



Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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22–23 June 2020

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Organizational matters

Report on the first regular session, 14 February 2020

I. Election of the Bureau

1. On 14 January 2020, the Executive Board held elections for Bureau members of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for the year 2020. The Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, Jukka Salovaara, (representing the Western European and other States), was elected President of the Executive Board. The Vice-Presidents were elected from the following regional groups: (a) Asia-Pacific States: Sukhbold Sukhee, Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations; and (b) Eastern European States: Eka Kipiani, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations.

2. The outgoing President, Pernelle Beckles, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations (representing the Latin American and Caribbean States), congratulated the incoming President and Vice-Presidents and thanked the Executive Board, particularly the outgoing Vice-Presidents who served during her tenure: Susan Mwangi, Minister Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations (representing the African States), who assumed her functions following Koki Grignon's completion of her tenure in New York as Deputy Permanent Representative; Marwan Ali Noman Aldobhany, Deputy Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations (representing the Asia-Pacific States); Katalin Bogayay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations (representing the Eastern European States); and Natalie Cohen, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations (representing the Western European and other States).

3. During the first regular session of the Executive Board, held at United Nations headquarters on 14 February 2020, Victoria Sulimani, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, was elected Vice-President (representing the African States). It was announced that Pernelle Beckles, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the



United Nations, would continue to represent the Latin American and Caribbean States on the Bureau until further notice.

II. Organizational matters

4. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session of 2020 ([UNW/2020/L.1](#)) and the annual workplan for 2020 ([UNW/2020/L.2](#)). The Board approved the provisional agenda and workplan for the annual session of 2020, to be held 22–24 June 2020 (see annex I), with a request to add an agenda item on the working methods of the Executive Board, and adopted the report on its second regular session of 2019 on 9–10 September 2019 ([UNW/2019/9](#)).

5. The Executive Board adopted two decisions: 2020/1 – Working methods of the Executive Board; and 2020/2 – Financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018 and report of the Board of Auditors (see annex II).

III. Opening statements

6. The President of the Executive Board declared the session open, highlighting the importance of 2020 in terms of milestones for gender equality, including Beijing+25, United Nations General Assembly resolution 1325 plus 20, the 10-year countdown to the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations 75 and the tenth anniversary of UN-Women.

7. He expressed his commitment to building on the hard work of the previous Bureaux of the Executive Board, stating that gender equality and non-discrimination were at the top of his government's development agenda and calling on all Member States to join efforts to make the voices of the most vulnerable heard across the globe.

8. In her opening statement, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the outgoing President and Bureau and welcomed the newly elected President, Bureau and Board. She noted that the President had already made a major leadership contribution to UN-Women through the convening of a donor round-table in Helsinki by the Government of Finland, which resulted in an additional financial pledge by the country.

9. She took the opportunity to announce recent senior appointments at UN-Women: Sarah Hendriks, Director of Programme, Policy and Intergovernmental Support; and Oulimata Sarr, Regional Director for West and Central Africa. She also noted the departure of the following senior staff: Shahrashoub Razavi, Chief of Research and Data; Greet de Leeuw, Director of Human Resources; and Patricia Francis, Special Adviser on Change Management.

10. Regarding the upcoming Commission on the Status of Women, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director stated that the focus would be on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action since its adoption in 1995. The major findings of the United Nations Secretary-General report and its eight key strategies provide a clear perspective on the state of the world for women and girls.

11. She took the opportunity to thank the 167 countries who submitted national reports, as well as the regional commissions and other stakeholders, for productive regional consultations. She also thanked civil society and youth movements for their active engagement. With a record number of civil society participants registering, UN-Women looked forward to being ambitious and adopting a strong Political Declaration. She reminded Member States to ensure young women were included in their delegations.

12. Touching on the Generation Equality Forum, the head of the Entity explained that UN-Women was convening a unique, multi-stakeholder global gathering that was centred on civil society, with the aim of reaching hundreds of thousands of people in support of women's rights and gender equality. The forum, co-hosted by the Governments of Mexico and France, was scheduled to convene in Mexico City (7–8 May 2020) and culminate in Paris (7–10 July 2020). She called on Member States to promote the forum in their own countries.

