNDP project. The collaboration led to increases in the number of women registered to vote in targeted districts. In one district, more women than men were registered to vote. In addition, this evaluation serves as an effective tool for guiding the work of the country chapter of the African Women Leadership Network and its inclusive strategic committee where senior office management are members. The office has prioritized the principle of Leave No One Behind through its work with the network by supporting and advocating for young women, women living with disabilities, and more, to be represented across all 26 provinces.

As the women's leadership and political participation movement in the country reaches the next level, UN Women will be able to use this evaluation to support resource mobilization, rethink the connections between its social norms change work and this thematic area, and improve its methods for monitoring and reporting on sustainable progress in the long-term.

UN Women Pakistan Country Office: moving towards an electoral cycle approach

UN Women's Pakistan Country Office has supported women's political participation before, during and after elections. A focus on registering women to vote and obtain national identification cards from hard-to-reach populations, launching a targeted nation-wide media campaign to encourage women to vote and post-election reflections on violence against women in politics are some of the highlights of the office's contributions during the evaluation period. This was done in close partnership and collaboration with other UN agencies, the Government of Pakistan and international and national civil society organizations, some of whom continued the work on voter education and registration after UN Women's initial engagement. Many expressed appreciation and interest in working on this issue with UN Women as the agency dedicated to gender equality and women empowerment within the UN system. UN Women also provided support to women's caucuses at the national and provincial level, including support to develop 'terms of reference,' ongoing advice and technical support through the sub-national office in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

UN Women Mexico Country Office: responding to violence against women in politics and promoting inclusion for parity democracy

"The present evaluation provided important insights on national achievements and more broadly on UN Women's comparative advantage in political participation work. It was also an opportunity to draw on good practices from other regions and country contexts, as well as to understand the common opportunities and challenges in a cross-regional perspective. The recommendations helped us consolidate best practices in the country and underpin a strengthened focus on leaving no one behind in our strategy for parity democracy, with particular focus on indigenous women's rights," says Natalia Calero, Programme Management Specialist at UN Women Mexico.

The UN Women Mexico Office's work on women's political participation was innovative in its approach to addressing violence against women in politics and including indigenous women as part of its broader strategy on parity democracy. Improving women's political leadership in local government is a key priority in the country since women mayors represent only 14 per cent, while in national congress and the local congress average percentages of women are approaching parity (42 per cent).

With the objective to localize efforts on preventing violence against women in politics, the Mexico Country Office and the Federal Electoral Court developed a protocol to address gender-based political violence, starting with Oaxaca, a Mexican state with the one of the highest indigenous population. In the future, the office will continue its focus on generating knowledge and data on women's political participation and political violence against women as an input for more effective public policies. Currently, it is working on ensuring indigenous women's rights by conducting a study in municipalities (with and without indigenous populations) to identify the obstacles faced by women aspiring to be mayors throughout the political-electoral process.

NATALIA CALERO, PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST AND ANDREA CHÀZARO, PROGRAMME ASSISTANT, UN WOMEN MEXICO COUNTRY OFFICE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TEAM

UN WOMEN PAKISTAN COUNTRY OFFICE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TEAM

UN Women Egypt Country Office: improving rural and marginalized women's access to national identity cards

BLERTA ALIKO, REPRESENTATIVE, UN WOMEN EGYPT COUNTRY OFFICE

The UN Women Egypt Country Office has established strategic partnerships under the nationally owned Women's Citizenship Initiative, which aims at issuing national identification cards for rural and marginalized women. In Egypt, a national identification card means being registered and recognized as a citizen who can vote and have access to financial and non-financial services.

UN Women played a significant role in the provision of technical assistance, quality assurance and documentation of processes and success stories.

The programme is considered one of the most politically-recognized and nationally-owned development programmes in Egypt due to its key contributions to women's advancement on both the political and socio-economic levels. A total of 713,571 national identification cards were issued for rural and marginalized women across Egypt. This led to its inclusion as a pre-requisite for the empowerment of Egyptian women in the 'National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030', that was recently endorsed by the President of Egypt.

