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Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Summary

The present report provides a summary of the normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the Entity's contribution to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in intergovernmental processes. It also provides information on how the Entity has contributed to the implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission on the Status of Women.

* E/CN.6/2016/1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/289, provides an overview of the work carried out by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to implement its normative mandate in support of the development of a comprehensive set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

2. With the convergence of key intergovernmental processes in 2015 and the unique opportunities these presented to further strengthen and deepen the normative framework for gender equality and the empowerment of women, UN-Women significantly expanded its engagement with Member States and other stakeholders to integrate gender equality issues into normative outcomes (see [E/AC.51/2015/9](#)). It solidified strategic partnerships with stakeholders, provided substantive expertise and policy analysis, worked to strengthen the knowledge base on gender equality and the empowerment of women and integrated good practices and lessons learned from regional and national experiences into its normative support. Through its operational and programme work, UN-Women worked with Governments, including gender equality ministries and other relevant ministries, national parliaments and civil society, in the implementation of the global policy guidance at the national level. The Entity leveraged the United Nations system to mainstream gender equality perspectives into its areas of work and mobilized it for collaboration on key normative processes.

3. UN-Women was instrumental in placing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the centre of key intergovernmental outcomes, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (see General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex); the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (see General Assembly resolution 70/1); and the Paris Agreement, the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([FCCC/CP/2015/L.9](#), annex).

4. UN-Women continued to provide substantive support to the Commission on the Status of Women, where it led the 20-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the global, national and regional levels. It also supported the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in strengthening the attention placed on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in their outcomes.

II. Strengthening the normative work on gender equality

5. This section provides an overview of the normative progress made in gender equality and the support from UN-Women to strengthen gender equality norms and standards in the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

A. Commission on the Status of Women

6. UN-Women, as the substantive secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, continued to support all aspects of the work of the Commission in its role as the principal global policymaking body that sets global standards and formulates policies to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and women's rights worldwide.

7. At its fifty-ninth session, the Commission undertook a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action twenty years after its adoption and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The session was the culmination of a two-year process, during which UN-Women played a key role in supporting many Member States in the submission of a record 167 national reviews. The five regional commissions convened intergovernmental meetings, in collaboration with UN-Women, and their outcomes contributed regional priorities to the fifty-ninth session. On the basis of the national and regional reviews, UN-Women analysed progress, gaps, challenges and priorities for the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action in the post-2015 context that served as basis for discussion by the Commission (see [E/CN.6/2015/3](#)).

8. The fifty-ninth session served to rally political commitment and provided a strong impetus to the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action through dialogue and the sharing of experiences and lessons learned, including ministerial round tables and interactive panels. In the political declaration, adopted on the occasion on the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Commission welcomed the progress made, but also expressed concern about its slow and uneven nature and that no country had fully achieved gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

9. In the political declaration, Governments affirmed their strong commitment to the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Ministers and representatives of Governments pledged to take specific action in six areas: (a) strengthened implementation of laws, policies, strategies and programme activities; (b) strengthened and increased support for institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; (c) the transformation of discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes; (d) significantly increased investment to close resource gaps, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources; (e) strengthened accountability for the implementation of existing commitments; and (f) enhanced capacity-building, data collection, monitoring and evaluation and access to and use of information and communications technology (ICT).

10. Importantly, the political declaration emphasized that the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was essential for achieving the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and for addressing the critical remaining challenges through the post-2015 development agenda. To that end, Member States agreed to use the opportunities and processes in 2015 and beyond to accelerate and achieve the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action in order to achieve specific results in each five-year review cycle and to strive for the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment

of women by 2030. UN-Women and the rest of the United Nations system were tasked with continuing to support this effort.

11. The Commission enhanced its methods of work and, as a result, affirmed its contribution to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women (see Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/6). It included a ministerial segment in its annual sessions and significantly strengthened the consideration of the review theme, including through presentation by Member States of lessons learned from, challenges to and best practices in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from a previous session.

12. In conjunction with the twentieth anniversary of the Platform for Action and with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN-Women launched a global advocacy campaign entitled “Planet 50-50 by 2030: step it up for gender equality” to mobilize action both at the highest political levels and among the general public.

B. General Assembly

13. UN-Women supported the work of the General Assembly through research, policy analysis and recommendations in reports of the Secretary-General and by providing substantive and technical expertise to Member States. Those inputs enabled Member States to continue to take action on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at the global, regional and country levels.