13. She noted the High-Level Meeting on Beijing+25 at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2020, anticipating the leadership of Member States. The meeting will provide an opportunity to take stock of achievements in this review year and for Heads of State and for governments to voice their support and commitments at the highest level.

14. Recalling that 2020 marked two decades since the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the head of the Entity stated that UN-Women planned to commemorate this occasion. All stakeholders would be asked to commit to and implement the following six priorities: (1) protection and support for women human rights defenders and peace-builders; (2) women's economic security in the context of post-conflict reconstruction; (3) women's full participation in peace negotiations; (4) the security sector and peacekeeping operations; (5) robust gender analysis underpinning all United Nations activities on peace and security; and (6) the financial resources needed to make progress in all these areas.

15. Regarding the tenth anniversary of the establishment of UN-Women by the United Nations General Assembly, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director expressed her gratitude for the unwavering support of the Executive Board and all Member States as the Entity considers how to scale up change to benefit women across the globe.

16. It was mentioned that the preliminary Contributions Revenue for UN-Women for 2019 would reach \$503 million for the first time, having received a significant boost of \$60 million from the EU–UN Spotlight Initiative. She thanked all donors for their support and urged Member States to consider increasing their contributions to regular resources and investing in a strong and high-performing UN-Women. However, she explained that when the numbers were disaggregated, it was clear that regular resources fell in 2019. Preliminary figures show a reduction of \$7 million, compared to 2018 and a funding gap of around \$58 million against the budget projection of \$200 million.

17. She reiterated that the sustainability of the Entity and its ability to deliver high-quality and timely support depended on a healthy balance between core and non-core resources. The decline in the share of core contributions compared to non-core from 55 per cent in 2011 to around 29 per cent in 2019 was of serious concern.

18. Turning to the topic of change management, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director spoke of some important milestones achieved in this process. She viewed the United Nations reforms as an opportunity to both strengthen system-wide attention to gender equality as well as to initiate institutional changes to maximize the efficiency of UN-Women. She explained that some changes required the Entity to work differently in some countries by fully leveraging the rest of the United Nations system, even though UN-Women may no longer be physically present.

19. Reiterating that UN-Women's personnel is its greatest asset, the head of the Entity stated that major steps were being taken towards a more inclusive and high-performing culture in the workplace.

20. The Board was informed of the Entity's eighth consecutive unqualified audit opinion for the year ended 31 December 2018 by the United Nations Board of Auditors. As of January 2020, 92 per cent of the recommendations were addressed and every effort was being made to ensure full implementation.

21. Regarding the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, it was highlighted that all of the following aspects would feed into this exercise: the repositioning of the United Nations Development System; the Beijing+25 review process; findings and recommendations from independent evaluations; analyses of results to date; lessons learned from the implementation of the Common Chapter with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF; the fact that the Sustainable Development Goals provide a framework for action; and the work of the Action Coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum.

22. Concluding her opening remarks, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director reiterated that UN-Women continued to count on the support, and partnership of the Executive Board for a stronger, better-financed organization.

23. Member States taking the floor in response to the opening statements, congratulated the President on his election and thanked the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director for her comprehensive remarks.

24. Member States congratulated UN-Women on its tenth anniversary and highlighted its leading role in championing gender equality around the world, both in terms of its normative role and programmatic activities, highlighting the nexus of humanitarian, development and peace operations. Several statements highlighted the Beijing+25 milestone, in conjunction with other important anniversaries. These offer a unique opportunity to build momentum for mobilizing resources and galvanizing political support to tackle remaining gaps while continuing to advance the agendas of gender equality and women's empowerment, despite ongoing global pushbacks.

25. Several delegations shared progress in their respective countries in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, such as in the areas of political and economic participation and social protection. The issue of persistent challenges, such as structural barriers to women's inclusion (e.g. in peace processes) and high maternal mortality rates, was raised.