In addition to serving rural and marginalized women, the programme also has supported the ongoing learning process of issuing national identification cards with government and non-government partners. Although the programme has formally ended, the ongoing issuance of identification cards continues to be a government priority and receives funding from the national budget.

The programme has been a significant source of learning, offering a set of best practices and lessons for future programme design captured through evaluations at different stages, including this corporate evaluation. Two key lessons learned to ensure the success and sustainability of the programme are: (i) to work with a partner with the mandate and political leverage to push the initiative and (ii) to focus on quality, not quantity, to ensure proper processes and operations are in place for institutionalization and sustainability.

UN Women Moldova Country Office: increasing inclusive women's political empowerment at the local level and the connection to environmental sustainability

"The work on women's political empowerment in Moldova is an important pillar of our previous and new Strategic Note 2018-2022 for the country. We find the corporate evaluation insightful and important and will be using the findings as we shape our future interventions, in relation to the upcoming parliamentary and local elections," says Asya Varbanova, acting Head of Office at UN Women Moldova Country Office.

The UN Women Moldova Country Office has had a history of working to enhance women's voices and participation in political life and decision making in Moldova. In July 2014, UN Women launched the Women in Politics joint programme with UNDP, the East-European Foundation and the Centre Partnership for Development. Completed in 2017, the programme changed the lives of women by developing their capacities before, during and after elections. Out of 949 women trained before local elections in 2015, 98 were elected as mayors and local councilors. The programme engaged with marginalized women, especially from the Roma community and women with disabilities. It worked to identify their main issues in accessing the political arena and address them through capacity-building and awareness-raising campaigns to promote their leadership. As a result, for the first time seven Roma women were registered on electoral lists of political parties and as independent candidates in the local elections in 2015. Two were elected as local councillors, blazing trails and setting an example for other Roma women to follow. In addition, the office already has identified linkages between environmental policy and decision making, which the evaluation pointed out was of

UN WOMEN MOLDOVA COUNTRY OFFICE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TEAM

high interest to stakeholders. Out of 24 small community initiatives developed and implemented by local women councilors, nine are related to environmental issues. Thanks to a local councillor, mentored through the UN Women initiative, an illegal Taraclia landfill is gone, replaced by fresh air and a small forest of ash, locust and maple trees.

Learning from the evaluation: response from management

Yannick Glemarec

Deputy Executive Director, Policy and Programme Bureau

Women's political participation is both an enabler and indicator of gender equality and women's empowerment. That is why UN Women has made it a corporate priority since its founding.

I am pleased to see that the corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's political participation confirms the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of our work on this vital issue. The evaluation views UN Women as well-situated within – and the main UN actor and thought leader on – this critical area of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, it recognizes our clear corporate-wide vision on women's political participation and our strong partnerships that have enabled us to respond and adapt to political opportunities and challenges at the country level. The evaluation underscores that by grounding our work in normative frameworks and international commitments, UN Women is an impartial and credible actor that can effectively assist Member States in strengthening norms, policies and implementation to help women realize their political rights.

This evaluation, which covered the previous Strategic Plan 2011-2017 period, provides a timely opportunity to reflect on lessons learned as UN Women starts its Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Importantly, it will enable UN Women to address its conclusions and recommendations in the new generation of programming initiatives for women's political participation. We can now consider how to strategically leverage our good practices and explore how we might approach women's political participation more systematically and holistically. This includes, for example, finding innovative ways of delivering on our institutional commitment to support the needs of marginalized women through political participation programming.

As UN Women strives to enhance its structure, capacity and capability to impact the lives of women and girls who are left behind, we also take note of our own staffing capacity gaps cited in this evaluation and will seek to address them to ensure we are sufficiently capacitated to support the Sustainable Development Goals' implementation. The Strategic Output on Women's Political Empowerment and Leadership, for one, has prioritized and streamlined areas of programmatic intervention with the current Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. Having identified the priority areas in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, UN Women is investing in knowledge sharing and capacity strengthening of personnel to deliver results on women's political participation at the country level. Based on needs identified through an organizational staff mapping, these investments will include in-person training, peer-to-peer learning, thematic webinars, one-on-one guidance and development of additional tools. These efforts will be supported and sustained through the establishment of a global community of practice on women's political participation.

