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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review theme: women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development

Review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a review and assessment of the extent to which Member States have implemented the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development. The present review is being conducted in rapidly changing global and national contexts for gender equality and women’s empowerment across sectors and areas of work and some three years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the implementation of which has gained significant momentum and traction.

* E/CN.6/2019/1.



I. Introduction

1. At the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Member States agreed on new working methods for the Commission (see Economic and Social Council resolution [2015/6](#)), which included a more rigorous review of the agreed conclusions relating to a priority theme from a previous session in order to encourage the implementation of its outcomes. As part of the review process, the Commission will consider a report on progress made on the theme at the national level.
2. The review theme of the Commission at its sixty-third session is “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development”, in accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2017–2019 (see Economic and Social Council resolution [2016/3](#)). The Commission had adopted agreed conclusions on that theme at its sixtieth session, in 2016 (see [E/2016/27-E/CN.6/2016/22](#), chap. I, sect. A).
3. The present report provides an assessment of the extent to which Member States have implemented the agreed conclusions in the following areas: strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks; fostering enabling environments for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; strengthening women’s leadership and women’s full and equal participation in decision-making; strengthening gender-responsive data collection, follow-up and review processes; and enhancing national institutional arrangements.
4. The present report will be accompanied by presentations by Member States, on a voluntary basis, of lessons learned, challenges and best practices, at the sixty-third session of the Commission.
5. The review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions is being held at a time when the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is well under way globally. The report draws on information received from Member States¹ and other sources, including the reports of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/2016/75](#), [E/2017/66](#) and [E/2018/64](#)) and voluntary national reviews submitted as part of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 2016 to 2018.

II. Importance of the agreed conclusions

6. The sixtieth session of the Commission produced agreed conclusions that have had an unprecedented influence and impact on the global normative framework, coming as they did on the heels of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The agreed conclusions reinforce the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and constitute a detailed road map for the gender-responsive implementation of the Goals that leaves no one, above all no women and girls, behind.²

¹ Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Honduras, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Netherlands, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. See www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw63-2019 for the submissions.

² UN-Women, *Driving the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (New York, 2016).

7. It is recognized in the agreed conclusions that the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires accelerated action on previous commitments, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and that the achievement of sustainable development is predicated on the full realization of the human rights of all women and girls.

8. That no country has fully achieved gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls undergirds the agreed conclusions. While progress has been made in closing gender gaps, significant inequalities between women and men and girls and boys persist globally, and women and girls continue to be marginalized because of the structural barriers and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that they face throughout their life cycle. The gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda therefore needs to be carried out in a comprehensive manner that reflects its universal, integrated and indivisible character, which applies to developing and developed countries alike.

9. It is reaffirmed in the agreed conclusions that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial to making progress towards all the Goals and targets. As such, elaborated therein are actions relating to gender equality and empowering all women and girls, as targeted in Goal 5 specifically and integrated across the Goals.

10. In particular, underscored in the agreed conclusions are the mutually reinforcing links between the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the eradication of poverty, ensuring an adequate standard of living, access to land and resources, and social protection for all women and girls (Goal 1); achievement of food security and nutrition (Goal 2); universal, accessible and high-quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health-care services (Goal 3); equal access to high-quality education at all levels, including early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education, technical and vocational training and lifelong learning (Goal 4); equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (Goal 6); access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services (Goal 7); full and productive employment, decent work and equal pay for work of equal value (Goal 8); safe spaces and safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport (Goal 11); effective responses to climate change (Goal 13); and effective institutions and inclusive and participatory decision-making at all levels (Goal 16).

11. Recognized in the agreed conclusions are the major contributions made by civil society, including women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders and girls' and youth-led organizations, in placing the interests, priorities and aspirations of women and girls at the forefront of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The call in the agreed conclusions for participatory and inclusive engagement, increased resources and support and safe and enabling environments for women's and civil society organizations has become increasingly significant in enabling their contributions to the gender-responsive implementation, follow-up and review of the Goals.

12. The emphasis on a gender-responsive approach to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda in the agreed conclusions reinforces the global attention to the agreed global indicator framework for the Goals, international and national standards and methodologies and national statistical capacities. These are needed to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality, reliable and timely data disaggregated by sex, age and income and other characteristics and to produce gender statistics in the areas highlighted in the agreed conclusions – poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work, women's access to and control and ownership of assets and productive resources, participation at all levels of decision-making and violence against women – that are important for measuring progress on

the Goals for women and girls. These areas were taken up by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in preparing the global indicator framework that was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution [71/313](#).

