



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

Distr.: General
17 September 2020

Original: English

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at its 2020 sessions

Contents

<i>Decision number</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Page</i>
First Regular Session: 14 February 2020		
2020/1	Working methods of the Executive Board	2
2020/2	Financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2018 and Report of the Board of Auditors	2
Annual Session: 22–23 June 2020		
2020/3	Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, including the midterm review of the Strategic Plan	3
2020/4	Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2019	5
2020/5	Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019	6
2020/6	UN-Women policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment	6
Second Regular Session: 15–16 September 2020		
2020/7	Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2018–2021	7
2020/8	Report on the Joint comprehensive proposal on the cost-recovery policy	8
2020/9	Working Methods of the Executive Board	9
2020/10	Evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	9



Decisions

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.

14 February 2020

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.

14 February 2020

2020/3

Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, including the midterm review of the Strategic Plan

The Executive Board,

1. Takes note of the report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, including the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, and further notes UN- Women's strong performance to date in meeting its annual targets;
2. Encourages UN-Women to take into account lessons learned from two years of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, as well as from its previous strategic plans and takes note with appreciation of the proposed adjustments and the identified areas of improvement as identified in the midterm review of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021;
3. Urges UN-Women to improve progress towards achieving the partially met outputs of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 and requests UN-Women to analyse and assess the targets set for the outputs of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, especially those which have consistently been over-achieved, and present the findings to the Executive Board in the context of consultations on the Strategic Plan 2022-2025;
4. *Requests* that UN-Women in accordance with its mandate, start preparations early for the next strategic plan, 2022-2025, in full consultation with the Executive Board, taking into account the lessons learned from the midterm review, the joint report on the evaluability assessment of the common chapter dated 30 March 2020, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/71/243), the outcome of the 2020 QCPR, and further requests that UN-Women present a roadmap at the second regular

session 2020 for consultations planned in the preparation of the next strategic plan, 2022-2025;

5. *Commends* UN-Women on effectively leveraging its mandate as a composite entity in assisting Member States, upon their request, and in ensuring coherence, consistency and coordination between the normative and operational aspects of its work; and reaffirms the important role of UN-Women in leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment and on gender mainstreaming across the United Nations System;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the strong commitment of UN-Women to the United Nations development system reform and encourages UN-Women to continue to work closely with United Nations funds, programmes, and entities under the leadership of resident coordinators and in collaboration with United Nations country teams, stakeholders and other development partners to support country efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework;

7. Takes note with appreciation of UN-Women's efforts to meet its commitments on the Funding Compact and improve the quality of funding and joint results, and encourages UN-Women to continue to leverage the Funding Compact and pooled financing mechanisms to strengthen inter-agency collaboration, and requests that UN-Women continue the practice of providing an update in the context of the structured dialogue on financing, prior to the second regular session 2020, on how the outcomes of the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, relate to the effective implementation of the Funding Compact in the remaining period of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021;

8. *Requests* that UN-Women, while taking into account its own priorities, accelerate its efforts to implement the common chapter, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, including by developing the necessary tracking framework within the respective integrated results and resources frameworks of their current strategic plans, following the recommendations of the joint report on the evaluability assessment of the common chapter dated 30 March 2020 and in the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as laid out in General Assembly resolution 72/279, and also requests that UN-Women present a joint update on progress to the Executive Board at the second regular session 2020;

9. *Takes note* of UN-Women's ongoing internal change management and strategic adjustments, and requests UN-Women to continue to improve its organizational effectiveness, sustainability of results and accountability, and, in this regard, to address the challenges weakening its results-based management and to enhance inter-agency cooperation and system-wide partnerships, and to keep the executive Board updated on the status of its internal reform processes, aimed at enabling the Entity to deliver better results, including at country level;

10. *Calls* for UN-Women to ensure delivery of the objectives of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, in the context of COVID-19 and to continue to work as part of a coordinated international response, with a focus on supporting programme countries;

11. Acknowledges the increase in UN-Women's other resources, encourages countries in a position to do so, to increase their contributions, especially to regular resources;

12. Notes UN-Women's joint efforts, including on eradication of poverty, addressing climate change, improving adolescent and maternal health, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, ensuring greater availability and use of disaggregated data for sustainable development, development and development

work which can contribute to peace-building and sustaining peace, and requests UN-Women to report to the Executive Board, in its annual report, on its operational and programming targets and corresponding efforts and results, including on making its programmes and operations consistent with its commitments on the mentioned issues;

13. *Decides* to transmit the report to the Economic and Social Council.

