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**Annual Report of the Executive Director**

## **Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, including the midterm review of the Strategic Plan**

### *Summary*

This is the second annual report of the UN-Women Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. It is a combined report, highlighting key results from the first two years of implementing the Strategic Plan and incorporating findings and recommendations from the midterm review.

The midterm review provided an opportunity to take stock of progress and lessons at the midpoint of the Strategic Plan, with a view to supporting the acceleration of results. It is accompanied by the revised integrated results and resources framework.

Various annexes also accompany the combined report, including a Transparency Portal providing details of results achieved at all levels, an annex on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and an annex on oversight functions.

Elements of a draft decision are in section VII.



## I. Introduction

1. Amid protracted and evolving planetary crises, in 2023 the world was rocked by the eruption of fresh conflicts. More than 614 million women and girls, 50 per cent higher than in 2017, lived in conflict settings. Across the world, from the rise in extreme weather events to the crippling cost-of-living crisis, women and girls continued to suffer disproportionately from crises not of their making.
2. Extreme poverty has declined over the last three decades but is still pervasive. Based on current trends, over 340 million women and girls will still live in extreme poverty by 2030 and one in four will experience moderate or severe food insecurity. While global wealth and income inequality has also broadly declined since the 1990s, inequality within most advanced and major emerging economies has increased, with women particularly affected by income inequalities.
3. Violence against women remained rampant. On average, over five women or girls are killed every hour worldwide by someone in their own family. No country is within reach of eradicating intimate partner violence.
4. Threats to multilateralism abounded, manifesting in intergovernmental spaces such as the Commission on the Status of Women. The backlash against gender equality intensified, including reversals on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and increasing violence against women in politics in many countries. This is imperilling progress on all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and deepening challenges for women and girls, particularly those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Progress on SDG 5 was lacklustre, with only 2 of 18 indicators assessed as "close to target". Notwithstanding significant improvements in data availability, including through the efforts of UN-Women, assessing progress effectively remains challenging.
5. UN-Women and the United Nations Trade and Development project that an additional annual investment of \$360 billion is required to bridge the gender equality gap – a conservative estimate pertaining to 48 developing economies covering only 70 per cent of the world's population. Yet SDG indicator 5.c.1 reveals that only 26 per cent of countries globally have systems to track budget allocations for gender equality. UN-Women calls on Member States to rebuild trust, recommit to the founding values of the United Nations and right-track the SDGs.
6. In the second year of its Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UN-Women strove to safeguard and advance progress with expenses of \$551.29 million in 99 countries/territories, leveraging its triple mandate and seven systemic outcomes to pursue results across its four impact areas.
7. Despite significant progress in advancing women's political participation over the last quarter century, with the proportion of women in national parliaments doubling, it has stagnated of late, rising by only 0.9 per cent between 2021 and 2023. Further, 54 per cent of countries still lack laws on key areas of gender equality, such as on equal rights to enter marriage and initiate a divorce. In 2022 and 2023, UN-Women strengthened legal protections, strategies, policies and action plans in 67 countries, home to 2.7 billion women and girls.
8. Women's labour force participation lags well behind men's (47 and 72 per cent, respectively). Women still spend three times as much per day on unpaid care and domestic work than men. In 2023, UN-Women supported a Human Rights Council resolution on the centrality of care and support from a human rights perspective. UN-Women's new *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy* reflects on the global landscape and the Entity's role in realizing the economic potential of women. Drawing on a rights-based and transformative definition of economic empowerment, it lays out opportunities for all stakeholders to galvanise progress.

9. In the face of slow progress on ending violence against women, UN-Women is leveraging the cross-thematic design of its Strategic Plan to support women's ability to access justice and social protection, fully participate in the economy and live free from violence. With less than 0.2 per cent of official development assistance (ODA) directed towards preventing violence against women, and recognizing the frontline role of women's organizations in this work, in 2023 UN-Women and the European Union committed to a 22-million-euro programme to strengthen women's rights movements.
10. With conflicts on the rise, UN-Women continued advocating for women's increased and meaningful participation in peacebuilding. Policy support resulted in establishing a minimum target of one-third female participation in United Nations-led mediation and peace processes.
11. With increasing humanitarian crises, surging global migration and forced displacement, UN-Women's active engagement, as the newest Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) member, has been crucial to securing consistent focus on crisis-affected women and girls in humanitarian decision-making processes. Seventy-nine per cent of humanitarian response plans developed in 2023 included gender equality priorities. Across 59 countries, UN-Women supported women to build resilience to disasters, collaborating with government agencies and over 1,000 women's organisations.
12. UN-Women enjoyed strong support from funding partners, with growth in both regular and other resources. Continued solid performance was evident from an average of 96 per cent progress across all organizational effectiveness and efficiency output indicators for 2022 and 2023 (94 per cent in 2023).
13. UN-Women used the midterm review to assess its performance over the first two years of its Strategic Plan and in the current operating context. The review highlighted the strengths of the plan's integrated approach in pursuing women's rights across the interconnected dimensions of UN-Women's mandate and thematic areas. It also identified areas requiring further work. The Entity has taken up proposed changes, including through adjustments to the integrated results and resources framework.
14. To further accelerate progress on the gender dimensions of the SDGs, UN-Women will use the opportunities of the Summit of the Future and the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to ensure that gender equality is well positioned as the world enters the home stretch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Global reach at the midpoint of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025**