III. Context for the implementation of the agreed conclusions

13. The agreed conclusions were adopted shortly after the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (see [E/CN.6/2015/3](#)), which revealed deeply entrenched gender inequalities across all countries and found that overall progress towards gender equality had been unacceptably slow, with stagnation and even regression in some areas. Providing assessments based on available evidence and data, the global monitoring report on the Goals for 2018 prepared by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) demonstrates that gender inequalities are manifest in every dimension of sustainable development.³

14. The implementation of the agreed conclusions proceeded in a complex economic, political and environmental context. The global economy remains volatile after nearly a decade of crisis, recession and subsequent austerity measures. Prevailing economic policies continue to deepen inequality and push people further behind. Some 125 countries were expected to be affected by fiscal consolidation in 2018, jeopardizing social protection and essential services for all, but women and girls are often the first and most affected. In some contexts, exclusionary and fear-based politics are gaining ground, breeding conflict and instability.³

15. Income inequality within countries is higher today than it was 25 years ago. This needs to be significantly reduced if the world is to put an end to extreme poverty by 2030. Although until recently no reliable sex-disaggregated estimates of people living in extreme poverty worldwide were available, new analysis indicates that 122 women for every 100 men between 25 and 34 years of age live in extreme poverty globally. This age span coincides with the period of childbearing and child-rearing, when families face increased expenses and women have less time to devote to paid work while caring for children.³

16. The greater participation of women in education and in the labour market in most regions notwithstanding, significant gender gaps remain in working conditions, wages, job quality and the sharing of household responsibilities. Women's global labour force participation rate in 2018 was 48.5 per cent, 26.5 percentage points below that of men.⁴ Deeply rooted gender roles and labour market discrimination inhibit women's access to decent jobs, and women are more likely than men to be unemployed or in vulnerable, informal employment with little or no social protection. Globally, women are paid on average 22 per cent less than men, and women do three times more unpaid care and domestic work than men and more if they have children.⁵

17. Women's political participation and decision-making in different realms are key to their empowerment, but progress is slow. The percentage of women in single or lower houses of national parliaments increased from 19 per cent in 2010 to around 23 per cent in 2018, with the highest rate – 30 per cent – in Latin America and the

³ UN-Women, *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (New York, 2018).

⁴ International Labour Organization (ILO), *Global Wage Report 2018/19: What Lies behind Gender Pay Gaps* (Geneva, 2018).

⁵ ILO, *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work* (Geneva, 2018); ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women 2018 – Global Snapshot* (Geneva, 2018).

Caribbean (see [E/2018/64](#), para. 55). According to data available around 2016, less than 38 per cent of senior and middle management positions are occupied by women, with the lowest rates in Northern Africa and Western Asia and in Central and Southern Asia.

18. A little over half of women aged from 15 to 49 years who are married or in a union make their own informed decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and access to sexual and reproductive health services (*ibid.*, para. 57). Among the same group of women, the demand for family planning satisfied by using modern contraceptive methods increased from 74.9 per cent in 2000 to 77.4 per cent in 2018, and from 39.4 per cent in 2000 to 58.5 per cent in 2018 for those in least developed countries. The prevalence of violence against women and girls across countries remains alarming. For example, 1 in 5 women and girls aged between 15 and 49 years reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months.³

19. This context points to the much-needed relevance of the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission and their recommended actions for the continued gender-responsive implementation of the Goals.

IV. National implementation efforts

20. Since the adoption of the agreed conclusions in 2016, Member States have proceeded in various ways and at different paces with their implementation. They have provided examples of good practices to realize gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and full enjoyment of human rights in the context of sustainable development in terms of normative, legal and policy frameworks; financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; women's leadership and equal participation in decision-making, including resources and support for women's and civil society organizations; gender-responsive data collection, follow-up and review processes for the 2030 Agenda; and national institutional arrangements, in particular national gender equality mechanisms.

A. Strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks

21. The agreed conclusions contain a range of actions needed to strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks in critical areas for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. A call is made for the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and all Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda in a manner that reflects its universal, integrated and indivisible nature. Actions identify the particular situations of different groups of women and the roles of diverse stakeholders and specify the importance of realizing the human rights of all women and girls.

