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## Commission on the Status of Women

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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”**

## **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, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [64/289](#), provides a summary of the normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in 2019, through its substantive support for intergovernmental processes. The report also highlights the Entity's contribution to implementing the policy guidance provided by the Commission on the Status of Women, including examples of the Entity's operational activities.

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\* [E/CN.6/2020/1](#).



## I. Introduction

1. In 2019, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) continued to support Member States in accelerating progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through research, policy analysis and recommendations in reports of the Secretary-General. Technical support and expertise for the systematic integration of a gender perspective into intergovernmental norms and standards was also provided. The Entity placed a high priority on the substantive preparations for the 25-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the twentieth anniversary of the adoption by the Security Council of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security.

2. The Entity's triple mandate endows it with the capacity to: (a) support the strengthening of global norms and standards; (b) promote more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system in support of commitments for gender equality and the empowerment of women; and (c) support Member States, upon request, in translating global norms and standards into legislation, policies and development plans at the regional, national and local levels as part of its operational activities.

3. As in previous years, the provision of substantive support to the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council remained a central feature of the normative aspects of the Entity's work, with the aim of strengthening the integration of a gender perspective into the work and outcomes of those bodies. To that end, the Entity continued to strengthen linkages between, on the one hand, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and, on the other hand, progress in sustainable development, financing for development, climate action, peace and security, humanitarian action and other thematic issues covered by intergovernmental processes.

4. The normative aspects of the Entity's work are aligned with its strategic plan for the period 2018–2021 ([UNW/2017/6/Rev.1](#)) and contribute to the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN-Women played an active role in the repositioning of the United Nations development system to ensure that system-wide accountability and action for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the fulfilment of their human rights are strengthened and that the Entity is well positioned to fully leverage its normative support, United Nations system coordination and operational activities in an integrated manner to deliver results.

## II. Gender equality and the empowerment of women

### A. Commission on the Status of Women

5. As the substantive secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women, UN-Women continued to support the Commission in its role as the principal intergovernmental policymaking body that sets global standards and formulates policy recommendations to promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and their human rights worldwide. Preparations and in-session servicing of the sixty-third session of the Commission included substantive and logistical support. The documentation prepared by UN-Women for the session supported high-level interactive dialogues and expert panel discussions, including on the priority theme

and the review theme, and also included the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women ([E/CN.6/2019/6](#)).

6. The agreed conclusions on the priority theme “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls” ([E/2019/27](#), chap. I., sect. A.), built on the report of the Secretary-General on the same topic ([E/CN.6/2019/3](#)). The emphasis on an integrated and gender-responsive approach to the design, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure, along with the positioning of the priority theme in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, expands the global normative framework. For the first time, the Commission stressed the importance of not reversing the levels of protection previously achieved.

7. UN-Women also supported the Commission in its review of progress made in the implementation of the agreed conclusions adopted at the sixtieth session, on the theme “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development”. A total of 12 Member States presented information, on a voluntary basis, on progress achieved, lessons learned and challenges faced, and identified best practices and means for accelerated implementation. In the report of the Secretary-General on the review theme ([E/CN.6/2019/4](#)), trends in implementation were identified based on information received from 49 States, as were measures aimed at achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the context of sustainable development, including by strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks and fostering enabling environments for gender-responsive financing and data collection.

8. In preparation for the session of the Commission, UN-Women collaborated with partners in the organization of regional consultations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the Arab States, to identify priorities and facilitate an exchange of good practices. At the global level, UN-Women convened a multi-stakeholder forum in February 2019, which brought together Member States, the United Nations system, civil society and other stakeholders to strengthen networks and help to build a conducive environment for the session.

9. UN-Women continued to support the Commission in its catalytic role of promoting gender mainstreaming and worked with secretariats of other functional commissions to enhance synergies and coherence. In support of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UN-Women and the Government of Austria jointly organized a workshop on applying a gender lens to science, technology and innovation, held in January 2019. The workshop brought together policymakers, researchers and representatives of Governments and international organizations to discuss gender perspectives in science, technology and innovation, highlight best practices and develop policy recommendations. UN-Women also supported the participation of the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women in the fourteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held in May 2019, to highlight the role of women’s agency, leadership and participation in the implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and the achievement of its global forest goals.

