



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

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Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Organizational matters

Report on the second regular session of 2020, 15 to 16 September 2020

I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session of 2020 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held virtually via the Zoom platform due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, from 15 to 16 September 2020.
2. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the second regular session ([UNW/2020/L.4](#)) and approved the report on its annual session held from 22 to 23 June 2020 ([UNW/2020/6](#)). The Executive Board approved the provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session of 2021 to be held on 15 and 16 February, and discussed the draft annual workplan for 2021, in preparation for its adoption at the first regular session of 2021.
3. The Executive Board adopted four decisions: Decision 2020/7 – Structured Dialogue on Financing the results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2018–2021; Decision 2020/8 – Report on the Joint comprehensive proposal on the cost-recovery policy; Decision 2020/9 – Working Methods of the Executive Board; and Decision 2020/10 – Evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which are contained in the annex of this report.

II. Opening statements

4. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, thanked the President and the Bureau for their unwavering support of the work of UN-Women, particularly their efforts in strengthening the strategic focus of the Executive Board's deliberations and oversight function, especially during a time of uncertainty and turbulence.
5. She conveyed her appreciation for the Executive Board's support in commemorating the 10-year anniversary of the creation of UN-Women. She noted that the progress made for women and girls was the collective success of all



stakeholders including Member States, civil society, the United Nations system and many other partners who had joined the effort. She cautioned that those successes were currently at risk, with the continuing inequalities faced by women and girls worsening due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. She called for the support of Member States in taking pre-emptive action against alarming projections, which showed that by 2021, for every 100 men aged 25 to 34 living in extreme poverty, there would be 118 women – a gap which was expected to increase to 121 women per 100 men by 2030. Calling attention to the then upcoming High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Beijing+25 on 1 October 2020, she urged all governments to be represented by their Heads of State and Government if possible to signal their strongest commitment to gender equality, and make declarations of actions and commitments to collaboratively work to avert the above scenario.

6. Reflecting on progress made since 1995 on advancing gender equality, the head of the Entity cited several concrete examples including the creation of UN-Women in 2010. Mention was also made of civil society and the women's movement, which were key players in Beijing in 1995, and in bringing UN-Women into existence. She stressed that they remained fundamental partners in the work of the Entity, continuing to be the mouthpiece of women, resilient and resourceful, despite being inadequately resourced. While the pandemic threatened these major institutions, with generous help and collective efforts, the international community could ensure that they continued to be key actors.

7. The head of the Entity also underlined the importance of gender parity for Planet 50-50 by 2030 and reiterated the necessity of the United Nations and governments' leadership. In this regard, UN-Women's system-wide mandate to lead and coordinate United Nations gender equality efforts had never been more important. On the third anniversary of the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, UN-Women would launch field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines, with recommendations on how to accelerate efforts to reach parity at field level. UN-Women would also launch civil society shadow reporting on the overall parity strategy to increase transparency and accountability.

8. Twenty-five years previously, discrimination against women had been acknowledged as being intensified by intersecting aspects such as sexual identity, ethnicity, age and disability. The aspect of race had fully resurfaced. She emphasized that UN-Women remained determined to help make the United Nations fit for purpose in this regard. She spoke of spearheading active discussion on racism, including within the leadership of the United Nations system, following the Secretary-General's call. She also stressed the Entity's commitment to addressing real and/or perceived discrimination as well as any racial discrimination in recruitment and promotion, aiming for a more diverse workforce with adequate representation of African people and people of African descent. This pertained to better distribution across regions and levels, particularly at headquarters, where about 60 per cent of the workforce emanated from one regional group of Member States. She underlined the need for the collective support of the Executive Board and all Member States in ensuring that changes were meaningful, as well as in monitoring and supporting the career progression of staff of all races from General Service to Director level. She asked the Executive Board, under the President's leadership, "to make sure that race and gender are one of the most visible intersectionalities of this moment".

9. On the issue of violence experienced during the pandemic, the head of UN-Women highlighted that 146 Member States had responded positively to the Secretary-General's appeal for a global end to violence everywhere. Sexual violence, online sexual harassment and harmful traditional practices were on the rise across the world, and were having a severe impact on marginalized women and girls. UN-Women continued to help address the issue of sexual harassment, exploitation

and assault, such as through the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.