22. Member States have taken steps to further integrate gender equality into national laws and policies in line with commitments made in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Albania, Argentina, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Italy, Jamaica, Myanmar, Romania, Saudi Arabia) and the Beijing Platform for Action (Ecuador, Myanmar, Switzerland). For example, Ecuador is adjusting its national curriculum to include gender equality as a cross-cutting theme, in line with the recommendation in the Beijing Platform for Action that a gender-sensitive educational system be created. In Myanmar, a national strategic plan for the advancement of women, covering the period 2013–2022, is

based on the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and on the Convention and has been accompanied by training that addresses gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and gender concepts in the context of the Convention. In 2016, the Central African Republic enacted a law on gender parity in public and private sector employment, both informal and formal, and decision-making bodies, in compliance with the Convention. Albania took steps to harmonize its law of 2017 on domestic violence with the Convention and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

23. Member States have reported that they are adjusting their national legal and policy frameworks for the gender-responsive implementation of the Goals (Australia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Finland, Honduras, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Myanmar, Panama, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Zimbabwe), although insufficient evidence exists to indicate whether this has become a generalized practice globally.

24. For example, Colombia, in its strategy for the implementation of the Goals, approved in March 2018, outlines the challenges and priorities in achieving gender equality and women's equal rights and autonomy by eradicating gender inequalities. The strategy includes a road map for the implementation and monitoring of the targets and indicators under Goal 5. In Costa Rica, its national policy for effective equality between women and men, covering the period 2018–2030, responds to international commitments on human and women's rights, highlighting the overarching objective of leaving no one behind. Liechtenstein adopted a national implementation strategy for the Goals in 2018 that mainstreams them into the policymaking process. Based on a gap analysis, Goal 5 is one of eight Goals with the highest priority for implementation.

25. Other countries have simultaneously incorporated the Goals into national-level actions and international development cooperation strategies. For example, Italy is implementing its national sustainable development strategy, covering the period 2017–2030, which is aimed at integrating the Goals into economic, social and environmental planning with impacts on national and international cooperation policies and actions. Slovenia is supporting the roll-out of the 2030 Agenda through its international development cooperation with an emphasis on gender equality and equal opportunities. Spain has an approved plan of action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda that will lead to the adoption of a national sustainable development strategy for the period 2020–2030 and is also implementing a master plan, covering the period 2018–2021, for development cooperation, according priority to the achievement of the Goals and using Goal 5 as the benchmark for gender equality and women's empowerment in its efforts.

26. Legal and constitutional frameworks that promote gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination have been priorities for some Member States (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Italy, Liechtenstein, Netherlands, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Togo, Ukraine). For example, a proposed constitutional reform in Chile would establish the duty of the State to promote and guarantee full equality of rights, duties and dignity between men and women and to prevent any form of violence, abuse or arbitrary discrimination against women. It is specified in the Constitution of the Dominican Republic that there is to be equality before the law without any discrimination on the grounds of gender, colour, age, disability, nationality, family links, language, religion, political opinion or philosophy or social or personal status. Member States have taken action to address diverse areas of discrimination, including prohibition of discrimination at work on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, ethnicity and marital status (Costa Rica), wage discrimination and equal pay

(Brazil, Ecuador, Switzerland) and gender imbalance and gender-based discrimination in the civil service and military (Ukraine).

27. A growing trend is action to enact or strengthen gender equality and non-discrimination legislation and policies through positive measures to protect and promote the human rights of specific groups of women, such as indigenous women (Australia, Peru), women in rural areas (Brazil, Panama, Slovenia, Spain), migrant and displaced women (Central African Republic, Dominican Republic, Italy), women with disabilities (Australia, Costa Rica, Italy, Kenya, Mozambique) and women who face discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Italy, Peru). In Brazil, the National Secretariats for Policies for Women and for the Promotion of Racial Equality have addressed gender and racial inequalities between men and women in the world of work, in particular the significant wage gaps between white men and white women and black men and black women.

28. Significant efforts have been made to promote and protect the economic and social rights of women and girls. This has included steps to increase access to economic and productive resources (Honduras, Mali, Mozambique, Peru, Switzerland, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe) and women's right to work and rights at work (Central African Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Jamaica, Panama, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Ukraine). These efforts have been complemented by strategies to ensure decent work (Argentina, Central African Republic, Italy, Jamaica, Peru), extend or reform social protection frameworks (Albania, Australia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Estonia, Italy, Jamaica, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Panama, Romania, Slovenia, Timor-Leste, United Republic of Tanzania) and the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work (Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Italy, Sweden).