14. UN-Women prepared three mandated reports of the Secretary-General for the Third Committee on the following topics: the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas ([A/70/204](#)), which emphasized the role of rural women as agents of change and their potential to make substantial contributions to local and national economies; violence against women migrant workers ([A/70/205](#)), which drew attention to the increasingly dangerous routes taken by migrant women and the resulting increase in their vulnerability to violence and exploitation; and measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly ([A/70/180](#)), which presented an analysis of the level of integration of gender perspectives at the intergovernmental level.

15. The Entity also prepared the report of the Secretary-General on women in development ([A/70/256](#)) for the Second Committee, in which he called for additional measures to remove barriers to women’s entry into the labour market, such as skills development, active labour market policies, adequate provision of social protection, guarantees regarding the rights of workers through collective bargaining and adherence to workplace norms and standards, and providing women access to productive assets.

16. UN-Women was invited by the Bureau of the Second Committee to organize a special event on the theme “Transforming economies, realizing rights: a policy agenda to achieve substantive equality for women and realize sustainable development”. The UN-Women flagship report entitled *Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016: Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights* served as the basis for the discussion. The event, in the form of a panel discussion chaired by the Chair of the Second Committee, included presentations by representatives of the United

Nations system and academia who identified social policies as important investments in human capabilities for economic development and who addressed the linkages between access to land and energy, food security and inequality and the need for investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women through the mobilization of national resources, official development assistance and other means. Among the key points to emerge from the ensuing discussion were that the full realization of women's human rights was a prerequisite for sustainable development; that national laws and regulations played a key role in safeguarding women's social and economic rights, in particular with regard to women's use and ownership of land and to inheritance; the importance of enabling economic environments for reducing inequality between men and women; and the need for policies to be supported by financial instruments, such as gender-responsive budgeting.

17. UN-Women further expanded its substantive support for Member States in order to strengthen gender equality perspectives in resolutions of the General Assembly. The Entity focused on resolutions in the Second and Third Committees that had little or no gender equality content in the past, on the basis of the analysis presented in the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly ([A/70/180](#)).

18. In tandem with the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, UN-Women organized a number of high-level events to demonstrate the linkages between the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and contributed to a number of side events convened by partners.

19. Specifically, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women convened a meeting of civil society thought leaders on 24 September 2015 to discuss priorities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030, in the context of the accelerated implementation of the Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Civil society leaders identified a number of areas requiring particular attention, including the removal of laws that discriminate against women and girls; changing social norms to make violence against women and girls unacceptable; the prioritization of sexual and reproductive rights; the improved collection of data disaggregated by sex; changing economic models to ensure decent work for women, including through the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work; and the need to mobilize adequate resources for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Civil society leaders voiced their concern about the shrinking democratic space for many civil society organizations around the world.

20. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director convened a business and philanthropy leaders forum on 26 September, co-hosted with the Alibaba Group and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The forum was aimed at mobilizing financial commitments from the private sector and philanthropic communities towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and resulted in

pledges and contributions to fund gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives.

21. The event entitled "Global leaders' meeting on gender equality and women's empowerment: a commitment to action", which was co-organized by UN-Women and China and held in New York on 27 September, was the culmination of an 18-month global campaign to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. In total, 140 countries participated in the event, including 64 heads of State and Government, 8 deputy heads of State and Government and leaders of 4 regional organizations, all of whom made commitments. Four civil society representatives, including the former Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women and a youth representative, called upon Governments to take action. A private sector representative and a philanthropist pledged their support for gender equality and empowerment of women.

22. The meeting represented a historic milestone, given that heads of State and Government had never gathered to make specific commitments to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment across the spectrum of the critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action. Leaders pledged to end all forms of violence against women, enhance the economic empowerment of women, increase leadership by women and their participation in decision-making at all levels, including in peace and security, improve the access to and completion of quality education by women and girls, integrate gender equality into planning and budgeting processes, address intersecting grounds of discrimination, expand support for women and girls in vulnerable situations and engage men and boys to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. UN-Women is reaching out to Governments and other stakeholders to implement commitments made at the meeting and continues to encourage States to make new and additional pledges.

C. Security Council

23. The Security Council convened a high-level review and open debate in October to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. The debate had the most speakers in the history of the Council, demonstrating the increasing attention being given to these issues by Member States.