10. As part of the partnership between the European Union and the United Nations, the Spotlight Initiative had allocated an additional US\$9 million to 44 civil society organizations in sub-Saharan Africa through the United Nations Trust Fund, with a primary focus on institutional strengthening, risk mitigation and survivor recovery during the pandemic. The head of UN-Women urged civil society to avail themselves of the call for proposals by the United Nations Trust Fund, which was expected towards the end of September 2020.

11. At the institutional level, the Entity was reinforcing existing mechanisms to address all possible challenges to combat sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse as part of its contribution to system-wide efforts. In addition, UN-Women was participating in country responses under the Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordination, such as awareness-raising and risk assessments, and joining system-wide efforts, such as development of country-specific guidance notes, and centralized reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations through an electronic real-time tool.

12. UN-Women was actively advocating for national fiscal stimulus packages to adopt a gender perspective in their design, and was working on influencing the Financing for Development agenda through key partners and constituencies such as finance ministers and multilateral development banks. This could be seen in UN-Women's work with the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office), in which UN-Women had successfully advocated for the establishment of gender markers and financial targets. One example was the Secretary-General's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, in which 61 per cent of the best proposals had gender equality as their principal objective, meeting and surpassing the 30 per cent target for financial allocation.

13. Highlighting the need for the Entity to be strong and well-funded, the Executive Director sought the Board's support to meet the integrated budget 2020–2021 revenue projections for the full implementation of the Strategic Plan. In the previous year, revenue had reached a record US\$527.4 million, but the share of regular resources to other resources had declined significantly, from 44 per cent in 2015 to 28.5 per cent in 2019. In 2020, non-core revenue already reached 95 per cent of the target. That was largely a result of generous contributions from the European Commission and the European Union/United Nations Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls. However, she cautioned that the Entity was likely to face a deficit in the target for regular resources of over US\$50 million in 2020. She urged Member States to channel more contributions towards regular resources and provide more flexible and predictable revenue for other resources, in line with the Funding Compact. She took the opportunity to express appreciation to partners for making payments earlier in the year and for their additional support, which had enabled a rapid response to COVID-19, and acknowledged the Governments of Denmark, France, Finland, Germany and Luxembourg for their increased contributions to regular resources. She urged those that had not yet made regular resource contributions in 2020 to do so.

14. The Executive Director thanked the Governments of France and Mexico for remaining committed to the Generation Equality initiative, which was postponed to the first half of 2021 due to the COVID-19 crisis and would be reshaped to address the pandemic's impact with a responsive regional footprint that integrated the Entity's COVID-19 activities and broadened stakeholder engagement.

15. She concluded her statement by recalling major 2020 anniversaries, such as the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the fifth anniversary of the 2030 Agenda, the tenth anniversary of UN-Women, 20 years since the adoption of Security

Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, while emphasizing that women and girls around the world continued to depend on the international community's collective support.

16. Prior to opening the floor to interventions from Member States, the President of the Executive Board, Jukka Salovaara (Finland), congratulated UN-Women on its tenth anniversary. He thanked the Executive Director for her comprehensive statement, particularly her outline of the progress made since 1995 by the international community in its quest for gender equality and women's empowerment. He echoed her sentiment on the significance of core funding for UN-Women, taking the opportunity to remind the Executive Board to support the Entity. He was particularly appreciative of the firm approach taken on addressing racial discrimination within the Entity.

17. Thanking the Executive Director for her comprehensive and informative statement, Member States also congratulated UN-Women on its tenth anniversary celebration and expressed appreciation for both its work and its agile response to the COVID-19 crisis. Showcasing achievements and cautioning on the challenges faced at national levels, some delegates highlighted the twenty-fifth anniversary of the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the upcoming Generation Equality Forum and its action coalitions, which they regarded as welcome additions to existing international commitments.

18. In a joint statement, several delegates emphasized that COVID-19 was testing the limits of the United Nations development system (UNDS) reform and its implementation. As the international community prepared to build back better and greener, more concerted action on the following five key areas was needed: 1) coordination and collaboration through policy mainstreaming and joint activities under the leadership of Resident Coordinators, focusing on comparative strengths; 2) efficiency, and potential improvements using the findings of the Business Innovation Group; 3) the full implementation of the Funding Compact, which was another cornerstone of United Nations reform, including the setting of comprehensive baselines, milestones and targets for all relevant indicators; 4) programme alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the development of which the Entity was urged to engage in as part of gender mainstreaming work; and 5) the full implementation of and regular updates on the progress of the implementation of the Management Accountability Framework.