29. In 2016, Sweden presented a government communication stating that unpaid care and household work were to be equally distributed among women and men. In 2017, Cuba enacted a law on maternity and working women to address shared responsibility within the family for care work and extend paid prenatal and postnatal maternity leave. In 2018, Estonia reformed the maternity and parental leave system with a view to encouraging more fathers to share care responsibilities by providing parental leave and options for work and family life reconciliation, with the intended outcome of shortening the career breaks of mothers. Spain, also in 2018, extended paid paternity leave to five weeks. Since 2017, Hungary has accorded priority to single-parent families for crèche admission, while Mongolia has passed a law improving social protection for mothers with a child aged 3 years or younger, including childcare. Recognizing the disadvantaged position in terms of pensions of the spouse who invested more time in caring for children or others in need of care, Liechtenstein now provides pension credits for child-rearing.

30. Member States reported on measures taken to fulfil commitments regarding the sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of women and girls (Australia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Germany, Honduras, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Mali, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Republic of Tanzania). Chile approved a strategy on sexuality, emotional health and gender in 2018, which provides for municipal educational and health services with a gender perspective for children and adolescents. Luxembourg helped to launch the "SheDecides" movement in 2017 to support the rights of women and girls to decide freely and for themselves about their sexual lives, including whether, when and with whom to have children, as well as how many. Saudi Arabia is preparing a national strategy for reproductive health and child health with three goals: reducing mortality and morbidity rates among mothers, newborns and children;

improving maternal and child health services; and improving awareness of reproductive and sexual health.

31. Efforts to enact and strengthen laws and policies to end, combat or criminalize violence against women and girls figure prominently in Member State responses (Albania, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Mali, Myanmar, Peru, Romania, Senegal, Slovenia, Togo, Ukraine). This includes the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (Georgia, Germany), upholding the right of women to live a life free of violence (Chile, Dominican Republic) and criminalizing specific forms of violence, such as stalking and psychological violence (Latvia). National strategies and action plans to tackle gender-based violence (Finland, Mozambique) and comprehensive measures to prevent violence against women of all ages (Argentina, Australia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Peru, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine) are also in place.

32. Only a few Member States reported on measures to tackle climate change and environmental degradation and the links to gender equality (Argentina, Botswana, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Zimbabwe). In Botswana and Zimbabwe, a national policy on gender and development and a national gender policy, respectively, consider the environment and climate change. The priorities for German and Slovenian international development cooperation include gender equality and climate change.

33. Member States recognize the importance of backing up normative, legal and policy frameworks with measures that ensure equal and effective access to justice by women and girls, and accountability for human rights violations (Australia, Botswana, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Estonia, Germany, Honduras, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania). For example, in Botswana, the national policy on gender and development of 2015 provides for access to justice, protection of human rights and freedom from violence. Italy has a department for equal opportunities that is mandated to combat violations of the fundamental rights to the integrity of the person and health of women and girls. In Liechtenstein, a law of 2016 on the Human Rights Association provides for ombudsman functions and a broad mandate to protect and promote women's human rights. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the Legal Aid Act (2017) facilitates access to justice for all Tanzanians, regardless of their economic status, which is particularly important for protecting women's social and economic rights, prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, tribe or political affiliation, and provides for legal aid in case of need. A priority area of the German development policy action plan on gender equality, covering the period 2016–2020, is women's access to justice.

B. Fostering enabling environments for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

34. Reaffirmed in the agreed conclusions are the commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, with a call made for a gender-responsive approach to public financial management, including gender-responsive budgeting and tracking of public expenditure, significant increases in investment in gender equality and the empowerment of women, including through the mobilization of financial resources from all sources and the fulfilment of countries' official development assistance commitments. Preliminary estimates suggest that to implement the 2030 Agenda will require significant investment ranging from \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion per year, but

detailed cost estimates are needed for the sectors, policies and programmes that are critical for achieving the Goals for women and girls.³

35. While some progress has been made in closing resource gaps, the policies and programmes necessary to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remain chronically underfunded in virtually all countries. Of the 80 countries with data, only 47 per cent have systems in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality.⁶ Indicator 5.c.1 of the Goal monitoring framework establishes an international standard for gender-responsive budgeting. The indicator methodology has been deemed clear and relevant by ministries of finance, national gender equality mechanisms and national statistical offices, but data are not regularly produced by countries.³

36. As confirmed in Member State submissions for the present report, gender-responsive budgeting is the most common approach used by Governments to allocate and monitor financial resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women (Albania, Argentina, Austria, Dominican Republic, Finland, Georgia, Mozambique, Senegal, Timor-Leste, Ukraine). In some countries, the commitment thereto is enshrined in a constitution (Austria) or institutionalized in law (Timor-Leste) or the budgetary process (Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine). Countries have institutionalized gender-responsive budgeting using multiple approaches, including training (Albania, Sweden), inter-agency structures (Albania, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Timor-Leste) and participatory processes (Argentina), as well as in international development cooperation (Austria, Spain, Sweden).