24. UN-Women, as requested by the Secretary-General and in response to Security Council resolution 2122 (2013), served as secretariat for an independent global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), with Radhika Coomaraswamy, a former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as lead author. The key findings and recommendations of the study were captured in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security ([S/2015/716](#)), which, in turn, informed the high-level debate of the Council and its outcomes. The study was the result of extensive global consultations, a review of existing work and new research. Its key finding and message is that the evidence base on the positive impact of women's participation for sustainable peace is now unquestionable and that attention must shift to overcoming the obstacles to their full and meaningful inclusion.

25. Security Council resolution 2242 (2015) is the eighth resolution adopted on women, peace and security. In the resolution, the Council identified the need to address gaps in financing, political will and institutional and attitudinal obstacles in order to drive the agenda to its full implementation. The Council also called for the integration of gender considerations into strategic frameworks on humanitarian action and called upon Member States to consider the women, peace and security agenda in the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. The resolution has two key areas of substantive focus, namely, the more effective and consistent implementation by the Council of its own commitments with regard to women, peace and security and a recognition of the evolving peace and security context, including the impacts of climate change, the global nature of health pandemics, the increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, rising violent extremism and the need to integrate women, peace and security into the efforts of all relevant actors in preventing and countering these threats.

26. With regard to its own working methods and procedures, the Security Council, in its resolution 2242 (2015), expressed its intention to establish an informal expert group on women, peace and security to ensure that regular, timely and quality information on gender conflict analysis is provided to the Council on both thematic and country-specific situations. The Council also urged the United Nations to redouble efforts to integrate women's needs into its work and encouraged closer relationships within the United Nations among those responsible for implementing the women, peace and security agenda, including UN-Women. In addition, the Council recognized the role of civil society organizations and expressed its intention to invite such organizations to brief it more regularly, including on country-specific situations. Lastly, the Council recognized the differential impact of violent extremism on women and girls and called for the greater integration of counter-terrorism and women, peace and security frameworks, consultations with women and women's organizations and gender-sensitive research and data collection on the drivers of radicalization for women and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations. In this respect, the Council requested Member States and relevant bodies of the United Nations, such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, to work in coordination with UN-Women.

27. Alongside the preparations for the high-level review, UN-Women continued to provide substantive support to members of the Security Council upon request, held technical briefings on women, peace and security for new Council members, actively contributed to the informal expert group on the protection of civilians and supported the direct engagement of women representatives of civil society in the work of the Council.

D. Economic and Social Council

28. UN-Women prepared the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2015/58), with particular emphasis on progress in promoting system-wide accountability on gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global and country levels through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. UN-Women continues to lead and support the implementation of the Action Plan across the United Nations system,

including through technical advice and support and capacity-building, and reporting thereon.

29. In the report of the Secretary-General, it was found that, during its third year of implementation, the Action Plan continued to propel progress and yield improvements in the performance of the United Nations system on gender mainstreaming. The report evidenced progress in 14 of the 15 performance indicators, including notable advances in the areas of strategic planning, monitoring and reporting, capacity development, knowledge generation and communication and gender policies. Thirty-eight Action Plan reporting entities met or exceeded the requirements for the gender policy indicator in 2014, an increase from 29 and 22 entities in 2013 and 2012, respectively. An additional nine entities committed to completing such policies in 2015, which would be a significant achievement, given that these policies constitute a key driver of institutional change. Strong gender policies, which act as frameworks for an entity's corporate implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy, are essential for improving performance. Gender policies that have been developed following the adoption of the Action Plan have increased in content and scope to cover the six areas of the 2006 policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination: accountability; results-based management for gender equality; oversight through monitoring, evaluation and reporting; human and financial resources; capacity development; and coherence, coordination and knowledge and information management.

30. In the report, areas were found where further improvements were needed and where proven strategies for gender mainstreaming needed to be expanded, such as joint programming, robust and adequate investment in both targeted and mainstreamed programmes and accountability mechanisms to ensure that guidelines on gender equality were implemented.

31. UN-Women provided technical support to Member States during the negotiation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/12 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. The Council welcomed the continued work of UN-Women to enhance coherence across the United Nations system on gender mainstreaming and recognized the importance of strengthening UN-Women to carry out its mandates. In its resolution, the Council called upon the United Nations system to fully implement the Action Plan and to mainstream a gender perspective, including increasing resource allocations commensurate with gender equality goals, into all policies and programmes, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions.