10. Preparations for the 25-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were a high priority for the Entity during 2019. Such activities included providing technical support to Member States in their work on resolutions related to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in particular the decision to hold a high-level meeting of the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session (see Assembly resolutions [73/294](#) and [73/340](#)), and to convene a high-level panel discussion during the high-level segment

of the Human Rights Council at its forty-third session (see Human Rights Council resolution 42/14). The regional and country offices of UN-Women provided technical assistance and support to 92 countries for the comprehensive national reviews of progress made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The national reports form the basis for the global synthesis report prepared by UN-Women for the Commission at its sixty-fourth session (E/CN.6/2020/3), as well as the regional synthesis reports prepared for the regional reviews.<sup>1</sup> UN-Women worked with the regional commissions to organize and support intergovernmental meetings at the regional level. It also supported multi-stakeholder forums with civil society and youth events prior to, or in conjunction with, regional reviews.

11. In May 2019, UN-Women launched its multigenerational campaign entitled “Generation equality: realizing women’s rights for an equal future” to accelerate coordinated gender equality actions and mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Entity is convening the Generation Equality Forum, a global multi-stakeholder gathering on gender equality, co-chaired by France and Mexico, with the leadership and partnership of civil society. Building on the national and regional reviews and following the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Forum will first meet in Mexico City in May 2020 and will culminate in Paris in July 2020.

## **B. Gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system**

12. An integral part of the work of UN-Women is its support for gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system, leading to more effective coordination and coherence within the system. With contributions from across the system, the Entity prepared the annual report on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2019/54). The report presents progress made in 2018 on accountability for gender mainstreaming among the entities of the United Nations system and the United Nations country teams through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (System-wide Action Plan 2.0 and gender equality scorecard).

13. A total of 66 United Nations system entities reported on their work to implement the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 for 2018. Results indicate that the weakest system-wide performance was in the areas of financial resource allocation (31 per cent of entities met or exceeded expectations) and the equal representation of women (17 per cent). Policy and organizational culture also remained areas that require strengthening, which is similar to the results for 2017.

14. New indicators on normative and development results related to the Sustainable Development Goals made it possible to provide an overview of United Nations system performance in supporting Member States to achieve the 2030 Agenda, including Goal 5. Of the 50 entities that reported, 9 (14 per cent) – mainly the funds and programmes – met or were on track to meet a high-level transformative result, meaning that further concerted efforts are required by the United Nations system to effectively address the root causes of gender inequality.

15. Entities also reported on the specific Goals to which their strategic plans contribute and on priority thematic areas in relation to gender equality. A total of 51 entities include a focus on Goal 5, with most entities supporting gender equality in socioeconomic areas: Goal 1 (18 entities), Goal 16 (14 entities), Goal 10 (13 entities)

<sup>1</sup> See [www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations#regional-review-processes](http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020/preparations#regional-review-processes).

and Goal 8 (12 entities). There were 38 entities that prioritized the participation of women and 18 that promoted the implementation of norms and standards, while only 5 prioritized financing for gender equality.

16. Analysis of the System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard for 24 country teams indicates that performance is strongest in the area of collaboration and engagement with Governments, and weakest in the area of resource allocation and tracking with respect to gender equality.

17. UN-Women provided technical support to the Economic and Social Council in its work on the resolution on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (Council resolution [2019/2](#)).

18. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system ([A/74/220](#)), prepared by UN-Women, highlighted that during the two-year reporting period, the representation of women continued to be highest at entry levels, decreasing progressively at higher grade levels. Disparities persist between Headquarters and non-headquarters locations, including peace operations, with the latter trailing Headquarters by 8.7 percentage points. Recommendations aimed at assisting United Nations system entities in moving forward to achieve gender parity included more rigorous implementation and harmonization of existing policies.

19. The Entity prepared 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/74/222](#)). The report showed an increase by 7 and 10 percentage points, respectively, in the proportion of reports of the Secretary-General and resolutions that integrated a gender perspective during the two-year reporting period.

### **III. Sustainable development**

#### **A. Economic and social empowerment**

20. As in previous years, UN-Women offered technical assistance to the General Assembly to support work related to gender-specific agenda items and strengthen the integration of a gender perspective into other resolutions of the Assembly, in particular in the First, Second and Third Committees.

21. For the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, UN-Women prepared the quinquennial report of the Secretary-General on the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development ([A/74/111](#)), which illustrates that women in low-income settings often face income and time poverty simultaneously. However, traditional poverty indicators, including multidimensional indices, tend to neglect the dimension of time use. The double bind of income and time poverty is particularly pronounced for women in their reproductive years, when they are often caring for young children while having to earn an income. Women aged from 25 to 34 years globally are 25 per cent more likely than men to live in extreme poverty. Against this backdrop, the expansion of opportunities for women to earn an income and the reduction of their care burdens are not separate objectives but are inextricably linked.