37. Regular gender analysis of public finance and budgets is another strategy undertaken by some Governments. In Colombia, the National Planning Department has introduced what is known as a gender equality classifier that enables the tracking of resources allocated to investment projects to fulfil the national gender equality policy. The Philippines has a requirement that 5 per cent of government expenditure be allocated to gender and development, and the Government of Albania set aside 3 per cent of the total budget for 2018 to specifically benefit women and/or advance gender equality. Sweden has a dedicated expenditure area for gender equality in the national budget; this earmarking of funds for gender equality ensures not only that gender perspectives are mainstreamed across policy areas but also that specific measures can be taken to advance gender equality as a primary objective. Finland has implemented a governmental plan for analysis and assessment of and research into gender equality, which includes a process to mainstream the 2030 Agenda into State budgeting by 2019, as well as gender impact assessments of the budget and gender budgeting.

38. Several Member States reported improvements in tracking gender equality in overseas development assistance (Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland) and in directing those funds to be mainstreamed across sectors and programmes to meet gender-responsive Goal targets. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has been applying a new statistical tool to measure the resources used for interventions geared towards gender equality, adjusted to the requirements of the statistical tool and gender policy marker of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. As a result, it was discerned that, in 2017, 66 per cent of Swiss bilateral intervention funds supported action that took into account gender issues, while 5 per cent specifically addressed gender equality considerations. Also in 2017, Slovenian overseas development assistance that mainstreamed gender equality into

⁶ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14383SDG5format-revOD.pdf>.

interventions rose to 17 per cent, and it was proposed that that be increased to 60 per cent by 2030.

39. Current overseas development assistance financing priorities include women's access to finance (Austria), women's leadership, decision-making and livelihoods (Australia), women micro-entrepreneurs (Luxembourg), supporting equal participation in the workforce, equal pay and promoting a work-life balance (Switzerland), women's civil society organizations (Finland) and supporting migrant and refugee women (Germany, Liechtenstein, Sweden).

40. To ensure targeted financial resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women, Member States have established dedicated funds for gender equality (Argentina, Sweden), including decentralized funding to promote gender equality at the subnational and local levels (Brazil, Cuba, Kenya, Mali, Mongolia, Switzerland), and have directed funds to support the work of women's civil society organizations (Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Italy, Jamaica, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland). Funds are being allocated to specific plans and issues, for example violence against women (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Mongolia, Spain), women and peace and security (Italy, Ukraine), women's economic empowerment (Botswana), gender-responsive public procurement (Kenya), addressing the gender division of labour and the participation of women in the labour market (Brazil), women's financial inclusion, women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses (Botswana, Dominican Republic, Italy, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe), women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics studies and careers, including entrepreneurship (Australia), and girls and girls' education (Kenya). Some countries, including Germany, are also pursuing partnerships with the private sector to increase resources for gender equality.

C. Strengthening women's leadership and the full and equal participation of women in decision-making

41. Underscored in the agreed conclusions is the crucial importance of the full, equal and effective participation of women in all fields of sustainable development and leadership at all levels of decision-making in the public and private sectors, including through temporary special measures. The realization of this ambition entails removing the obstacles to participation by women and girls, such as the constraining impacts of poverty, violence, lack of access to high-quality education, disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, and discriminatory social norms. It is also noted in the agreed conclusions that there is a need to increase resources and support for women's and civil society organizations at all levels so that they can fully contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.

42. Member States have sought to ensure the effective participation of women in the political and economic life of their countries principally through affirmative action measures such as quotas for political representation in elections and parliaments and membership of public and private sector boards. The use of gender quotas and other temporary special measures has served to increase levels of representation in politics and decision-making bodies in many countries, but less than half of countries have such measures or quotas in place. In the 35 countries with available trend data on women's share of employment in senior and middle management, improvements have occurred in some cases, but declines have been seen in others.³

43. Responses by Member States demonstrated the significant attention given to the implementation of these aspects of the agreed conclusions, in an effort to achieve equal participation of women and men in politics and decision-making. Many

countries have set quotas for parliamentary representation at around 30 per cent or lower (Argentina, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Mali, Mongolia, Romania, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania), while others, including Chile and the Philippines, are aiming for 40 per cent and Costa Rica and Luxembourg 50 per cent. In Senegal, women currently account for some 42 per cent of parliamentarians, thanks largely to its legislation on gender parity in political representation. A number of Member States are considering extending the practice of gender quotas to municipal and local elections (Luxembourg, Myanmar, Peru, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Ukraine). Indicator 5.5.1b, on to the representation of women in elected positions in local governments, will for the first time allow for systematic monitoring of women's involvement in local politics, complementing indicator 5.5.1a, on women's representation in national parliaments.