26. In a joint statement, several Member States stressed the importance of a consistent approach and a collective system-wide response to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, anchored in an approach centred on victims and survivors, as well as the role of UN-Women. They commended the Entity for adopting the United Nations protocol on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving implementing partners. They expressed

interest in learning how the Entity adhered to the protocol, and on what systems were in place to monitor all implementing partners. The delegations commended UN-Women for following up on the recommendations of the Deloitte report presented to the Board last year and looked forward to the update on the management response to the recommendations of the independent review during the 2020 annual session of the Executive Board. Delegations called on UN-Women to continue to promote efficient and consistent messaging within the Entity to facilitate the necessary cultural change, including preventing and responding to harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment. They offered their support to the UN-Women in promoting the behaviour changes necessary to make the reform a reality and accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

27. Other individual and group statements welcomed effort to support the United Nations reform process at both the headquarters and the country level and the Entity's initiatives towards enhancing its institutional capacity in this regard. They underscored the significance of the coordination mandate on gender mainstreaming of UN-Women in the context of United Nations Development System reform; progress in adolescent women's and girls' education; the change management process and rationalization of country presence through the ongoing country typology assessments; and efforts to diversify the funding base through pooled and thematic funding strategies, including the role of National Committees. They also expressed support for the Generation Equality preparation process and the Action Coalitions.

28. The delegation of Japan announced the theme of its sixth World Assembly for Women (WAW! with Men), to be held in April 2020 in Tokyo, and looked forward to welcoming the Deputy Executive Director of Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships and to relaying the enthusiasm to the Generation Equality Forum.

IV. Update on the implementation of General Assembly Resolution 72/279

29. The Executive Board was presented with an update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 in the form of a background paper and presentation by the Director of the Coordination Division, supplementing information provided in 2019. Building on the 2019 milestones, UN-Women will focus on the following objectives in 2020:

- Engagement in regional and multi-country office system-wide reviews and ensuring the presence of UN-Women in the field takes into consideration the capacities of the United Nations Development System and the elimination of duplication.
- Ensure the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 takes into account the implications of United Nations Development System repositioning on the corporate strategy of UN-Women and propose adjustments as needed.
- Start development of the new Strategic Plan in close consultation with other United Nations entities to ensure it fully reflects the expectations of the United Nations Development System repositioning.

- Further refine the UN-Women collaborative advantage, based on leveraging partnerships to support greater results for women and girls, including in line with the outcomes of Beijing+25 and the Generation Equality Forum.
- Finalize the UN-Women country typology, including through piloting new approaches to facilitate UN-Women support for national partners and United Nations Country Teams where the Entity is non-resident.
- Support the roll-out of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks in all relevant countries to ensure gender equality perspectives are strongly reflected.

30. Looking ahead, UN-Women will engage closely with key elements of the reform that are still under way, including finalizing the Funding Compact, and the global and regional level chapters of the Management and Accountability Framework. The Entity will optimally deploy its mandate and further advance the United Nations Development System reform agenda, validating its responsiveness to reform and identifying additional opportunities for alignment.

31. Several delegations welcomed the update on the change management process and efforts to increase coherence with the Funding Compact, and urged the Entity to maintain focus on a more streamlined and efficient joint programme delivery to enhance results on the ground.

32. Member States noted the steps taken by UN-Women, to follow-up on commitments of the Funding Compact. They supported its efforts to further engage in pooled funds and elaborate on the possibility of establishing thematic funds. They urged accurate tracking and harmonized reporting of the Funding Compact commitments and intensifying effort to reach the Compact targets. A delegation stressed that joint action should be further enhanced, including through improved definition and measurement of joint results, and strongly encouraged agencies to strive for efficiency gains to ensure that a maximum of aid reaches intended beneficiaries.

33. One Member State from the Africa region expressed concern with the UN-Women decision to close its country office and highlighted the potential risks, such as the potential reversal of achievements made on gender equality in this country.