19. Member States highlighted the importance of data-driven programming. One speaker inquired about how UN-Women could further improve its coordination efforts in the system's COVID-19 response. Another underlined the importance of respect for national ownership and domestic regulations, and of refraining from promoting abortion as an essential service in COVID-19 response planning. One delegate expressed the wish to see the language used in UN-Women official reports agreed at the intergovernmental level. Concern was also raised that the Generation Equality Forum had not been formally agreed to by all Executive Board members.

III. Structured dialogue on financing

20. Deputy Executive Director Anita Bhatia introduced the agenda items on the structured dialogue on financing and on the joint comprehensive proposal on the cost-recovery policy. She underlined the commitment of UN-Women to further operationalize the principles of the United Nations reform process, particularly through better implementation of the Funding Compact. She highlighted the need to strengthen collaboration with Executive Board members to improve the sustainability,

predictability and flexibility that core funding ensured while continuing to make efforts towards broadening and diversifying the funding base. Members should also seek to influence the direction of funding made by others, towards the promotion of gender equality.

21. The Director of the Strategic Partnerships Division presented the report on the structured dialogue on financing. The ongoing structured dialogue on financing served to support organizational effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The overarching objective of the dialogue was to ensure that the integrated budgets of UN-Women for the biennia 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 were fully financed in support of the comprehensive implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

22. In accordance with UN-Women Executive Board decisions on the structured dialogue on financing, the report presented aimed to demonstrate better alignment of resources with the expected results in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. It took into account recent discussions and recommendations to improve the quality of structured dialogues on financing, and steps taken to harmonize approaches to the dialogues and Funding Compact reporting by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and UN-Women.

23. In 2019, the total revenue of UN-Women from all sources had increased by 30 per cent to US\$527.4 million. Compared with 2018, regular resources had decreased by 4 per cent to US\$143 million and other resources had increased by 52 per cent to \$357.5 million, with the remaining funding received as assessed contributions and other revenue. As mentioned by the Executive Director in her opening statement, the large increase in other resources in 2019 was primarily due to funding received from the European Commission for the European Union/United Nations global Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls. Alongside the upward trajectory in other resources, there had been a shortfall in regular resources of US\$57 million, or a 28.5 per cent deficit against the Executive Board-endorsed 2019 integrated budget.

24. UN-Women appreciated the significant increase in other resources revenue in 2019, and remained ready to work closely with its major funding partners to address the declining share of regular resources, which had dropped below the Funding Compact threshold of 30 per cent in 2019. In the current biennium 2020–2021, for which the annual regular resource integrated budget was set at a relatively conservative US\$200 million to support normative support functions, United Nations system coordination, and operational activities, the Entity sought continued support for the financing of its work to enable the achievement of its mandate.

25. Delegates encouraged UN-Women to continue diversifying its funding sources, including through continued collaboration with international financial institutions. UN-Women was urged to make good use of innovative financing mechanisms and commended for achieving the funding milestone of US\$500 million. Member States expressed concern for the decline in core funding. In a joint statement, several Member States highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic had heightened the importance of core funding, urging UN-Women to update the Executive Board on efforts made to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 and to expand its donor base, particularly in the private sector. Delegates called for the structured dialogue on financing to be convened throughout the year to ensure sustainable financing of the Strategic Plan. In their view, it was important to explore ways of expanding the core donor base, such as further investment in national committees and other innovative fundraising initiatives, as well as to improve the recognition and visibility of donors providing core contributions. UN-Women was also commended for expending 14 per

cent of total programme expenditure, or US\$45.7 million out of US\$326 million, on joint programmes, which almost met the Strategic Plan annual milestone of 15 per cent.

26. One delegate recognized the Entity's efforts in the areas of North-North, South-South and triangular partnership, as well as in financing targeting women's health, economic empowerment and food security. They looked forward to being kept informed of developments in this regard.