Progress in women's political participation will be a key driver for the Sustainable Development Goals. Although more women than ever before are leading and participating in political life, we are far-removed from the Beijing target of gender balance. Women in politics everywhere in the world are experiencing backlash to their participation in the form of gender-based violence. UN Women's support for women's political participation becomes more of a priority every day.

I am deeply grateful to the evaluation team and my colleagues who have throughout this evaluation process put the spotlight on the fundamental issue of women's political empowerment. The evaluation's invaluable recommendations and observations will inform our work and our continuing assessment of its impact on women's lives around the world.

Evaluation approach: incorporating systems thinking and intersectional analysis

Evaluation approach: incorporating systems thinking and intersectional analysis

The evaluation approach adopted for this evaluation is called *Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices (ISE4GEMs)*. It combines innovative systemic evaluation practice with intersectional analysis of the three cross-cutting dimensions relevant for the sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda. The approach further builds on existing human rights and gender-responsive evaluation approaches and is a response by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service to the shift in the development and evaluation community towards the use of systemic approaches.

The ISE4GEMs approach emphasized boundary analysis throughout the evaluation process and the identification and inclusion of marginalized voices (youth, rural women, indigenous groups, etc.) within the data collection and analysis where feasible and ethical. For this evaluation, the environment dimension was addressed in a formative manner to support learning and future considerations for programming.

To address thematic information needs, the evaluation sampled six cases that served as inputs to the report: the five sub-thematic areas of (i) constitutional and legal reform, including temporary special measures; (ii) inclusive electoral processes; (iii) parliamentary support; (iv) local government; and (v) violence against women in politics; and the cross-cutting area of (vi) leadership. The evaluation also sought to maximize the use of concurrent or recently completed evaluation processes by coordinating with decentralized evaluations taking place at the same time and sought to conduct site visits in countries that had not received a corporate evaluation mission to date.

EVALUATION EXPERT'S VIEW
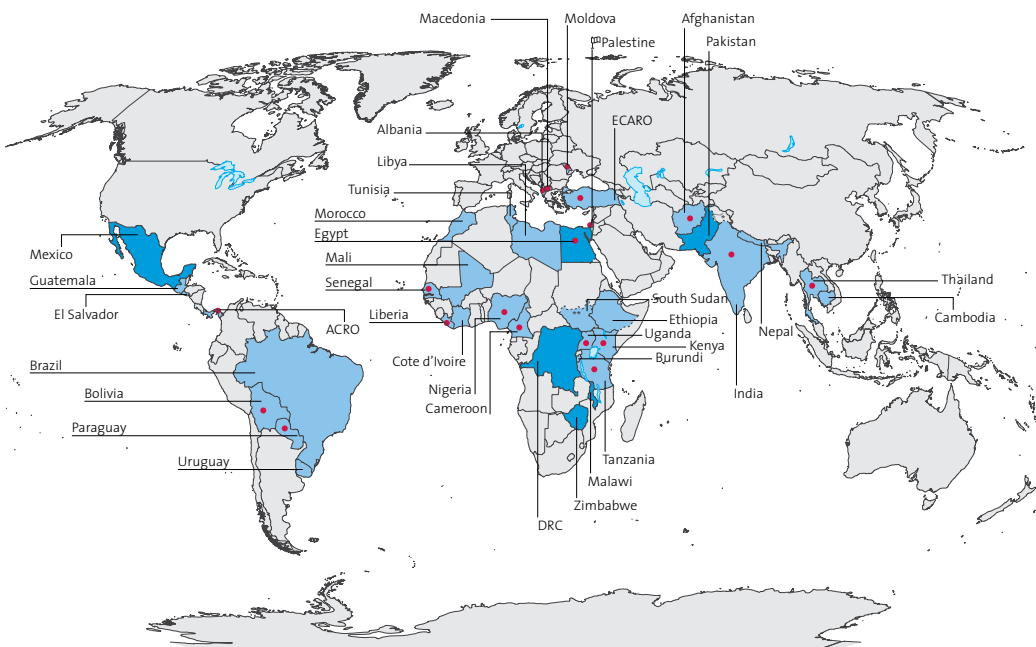
Beverly Parsons, Executive Director, InSites

"A system is an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something," Meadows, D. H. 2008. Thinking in Systems. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing. p. 11.