15. Since the start of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UN-Women has expanded and deepened partnerships with government, civil society, private sector and United Nations partners to increase its global reach. While highlights of country-level work are elaborated in later sections, below is a summary of the aggregate results achieved over the past two years.<sup>1</sup>
16. In 78 countries, 2.8 billion women and girls now have a more supportive legislative and policy environment. Furthermore, 82 countries have strengthened national mechanisms, processes and/or guidelines for the achievement of gender equality, including gender-responsive national reviews, financing assessments and inclusive peacebuilding processes. Alongside this, over 13,600 partner organizations in 92 countries have increased capacities to safeguard women's rights, including delivering quality goods, services, and resources for women in humanitarian and development settings. In 73 countries, 431 gender-responsive services, products, tools and initiatives were developed and/or implemented, including

<sup>1</sup> Due to recent circumstances experienced by the UN-Women office in the **State of Palestine**, the office's 2023 results are only partially included in this report, to the extent they could be quality assured

innovative financing tools, multi-stakeholder initiatives and platforms for disseminating gender statistics.

17. UN-Women directly contributed to the following results under the Strategic Plan's seven outcome areas:

*Global normative frameworks, and gender-responsive laws, policies and institutions*

18. Gender-responsive governance is fundamental to the realisation of the full spectrum of women's rights. UN-Women supported the adoption, revision or repeal of 248 laws across 39 countries, home to 1.4 billion women and girls. Over 300 gender-responsive national and local multi-sectoral policies, strategies and/or plans were adopted in 58 countries, with the potential to benefit 2.6 billion women and girls. Meanwhile, more than 5,800 partner organizations/institutions in 82 countries have increased capacities to influence gender-responsive legislation, strategies, policies, action plans and/or institutional reforms.

*Financing for gender equality*

19. Work on gender equality remains chronically under-funded. To address this, in 53 countries, more than 1,500 partner organizations/institutions now have strengthened capacities to apply newly-obtained knowledge and technical skills to effectively mainstream gender into fiscal laws, policies and standards, in areas including taxation, trade and decentralization.

*Positive social norms including by engaging men and boys*

20. Pervasive unequal social norms affect the daily experiences of women everywhere and present a significant obstacle to achieving structural change. With dedicated focus on transforming inequitable gender norms, 15 countries have adopted comprehensive, coordinated strategies for preventing violence against women.

*Women's equitable access to services, goods and resources*

21. Inadequate public investments in essential services and care infrastructure continue to impede women's ability to fully participate in the economy, access justice and social protection, and live free from violence. With support from UN-Women, over nine and a half million women, across 79 countries, including many survivors of violence and internally-displaced women and refugees, accessed information, goods, resources and/or services. Forty-nine countries have implemented systems, strategies and/or programmes to advance women's equal access to and use of services, goods and/or resources (including social protection), and 60 countries have strengthened protocols, guidelines and initiatives to prevent and respond to violence against women. Meanwhile, more than 6,600 organizations across 87 countries have enhanced capacities to deliver and/or monitor essential services, goods and resources for women and girls in humanitarian and development settings.

*Women's voice, leadership and agency*

22. UN-Women's strong relationships with feminist and women-led organisations, who are at the forefront of driving progress on women's rights, represent a clear comparative advantage. Across 57 countries, more than \$109.6 million was disbursed to civil society organizations working towards the achievement of women's rights, including through the Spotlight Initiative, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (UN Trust Fund), and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF). Over 12,300 civil society organisations or mechanisms, across 84 countries, enhanced leadership capacity and enabled meaningful and safe engagement in decision-making. In 25 countries, 75 initiatives were developed and implemented to prevent, monitor and mitigate violence against women in politics and public life.

*Production, analysis and use of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data*

23. While data is the foundation for evidence-based political and socio-economic decision-making, it often ignores gender differences. UN-Women worked in 58 countries to ensure statistical systems do not turn a blind eye to women, supporting 76 gender statistics/data initiatives to inform policy, programming and budgeting and/or develop national plans and strategies, and 31 countries used the data for policies and programmes.

*UN system coordination for gender equality*

24. In a repositioned United Nations development system, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (Cooperation Frameworks) are the primary planning framework at the country level. With UN-Women's support, 80 per cent of United Nations Country Teams that developed Cooperation Frameworks in 2023 prioritized gender equality (72 per cent in 2022). Seventy-four United Nations entities (73 in 2022) reported on the System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP 2.0) and 97 United Nations Country Teams on the UNCT-SWAP (76 in 2022) on their gender mainstreaming performance.