32. At the 2015 Youth Forum of the Economic and Social Council, UN-Women made substantive contributions on youth engagement in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. UN-Women organized a panel discussion entitled "Gender equality and youth: 20 years since the Beijing Platform for Action and onwards to a post-2015 development framework", with the participation of four grass-roots youth activists who provided specific recommendations from a youth development lens. In cooperation with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, UN-Women created the first-ever working group on youth and gender equality, with the objective of strengthening linkages between the Beijing Platform for Action and the World Programme for Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

33. As the Co-Chair of the Inter-agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, UN-Women organized a side event in the context of the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva. Speakers focused on the role of crisis-affected women and girls in shaping effective, inclusive and coordinated humanitarian responses.

34. During the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, UN-Women participated as a lead discussant in a panel discussion on the future of the Forum. UN-Women argued that gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their human rights were essential for the achievement of sustainable development and for building peaceful, just and equal societies. To that end, global, regional and national levels of follow-up and review, as well as thematic reviews, had to systematically align gender equality commitments with the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

II. Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women through thematic international and other normative processes

35. UN-Women further expanded its engagement with and advocacy in a range of intergovernmental processes. The Entity provided evidence, good practice examples and strategies for reflection of gender perspectives in discussions and outcomes, and served as convener for stakeholders to facilitate exchanges of views. Those efforts resulted in significant gains for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights in the normative framework and strengthened the basis for implementation at the country level.

A. Financing for development

36. UN-Women prioritized its engagement with the preparatory process for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. That effort built on the long-standing commitment of the Entity to provide evidence of the key role of financing for gender equality, which had been confirmed by the Commission on the Status of Women in 2008. At the global level, UN-Women provided technical advice to Member States, upon request, and prepared policy messages for addressing gender equality and women's empowerment under each action area of the outcome document.

37. UN-Women participated in regional consultations organized by the regional commissions of the United Nations. Drawing on evidence and data from regional experiences on gaps in financing gender equality and women's empowerment, UN-Women shared policy recommendations with Member States and other actors for their consideration. Its country offices reached out to national partners and sought the support of ministries of finance and foreign affairs for prioritizing financing for gender equality and women's empowerment.

38. Throughout the process, UN-Women advocated for transformative financing for gender equality and women's empowerment, given that progress in achieving gender equality has been held back by chronic and significant underinvestment. Transformative financing calls for significantly increased, prioritized and sustained

investments in terms of scale, scope and quality, from all sources at all levels, for gender mainstreaming and for targeted interventions in key sectors. The advocacy by UN-Women for transformative financing was built on the pledge by Member States in the political declaration of the Commission on the Status of Women for significantly increased investment to close resource gaps and was echoed and further reinforced in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

39. Among the many efforts undertaken by UN-Women during the preparatory process, the Entity organized side events to raise awareness and provide evidence and case studies, which resulted in cross-regional statements by Member States in support of gender equality and women's empowerment.

40. At the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, UN-Women organized three side events. Together with the World Bank Group, UN-Women hosted a high-level event on good practices in financing for gender equality, with the participation of the Secretary-General, the President of the World Bank Group, the Prime Minister of Sweden, the Minister of State for Finance of India and representatives of civil society and the private sector. A second side event provided an opportunity for Member States and partners to share examples of implementing gender equality interventions, ranging from laws, policies and programmes to the allocation and tracking of resources. Participants called for intensified efforts on gender-responsive budgeting and endorsed an action plan for transformative financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, which called upon all actors to implement transformative policy and financing actions to accelerate the implementation of commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action, and to meet new commitments in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The third side event brought together stakeholders from Governments, the United Nations system and civil society organizations to discuss innovative ways to finance gender equality in Africa.

41. UN-Women also supported the organization of a women's forum and the civil society organizations forum, which were part of the Conference. Through those forums, gender equality perspectives informed policy discussions and the advocacy work of civil society organizations. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director spoke at the international business forum, bringing attention to the gender equality perspectives of sustainable business practices.

42. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted at the Conference, includes a clear reaffirmation of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their human rights as essential to sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development. Member States recommitted themselves to adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation and transformative actions for the promotion of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment at all levels. The Action Agenda also includes actions to enable the full and equal participation of women in the economy, support their full and productive employment and decent work, facilitate financial inclusion for women, increase investment in the use of high-quality data disaggregated by sex and promote gender-responsive budgeting.