44. Countries have also implemented advocacy efforts to raise awareness of the need for greater involvement of women in politics and government (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg). With an awareness-raising campaign entitled “Without women, you can't make a State”, Luxembourg also agreed on a goal of 40 per cent representation of women in positions of responsibility in the public sector by 2019. Australia has almost met its target of having women account for 50 per cent of the members of government boards. In Finland, the National Commission on Sustainable Development, a multi-stakeholder platform led by the Prime Minister to advance the integration of the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda into national policies, budgets and action, follows the statutory 40–60 per cent quota requirement for public administration and committees, with women forming 51 per cent of the membership. Since 2009, Liechtenstein has been close to gender parity at the ministerial level in its Government. The Government of Sweden has been gender balanced since 1994, with women holding 51 per cent of board seats in public agencies and 49 per cent in State-owned companies in 2018, but Sweden also noted in its response that to reach that goal systematic measures had been taken over a long period.

45. With regard to the participation of women in economic decision-making and on company boards, while quota systems appear to be less common, a number of countries reported promising trends. In Panama, it is compulsory for women to account for 30 per cent of the members of executive boards of public entities, with the same or lower levels set for private companies in Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland and Spain. Italy notes that, although no sanctions are envisaged, companies are obliged to report and explain cases of non-compliance and that progress is slow, with women accounting for less than 12 per cent of members of boards of directors in the country. Quotas and other measures are also being applied in specific sectors to encourage the active participation of women in decision-making. Senegal has introduced a gender quota of 20 per cent in decision-making bodies in the agricultural sector, Chile is ensuring the participation of women in the governing bodies of labour organizations and cooperatives, Hungary is promoting women's leadership in science and Australia and Botswana are undertaking gender mainstreaming in the sports industry.

46. Several Member States are supporting the involvement and leadership of women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping (Central African Republic, Colombia, Finland, Kenya) and in civil society organizations, with particular attention to the participation of marginalized and disadvantaged women (Australia, Latvia, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste). In Finland, a crisis management initiative, part of its development cooperation programme covering the period 2018–2021, is aimed at increasing the meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention and resolution by working with national partners in conflict-affected countries to enhance women's influence in peace and security, while also engaging the international

peacemaking community to advance more gender-sensitive mediation policies. In Jamaica, a gender ambassadors programme addresses gender discrimination and stereotypes among young people, providing training to students, both women and men, on the importance of women in leadership, politics and decision-making positions.

D. Strengthening gender-responsive data collection, follow-up and review processes

47. Emphasized in the agreed conclusions is a gender-responsive approach to the national follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, taking into account the agreed global indicator framework, and the need to develop and enhance standards and methodologies at the national and international levels to systematically design, collect and ensure access to high-quality, reliable and timely data disaggregated by sex, age and income and other characteristics. Underlined is the need to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics on, inter alia, poverty, income distribution within households, unpaid care work, women's access to, control and ownership of assets and productive resources, participation at all levels of decision-making and violence against women in order to measure progress for women and girls with regard to the Goals.

48. The global indicator framework for the Goals provides a set of measures to track and monitor progress towards the Goals and targets, comprising 232 unique indicators and 54 gender-specific indicators that cover areas such as unpaid care and domestic work and violence against women and girls that are new to global monitoring efforts. However, the framework is gender-sensitive in only 6 of 17 Goals (1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 16), gender-sparse in others (2, 10, 11, 13 and 17) and gender-blind in the remainder (6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 15). Gaps in gender data and lack of trend data hamper any assessment and monitoring of the direction and pace of progress for women and girls. Sufficient and regular data are currently available only for 10 of the 54 gender-specific indicators, a limitation common to developed and developing countries alike. The gender data gaps reflect the long-term lack of investment in and political commitment to gender statistics. Only 13 per cent of countries have a dedicated budget for gender statistics and only 15 per cent have legislation mandating gender-based surveys. Significantly increased investment in national statistical capacity and timely and quality data collection is necessary for gender-responsive monitoring of the Goals.³

49. Countries have assessed their national statistical capacity to monitor based on the global indicator framework (Ecuador, Italy, Luxembourg, Timor-Leste). Ecuador analysed 53 per cent of the total indicators, concluding that it would be methodologically possible to provide national data against one third (73) of the indicators. Italy also assessed the overall availability of indicators. In an evaluation of the 169 targets by Luxembourg, 126 were deemed relevant in the national context and, based on national statistical data availability, 118 indicators were selected to monitor the Goals in the country, and the implementation of Goal 5 was to be monitored by the following indicators: time spent on unpaid domestic work and volunteer activities (by sex); proportion of seats held by women in the parliament; representation of the underrepresented sex in decision-making bodies; and gender pay gaps.