22. The report contributes to the global debate on poverty measurement and effective poverty eradication strategies, showcasing good practices of gender-responsive policy design and implementation. Providing women with sustainable routes out of poverty requires an integrated public policy approach that brings together action on social protection, public services, infrastructure and decent work within an enabling macroeconomic environment. In October 2019, UN-Women also

organized a special event of the Second Committee, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), bringing together leading experts to examine the ways in which income poverty and time poverty coincide in the lives of low-income women and how environmental degradation intensifies those gender-based inequalities, as well as to identify key strategies for tackling those interlinked challenges.

23. UN-Women also prepared the report of the Secretary-General on women in development ([A/74/279](#)). In the report, the integration of a gender perspective into national sustainable development strategies, inclusive growth strategies and active labour market and social protection policies are reviewed. The report finds that, despite the increasingly visible participation of women in the economy, notable gender gaps remain in labour markets in both developing and developed countries.

24. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas ([A/74/224](#)), prepared by UN-Women, found that countries have supported the resilience and adaptive capacities of rural women and girls through climate-resilient agriculture and livelihoods, access to sustainable energy and water infrastructure. In the report, remaining gaps were identified, especially regarding the availability of gender-responsive climate finance and of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on the links between the situation of rural women and girls and climate resilience, and in support of policymaking and action. UN-Women also prepared the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women migrant workers ([A/74/235](#)). While the potential for migration to promote the agency and economic empowerment of women was identified in the report, it also found that the lack of safe and regular migration pathways and restrictive migration and labour laws can heighten the risk to women migrant workers of violence and exploitation, in particular to those with irregular migration status.

25. UN-Women contributed to the work of the General Assembly in preparation for its high-level meeting on universal health coverage. Those efforts included technical support during the informal consultations on the political declaration entitled “Universal health coverage: moving together to build a healthier world” (see Assembly resolution [74/2](#)), adopted in September 2019. In the declaration, the Assembly calls for accelerated efforts to achieve universal health coverage by 2030, with quality health systems, a focus on primary health care and efficient health financing policies. It calls for better opportunities for women to ensure their role and leadership in the health sector by addressing inequalities and eliminating biases against women. It reiterates the commitment of the 2030 Agenda for universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services (target 3.7) and to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences (target 5.6). Importantly, it calls for mainstreaming a gender perspective when designing, implementing and monitoring health policies.

26. The Entity provided technical support and expertise during the three regular sessions and intersessional activities of the Human Rights Council in 2019. In addition to the resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women and girls in sports (Council resolution [40/5](#)), in which women’s rights to bodily integrity and autonomy are reiterated, and the resolution on equal pay (Council resolution [41/14](#)), UN-Women supported the negotiations on the resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in the world of work (Council resolution [41/17](#)), as well as the resolution on the consequences of child, early and forced marriage ([41/8](#)), through its engagement with the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. In a resolution on the right to social security (Council resolution [42/13](#)),



the equal right of men and women to social security is underscored and gender biases and gaps in the design and implementation of social security systems are recognized; the agreed conclusions of the Commission at its sixty-third session are also welcomed.

27. During the forty-first session of the Human Rights Council, held from 24 June to 12 July 2019, UN-Women organized and participated in several side events to highlight gender issues, including panel discussions on violence against women in the world of work, the rights of older women and their economic empowerment, and sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians. Together with ILO, it provided evidence-based technical guidance on addressing violence and harassment against women in the world of work. The work was conducted in parallel with the ILO standard-setting process, which culminated in the adoption of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), of ILO.

28. UN-Women continued to ensure that all human rights investigations mandated by the Human Rights Council have the required gender expertise to fulfil their mandates. The Entity provided investigators or gender advisers from the roster of Justice Rapid Response and UN-Women sexual and gender-based violence justice experts for investigations on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the State of Palestine. With the support of those experts, the Council's investigations comprehensively integrated a gender perspective and documented crimes and violations, including restrictions on access to sexual and reproductive health in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (see [A/HRC/41/18](#)), a rise in domestic violence relating to the 2018 demonstrations in Gaza (see [A/HRC/40/CRP.2](#)), attacks on women human rights defenders in Yemen (see [A/HRC/42/CRP.1](#)) and the forced marriage of girls in the Syrian Arab Republic (see [A/HRC/42/51](#)).

## **B. Climate action and environmental protection**

29. UN-Women continued to contribute to the coordinated and gender-responsive implementation of the three Rio Conventions. With regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Entity contributed to the review of its Lima Work Programme on Gender and of its gender action plan, including work towards the next gender action plan. In collaboration with the Government of Costa Rica, the review included the joint organization of a preparatory workshop for parties and other stakeholders on key elements to include in the second gender action plan. In its submission to the fiftieth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation, held in June 2019, the Entity highlighted capacity-building, data and knowledge needs for national-level implementation of gender-related mandates under the Convention and the Paris Agreement. Technical support was also provided to parties during the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in December 2019.