IV. Joint comprehensive proposal on the cost-recovery policy

27. In Decision 2018/21 of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA, decision 2018/21 of the Executive Board of UNICEF and Decision 2018/6 of the Executive Board of UN-Women, agencies were directed to: (a) jointly review existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs, with a view to further harmonize their approaches by determining common definitions of cost categories and corresponding activities and functions at a granular level, while taking into account individual agencies' different business models; (b) present a preliminary comprehensive proposal on the cost-recovery policy for consideration by the Executive Boards at their first regular sessions in 2020, and present a final comprehensive proposal for the decision of the Executive Boards at their second regular sessions in 2020; (c) review cost-recovery rates in a comprehensive manner, as part of the comprehensive proposal, and (d) present an assessment of the reasons why full cost recovery is not currently being achieved, as part of the comprehensive proposal. Based on the Executive Board's decisions about the four agencies and subsequent extensive deliberations, the agencies developed the joint comprehensive policy on cost recovery. The policy was premised on a harmonized cost-classification and cost-recovery framework and its implementation was intended to be straightforward and transparent.

28. Taking the floor in response to the presentation, several Member States jointly expressed appreciation for the revised policy, which aimed to improve harmonization, transparency and collaboration, and commended UN-Women for leading the way within the United Nations system. They urged UN-Women to expand the policy within the system and to establish a review and monitoring mechanism, including annual reporting on cost-recovery rates. One delegate inquired about plans to prepare for leaner years ahead, considering the COVID-19 crisis. UN-Women highlighted three ways in which it was preparing for lean years: 1) repurposing savings from travel and workshops, 2) expanding funding opportunities by further exploring joint programming and leveraging other agencies' resources and 3) forming new partnerships, including with international financial institutions.

V. Strategic Plan

29. The Executive Board was presented with the road map for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and briefed on progress on the implementation of the Common Chapter of the Strategic Plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women. Deputy Executive Director Anita Bhatia explained that UN-Women would seek to harness collaboration through the Common Chapter and expand beyond the four agencies involved. Wide consultations would be a key principle in the development of the Strategic Plan. There was a need for joint action given the conclusions of the Beijing+25 review process which showed some progress on gender equality, but also serious challenges.

30. In anticipation of the next Strategic Plan, UN-Women would sharpen its programmatic focus, building on the principles of change management and focusing on influencing other actors to maximize impact. The next Strategic Plan would be rights-based, responsive and evidence-based, acquired through a thorough consultative process on the global, regional and country level, and coordinated with partners and the United Nations system. It would be submitted for adoption by the Executive Board in September 2021 and a draft would be presented to its Annual Session 2021. In relation to the Common Chapter, it was explained that in response to the Executive Board's requests, a common tracking framework had been developed with the aim of illustrating how the entities worked together, drawing exclusively from existing indicators in the current Strategic Plans to allow for harmonized monitoring.

31. The floor was opened to interventions by Member States, who welcomed the road map and appreciated the open and consultative process. It was reiterated that the consultative process should bear in mind national priorities.

32. One speaker found plans for further operationalizing the Common Chapter in the next Strategic Plan to be a positive move and welcomed the tracking framework. One delegate underscored the importance of measuring the results of the joint work and building on lessons learned, and welcomed strategic dialogues with other agencies. Another speaker endorsed the Entity's active role in coordinating with other Common Chapter agencies and consulting with the independent evaluation office. Support was expressed for ensuring that the next Strategic Plan was rights- and evidence-based, and it was also noted that it must be people-centred. Plans for regular updates with Member States were welcomed. One delegate highlighted the importance of building on the current Strategic Plan so that its five outcomes remained relevant and of using intergovernmentally agreed terminology to ensure that the next Strategic Plan worked for all.

33. While commending the underlying principles of the road map towards the next Strategic Plan, one delegate underlined the importance of extensive consultations at the local level with governments and civil society, requesting further information on plans for such consultations.

34. The Secretariat responded that the field focus towards the next Strategic Plan was critical and had been made even more significant by the pandemic. Regional Directors would be taking the lead in ensuring that local stakeholders were heard. It was reiterated that work beyond the four Common Chapter agencies was already being done, with the coordination mandate of the Entity being leveraged and the plans of other entities being influenced, especially plans regarding gender mainstreaming of the socioeconomic response to the COVID-19 crisis.

35. Deputy Executive Director Åsa Regnér stressed the importance of the priorities of the next Strategic Plan being driven by a strong knowledge base. In 2020, UN-Women were taking stock of the state of gender equality in the world through the Beijing+25 review, national reports, the Secretary-General's report and the political declaration of the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. By analysing this knowledge base, UN-Women would be able to identify where value could be added and where its work was most needed. The need for greater focus on the role of men and the issue of masculinity in driving change was also cited as an area that should be reflected in the next Strategic Plan. Furthermore, multiple dynamics would be taken into consideration as the plans of the next Strategic Plan advanced, such as the current COVID-19 crisis and its impacts, conflicts and crisis, the technical revolution and climate change.