43. UN-Women will continue to support Member States on gender-responsive planning and budgeting and the implementation of national action plans that prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity will continue to advocate for increased and prioritized official development assistance allocations,

innovative financing initiatives and specific innovative financing vehicles for gender equality programmes. The Entity will also continue to support the mainstreaming of transformative financing into the broader work of the United Nations system through, among others, the United Nations Development Group and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the gender marker initiative, including in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the United Nations country teams.

B. Sustainable development

44. On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The result of a process spanning almost three years, the 2030 Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets. It builds on the Millennium Development Goals and seeks to realize human rights and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Goals are aimed at integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. Goal 5 is dedicated to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and gender-sensitive targets are also included in 11 other goals. Follow-up processes at all levels will be guided by a set of principles, be gender-sensitive and be based on high-quality data disaggregated by income, sex, age and other characteristics. At the global level, a high-level political forum will be responsible for reviews, supported by, among others, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

45. The targets under Goal 5 capture key structural constraints to gender equality and women’s empowerment such as discrimination, violence against women and girls, harmful practices and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. Participation in decision-making and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are also addressed. Action in pursuit of these targets, as well as the implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda have the potential to transform gender relations and the lives of women and girls in all countries. The 2030 Agenda builds on existing international commitments, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It envisions a world in which every woman and girl can enjoy full gender equality and where all legal, social and economic barriers to the empowerment of women and girls have been removed, and where all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls must be eliminated, including through the engagement of men and boys. It calls for increased investments, strengthened support for gender equality institutions and for systematic gender mainstreaming.

46. As UN-Women previously reported to the Commission ([E/CN.6/2013/2](#), [E/CN.6/2014/2](#) and [E/CN.6/2015/2](#)), the Entity actively engaged in the preparations for the post-2015 development agenda throughout its various phases. UN-Women provided comprehensive substantive contributions and technical assistance to Member States, organized side events and briefings and worked closely with the United Nations system through inter-agency processes, such as the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda and the technical support team, as well as with civil society organizations, to make gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls a central element of the 2030 Agenda. Many of these events not only made the case for gender equality and the

empowerment of women and girls but they also served to forge partnerships, helped to build coalitions of supporters and champions and provided the evidence that enabled Member States to achieve this strong result.

47. As an observer to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, UN-Women contributed to the development of global indicators for the 2030 Agenda. The Entity issued a report entitled “Monitoring gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: opportunities and challenges”. The result of a wide-ranging consultation process with Member States, civil society and international organizations, the report takes as its starting point the minimum set of gender indicators, as endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission. In its report, UN-Women suggested new and/or improved indicators to help to monitor the gender equality dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Entity also argued for a systematic disaggregation by sex of all relevant indicators across all Goals and targets, as well as by age where relevant, given that gender inequality is experienced differently by women and girls across the life cycle. Indicators should also be disaggregated by other salient socioeconomic characteristics, including income/wealth, location, class, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics so as to better capture intersectional inequalities throughout the framework.

C. Climate change

48. Over the past year, UN-Women intensified its engagement with the processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In particular, it closely monitored the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, undertook sustained outreach to the Parties to the Convention and provided technical inputs to support the reflection of a gender perspective in the agreement to emerge from the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Paris from 30 November to 12 December 2015, including the recognition of the active participation of women in all aspects of climate-related actions, and for climate policies and programmes to be gender-responsive.

49. UN-Women provided substantive contributions to the linkages between gender equality and women’s agency and climate action to support the implementation of the Lima work programme on gender (FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.3, decision 18/CP.20). This included the inputs of the Entity to a mandated workshop on gender-responsive climate policy, with a focus on mitigation action and technology development and transfer, held in June 2015.

50. Building on this work and the outcome of the mandated workshop, in October 2015 UN-Women, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Convention secretariat organized an expert group meeting on implementing gender-responsive climate policy and actions in the context of sustainable development. The meeting prepared recommendations to assist parties to the Convention, policymakers and practitioners to formulate and implement gender-responsive climate policy and actions in the context of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties and in the broader 2030 Agenda. Specifically, the recommendations are aimed at supporting the integration of gender perspectives in Convention mechanisms and processes, including into the development of

technology needs assessments, as well as the operationalization of gender-specific mandates of the Green Climate Fund.¹

51. UN-Women continued to offer capacity-building support to facilitate the participation and engagement of gender equality advocates and climate experts from Government and civil society in Convention-related meetings and processes. The Entity worked strategically with key advocates, such as the Women and Gender Constituency and the Mary Robinson Foundation — Climate Justice, to ensure that gender-specific references were incorporated throughout the draft agreement considered by the parties. Those efforts contributed to the inclusion of gender-specific references in the preamble and purpose, and in the sections on adaptation, finance and capacity-building of the draft agreement that formed the basis for negotiations at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties .

52. At the twenty-first session, UN-Women undertook intensive outreach to key delegations at the highest levels. Despite this outreach by UN-Women and other gender equality advocates, the final Paris Agreement did not retain gender-specific references in the purpose section of the text and in thematic sections, such as finance and technology development and transfer. In the preamble, the parties acknowledged the importance of the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women for parties when taking action to address climate change. In the Agreement, the parties also mandated that adaptation actions and capacity-building activities be gender-responsive.

53. In the Paris Agreement, the parties acknowledged that existing decisions adopted by the parties to the Convention remained valid and would guide the implementation of climate action. Those include Conference decision 23/CP.18 on improving women's participation in Convention bodies and in delegations, and the Lima work programme on gender. UN-Women will work with partners to continue to build on the normative gains made on gender-responsive climate policy and action across all thematic areas considered within the context of the Convention.

54. Recognizing the need for actions on the ground to help to implement these normative gains for the specific benefit of women and girls, UN-Women launched two global programmes during the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties, namely, on women's sustainable energy entrepreneurship and access and women's empowerment through climate-resilient agriculture. These programmes are comprehensive climate responses that will contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals on poverty eradication, health, gender equality, energy, economic growth and sustainable consumption and production.

D. Information and technology

55. UN-Women provided substantive inputs to Member States during the 10-year review of the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, which culminated in a high-level meeting of the General Assembly on 15 and 16 December 2015. Technical inputs, which were reflected in the outcome, focused on the improved implementation and monitoring of gender

¹ See the report of the expert group meeting. Available at www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/how%20we%20work/intergovsupport/egmreport_bonn_final_25-november-2015.pdf?v=1&d=20151125T232255.

equality commitments, actions against cyber-related violence against women, strengthening the quality of women's engagement in the information society, including their full participation in decision-making processes related to ICT, and increased access to the development and use of technologies. UN-Women co-organized side events at the annual forum of the World Summit in Geneva and the high-level meeting, linking the World Summit to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Platform for Action.

56. UN-Women co-chairs, with the United Nations Development Programme, the Working Group on Broadband and Gender of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development, which produced a discussion paper entitled "Cyber violence against women and girls: a worldwide wake-up call". The Gender Equality Mainstreaming-Technology Awards, which are co-sponsored by UN-Women and the International Telecommunications Union, are a platform for advancing women's meaningful engagement with ICT and their role as decision-makers and producers within ICT sectors.

E. Human rights

57. In coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN-Women continued to support the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in all regions, including support for capacity-building and training on the Convention and women's human rights for Government officials, gender equality advocates and other stakeholders. Support was provided to States parties for reporting under the Convention, preparing for the constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and in connection with the preparation of shadow reports by civil society organizations and reports by United Nations country teams submitted to the Committee. Through its programme work, UN-Women further expanded its support for follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations, including reflection of Committee recommendations in national laws, policies and programmes and measures to ensure legal and policy reforms.

58. UN-Women continued to provide support to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in the development of general recommendations, including ongoing work on access to justice and on rural women. UN-Women issued a guidebook on the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations ([CEDAW/C/GC/30](#)) and Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. The guidebook provides practical guidance on how these frameworks can be used to strengthen and reinforce each other in their implementation at the national level.

59. The Entity contributed to the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, including by supporting the preparation of Member State reports, contributing to United Nations country team reports and supporting the implementation of recommendations. UN-Women continued its collaboration with other mechanisms of the Council, including the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, the Special Rapporteur on indigenous issues, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities.

UN-Women continued to ensure that all Council-mandated commissions of inquiry and, increasingly, all Council fact-finding missions had the required gender expertise to fulfil their mandates. In 2015, this included providing sexual and gender-based crime investigators for the commissions of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea, the 2014 Gaza conflict and the Syrian Arab Republic and fact-finding missions to Iraq, Libya and South Sudan, as well as on abuses and violations committed by Boko Haram.