V. Briefings

A. Midterm review of the Strategic Plan

34. The Director ad interim of the Strategic Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division gave an update on the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The midterm review represented an opportunity to take stock of the achievements to date, reflect on lessons learned and recalibrate the Entity's strategic direction, programming and business processes to intensify its effort and fully achieve the envisioned results in the second half of the Strategic Plan. The midterm review examined the following four core questions, outlining preliminary findings, opportunities/challenges, ongoing efforts and next steps: (1) What are the implications of United Nations development system reforms and other key developments for the UN-Women corporate strategy and forms of implementation? (2) How and where does the UN-Women programmatic focus need to be further improved to increase impact? (3) With limited resources, how

can UN-Women leverage its partnerships approach and United Nations coordination mandate to boost its contribution to the 2030 Agenda? (4) What adjustments are needed to the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (indicators, targets, resources, etc.) to better articulate the changes UN-Women generates, including its efforts to leave no one behind?

35. It was stated that the midterm review would continue to build on complementary internal and external workstreams to gather comprehensive information based on the four questions, including through consultations with the cross-divisional midterm review reference group and all other relevant stakeholders. The progress in these workstreams, as well as evidence from upcoming evaluations and assessments, will be monitored and integrated. External experts will be engaged throughout the process to complement and enhance the final product.

36. Member States advised that the midterm review process should expand the focus beyond achievements to highlight the limitations and challenges going forward, with emphasis on reaching the Sustainable Development Goals in a holistic manner and lowering barriers for joint programming while leaving no one behind. One speaker emphasized the need for UN-Women to undertake the midterm review in close collaboration with the United Nations funds and programmes, taking the full implications of the United Nations Development System reform into account and integrating all assessments to date. In the context of the UN-Women midterm review itself, Member States outlined their expectations for further reflection and clarification on the Entity's coordination role for gender equality in the reformed United Nations Development System, both globally and at the country level. They applauded the Entity's efforts to strengthen its approach to leaving no one behind in terms of programming and with respect to capturing results.

37. Delegations requested advance outlines of the midterm review reports to be made available, preferably in a harmonized format for the common elements, and welcomed the proposal for a joint workshop on the midterm reviews to take place well in advance of the next formal sessions of the Executive Boards, looking forward to more information in this regard.

38. UN-Women was urged to reflect on how the United Nations reforms have impacted the Entity's way of working and affected programmatic priorities, including the impact of humanitarian, peace and development nexus and the advancement of gender equality, all within the context of the midterm review of the Strategic Plan.

39. In a joint statement, several delegations stated that they were relying on the continued leadership of UN-Women to promote reform within the organization and for assurance that country representatives, irrespective of their grade/rank, were informing the performance appraisals of Resident Coordinators and vice versa.

40. With respect to the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, some Member States felt this was the most important instrument for planning and implementation of development activities in partnership with host countries to ensure that human rights and gender equality were mainstreamed throughout country programmes.

B. Operational Response at the Regional Level

41. Accompanied by an introductory video that focused on harmful traditional practices and the importance of a joint regional response and transformational programming, this agenda item was presented by the UN-Women Regional Director for West and Central Africa, covering the operational response of UN-Women in East, South, West and Central Africa.

42. As outlined in the background paper provided to the Board, the UN-Women Africa Strategy 2018–2021 was derived from the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The Regional Director touched on the areas of progress to date and focused on the four strategic outcomes: (1) women lead, participate in and benefit equally from decision-making processes; (2) women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; (3) women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; (4) women and girls contribute to building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from humanitarian action. The Africa Strategy also supported three pan-African cross-regional programmes: (1) ending child marriage in Africa; (2) strengthening the women's movement for Africa's transformation; (3) reducing migration and trafficking of women and girls. While gender statistics for localization of the Sustainable Development Goals covered the regional flagship programme, the Africa Strategy recognized the role of positive social norms as an enabler, improving the alignment of the three UN-Women regional offices in Africa and helping integrate their technical, advisory and policy support in partnership with Member States, Regional Organizations (including the African Union), the Economic Commission for Africa, regional economic communities, civil society organizations and other regional and subregional structures and institutions across the African continent. It also allowed each of the regions to be centres of excellence in the respective thematic areas, allowing them to serve as hubs for knowledge and technical expertise on gender equality and women's empowerment on the continent.

