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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for 2024

(Item 3 (a))

Programme 14

Gender equality and the empowerment of women

1. At its 7th meeting, on 1 June 2023, the Committee considered programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women, of the proposed programme plan for 2024 and programme performance information for 2022 ([A/78/6 \(Sect. 17\)](#)). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the review of the proposed programme plan by sectoral, functional and regional bodies ([E/AC.51/2023/9](#)).

2. Representatives of the Secretary-General introduced the programme and responded to questions raised by the Committee during its consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Several delegations expressed appreciation and support for the programme and for the work carried out by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). A delegation communicated its appreciation by thanking all United Nations agencies that played a critical role in the work of women and girls. Support was expressed for the activity carried out by UN-Women to mainstream a gender perspective and ensure effective gender equality. In addition, delegations noted the central role played by UN-Women in contributing to the attainment of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

4. With reference to programme performance in 2022 (para. 17.39 of the report), another delegation complimented the work carried out by UN-Women on its tracker,



which analysed the gendered impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) responses globally, and requested further information on the future use of that tool and any lessons learned.

5. Support was also expressed for the programme's focus on the five thematic areas: developing and implementing global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment; promoting women's leadership and political participation; facilitating women's economic empowerment; eliminating violence against women and girls; and reiterating women's contribution to peacebuilding and humanitarian relief efforts.

6. A delegation noted the value of the programme's report and stated that it would be necessary to have collective and precise action that was effective and inclusive on gender in order to address the structural crisis and create just societies.

7. Another delegation stated that, while there had been positive developments, statistics had shown that the number of vulnerable women and girls was still high and, in some cases, might be on the rise.

8. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the programme's support for advancing gender-responsive climate policies in the context of environmental and disaster risk reduction and of all actions to advance peace and security. The delegation also welcomed the growing number of national action plans on women and peace and security, and the support of UN-Women for strengthening legislative frameworks to promote gender balance in elections and decision-making institutions.

9. The delegation mentioned that its country, with the support of UN-Women, had adopted e-commerce platforms to bring women entrepreneurs and retailers new business opportunities, both in the country and across its borders, thus enabling women to enter traditionally male-dominated sectors. In addition, the country partnered with UN-Women and other United Nations entities, as well as the private sector, to promote women in trade and development, and implemented a training series training for women and girls to ensure that they participated fully in trade for socioeconomic development.

10. Another delegation highlighted its country's development of a programme to eliminate violence against women and girls. The delegation stated that the programme would support gender equality, which was good for the economic empowerment of women.

11. A delegation complimented the work of UN-Women in coordinating and supporting, with its expertise, the work of the United Nations on gender equality and the empowerment of women and expressed its support for the role of UN-Women as a normative and policy-setting entity. The delegation highlighted, in particular, the work of UN-Women on gender-based violence; women and peace and security; and conflict-related sexual violence; as well as the country briefs that UN-Women had provided.

12. Another delegation commended the leadership of UN-Women in advancing the women and peace and security agenda at the country and regional levels and in the context of priorities established by intergovernmental bodies in relevant resolutions. In that regard, the delegation stressed that the actions of UN-Women had translated into legislation, policies and development plans that contributed significantly to advancing sustainable peace and development. The delegation welcomed the critical role of UN-Women in strengthening the participation of civil society, especially in the context of actions to prevent conflict, build peace and catalyse gender-responsive humanitarian action.

13. In the context of the political participation of women, the delegation stated that the obstacles and threats to the security of women had increased and that the focus had to be on the opportunities and obstacles to implementing the frameworks and, equally, to address the need for gender-responsive judicial and constitutional frameworks.

14. The delegation also stated that gender equality was not just a goal but a catalyst for sustainable development. The delegation shared its intention to pursue the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda with priority, including by seeking to mainstream women and peace and security language across different dossiers while ensuring that the voices of women, including among civil society, would have a platform.