23 June 2020

2020/4 Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2019

The Executive Board,

1. Takes note of the report on the evaluation function of UN-Women in 2019, and the programme of work and budget for 2020 for the Independent Evaluation Services;

2. Takes note with appreciation of the steps taken by UN-Women to maintain an independent, credible and useful evaluation function and its contribution to system-wide gender-responsive evaluation efforts and national evaluation capacity development;

3. *Notes* the progress made in implementing the decision 2019/5 and requests UN-Women to continue its efforts in order to fully implement this decision with a specific focus on key performance indicators which can be further improved;

4. *Takes note* with appreciation of the inclusion of the additional information on decentralised evaluations, requests UN-Women to continue the gender-responsive evaluations of country programmes, in order to improve programming at country level, and to continue using evaluation findings and recommendations in policies, strategies and programming;

5. *Encourages* UN-Women to continue including analysis on each of the nine key performance indicators, on both global and regional level, in the annual report on the Evaluation function;

6. Takes note of the submission of the revised Evaluation Policy, requests UN-Women to bring the language of the revised Evaluation Policy in line with that of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and submit it for endorsement by the Executive Board at the Second Regular session 2020;

7. Encourages UN-Women to strive to reach the 3% top bracket of the range for the financial allocation of the total UN-Women programme budget to the evaluation function; and requests UN-Women to continue working to safeguard the independence of the Independent Evaluation Service and ensuring evaluation expertise in the Advisory Committee on Oversight (ACO);

8. Takes note of the findings and conclusions of the joint report on the evaluability assessment of the common chapter to the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women dated 30 March 2020, and in this regard requests UN-Women management to consult with the Independent Evaluation Service in their efforts to implement the common chapter of the Strategic Plans, 2018-2021;

9. Requests that IES continues to seek opportunities with other United Nations agencies to conduct further joint evaluations, and independent system-wide

evaluations in line with General Assembly resolution 72/279 on repositioning the United Nations Development System.

23 June 2020

2020/5

Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019

The Executive Board,

1. Takes note of the annual report of the internal audit service and investigation activities and the related management response and expresses its continuing support for strengthening the capacity of Internal Audit Service;

2. Takes note of the Advisory Committee on Oversight's report for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019; and encourages UN-Women to consider the Advisory Committee on Oversight's recommendations;

3. Encourages UN-Women management in its continuous efforts to further strengthen its second line of defence, including on accountability for key processes highlighted in the report and the establishment of a Statement of Internal Controls;

4. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to allocate sufficient resources to ensure a satisfactory number of internal audits and sufficient capacity for investigations each year as well as to enable sufficient resources to support the functions of the IEAS Director as the responsible official in UN-Women for interactions with OIOS on investigation findings;

5. *Requests* UN-Women to address areas of recurring issues and the high number of audit recommendations related to managing implementing partners, project/programme management, travel management, risk management, structure and capacity, and procurement, including by ensuring the availability of high-competent staff and relevant control mechanisms in order to manage these areas of recurring concern;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* the transparency on the status of investigations and the actions taken, including the Report of the Executive Director of UN-Women on disciplinary measures and other actions taken in response to misconduct and wrongdoing by UN-Women staff members, other personnel or third parties and cases of possible criminal behavior 1 January–31 December 2019, and requests the Executive Director of UN-Women to continue efforts in this regard.

23 June 2020

2020/6

UN-Women policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

The Executive Board,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the update provided on the implementation of recommendations contained in the independent victim-centred review of UN-Women's policies and procedures on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and as noted in the related management response;

2. Encourages UN-Women to continue to take action to ensure a joint, system-wide coherent approach to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, while leveraging its mandate, including during the COVID-19 response and recovery;

3. Requests UN-Women to provide an update on how UN-Women is preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in its policies, procedures and operations including an update and analysis on emerging sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment risks, and actions taken to address issues of concern, including support to victims and survivors, during the COVID-19 response and recovery, within existing reporting lines including at the Second Regular Session 2020.

23 June 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