43. A Member State expressed interest in learning about the challenges and opportunities faced by the Entity in the Africa region in implementing the Maputo Protocol, as well as the areas of work with the regional economic communities. The speaker also sought more information on the plans of UN-Women for strengthening the women's movements across the region. Another delegation emphasized the critical importance of close engagement with local leaders order to bring about lasting change starting at the community level.

C. Mobilizing for the Generation Equality Forum

44. The Director of the Civil Society Division presented this agenda item. As mentioned by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director in her opening statement, the Generation Equality Forum was an intergenerational and intersectional gathering for gender equality convened by UN-Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico, in partnership with civil society. Discussions will focus on action and accountability for the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and intersecting emerging issues for gender equality. The Mobilizing Action Coalition blueprint will be developed in Mexico on 7–8 May 2020 and the Action Coalitions will be announced and the road map launched with connection to satellite sessions across the world in France on 7–10 July 2020. The vision and components of the Action Coalitions were outlined, as well

as the six global themes: (1) gender-based violence (2) economic justice and rights; (3) bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights; (4) feminist action for climate justice; (5) technology and innovation for gender equality; and (6) feminist movements and leadership. Each is linked to two or three specific actions, all of which will be detailed in a blueprint.

45. Following the presentation on the Generation Equality Forum, one speaker highlighted the importance of focusing on adolescent and young women, while another noted that the Women, Peace and Security agenda and women in conflict should be considered as topics by the Action Coalitions. One delegation stressed the need to ensure the involvement of women with disabilities in the discussions, including physical access and participation at both the Mexico and France conventions. The role of private sector engagement with the Action Coalitions and their investment to meet the implementing gap from overseas development assistance and other public resources, were underlined and the UN-Women management was requested to consider integrating the priority themes of the six coalitions in the next cycle of the Strategic Plan.

46. Several delegations expressed the hope that with the creation of the Action Coalitions, priorities in the blueprints will also inform the Entity's activities in the coming years, including strategic joint activities with sister agencies.

D. Working methods of the Executive Boards

47. The Secretary of the Executive Board presented the joint response of the secretariats on the working methods of the Executive Boards. The joint paper was presented for the consideration of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women in accordance with the request in paragraph 2 of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board decision 2019/22, paragraph 3 of UNICEF Executive Board decision 2019/20 and paragraph 2 of UN-Women Executive Board decision 2019/13 "to present to the Executive Board for deliberation and consideration at the first regular session 2020 an exemplary annual programme of work, including informal briefings, for each of the three options presented in the joint response, with corresponding explanatory narratives on the envisaged changes and their expected effect on Board oversight, effectiveness and efficiency, as well as further elaboration on the listed issues of joint relevance and interest to all Boards." In preparing this paper, the secretariats attempted to present practicable indicative annual workplans for each option based on their respective annual workplans. The attempt at harmonization by the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women took into consideration the different mandates, corporate models, funding modalities and organizational and operational structures of the five entities under the three Executive Boards.

48. In a joint statement, some Member States welcomed the joint paper of the secretariats of the Executive Boards, recalling that ongoing discussions on possible ways of enhancing the working methods of the Executive Boards arose from the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. They emphasized that it was a process mandated by Member States and should continue to be driven by Member States.

49. They considered the paper provided by the secretariats for this session to be an important contribution towards initiating the Board's deliberations on two essential points: the role of the Joint Meeting of the Boards and the efficiency

and effectiveness of Board sessions. With respect to the role of the Joint Meeting of the Boards, the delegations conveyed their aspiration for this forum to be dedicated to discussions of agenda items of common relevance to all Boards, which would limit duplication of discussions in individual Boards and enhance cross-Board coordination, while the decision-making capacity of these agenda items could still be maintained within the individual Boards.

50. Regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of Board sessions currently in place, delegations felt the need for an evidence-based approach. They looked forward to further discussions on how formal Board sessions were organized and alluded to a pending draft decision on this subject to be adopted at the conclusion of the current session of the UN-Women Executive Board. The delegations stated that discussions should focus on the content of the agenda of the formal Board sessions. Delegations were of the view that the three Boards should meet as required for (1) the entities to obtain the mandates they need from their Boards; and (2) the Member States to exercise their strategic oversight function, aiming for quality oversight. They appealed to all fellow Member States to work towards an action-oriented process, placing strategic discussion and guidance at the heart of formal Board sessions.

VI. Audit matters

51. The Director ad interim of the Management and Administration Division introduced the financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018. This was the eighth unqualified audit opinion for UN-Women since its inception. Total revenue was \$404.7 million and total expenses were \$380.3 million. The Entity recorded a surplus of \$24.5 million for the year ended 31 December 2018, compared to a surplus of \$39.6 million for 2017. The surplus was mainly due to increased revenue from other resources (non-core), which will be spent on programme expenditure in future years. The delivery rate for 2018 programme expenditure from other resources was 80.9 per cent, against a target of 85 per cent. In outlining revenue and expenditure by funding source, it was noted that the increase in voluntary contributions from donors in 2018 of \$23.7 million was represented by an increase in regular resources (core) of \$2.6 million and an increase in other resources (non-core) of \$21.1 million.

52. The Director of External Audit (Chile) presented the report of the Board of Auditors. In the opinion of the Board of Auditors, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of UN-Women as at 31 December 2018 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year ended on that date, in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). In its overall conclusion, the Board of Auditors did not identify significant errors or omissions from the review of financial records of UN-Women for the year ended 31 December 2018.

53. The Board of Auditors concluded that UN-Women provides and applies controls that allow reasonable mitigation of the risks present. However, the Board of Auditors identified scope for improvement in areas such as field procurement activities, programmes and operations, liquidation of partner advances and compliance with rules, regulations and instructions at both headquarters and the field offices.

54. The Director ad interim of the Strategy, Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division gave an update on the implementation of the

recommendations of the Board of Auditors. As of January 2020, of the 12 audit recommendations issued, actions had been completed for 11 out of 12 of the 2018 audit recommendations (92 per cent). The Board of Auditors assessed 7 of 11 audit recommendations as implemented, with four pending assessment. Regarding the implementation status of audit recommendations from previous years, as of January 2020, actions had been completed for six out of 10 recommendations for 2016 and 2017 (60 per cent). The Board of Auditors assessed three out of six audit recommendations as implemented, with three pending assessment. The four recommendations in progress were: (1) finalize country typology; (2) enhance Audit Coordination Unit capacity; (3) improve linkage between the Resource Management and ATLAS systems; and (4) establish a policy for project management and accounting for ineligible expenditure.

55. Delegations welcomed the eighth unqualified audit opinion received by UN-Women, showing funds were being used in accordance with accounting standards. They applauded the increase in revenues by 7 per cent in 2018, noting with concern the modest increase in unearmarked contributions, and called on Member States to offer high-quality contributions to UN-Women. The Entity was requested to provide more information on funding shortages and alternative financing arrangements and was urged to continue making an effort at country and regional levels to comply with newly strengthened procedures and regulations on fraud risk assessment, the selection of partners and the monitoring of project audits. Other speakers highlighted the importance of following a risk-based approach to internal and external audit matters.