15. The delegation further stated that its efforts aligned with the proposed programme budget for 2024, that it had contributed to the core funding of UN-Women and that it would, in the current year, contribute, in particular, to the programme's valuable work on women and peace and security. The delegation looked forward to actively collaborating with UN-Women and other Member States to maximize the impact of its collective efforts in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

16. With regard to strategy and external factors for 2024 (see paras. 17.3 and 17.5 of the report), a delegation expressed support for the programme's strategic plan for the period 2022–2025 which guided the activities, strategic direction, objectives and approaches of UN-Women with a view to supporting the efforts of Member States to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as the enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls.

17. In that regard, the delegation sought information on the specific gender-responsive programme that UN-Women was currently advocating, beyond what had been done over the years. The delegation also sought further details on the initiatives for the sustainable empowerment of women that were being put in place to address the ever-growing gender disparities in the world.

18. The delegation referenced paragraph 17.5 of the report and expressed its appreciation for the continued focus of UN-Women on integrated approaches to address the root causes of gender inequality and its work to effect broader systems change by advancing the seven systemic outcomes, given the interconnected nature of global challenges.

19. The same delegation stated that it was preparing for its elections that year and was working to launch programmes that would support the participation of women in parliament and other decision-making forums.

20. Another delegation also expressed support for the work done by UN-Women and welcomed the programme's intention to continue to integrate disability inclusion in its work in line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the UN-Women global strategy on disability inclusion.

21. A delegation expressed its appreciation for the attention paid by UN-Women to marginalized and vulnerable groups of women and girls, including those with disabilities, and expressed support for the intent expressed in the 2024 programme plan to enhance focus on the UN-Women country offices engaging in activities related to the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities.

22. Another delegation stated its intention to accelerate the effective mainstreaming of disability inclusion in its institutional processes and programming, including mitigating measures to overcome any operational challenges, and also stated that it prioritized the empowerment of women and girls, especially those with disabilities,

to ensure their participation in science, technology and innovation through the private sector, with the Government providing scholarships for girls with disabilities.

23. A delegation pointed out that the work of UN-Women was in line with the commitment of its country to strengthen gender equality and the protection of the rights of women. The delegation stated that it had proudly launched its first national action plan on women and peace and security, for the year 2022, to strengthen the capacity of women across all areas. Another delegation supported the importance of international cooperation and the exchange of knowledge offered by UN-Women and the importance of implementing national action plans on women and peace and security, and noted that its country was currently working on its first national action plan and its implementation.

24. Gratitude was expressed for the significant contribution of UN-Women to the elaboration of the action plan. The cooperation between the delegation's country and UN-Women had been strong, and the delegation expressed appreciation for the cooperation and support from UN-Women. The delegation stated that it was the responsibility of all to support the achievement of gender parity and the empowerment of all women and girls.

25. The view was expressed that women and girls in many parts of the world continued to be excluded from decision-making and to be targeted by discrimination and violence, although their contribution to peace and decision-making processes had already proven effective and beneficial. The delegation stated, since the adoption of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), its country had supported the resolution and the subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, and had devoted significant efforts and resources to promoting the meaningful participation of women in peace and international mediation processes. The delegation also stated that, to strengthen its commitment, it had adopted a national action plan, which was now in its fourth cycle (2020–2024), and that funding had been allocated to promote relevant initiatives by civil society organizations.

26. Another delegation highlighted that women remained central to the development of their households, economies and the welfare of their families and that they played a vital leadership role in their communities and nations. The delegation stated that evidence had suggested that the surest way to improve economic development was to empower women.

27. A delegation commended UN-Women for the work it carried out for the United Nations and ultimately the Member States, and indicated that it placed great importance on the empowerment of women and girls, gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda. The delegation further mentioned that it was indeed essential to incorporate the gender perspective in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as stated in the report.

28. Recognition was given by another delegation to the UN-Women programmatic plan and objectives, which, it opined, was generally in line with the mandates conferred by intergovernmentally agreed documents aimed at the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5, racial equality and empowerment of women, and the implementation of a cross-cutting approach to a gender perspective in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

29. The same delegation stated that the programme of UN-Women correctly tackled its triple mandate and aligned in a general manner with the mandates and planning documents currently orienting its operational activities for development, such as the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the 2022–2025 strategic plan, the repositioning of the United Nations development system and the 2030 Agenda. In that

regard, the delegation noted that, overall, the programme acknowledged the need to act in the field in response to requests from host countries, in line with their own nationally established plans and priorities.