VI. Update on the working methods of the Executive Boards

36. The Secretary of the Executive Board highlighted that UN-Women was the coordinating agency on all joint efforts of the Executive Board during the drafting of the joint document and played a key role in ensuring that the process was highly consultative and cooperative and in line with the United Nations reform. The three main objectives of Member States were to: 1) reduce the agenda/time frame of the second regular session as requested by Member States, since the schedule of the second regular session coincided with the United Nations General Assembly; 2) harmonize agendas among the three Executive Boards and 3) strengthen the efficiency and oversight of the Executive Boards. If approved, the report proposal would ensure 100 per cent harmonization of all agenda items among the Executive Boards, which would strengthen their horizontal oversight function in the spirit of United Nations reforms.

37. On behalf of the Bureau, the President thanked the Secretariat of the UN-Women Executive Board for their hard work as the year's coordinating agency on the effort and agreed that UN-Women had been a driving and unifying force in the harmonization process.

38. One delegate expressed appreciation for the creation of the joint document and indicated their wish to reserve the right to revisit the days allocated to each session to facilitate their capital's participation in the sessions, which they considered paramount to the Executive Board's oversight function.

39. The Secretary clarified that the days allocated to Executive Board sessions in 2021 were only indicative and would be discussed with the Bureau ahead of time. Schedule changes in either direction were therefore ever possible.

VII. Evaluation

40. The Director of Independent Evaluation and Audit Services presented the meta-synthesis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2019. The presentation was in line with Decision 2020/4 to bring the language of the policy closer to that of the Strategic Plan. It presented key highlights of the meta-synthesis report, including the fact that the meta-synthesis had reviewed 68 evaluations to identify trends according to the four effectiveness outputs.

41. The meta-synthesis underlined that UN-Women played a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and identifying factors that hindered results. On partnerships, it highlighted that the alignment of programming with existing government programming increased ownership. On good practices, it found that identification of strong local partners was crucial. Weak partner capacity and quick staff turnover impacted the implementation of programming. Good practice indicated that knowledge products were enablers of success, especially if they reached the right people. Some challenges that impeded successful implementation included weak partner capacity, lack of adequate in-house investment, overburdening and high turnover of staff, and insufficient funding.

42. Management indicated that the meta-synthesis served as a highly useful tool in working towards a more effective and efficient UN-Women and that it would continue to strive towards more streamlined and efficient systems, as well as high-quality programmes and policy guidance, both internally and for partners, to strengthen their capacities and knowledge generation and create evidence-based solutions. It reiterated that it would work to ensure that strained financial and human resources were used in the most effective manner, including through the change management

process and the allocation of core resources across the Entity. Management further emphasized that effectively implementing its coordination mandate would provide an opportunity to drive change on a wider scale by influencing the rest of the system, and push the mandate of gender equality and the empowerment of women forward. On results-based management, work continued to fine-tune assistance systems and ensure greater linkages between them, and to initiate a comprehensive portfolio review process to further strengthen this area.

43. One Member State expressed disappointment that UN-Women had not used intergovernmentally agreed terminology in the meta-synthesis report and inquired about why the meta-synthesis had been based on data from 2017–2019 rather than from the most recent fiscal year.

44. UN-Women was commended for many positive actions including increased collaboration within the United Nations family, leveraging its comparative advantages, and seeking to identify the reason for the Entity's leadership of the Gender Theme Groups having not been more successful. Several Member States, in a joint regional response, expressed appreciation for efforts made to align the Evaluation Policy with the current Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

45. There was a need to improve capacity on results-based management, such as by improving the utility of the Results-Based Management System (as well as staff capacity in that area).

46. Deputy Executive Director Anita Bhatia reassured the Executive Board that the proposals put forward by Member States were well noted, highlighting the need to work with Resident Coordinators to prioritize the Gender Theme Groups and collaborate within the United Nations Country Teams so that they received the attention they needed and deserved. She added that the Entity's leadership of those Theme Groups had varied from region to region. UN-Women would be focusing on intensifying programme management training on programme cycles and results-based management. The Director of Evaluation underlined that management had provided good reflection on results-based management and leadership of Gender Theme Groups. Attaining better results came down to making investments and having the right capacity on the ground, as well as the ability of UN-Women to work through and with Resident Coordinators. It was clarified that the meta-synthesis took the years 2017–2019 into account, thus providing a basis of multiple years for analysis and identification of trends.