VII. Joint preliminary comprehensive proposal on the cost recovery policy

56. In UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board decision 2018/21, UNICEF Executive Board decision 2018/21 and UN-Women Executive Board decision 2018/6, the Executive Boards directed the agencies to: (a) present a preliminary comprehensive proposal on the cost recovery policy for consideration by the Executive Board at its first regular session in 2020, with a view to presenting a final comprehensive proposal for the decision of the Executive Board at its second regular session in 2020; (b) carry out a comprehensive review of cost recovery rates, as part of the comprehensive proposal; and (c) present an assessment of the reasons why full cost recovery is not currently being achieved, as part of the comprehensive proposal. The current joint report is in direct response to the above requests. In UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board decision 2019/21, UNICEF Executive Board decision 2019/28 and UN-Women Executive Board decision 2019/12, the Executive Boards requested additional information on recommendation three (regarding the independent oversight and assurance functions). The joint report responded to the request, describing the overall importance of cost recovery while providing additional analysis and an impact assessment, with (a) stronger argumentation of why cost recovery is relevant; (b) the impact of the differentiated rates; and (c) the rationale for the separate budget lines for independent oversight and assurance activities.

57. In a joint statement, several Member States expressed their full support for the four agencies leading the harmonized approach on rates, cost classification and methodology for their cost recovery policy and requested that they provide further disaggregated data to be included in future financial reports. They

emphasized the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review call for full cost recovery to remain in focus, avoiding cross-subsidization as much as possible, including by closing the loophole on differentiated rates, increasing policy compliance and transparency on waivers granted.

VIII. Structured Dialogue on Financing

58. The Director of the Strategic Partnerships Division presented options for improving the quality of the Structured Dialogue on Financing. This presentation and background paper were provided to the Executive Board in response to its decision UNW/2019/11, which requested that UN-Women present “options on improving the quality of the Structured Dialogue on Financing.” Structured dialogues were taking place in the context of an agreed Funding Compact that clarified the interdependent responsibilities and commitments of Member States and the United Nations development system to improve funding in support of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In line with the Compact, the background paper outlined several options as the basis for further discussions with the Executive Board to ensure the efficient and effective financing of the UN-Women Strategic Plan. The options proposed were: (1) strengthen the link between results and resources; (a) align financing dialogues with the Funding Compact; (3) enable participatory dialogue; and (4) encourage diverse perspectives in financing dialogues.

59. Member States applauded UN-Women for its concrete and innovative proposals, in line with the Funding Compact commitments, and presented ideas to further enhance dialogue. A speaker also underscored the significance of harmonization with respect to the Funding Compact and asked UN-Women to provide more data on required regular and other resources for each of the outcomes of the Strategic Plan to better identify funding gaps. They urged country and regional offices to seek and inform on opportunities for soft earmarking whenever possible.

IX. Closing of the session

60. In closing, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director reminded delegations particularly those from the Global South, to encourage their countries to consider participating effectively in the Generation Equality Forum, especially by making themselves available as either leaders or participants in the Action Coalitions.

61. She took this opportunity to clarify that UN-Women will invite women Heads of State to the Generation Equality Forum in Mexico, which will focus on leadership and celebrating women leaders. She urged countries with women Heads of State or Vice-Presidents to encourage them to attend. Otherwise, participation at a ministerial level would also be welcomed.

62. At the Generation Equality Forum in France, on the other hand, UN-Women would welcome the participation of Heads of State. However, the intention is to announce ground-breaking contributions. She stressed that this was a civil society forum, in which Heads of State would participate as partners in a show of their support for civil society. The General Assembly in September in New York will be the forum for Heads of State.

63. While acknowledging some specific issues raised by delegations, she appreciated their comments and thanked them for an efficient and fruitful first regular session of the Board. She also looked forward to the participation of Member States in the upcoming Commission on the Status of Women and to a strong outcome.

64. The President concluded by conveying his appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, her management team and entire staff for their responsiveness and for providing the Board with the substantial support and assistance on clarifications of issues raised.

The session was then adjourned.