30. UN-Women collaborated on the Climate Action Summit during the high-level week of the General Assembly, in September 2019, by working with Governments and stakeholders to increase attention to gender equality in the context of climate action. UN-Women supported the co-leads of the social and political drivers track in developing a dedicated initiative on gender equality in climate action, which was announced at the Summit. The initiative garnered the commitment of 53 countries to implement gender-responsive climate change action plans, policies and strategies, improve the evidence base and track progress, and promote the leadership of women and girls in climate action. In the lead-up to the Summit, UN-Women organized side events during the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held

in March, the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, held in July, and on the eve of the Summit. The events showcased the leadership of women and girls in adaptation and mitigation actions worldwide. The Entity also provided substantive input to the analytical study of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on gender-responsive climate action for the full and effective enjoyment of the rights of women ([A/HRC/41/26](#)).

31. UN-Women supported capacity-building for the parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa for the review of the gender action plan of the Convention, land degradation neutrality target-setting, finance and the development of data and indicators, among others, from a gender perspective. The Entity's provision of support to the parties and its contribution to the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held in January 2019, resulted in the strong reflection of key gender issues in the deliberations of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in September 2019. UN-Women, in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the Convention secretariat, held a subregional workshop for countries in West Africa that built capacity to link land degradation neutrality targets with nationally determined contributions through the development and implementation of gender-responsive, transformative projects and programmes focused on land degradation neutrality. UN-Women, in partnership with the Convention secretariat and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, also developed a manual to provide step-by-step guidance to parties on developing such projects and programmes.

32. UN-Women continued to strengthen the knowledge and evidence base and advocated the integration of a gender perspective into the post-2020 global biodiversity framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Ahead of the first meeting of the open-ended working group on the post-2020 framework, the Entity jointly organized an expert workshop in April 2019 with the Government of Canada, the Friends of Gender Equality group and the Convention secretariat to identify entry points for integrating a gender perspective into the framework. A technical discussion together with the World Agroforestry Centre and with the parties and other stakeholders had the same objective. UN-Women made submissions to the Convention secretariat that covered the need to reflect gender issues in goals, targets, principles and possible indicators in the framework and provided technical assistance to parties during the twenty-third session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, held in November 2019.

### **C. Follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

33. UN-Women continued its engagements with the global process for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through its contributions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in July and under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2019. During the preparatory process, UN-Women provided technical support to Governments in the preparation of voluntary national reviews to encourage the integration of a gender perspective. Its participation in the regional forums for sustainable development contributed to greater attention being given to gender equality issues.

34. The Entity's technical support for gender equality and the empowerment of women as a cross-cutting issue during negotiations contributed to the political declaration entitled "Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable



development”, which was adopted at the high-level political forum in September, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, and subsequently endorsed by the Assembly in October 2019 (see General Assembly resolution 74/4). World leaders called for a decade of action to deliver the Goals by 2030 and announced actions that they are taking to advance the Agenda. A total of 141 acceleration actions, 53 of which include commitments to the implementation of Goal 5, were registered.

35. The high-level political forum for sustainable development provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations for the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda, and UN-Women contributed policy expertise, evidence and technical support to the forum. It convened an expert group meeting in February 2019 on the gender perspectives of Goals 10, 13 and 16 – three of the goals under review in 2019 – together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. The meeting resulted in a series of recommendations aimed at accelerating progress on the three goals and their interlinkages from a gender perspective, and in particular on: strengthening good governance, inclusive rule of law and access to justice; removing structural barriers to the participation of women in decision-making and promoting inclusive and sustainable economic and social policies; investing in national statistical capacities to promote evidence-based policymaking, planning and budgeting; and increasing financing for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda through domestic resource mobilization policies and global action to address the systemic imbalances in domestic and international tax, trade and investment arrangements.

36. UN-Women also contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2019/68). It spearheaded coordination efforts across agencies for information relating to Goal 5 and contributed the relevant data and statistics for indicators for which the Entity is the lead or co-lead agency. In order to complement the report, the Entity, together with the Statistics Division, released the publication “Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: the gender snapshot 2019”.<sup>2</sup> The publication brings together the latest available evidence on gender equality across all 17 Goals, selecting one indicator per Goal to illustrate progress, gaps and challenges to date.