VIII. Address by the Chair of United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Staff Council and management action

47. The UN-Women Staff Council representative, Sonya Thimmaiah, presented a statement on behalf of the Chair, conveying condolences to colleagues who had lost loved ones to COVID-19. The Staff Council expressed concerns about the increased workload and challenges to work-life balance as well as the risks associated with returning to the office. She noted that colleagues had experienced suicidal thoughts and depression. The Staff Council had participated in internal working groups and appreciated the flexible working modality. It highlighted that staff with children had assumed increased care responsibilities. It also underscored the importance of the mass movement against racism and expressed that until the arrival of that movement in recent months, insufficient attention had been paid to race bias and discrimination

in UN-Women. A truly inclusive workplace was important, and the Staff Council welcomed a culture change, particularly on biases in recruitment. The Staff Council counted on support from the donor community to achieve such a culture change and to ensure better recruitment of international staff from underrepresented countries in the global south. It called for equal duty of care principles to be applied to both staff and non-staff, thereby adjusting the shortcoming of certain contract modalities.

48. The Executive Director responded, highlighting that the Staff Council provided much-needed guidance to UN-Women management. She was proud of the members of the Staff Council, who worked hard for the welfare of colleagues. She reiterated that 2020 had been a challenging year and presented multiple additional trials for UN-Women staff. While management tried to accommodate the needs of its workforce, she acknowledged that more could be done to improve work–life balance, an area on which management intended to continue working with the Staff Council. The Executive Director reiterated that UN-Women had been supportive and offered maximum flexibility. She mentioned with great concern the extent of the impact of the crisis on staff including deep loneliness and suicidal thoughts, further stressing the need to find unintrusive ways to check in with colleagues. On race relations, the head of the Entity reiterated that the Staff Council had been supporting UN-Women as it had been taking proactive steps to address serious challenges, and emphasized management’s commitment to ensure that race and gender were handled in a mutually reinforcing manner. On contract modalities, management welcomed the guidance provided by the Staff Council.

IX. Closing

49. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked the President for his efficient leadership of the session and the Vice-Presidents for their contributions and skilful facilitation, which had led to the adoption of the draft decisions. She also took the opportunity to respond to the various comments raised on specific agenda items, and thanked Member States for their cooperation and collaboration which had allowed for fruitful dialogue, and for marking the tenth anniversary of UN-Women. She expressed her appreciation for the trust and confidence built over the years between the Executive Board and UN-Women, praising the openness of discussions with the Staff Council, which she opined was even more significant given the COVID-19 crisis.

50. On the issue of funding, she looked forward to working with Member States to achieve a better balance between core funds and non-core funds, recognizing that the COVID-19 crisis would impact on resource mobilization, since no country had been left untouched by the financial crisis that it had created. She appreciated those Member States who had contributed generously to UN-Women in the intervening period, enabling the Entity to move agilely. She reiterated that UN-Women remained fully committed to increasing resource mobilization efforts and outreach to the private sector, raising not only financial resources, but also non-financial support to avert significant expenses. She appreciatively acknowledged the positive comments made by several Member States on UN-Women’s response to the COVID-19 crisis, and the flexibility demonstrated by donors that had made their agile response possible, while pledging to continue working closely with the United Nations system to ensure that the both COVID-19 response and recovery efforts were gender-responsive.

51. The Executive Director was thankful for delegates’ encouragement on the progress made by the Entity on the implementation of its Strategic Plan, as highlighted in the midterm review. She reiterated that in spite of the magnitude of challenges that 2020 had brought, UN-Women was committed to maintaining

momentum on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. She looked forward to marking that anniversary on 1 October, and to the Generation Equality Forum and its outcome in the following year.

52. She closed by thanking the President, the Bureau, the rest of the Executive Board, her workforce and the Executive Board Secretary and Secretariat for their tireless work – especially over the past two days of virtual engagement – and for the appreciation expressed on the Entity’s tenth anniversary.

53. The President of the Executive Board thanked the Executive Director, her workforce including the Executive Board Secretariat, and all delegates before officially declaring the session closed.