Annex I

Proposed provisional agenda and workplan for the Annual Session 22–24 June 2020

Note by the Executive Board Secretariat

Provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters
2. Annual Report of the Executive Director
3. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279
4. Policy and programme matters
5. Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting
6. Update on the Management response to the Independent review of UN-Women policies and procedures for tackling Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH)
7. Audit matters
8. Evaluation
9. Other matters

Provisional workplan

<i>Day</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Subject</i>
Monday, 22 June	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.		Opening of the session
		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women Organizational matters • Adoption of the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the annual session 2020 • Adoption of the report of the first regular session 2020
		2	Annual Report of the Executive Director <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, including the midterm review
	1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.		
	3 p.m. – 6 p.m.	2	Annual Report of the Executive Director (cont'd)

	<i>Post-meeting</i>		<i>Informal consultations on draft decisions</i>
Tuesday, 23 June	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.	3	Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279
		4	Policy and programme matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the operational response at the regional level
		5	Follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting
	1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.		<i>Informal consultations on draft decisions</i>
	3 p.m. – 6 p.m.	6	Update on the Management response to the Independent review of UN-Women's policies and procedures for tackling Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH)
Wednesday, 24 June	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.		<i>Informal consultations on draft decisions</i>
		7	Audit matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the internal audit and investigation activities for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2019 • Report of the Advisory Committee on Oversight (ACO) for the period of 1 January to 31 December 2019 • Management responses • Management response to Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reports issued in 2019
		8	Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the evaluation function of UN-Women, 2019 • Management perspective
		9	Other matters
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Closing of the session

- Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women
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Annex II

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board

Decision 2020/1 – Working methods of the Executive Board

The Executive Board,

1. *Recalls* decision 2019/8 of the Executive Board of UN-Women on working methods of the Executive Board and reiterates its requests therein;

2. *Takes note* of the Joint Response by the Executive Board Secretariat on the Working Methods of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP presented in accordance with the request of UN-Women Executive Board Decision 2019/13 and the related decisions of the other Executive Boards;

3. *Takes note* with appreciation of the revised Guidelines for the field visits of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women, and for the joint field visits of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP;

4. *Requests* the Secretariat of the Executive Board of UN-Women, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and UNICEF, to submit to Member States, ahead of the annual session 2020, with a view to conclude discussions on the working methods no later than the second regular session, a concrete proposal for a rearranged annual workplan of the Executive Board for 2021, which includes daily schedules of the three sessions and informal consultations, supported by a detailed comparative analysis of potential implications on items for decisions, overall costs, efficiency and oversight, with a view to reducing the workload of the second regular session by shifting agenda items among formal sessions, as appropriate;

5. *Further recalls* Decision 2018/7 and stresses the need to continue to harmonize the consideration of common agenda items across the respective Executive Board agendas and requests the Secretariat of the Executive Board of UN-Women, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and UNICEF, to reflect this in the proposal for a rearranged workplan for 2021;

6. *Recalls* decision 2018/7 and requests UN-Women management to answer during the formal session all the questions raised by Member States and, in cases of having unanswered questions, to distribute a written response within a reasonable time frame in a way that would not overburden the Secretariat of the UN-Women Executive Board;

7. *Takes note* with appreciation of the current tracking system of the decisions of the Executive Board and requests the Secretariat to put the full text of decisions into the system so that Member States have full oversight on follow-up and fulfilment of decisions, starting in 2019.

Decision 2020/2 – Financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018 and report of the Board of Auditors

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for the financial period that ended on 31 December 2018;
 2. *Takes note* of the eighth unqualified audit opinion issued by the Board of Auditors on the financial statements of UN-Women for the year ended 31 December 2018;
 3. *Notes* the areas for further improvement as referenced in the Board of Auditors report for the financial period that ended on the 31 of December 2018 and in this regard calls on UN-Women management to further strengthen governance, risk management, internal controls and accountability within the Entity;
 4. *Notes* with concern the outstanding audit recommendations from the 2016 and 2017 reports of the United Nations Board of Auditors and the associated lower implementation rate for the year ended 31 December 2018 and further requests UN-Women to fully implement the outstanding recommendations;
 5. *Requests* UN-Women to effectively address the areas highlighted for improvement in the Report of the Board of Auditors;
 6. *Takes note* of the management response of UN-Women to the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for the financial period that ended on 31 December 2018.
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