30. The delegation also noted that the programme plan lacked mention of the ethnic racial perspective in the criteria presented for the empowerment of women and gender equality. The delegation believed that the ethnic racial factor was an important cross-cutting component that should have been better explored.

31. Another delegation expressed its support for ensuring the realization of Sustainable Development Goal 5 through initiatives such as addressing issues of gender-based violence and gender disparities, especially in the workplace, and eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

32. A delegation remarked that it had successfully participated in the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and it commended the work of the Commission and complemented the excellent commitment that had been demonstrated in organizing and leading the session, the theme of which was innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

33. The delegation stated that women and girls remained underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as well as innovation, proving that women and girls continued to be challenged by discrimination and stereotypes preventing their meaningful participation in that sector. The digital revolution would have significant potential to generate great socioeconomic benefits and could contribute to advancing gender equality.

34. The delegation highlighted the importance of encouraging women and girls to challenge stereotypes and seize opportunities that could uplift them. The delegation added that having more women and girls in science and technology was a key driver for the achievement of the commitment of Africa to power sustainable development through science, technology and innovation, as was highlighted in the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 of the African Union.

35. The delegation stated that there should be continued investment in women-led innovations and in research conducted by women to raise the level of venture capital directed towards women-led startups.

36. Delegations raised questions with regard to result 2, youth as agents of change in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, paragraph 17.28, figure 17.II, under subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships, where it was noted that the performance measure indicated the high increase in the number of young women and girls with strengthened capacities to contribute to relevant intergovernmental policy discussions and forums during the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, but in the years 2023 and 2024, there was only a 5 per cent increase. Clarification was sought as to why there was such a small increase.

37. With reference to paragraphs 17.20 and 17.21 of the report, a delegation agreed with the strategy of subprogramme 1, Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships, and accountability of the United Nations system with regard to gender equality and the cross-cutting nature of a gender perspective. The delegation highlighted the importance of including capacity development in the United Nations system and women throughout the system.

38. In the context of table 17.5 of subprogramme 2, Policy and programme activities, clarification was sought as to the exact nature of category D, communication deliverables, external media relations and digital platforms and multimedia content. The delegation requested further clarification as to how UN-Women intended to be

more adaptive in 2024 when the technological environment was not the same throughout the world.

39. Another delegation stated that its country was developing a feminist foreign policy, the goal of which was to institutionalize and make cross-cutting a gender perspective and its intersectionality. The delegation expressed the view that gender gaps limited the full participation of women in building democracy. The delegation stated that it had been proven that the full participation of women in building democracy contributed to the social, economic and political potential of a country.

40. A delegation shared aspects of its country's reasons for pursuing a feminist foreign policy, indicating that the rights of women served as a barometer of the state of societies and that, in places where all people enjoyed equal opportunities and rights to participate in community life, everyone benefited.

41. The delegation stated that its feminist foreign policy would seek to achieve equality for women and girls worldwide, to attend to the particular concerns of marginalized groups, to achieve a world in which all human beings enjoyed the same rights, to ensure their equal representation in all areas of life, to pave the way for them to have equal access to resources, to harness the fact that women as agents of change and in senior positions propelled societies forward and strengthened democracy, and to achieve all of the above for all people in equal measure.

42. For that reason, the delegation stated that UN-Women was crucial to strengthening and defending the rights of women all over the world. The delegation assured its full support and thanked UN-Women for presenting the proposed programme plan. In that context, a question was asked as to which of the expected six results that were present in the programme plan was thought to be most difficult to achieve and for what specific reasons.

43. Another delegation shared that the foreign policy of its country combated sexual violence and supported the empowerment of women, together with gender equality and the increased political participation of women. That was why the delegation's country was a trusted partner of women and the agenda on sexual equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

44. The delegation shared its belief that multilateralism was the key to addressing the major challenges, acknowledged that UN-Women faced challenges, and encouraged Member States to remain united in support of UN-Women as it coordinated efforts to increase the empowerment of women and girls.