In a complex, connected and dynamic world, the Inclusive Systemic Evaluation approach used for this evaluation addresses the international community's call both to adopt a systemic lens recognizing complexity and uncertainty and attend to environmental sustainability.

The corporate evaluation of women's political participation addresses systems-thinking concepts, such as interconnections, complexities, dependencies, power distribution and multiple levels of systems. It attempts to identify how complex, living dynamic systems change and how such change is sustained. Although the most basic structures of complex living systems are networks (For more information, see: Fritjof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi, 2014. *The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision. University of Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.*), only recently have such structures been given significant attention in evaluations. With the massive worldwide interconnectivity through the internet and social media, the network as a fundamental organization structure needs much more attention. As such, this evaluation attempted to analyse synergies with other organizations. Expanding the use of systems evaluation approaches within the work of UN Women and the United Nations could support improving the way in which evaluation is conducted and bring forward new learning about inter-relationships and intersectionality of the work undertaken in complex contexts.

In my work, I have been arguing that environmental and social sustainability should be core values of evaluators – as Advisor for this evaluation, I am pleased to see that this corporate evaluation placed these values at the heart of its evaluation practice. Adopting an intersectional analysis of the three dimensions of gender, environment and marginalized voices provided an opportunity to learn about the potential for connection between women in leadership and the environment. It also brought forward voices from the margins that need to be heard.

Geographic distribution of the overall sample for the evaluation

Map labels: Macedonia, Moldova, Afghanistan, Palestine, Pakistan, Albania, ECARO, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Mali, Senegal, Thailand, Liberia, South Sudan, Cambodia, ACRO, Ethiopia, Uganda, Nepal, Mexico, Guatemala, Kenya, El Salvador, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, India, Brazil, Nigeria, Cameroon, Bolivia, Paraguay, Tanzania, Uruguay, Malawi, Zimbabwe, DRC

Legend:
- Constitutional and legal reform, including temporary special measures (TSM)
- Parliamentary support
- Inclusive electoral processes
- Local government
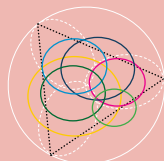- Violence against women in politics
- Leadership

■ **PORTFOLIO REVIEW: 43**

■ **FIELD VISITS: 6 (Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Mexico, Pakistan, Malawi, Zimbabwe)**

● **IN-DEPTH REVIEW CONDUCTED 24**

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for

Gender equality, **E**nvironments and **M**arginalized voices
(ISE4GEMs)

DATA COLLECTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

500+ documents

397 stakeholders consulted — UN, governments, CSOs, donors, others

6 cases:
- constitutional and legal reform, including temporary special measures (TSM)
- inclusive electoral processes
- parliamentary support
- violence against women in politics
- local government
- leadership

Portfolio analysis and sample:

43 countries in the broad sample

24 countries in the in-depth sample

6 in-country field visits
(Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Malawi, Mexico, Pakistan and Zimbabwe)

6 regions covered
Western and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, Americas and the Caribbean, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific , and Europe and Central Asia (remotely)

2 online surveys:
- • **246** internal respondents
- • **119** external respondents

Full report available at:
http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability/evaluation/corporate-evaluations

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ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SERVICE

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision making and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organizations mandate, including its normative, operational and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments and civil society organizations.

ABOUT UN WOMEN

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 implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

ACCOUNTABILITY
is
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GATE System:
The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use

An on-line based Public Information Management System, which facilitates
UN Women's effort to strategically plan and effectively use evaluations
for accountability, management for results, and knowledge management.

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UN WOMEN