50. Member States have developed and strengthened institutional mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the Goals and targets (Cuba, Finland, Jamaica, Panama). Chile, Colombia and Finland have created online platforms for monitoring the Goals, which contain the statistical data sources for the indicators. The Colombian

tool allows for an understanding of the specific characteristics of groups based on gender, disability, ethnicity, lifestyle and other socioeconomic characteristics, as well as the intersections between them. Other countries report that the provision of data and information needed for targets and indicators under Goal 5 has been integrated into national gender data frameworks (Argentina, Austria, Philippines, Ukraine). In terms of international development cooperation, Austria and Switzerland stress the alignment of any new indicators for gender equality projects with the global indicator framework.

51. Most Member States reported advances in national gender statistical capacity and scope, with many producing periodic reports on sets of selected gender indicators (Australia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Sweden). For example, Australia conducts 20 national surveys to collect sex-disaggregated data on gender equality issues. Latvia periodically produces a collection of statistics on the status of women and men in society. Liechtenstein prepares an annual compilation of gender statistics on about 100 topics relevant to the human rights situation of women and girls. Sweden has an online gender equality statistics portal that is updated biannually with national statistics and indicators relating to national gender equality objectives; all official statistics relating to individuals are to be disaggregated by sex. Other countries focus some of their efforts on data collection in specific gender equality areas: violence against women (Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Honduras, Jamaica, Kenya), femicide (Argentina), multifaceted and disaggregated poverty (Australia), the gender pay gap and equal pay (Estonia, Germany, Panama, Switzerland), time use (United Republic of Tanzania), gender-responsive procurement and women suppliers (Dominican Republic), judicial decisions on women's rights (Argentina), women, children and families (Mali), indigenous and tribal women (Australia) and rural women (Kenya).

E. Enhancing national institutional arrangements

52. In the agreed conclusions, Member States were called upon to strengthen the authority, capacity and visibility of and funding for national gender equality mechanisms at all levels and to support coherence and coordination by mainstreaming gender perspectives across all policies, programmes and sectors of government in the context of the 2030 Agenda. This is particularly crucial because national gender equality mechanisms are often responsible for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of government policies and programmes for gender equality and the empowerment and human rights of women and girls, including compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

53. As an indication of the increasing importance of gender equality considerations in governance overall and for the accelerated, gender-responsive implementation of the Goals, a number of Member States have strengthened their national gender equality mechanisms (Albania, Georgia, Jamaica, Kenya, Philippines) and many others have either created new institutions or upgraded existing ones (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Peru, Spain, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Ukraine) to enhance their authority, visibility and centrality in government. For example, Chile now has a ministry responsible for women and gender equality, Costa Rica a minister for the status of women and Colombia a presidential council on women's equality. In a few cases, Governments have found ways to augment the funding for national gender equality mechanisms (Honduras, Italy, Panama) or maintain levels even in the face of budget cuts across government (Switzerland). Honduras reports that the budget for the National Institute for Women has steadily increased; in Panama the budget for the National Institute for Women saw an increase of 45 per cent between 2015 and 2018; and the Italian budget

allocation for the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers doubled for the period 2016/17.

54. Member States have placed a renewed and systematic focus on gender mainstreaming in the context of the 2030 Agenda to ensure that gender equality considerations are integrated into implementation across all Goals and targets (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Mali, Netherlands, Philippines, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania). For example, in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, a multisectoral plan for reducing patriarchy and enhancing women's right to live well takes an integrated approach, through a newly established inter-institutional commission made up of seven ministries, that incorporates economic rights, education, health, ending violence against women, political participation and institutional strengthening. In Finland, a government action plan for gender equality, covering the period 2016–2019, is an instrument for coordinating and assessing the impact of gender equality policies and activities across all ministries, ensuring that key government processes, including budgeting, drafting of proposals and decision-making, support the promotion of gender equality. Gender impact assessments of government proposals will be made more often and more thoroughly. Gender impact assessments of the budget will be developed further and integrated into the budget planning process.