37. The Entity continued to contribute to the work of the Statistical Commission, as well as that of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, in the development of gender statistics. In particular, it supported the development of internationally accepted standards and methodologies for use by Governments to monitor the implementation of targets for which such standards do not yet exist. As a result of the Entity’s work to follow up on the methodological phase, with concerted efforts to establish a global baseline on recently reclassified tier II indicators, data coverage for key Goal 5 indicators has expanded: indicator 5.1.1 now has data for 53 countries and areas, 5.5.1.b has data for 119 countries and areas and 5.c.1 contains information on 69 countries and areas. Furthermore, as part of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics, a city group created at the forty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission and constituted to address the issues of conceptualization, methodology and instruments in the domain of governance statistics, UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme have jointly led the development of a conceptual and measurement framework for political participation. It has ensured the integration of a gender perspective into the measurement of other governance areas, such as non-discrimination, access to justice, safety and security. These contributions are reflected in a new handbook on

<sup>2</sup> Available at [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2019](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2019).

governance statistics to be presented to the Statistical Commission in March 2020 and expected to guide the work on governance statistics for national statistical offices.

38. UN-Women leadership and technical expertise have been instrumental in ensuring the prioritization of sex disaggregation and multidimensional disaggregation from a gender perspective by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Emphasizing that the factors that contribute to disadvantages for women and girls do not operate in isolation, UN-Women strongly advocated the simultaneous disaggregation of Goal indicators by sex and other characteristics. Its advice on policy priorities and current and future disaggregation plans related to gender were presented by the Group at the fiftieth session of the Statistical Commission.

#### **D. Financing for sustainable development**

39. The Entity has supported the integration of a gender perspective into the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up. In intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations (see [E/FFDF/2019/3](#)), Member States reiterated the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies. They further noted with concern the gap in access to capital for businesses led by women, and also encouraged initiatives to provide opportunities for underrepresented groups, such as women, to gain access to local, regional and international markets.

40. Together with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN-Women chaired the gender cluster group of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, which consists of 18 agencies with a mandate to mainstream gender perspectives into the annual report of the Task Force. The Entity's leadership and technical contributions since 2017 have contributed to strengthened gender mainstreaming in the report, including with regard to national efforts to develop integrated national financing frameworks, trade, science and technology and financial inclusion. The *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019* tracks progress across the seven areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in a gender-responsive manner.

### **IV. Human rights**

41. UN-Women continued to provide normative support in relation to the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council to strengthen the integration of a gender perspective, including by supporting Member States in preparing for the review, assisting with the preparation of reports by stakeholders, contributing to United Nations country team reports, making interventions at meetings of the Council and supporting the implementation of recommendations.

42. In coordination with OHCHR, UN-Women supported the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in all regions. Support was provided to States parties in reporting under the Convention and in preparing for the constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. UN-Women provided support for 94 per cent of United Nations country team reports to the Committee, including in coordinating and leading the process of preparing the reports. It also offered support in connection with the preparation of shadow reports by civil society organizations and reports by country teams submitted to the Committee. During the fortieth session of the Council, UN-Women participated in interactive dialogues and side events marking the fortieth

anniversary of the adoption of the Convention and highlighting the synergies between the implementation and monitoring of the Convention and Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security.

43. Through its operational work, UN-Women continued to support the implementation of and follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations, including the reflection of Committee recommendations in national laws, policies and programmes. It provided support to the Committee in the development of a general recommendation on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration. This included participation in the expert group meeting on the topic, joint organization of a side event during the forty-first session of the Human Rights Council, support for the organization of regional consultations and the submission of a statement to the Committee on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons, which UN-Women co-chaired in 2019. In collaboration with the members of the expert working group for addressing women's human rights in the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration, chaired jointly by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, UN-Women developed "Policies and practice: a guide for gender-responsive implementation of the Global Compact for Migration" to support Governments and other stakeholders in their work.

44. UN-Women continued its engagement with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to increase the focus on the situation of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Entity provided oral statements during the twenty-first and twenty-second sessions of the Committee. In June 2019, during the twelfth session of the Conference of States parties to the Convention, UN-Women organized side events to discuss strategic approaches for promoting the rights of women and girls with disabilities. Specifically, the Entity partnered with the Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility, Member States and civil society organizations to organize a high-level meeting on the theme "Women with disabilities in political and public leadership: towards Beijing+25". The meeting resulted in a declaration and call to action with specific recommendations to Governments for the greater inclusion and participation of women and girls with disabilities in political and public affairs.

45. In support of the work of special procedures, the Entity provided input for the report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children (see [A/74/189](#)), in which the Special Rapporteur addressed access to remedies for victims of trafficking for abuses committed by businesses and their suppliers, as well as for the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders ([A/HRC/40/60](#)), in which the Special Rapporteur examined the gender-related risks and specific violations faced by women, including sexual violence. The Entity also provided input for the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2437 \(2018\)](#) ([S/2019/711](#)), in which the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, as well as the inspection and seizure of vessels off the coast of Libya, are addressed. UN-Women contributions to the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa ([A/74/322](#)) resulted in the inclusion, for the first time, of a dedicated focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and recognition of the role of women as decision makers and agents of change.