45. Another delegation expressed the view that it attached great importance to the development of international cooperation in the area of gender equality and the empowerment for all women and girls. The delegation mentioned its support for the mandate of UN-Women, in particular for its special role in moving forward the global development agenda, and pledged to continue to interact with UN-Women effectively as it implemented its strategic plan.

46. At the same time, the delegation highlighted the need for the programme activity of UN-Women to be implemented only with the consent of the host country, taking into consideration national realities, capabilities and levels of development, national priorities and legislation.

47. The delegation drew attention to the need to use terminology that was agreed in the course of intergovernmental negotiations, which would help with the constructive interaction among delegations and other stakeholders with UN-Women. In that regard, the delegation stated that it would put forward a number of proposals on the text of the programme with a view to bringing its terminology in line with the universally agreed language. The delegation's proposals would address the use of language

related to gender statistics, the application of an intersectoral approach and the use of the expression “gender-sensitive”.

48. Another delegation expressed the view that programme 14 required adjustment. In particular, the delegation referenced paragraphs 17.12, 17.31, 17.32, 17.48 and 17.69, which it felt would require further adjustment because they ignored the fundamental point that any activity of UN-Women within countries, including interactions with civil society, should be carried out only at the request of the relevant interested State. The delegation further stated that it could not agree that UN-Women played a decisive role in the integration of gender perspectives in the adoption of national action plans, in particular when it came to women and peace and security (as referenced in para. 17.42).

49. The same delegation stated that it was obvious, in practice, that when such documents were developed, the content would be under the purview of the Government in question, and the efforts of UN-Women were only to provide advisory assistance. In that context, the delegation did not agree with the performance measure in figure 17.IV on the number of adopted national action plans on women and peace and security with monitoring indicators (cumulative). The delegation stated that the performance measure was never adopted at the intergovernmental level. At the same time, the delegation expressed the view that UN-Women, within its mandate, could contribute to the activity of other bodies and United Nations entities but not replace them. The delegation applied this to the disability issues (as referenced in paras. 17.12, 17.31 and 17.32) and youth issues (para. 17.28). The delegation stated that it would submit written proposals with regard to its comments.

50. Another delegation, in renewing its support for the work of UN-Women, stressed the importance of the work that was being done in its country to support women, describing the launch of a programme in 2023 dedicated to victims of violence. The programme was the first of its kind to empower women and to give them the support that would allow them to participate in economic activities, which reflected the delegation’s belief in the equality of women and in supporting their independence so that they could effectively build their society.

Conclusions and recommendations

51. The Committee recognized the contribution of UN-Women and its focused engagement within the United Nations development system to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls continued to be an integral part of the sustainable development agenda.

52. The Committee supported the work of UN-Women on its established thematic impact areas: (a) governance and participation in public life; (b) women’s economic empowerment; (c) ending violence against women and girls; and (d) women and peace and security, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction.

53. The Committee highlighted the importance of the women and peace and security agenda and its implementation in order to achieve sustainable peace and political solutions.

54. The Committee commended UN-Women for continuing to contribute to accelerating the effective mainstreaming of disability inclusion in its institutional processes and programming, in line with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the UN-Women global strategy on disability inclusion.

55. The Committee encouraged UN-Women to continue to build strategic partnerships with United Nations entities, including through inter-agency

mechanisms, to deliver results for women and girls in a coordinated and coherent way, especially in the area of sustainable development.

56. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 14, Gender equality and the empowerment of women, of the proposed programme budget for 2024, subject to the following modifications:

Overall orientation

Paragraph 17.9

Delete the seventh sentence.

Paragraph 17.12

Replace the final sentence with “Together with United Nations partners, the Entity, within its mandate, will promote disability inclusion work with persons with disabilities.”

Paragraph 17.19

Replace subparagraph (b) with the following:

“Work of UN-Women on gender stereotypes and negative social norms”.

Subprogramme 1

Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships

Paragraph 17.31

Replace “an intersectional” with “a comprehensive”.

In the final sentence, before “to support countries” insert “, upon their request,”.

Paragraph 17.32

In the first sentence, replace “engagement” with “the engagement of UN-Women, within its mandate,”.

Subprogramme 2

Policy and programme activities

Paragraph 17.48

At the end of first sentence, add “, upon the request of interested Member States”.

Delete the final sentence.