60. Recognizing that women and girls with disabilities are often subject to multiple forms of discrimination, UN-Women supported initiatives to increase attention given to the situation of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UN-Women addressed the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and contributed to its discussion of a general comment on article 6 of the Convention on women with disabilities. This support for normative work also expanded the Entity's operational activities. For example, in June 2015, the UN-Women country office in Georgia supported training on gender aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and their application. In addition, the Entity joined the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities fund.

F. Urban agenda

61. In preparation for the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be held in Quito in October 2016, UN-Women continued its work to ensure that the Conference outcome would strategically support the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development using human settlements and urbanization as a vehicle for change. To that end, UN-Women contributed to the second session of the Preparatory Committee. It also participated in the inter-agency task force and the preparation of issue papers in an effort to ensure that gender analysis informed the specific issues relevant to the Conference.

62. Given the important role that the local level will have in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, UN-Women is advocating for adequate legal frameworks, institutional and financial capacity of local governments and local leadership and ownership, as well as the active engagement and involvement of local and grass-roots civil society organizations, in these processes. The Entity is working to ensure that Habitat III sets a new standard for the elimination of the persistent inequalities and discrimination against women and girls that prevail in many cities across all regions.

G. Disaster risk reduction

63. UN-Women engaged closely with the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. The Entity took the lead in developing the United Nations common position on the integration of a gender perspective into the outcome document of the Conference and provided technical expertise to Member States. During the Conference, UN-Women provided

substantive contributions, including through the multi-stakeholder dialogue on women's leadership, and provided technical inputs to the negotiation process.

64. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (General Assembly resolution 69/283) makes specific provisions for the integration of gender equality, calling for all related policy and practices on disaster risk reduction to reflect gender provisions. The Framework includes calls for the promotion of women's leadership and the use of sex and age disaggregated data for risk-planning and decision-making. The United Nations was called upon to revise its Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience and to provide technical guidance on the implementation of the Framework. On the basis of these mandates, UN-Women will further integrate gender equality perspectives into the work of the United Nations system in the areas of disaster risk reduction and resilience.

H. Humanitarian affairs

65. In preparation for the first World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2016, UN-Women supported Member States and other stakeholders in mapping a humanitarian agenda that would fully integrate a gender perspective and the needs and rights of women and girls. To promote stronger linkages between gender equality and the empowerment of women and humanitarian action, UN-Women seconded a gender and humanitarian specialist to the secretariat of the Summit.

66. The contribution of UN-Women to the process included a workshop, in collaboration with CARE International, on the margins of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Particular emphasis was placed on ways to advance the implementation of existing commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women and the human rights of women in humanitarian action. The Entity provided substantive and financial contributions to a number of national and regional consultations, including in Chile and Guatemala, and in Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa and South and Central Asia. In collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Population Fund, UN-Women organized working group sessions with civil society and gender equality experts to formulate advocacy messages reflecting the views and experience of women and girls in location-specific humanitarian contexts. UN-Women also contributed to the Summit's thematic consultations, at which thematic position papers were drafted. As a member of the gender thematic group, which is a multi-stakeholder collection of gender experts, UN-Women worked to ensure that the preparations for the Summit reflected the needs and rights of crisis-affected populations. Through these thematic consultations, UN-Women was able to mobilize significant support for the participation and leadership of women.

67. The global consultation for the Summit, held in Geneva in October 2015, consolidated the regional and thematic consultations. The synthesis report² includes a section on making humanitarian action work for women and girls and a call upon actors to use a rights-based approach to address the specific needs of women and girls of all ages, through strengthening compliance with gender equality policies,

² Available at www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_global/synthesisreport.

funding programmes that demonstrate a strong commitment to women and girls, enhancing accountability measures and ensuring the safety of women and girls.

68. At a time when the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has reached unprecedented levels, UN-Women will be championing gender issues, given that the Entity is assuming the Chair of the Global Migration Group in 2016.

IV. UN-Women support for the implementation of policy guidance

69. UN-Women has further strengthened the existing linkages between its headquarters and field offices in supporting the implementation of the global framework on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. One example of this effort is support for the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

70. The agreed conclusions on the challenges to and achievements of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls remains the only intergovernmental outcome that assesses the situation of women and girls with regard to each of those Goals. The conclusions provided an intergovernmental mandate and an important tool for the advocacy by UN-Women for a stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective across all other goals in the post-2015 development agenda.