46. The Entity contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on galvanizing global ambition to end the AIDS epidemic after a decade of progress ([A/73/824](#)), in which the Secretary-General calls for enabling legal and policy environments to reach marginalized populations and allow them to meet their health needs and for supporting the inclusion of communities, in particular women, in the design,

implementation and monitoring of HIV services. UN-Women offered policy recommendations for the report of the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to the Economic and Social Council (see [E/2019/74](#)). As well as acknowledging the co-conveners of the Global Partnership for Action to Eliminate All Forms of HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination, including UN-Women, in the report, the Executive Director highlights gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as a central pillar of the HIV response, as well as meaningful engagement and resourcing of organizations of women living with HIV and the elimination of gender-based stigma and discrimination and violence against women as key elements of action. The report contains calls for reinvigorated efforts to protect human rights and address social and structural determinants of health in the context of the HIV response, in particular gender equality and the empowerment of women, and for the increased availability and uptake of HIV services for young women and adolescent girls.

47. The Entity partnered with the Task Force on Justice, the World Bank and the International Development Law Organization to inaugurate a high-level working group on access to justice for women, consisting of a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and various Governments and organizations. The working group commissioned the report on justice for women as a resource for the high-level political forum. In order to address persistent discrimination in law, UN-Women also partnered with the African Union, the Commonwealth, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Ibero-American General Secretariat to issue a road map entitled “Equality in law for women and girls by 2030: a multi-stakeholder strategy for accelerated action” for the elimination of laws that discriminate against women and girls, with a focus on six thematic areas and 100 countries. In 2018, UN-Women supported the passage of a total of 44 laws relating to gender equality, 22 of which addressed discriminatory standards or practices.

## **V. Peace and security**

### **A. Security Council**

48. UN-Women brought new evidence, trend analysis and information on emerging issues and implementation gaps to the attention of policymakers in order to strengthen accountability with respect to women and peace and security. The Entity built synergies with linked agendas on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and on youth and peace and security. Normative advances were translated into programming at the country level. In preparation for the twentieth anniversary, in October 2020, of the adoption by the Security Council of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), UN-Women supported an assessment of the implementation of the recommendations relating to women and peace and security relevant to the United Nations system in the three peace and security reviews undertaken in 2015. The findings, along with a trend analysis of progress at the country level, were included in the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security ([S/2019/800](#)). In the report, six priority areas for accelerated action were identified ahead of 2020, including the meaningful participation of women in peace processes, post-conflict financing and economic recovery that promotes gender equality.

49. The Entity continued to provide substantive support to Security Council members to strengthen the integration of women and peace and security concerns into the Council’s deliberations and decisions. Such efforts included serving as the secretariat of the Council’s Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security. Of all the decisions adopted by the Council in 2018, 72 per cent contained explicit

references to women and peace and security issues. All four missions conducted by the Council in 2018 integrated elements relating to women and peace and security and included meetings with local women's groups. In a significant increase from previous years, 27 women from civil society organizations were invited to give briefings to the Council in both country-specific and thematic meetings. The Executive Director of UN-Women briefed the Council on her missions to South Sudan and Somalia, advocating the meaningful representation of women in the pre-transitional and transitional phases in South Sudan and preparations for the elections to be held in Somalia in 2020 and 2021.

50. In line with Security Council resolutions [2242 \(2015\)](#), [2395 \(2017\)](#) and [2396 \(2017\)](#), UN-Women strengthened the integration of its work on women and peace and security, counter-terrorism and the prevention and countering of violent extremism. The Entity supported the country assessments of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate by providing in-country gender analysis and, together with the Executive Directorate, chaired the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact working group on gender-sensitive approaches. In order to strengthen the knowledge base, UN-Women released new guidance on gender mainstreaming in the prevention of violent extremism, in collaboration with the working group, contributed to the key principles for the protection, repatriation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of women and children with links to United Nations-listed terrorist groups and produced two new research papers<sup>3</sup> on the drivers of radicalization and the participation of women in violent extremist groups. During the period, UN-Women gave two briefings to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#) concerning counter-terrorism.

51. The Entity continued to promote the role of women, including young women leaders, in sustaining peace and preventing conflict. In collaboration with the Peacebuilding Support Office, it supported the Peacebuilding Commission in implementing its gender strategy and organizing policy discussions on gender-responsive financing, transitions and the role of local women peacebuilders. The Entity provided technical expertise for the development of system-wide guidance on conflict sensitivity and on community engagement. It also supported new multi-country research by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, capturing perspectives of women in civil society, which will inform the report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace to be issued by the Secretary-General in 2020.

52. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [2242 \(2015\)](#), UN-Women partnered with the Department of Peace Operations to develop a methodology for gender-responsive conflict analysis for transition settings. A requirement for such an analysis was included in the transition planning directive of the Secretary-General. UN-Women advocates greater investment in gender analysis to inform all policymaking, planning and budgeting, the lack of which can have devastating and long-term implications in conflict- and crisis-affected settings.

53. UN-Women supported countries in translating global norms and standards into meaningful action at the regional, national and local levels, including through its work as the secretariat of the Women and Peace and Security Focal Points Network. The Network increased its membership in 2019 to 85 Member States and regional organizations, and focused on issues such as the full participation of women, disarmament and the leadership of young women in peace and security. Over 80 countries have adopted national action plans on women and peace and security, a

<sup>3</sup> Available at [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/07/research-paper-understanding-why-youth-fight-in-the-middle-east](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/07/research-paper-understanding-why-youth-fight-in-the-middle-east) and <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/04/research-paper-gendered-pathways-to-radicalization-and-desistance-from-violent-extremism>.

50 per cent increase since 2015. A total of 12 regional organizations have also adopted dedicated plans and strategies.

## **B. Participation of women in peace processes**

54. Given the slow progress to date, UN-Women identified the meaningful participation of women in peace processes as one of six priority areas of accelerated action ahead of the twentieth anniversary, in 2020, of the adoption of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). With technical support, capacity-building and strategic opportunities linked to peace processes, as well as research and knowledge generation, UN-Women supported the realization of commitments to build peaceful and inclusive societies shaped by the leadership and participation of women and to ensure that gender equality issues are addressed throughout peace processes and in the implementation of peace agreements. Partnerships with Member States and regional organizations deepened during the reporting period, including initiatives linked to the work of regional networks of women mediators, such as the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) and the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, as well as technical support to Finland and Spain ahead of the launch in September 2019 of their 10-point initiative on the inclusion of women in peace processes, entitled “Commitment 2025”.

55. UN-Women contributed to the implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative of the Secretary-General, which was launched in 2018. Over 150 countries have endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which includes a robust commitment to collectively implement the women and peace and security agenda. UN-Women also supported the Department of Peace Operations in the development of the uniformed gender parity strategy 2018–2028 to significantly increase the number of women deployed as military and police peacekeepers. In addition, UN-Women hosts the secretariat of the Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations, an innovative multi-partner trust fund to assist Member States in recruiting and deploying more women as military and police personnel in support of peacekeeping.

56. As the secretariat of the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund, UN-Women launched the 40by20 for Women campaign, which is aimed at raising \$40 million by the end of 2020 for women peacebuilders and first responders. Increased financing allowed the fund to expand from 5 to 12 countries in 2019, in support of over 90 women’s organizations working in crisis settings. In partnership with the Peacebuilding Support Office, UN-Women supported efforts by the Peacebuilding Fund to exceed its 30 per cent minimum funding target for gender-responsive peacebuilding investments. In 2018, a total of 40 per cent of resources allocated by the Fund were for both targeted and mainstreamed peacebuilding projects, and its Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative increased from \$29 million in 2017 to \$37.1 million in 2018.

## **VI. Humanitarian action**

57. During the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council, UN-Women provided technical support during negotiations regarding the resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (Council resolution [2019/14](#)), and organized an event to draw attention to the need to make gender equality a reality in humanitarian settings by translating standards into action on the ground. In particular, the Entity called for an understanding of gender equality beyond measures to combat gender-based violence



and sexual exploitation and abuse and to address other protection concerns that would also highlight that achieving sustainable change can be supported by empowering women and enabling them to increase their self-reliance and resilience.

58. As co-chair of the Gender Reference Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UN-Women assumed stewardship of the gender desk to monitor adherence to the standards, roles and responsibilities endorsed in the Committee's 2017 gender policy for humanitarian action. In this capacity, UN-Women published the inaugural gender accountability framework report, which includes monitoring of the collective action of the humanitarian coordination system led by the United Nations to integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into humanitarian action.

59. UN-Women contributed to the Global Refugee Forum to ensure that the focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls contained in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants is sustained. As a co-sponsor of two priority areas at the Forum – namely, strengthening protection capacity and promoting access to quality education – UN-Women played an advocacy role to uphold the rights of refugee women and girls and enhance their roles as leaders and agents of change. In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UN-Women co-hosted an event entitled “Women on the move: towards a gender-responsive Global Refugee Forum” to mobilize support and firm pledges from Member States.

60. In partnership with the Women's Refugee Commission, UN-Women led the analysis of progress made by stakeholders over the past year towards the empowerment of women and girls, in line with the Agenda for Humanity commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit. It examined and identified positive trends, innovative programmes and existing challenges, and presented key recommendations required for the advancement of gender equality in humanitarian action.