Annex

Decisions adopted at the second regular session of 2020

2020/7

Structured Dialogue on Financing the results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2018–2021

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note of* the report on the Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 (UNW 2020/7);
2. *Recognizes* the improvements UN-Women has made to structured dialogues on financing and encourage UN-Women to continue engaging in structured dialogues with all Member States throughout the year;
3. *Requests* UN-Women to continue its efforts to improve its efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability and in this regard to continue to provide information on its programme activities, within the proceedings of the Executive Board;
4. *Requests* UN-Women to update the Executive Board ahead of the annual session of 2021 and report at the second regular session of 2021, as part of the structured dialogue on financing, on how UN-Women will mitigate the effects of potential decreases in regular and other resources, including the impact on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and in the context of preparations for the next Strategic Plan;
5. *Notes* the declining level of regular resources as a share of voluntary contribution revenue, which in 2019 fell below the Funding Compact threshold of 30 per cent;
6. *Encourages* all Member States in a position to do so, to increase their voluntary contributions to UN-Women, especially to its regular resources and to prioritize flexible and timely resources aligned with the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and, if possible, through multi-year commitments, in order for UN-Women to preserve the capacity to carry out its mandate;
7. *Recognizes* the disproportionate socio-economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls and encourages Member States in a position to do so, to make targeted investments in gender equality and women's empowerment through voluntary contributions to UN-Women, especially to its regular resources, as well as to support flexible pooled interagency funding mechanisms, in line with the funding compact;
8. *Recognizes* the progress made by UN-Women on entity-specific commitments of the funding compact and requests UN-Women to engage with United Nations development system entities and the United Nations Development Coordination Office in the Office's coordination of a further harmonization of these indicators across the United Nations development system while maintaining their entity-specific relevance;
9. *Notes* the lack of a commonly agreed definition for 'joint activities' and requests UN-Women to engage with United Nations development system entities and the United Nations Development Coordination Office in the Office's coordination of the formulation of a system-wide definition of joint activity expenditures undertaken by the United Nations development system entities that

accurately reflects the cooperation taking place among UNDS entities on joint development activities;

10. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to support full implementation of the Business Operations Strategy across all United Nations country teams by 2021.

16 September 2020

2020/8

Report on the Joint comprehensive proposal on the cost-recovery policy

The Executive Board,

1. *Approves* the joint comprehensive cost-recovery policy ([DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2020/1](#)), including cost-classification categories, methodology and rates, effective 1 January 2022;

2. *Requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to adapt the presentation of the national committees' rates in table 4 of the policy, clarifying that in the case of UNICEF, the 5 per cent rate is applicable only to thematic contributions raised by National Committees;

3. *Resolves* that the comprehensive cost-recovery policy as outlined in document [DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2020/1](#) supersedes the previous cost-recovery policy, including cost-classification categories, methodology and rates;

4. *Requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to provide harmonized annual reporting on the progress of implementation of the cost-recovery policy as an annex to their respective existing reporting, including the presentation of the financial impact of the harmonized differentiated rates and waivers granted, and to continue including, in line with the policy, inter alia an itemization of each waiver/discount listing the donor name, total contribution, programme name, cost-recovery rate and United States dollar value of the waiver/discount, as well as the resulting effective cost-recovery rates and cost-recovery amounts realized;

5. *Decides* that agreements signed prior to 1 January 2022 will be honoured using the existing cost-recovery rates (per Executive Board decision 2013/2) and that new agreements as well as revisions of existing agreements that result in additional/new contributions signed after 1 January 2022, will comply with the rates in the cost-recovery policy as approved in this decision;

6. *Further requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to present in a harmonized way in their existing reporting the calculations of the notional cost-recovery rates in their respective integrated budget documents;

7. *Requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to present a comprehensive review of the cost-recovery policy and its implementation for decision at the second regular session 2024, and further requests UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to organize a joint briefing in 2023 to present a joint timeline for the review and preliminary observations and findings from the implementation of the cost-recovery policy.

16 September 2020

2020/9
Working methods of the Executive Board

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the joint response of the Executive Board secretariats of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women;
2. *Approves* the proposal for the rearranged annual workplan of the Executive Board for 2021, which seeks to reduce the workload of the second regular session;

16 September 2020

2020/10
Evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the amendments made to align to the Evaluation Policy the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and *endorses* the revised Evaluation Policy.

16 September 2020