71. The agreed conclusions called for action in five areas: (a) realizing the full enjoyment by women and girls of all human rights; (b) strengthening the enabling environment for gender equality and the empowerment of women; (c) maximizing investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women; (d) strengthening the evidence base for gender equality and the empowerment of women; and (e) ensuring the participation and leadership of women at all levels and strengthening accountability. At the regional and country levels, UN-Women assisted Governments in the implementation of the conclusions across the five action areas.

72. UN-Women provided technical assistance to the presidential commission on human rights in Guatemala in support of its monitoring role and in the preparation of reports on women's rights through specialized training sessions of Government officials to promote compliance with international commitments and to advance the human rights of women. In partnership with OHCHR, UN-Women supported the Government of Guatemala in the initial preparation of its eighth and ninth periodic reports under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

73. In an effort to strengthen enabling environments, UN-Women supported several Governments in the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into national development policies and programmes. While Bangladesh was beginning to prepare its seventh five-year development plan, UN-Women contributed a technical background paper on gender equality and provided inputs to gender equality sections of 13 other technical background papers.

74. UN-Women used the agreed conclusions as an advocacy tool to promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into national policies and programmes. In

Uzbekistan, UN-Women and the national women's committee organized consultations with Government representatives and other stakeholders during the preparation of the second national report on the Millennium Development Goals. The consultations were used to strengthen the understanding of ministries and other stakeholders on current intergovernmental agreements in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women and the linkages between those agreements and the Goals.

75. In Jordan, UN-Women established a partnership framework with the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Labour to review the policy environment for the economic empowerment of women. This partnership framework was complemented by strengthening the institutional capacities of local civil society organizations to provide skills training, mentoring and monitoring of revolving microcredit lending portfolios in poor areas.

76. In an effort to maximize investments in gender equality and the empowerment of women, UN-Women supported the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania in the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting in Government programming and operations. UN-Women supported the creation of a country gender profile that provides the evidence base for key actionable recommendations for planning and budgeting.

77. In an effort to strengthen the evidence base for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the UN-Women regional office for Asia and the Pacific briefed the Regional Coordination Mechanism's thematic working group on gender statistics about the agreed conclusions, which then served as the basis for the adoption of a regional core set of gender indicators at the meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's Committee on Statistics in March 2015. These indicators now provide a normative foundation for the collection of gender statistics by national statistics offices in the Asia-Pacific region.

78. In an effort to ensure women's participation and leadership at all levels and to strengthen accountability, the UN-Women country office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo established a working group with gender equality advocates. The working group enabled stakeholders to strategize on ways to increase women's leadership in decision-making positions in the Government and resulted in a gender strategy for the independent national electoral commission and a national action plan for women's political participation.

79. In Burundi, UN-Women supported a project to increase the participation and leadership of women of the Batwas indigenous group and organized training sessions with representatives of 25 political parties who committed themselves to encouraging Batwas women to compete during upcoming elections. The efforts of UN-Women were particularly timely in the light of the amended electoral code, which mandates the representation of Batwas women in local-level decision-making bodies.

V. Conclusions

80. Significant normative advances on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights were made in 2015 through high-level events and in the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Commission on

the Status of Women. UN-Women supported Member States in ensuring the centrality of gender equality in the global normative framework and in deepening and expanding this framework through strengthening the evidence and knowledge base, advocacy and outreach, awareness-raising, partnership-building, coalition-building and by serving as convener for stakeholders to advance normative frameworks. The Entity's regional and country presences have more effectively supported the national implementation of commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

81. As 2015 marked a watershed year, UN-Women placed significant effort into supporting the normative work of Member States in the context of the review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and intergovernmental processes on women, peace and security, disaster risk reduction, financing for development, sustainable development and climate change. The Entity reached new heights in mobilizing commitments to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030 at the highest political levels.

82. In 2016, UN-Women will continue to support Member States, given that the global indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the follow-up and review mechanisms will be decided in the context of the Statistical Commission and the High-level Political Forum. It will support work pertaining to the World Humanitarian Summit and Habitat III, and will continue its engagement with follow-up processes to the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the mid-term review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020. A strong focus will continue to be placed on all climate-related processes, including through engagement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and, in particular, follow-up to the Paris Agreement.