61. In the area of disaster risk reduction, UN-Women provided normative support in the formulation of gender-responsive plans, policies, tools and actions, especially in the collection and use of data disaggregated by sex, age and disability and in targeted investment in women and girls. At the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Reconstruction Conference and the Small Island States Resilience Initiative practitioners' network, UN-Women co-organized or contributed to several sessions and advocated the reflection of gender equality in outcome documents. It also leveraged its experience on the ground to inform the development of operational guidelines for the United Nations common guidance on helping to build resilient societies, thereby ensuring that a gender perspective was mainstreamed into the guidance.

## **VII. Support for implementation of policy guidance**

62. The strengthening of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and on the empowerment of women and girls is a foundation of the Entity's operational activities. UN-Women provides Member States, upon request, with six types of support in its operational activities: (a) normative support; (b) United Nations coordination for gender equality and the empowerment of women; (c) integrated policy advice; (d) capacity development; (e) advocacy and social mobilization; and (f) technical assistance for essential services. Such activities include support in follow-up to the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, including regarding the implementation of the agreed conclusions on challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, adopted by the Commission at its sixty-second session. UN-Women operational

activities are implemented to a significant extent in rural and remote areas, covering a wide range of issues that are critical for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls, including land rights, entrepreneurship skills, financial inclusion, climate resilient-agriculture and access to technology.

63. The Entity continued to support national mechanisms for gender equality aimed at strengthening their institutional capacities, including for the integration of a gender perspective into national sustainable development policies and plans. Emphasis has also been placed on support for the implementation of national policies, plans and programmes for gender equality, including strategies for the empowerment of rural women and girls.

64. For example, UN-Women provided technical support to the Government of El Salvador in the preparation of a national policy for rural, indigenous and peasant women, which was adopted in 2019. The Entity continues to support the relevant ministries in the development of an action plan to implement the policy. In North Macedonia, the Entity supported the Government in applying gender-responsive budgeting in rural development programmes. In Cambodia, it worked with national institutions to provide access to gender-responsive climate financing and developed national capacity for integrating a gender perspective into climate change and disaster risk reduction planning, implementation and monitoring, through capacity-building efforts. In Cameroon, the Entity supported the Government in implementing a rural road-building project, including through the training of 20,000 rural women to allow them to gain financial and entrepreneurial skills and improve farming techniques to meet the demands of new markets. UN-Women also engaged with traditional and cultural institutions through a series of regional consultations in East and Central Africa on ending child marriage and female genital mutilation, which occur at higher rates in rural areas and are enforced by traditional legal structures.

65. In 2019, UN-Women continued to implement the multi-year joint programme on accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women, together with the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agriculture Development, in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, the Niger and Rwanda. The programme employs a multitrack strategy to improve food and nutritional security, entrepreneurship skills and value chains to gain access to markets, leadership and participation in communities and institutions, and the gender-responsive policy environment for economic empowerment. UN-Women and its partners work with the most vulnerable and poorest women, and with illiterate women, as well as with women entrepreneurs already organized in producer organizations, allowing the Entity to respond to the principle of leaving no one behind and to support businesses that contribute to economic growth in their communities. In 2018, the agricultural production of participating rural women increased from 2017 by an average of 34.1 per cent.

66. UN-Women supported the collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated data on rural women and girls with the aim of facilitating evidence-based policymaking and decision-making to contribute to their empowerment. For example, in Kenya, the Entity supported the Agricultural Finance Corporation to carry out a baseline survey and document good practices on access to agricultural finance for rural women, and reprocessed data from existing sources to generate information, address data gaps and produce gender statistics.

## VIII. Conclusion

67. The provision of normative support to intergovernmental processes and bodies remained a high priority for UN-Women in 2019, including in the context of preparations for the 25-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Entity continued to build on its previous contributions to various processes to strengthen the integration of a gender perspective across the work of intergovernmental bodies. By strengthening the evidence base and drawing linkages across sectors, UN-Women continued to work towards strengthened coherence, consistency and coordination between the normative and operational aspects of its work. Its efforts were guided by a commitment to support the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in partnership and collaboration with multiple stakeholders to ensure that no one is left behind. They were also guided by the Entity's proactive engagement in system-wide processes on the repositioning of the United Nations development system and its efforts to ensure that the outcomes of those processes support the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

68. The 25-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020 presents a significant opportunity to assess progress and the remaining gaps and challenges at all levels and to galvanize intensified and impactful action and partnerships to close those gaps. UN-Women will support the work of the Commission as it strengthens the global normative framework and will contribute to the accelerated implementation of the Commission's policy guidance in order to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the fulfilment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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