55. Inter-institutional mechanisms have been put in place in some countries for coordination and decision-making relating to gender equality and compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Costa Rica, Georgia, Germany, Mongolia, Myanmar, Romania). Others have gender focal points at the local and national levels of government to comprehensively support gender mainstreaming (Albania, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Senegal, Sweden, Switzerland). Yet more have set up observatories to ensure that gender equality considerations are addressed across a broad range of policy areas, including education (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Italy), health (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Spain), parity in political representation and elections (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Central African Republic), gender-based violence and violence against women (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Honduras, Italy, Peru), the participation of women in development (Saudi Arabia) and gender equality and women's rights (Colombia, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Italy).

56. Those efforts to support national gender equality mechanisms notwithstanding, the submissions received for the present report do not appear to indicate that the mechanisms are systematically included in the interministerial structures set up to oversee the implementation of the 2030 Agenda or that gender mainstreaming strategies are effectively and consistently being applied to ensure the gender-responsive implementation of the Goals.

V. Conclusions, recommendations and future priorities

57. The agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission addressed a broad range of elements necessary for realizing gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment and their human rights in the context of sustainable development and provided a road map for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

58. Since the adoption of the agreed conclusions, Member States have taken significant strides towards their implementation. Nevertheless, based on an assessment of the submissions for the present review and other monitoring reports, the implementation of the conclusions has been uneven and substantial gaps remain, especially in terms of gauging the overall effectiveness of the action taken.

59. Efforts have focused on aligning national policies, institutions and statistical capacities for the gender-responsive implementation of the Goals, targets and indicators. Some Member States touched upon the role of national gender equality mechanisms in the context of the national-level implementation of the Goals, but more information is needed on the extent and depth to which gender equality perspectives have been integrated into national sustainable development plans and strategies. The political and economic participation, leadership and decision-making of women, which are widely recognized as necessary for achieving these goals, are not meeting targets. Financing for gender equality has not met demand, the efforts made in gender-responsive budgeting notwithstanding. While national statistical capacity to produce the disaggregated data (by sex and other characteristics) and gender statistics needed to monitor progress for women and girls in the implementation of the Goals is expanding, significant gaps remain.

60. To address those concerns, Member States and other stakeholders are encouraged to take a comprehensive and integrated whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the following priority areas:

(a) Prioritize gender-responsive policies and programmes to make progress for women and girls in the implementation of the Goals:

- (i) Align national gender equality frameworks, policies and programmes with the Goals;
- (ii) Address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that women and girls face in policies and programmes for gender equality and sustainable development and develop national strategies for identifying and targeting groups that are being left behind;
- (iii) Integrate environmental sustainability and climate resilience into gender equality policies and programmes;
- (iv) Promote meaningful participation by women and girls, as appropriate, in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(b) Increase financing for policies and programmes to achieve gender equality and sustainable development:

- (i) Develop equitable and progressive domestic resource mobilization strategies, including through progressive income and wealth taxes and by closing tax loopholes;
- (ii) Ensure the effective and equitable use of official development assistance and investments in gender equality and sustainable development;
- (iii) Increase and monitor budget allocations for gender equality policies and programmes;

(c) Strengthen national gender equality mechanisms and women's civil society organizations for the effective, gender-responsive implementation of the Goals:

- (i) Increase the funding, staffing and coordination and monitoring capacities of national gender equality mechanisms;
- (ii) Support women's civil society organizations to take an active part in designing and implementing policies and programmes for the gender-responsive implementation of the Goals;

(d) Ensure an open, inclusive, transparent and gender-sensitive monitoring, follow-up and review process for the 2030 Agenda by strengthening commitment at the highest political level:

- (i) Improve gender data, statistics and analysis to effectively monitor progress for women and girls across all Goals and targets;
- (ii) Support the regular collection of data for gender-specific indicators, ensuring quality and comparability;
- (iii) Strengthen accountability through gender-responsive processes and institutions to ensure an integrated approach to implementation, follow-up and review with gender equality at its core;
- (iv) Ensure the monitoring of and reporting on gender equality commitments;
- (v) Support women's organizations and other civil society actors to monitor progress and hold Governments to account for gender equality commitments.

61. The 2030 Agenda represents an unprecedented opportunity to tackle the greatest development challenges, eradicate poverty, reduce multiple and intersecting inequalities, mitigate climate change, end conflict and sustain peace, with gender equality considerations integrated across the 17 Goals, building on the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In their actions to implement the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Member States have taken steps necessary to ensure that all women and girls will contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.