*Organizational efficiency and effectiveness*

25. UN-Women remains committed to operational excellence. Between 2022 and 2023, the Entity implemented a record combined \$1.09 billion, all directly linked toward the achievement of results for women and girls. Regular resources received in 2023 grew by 7.1 per cent, outpacing growth of other resources (1.7 per cent) for the second time since 2014. Effectively leveraging partnerships and communication, UN-Women's social media reach increased to 194 million (188.5 million in 2022), and Women's Empowerment Principles signatories increased 19 per cent in 2023, to 8,917 signatories in over 160 countries. Finally, demonstrating its financial stewardship and operational maturity, in 2023 UN-Women received its twelfth unqualified audit opinion from the United Nations Board of Auditors, and met both 2022 and 2023 milestones for the implementation of internal and external audit recommendations.

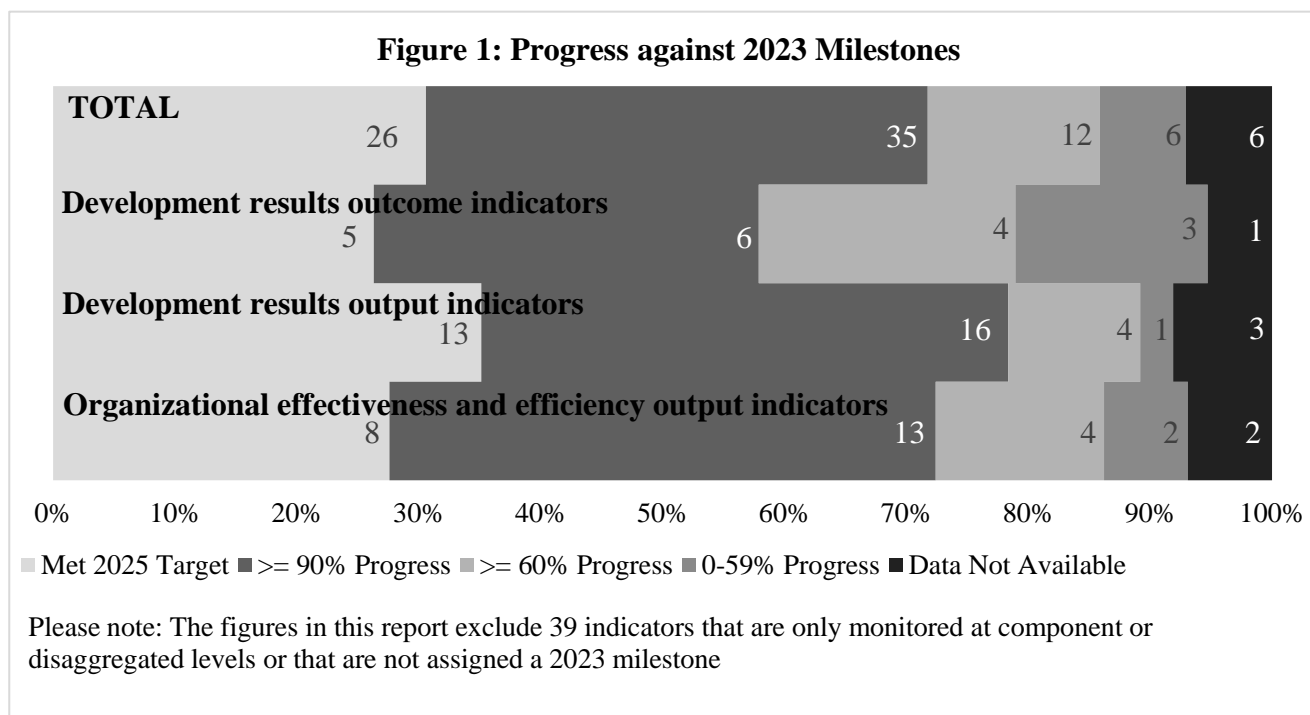
**Generation Equality**

The 2023 Accountability Report shows that Generation Equality is working. Of 1,271 reported Action Coalition commitments from 83 countries, 10 per cent have been completed and 84 per cent are on track. The initiative is spurring new financial commitments and encouraging commitment makers to adopt new feminist funding approaches. Collectively, commitment makers reported \$47 billion in financial commitments, with \$20 billion already secured and \$9.5 billion spent. In 2022, Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact signatories alone spent an estimated \$958 million in conflict and crisis settings, reaching 22.1 million women and girls.


As a multistakeholder, intergenerational platform for collective action for gender equality, Generation Equality is fostering strong alliances across sectors and between stakeholders. 82 per cent of all reported Generation Equality commitments have resulted in new partnerships or strengthened existing ones. Generation Equality is being localized with national government leadership and investments in a range of priority issues. Young people see Generation Equality as an opportunity to connect with stakeholders who share their goals, however their meaningful engagement is yet to be achieved. More systematic means of tracking financial investments is also needed.

## II. Performance under impact areas

26. In 2023, UN-Women supported 99 countries and territories (100 in 2022), including high-income countries, to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. At the midpoint of the Strategic Plan, overall progress towards targets is positive.
27. UN-Women achieved good performance (reaching at least 90 per cent of 2023 milestones) for 85 per cent of indicators with data available at the development results output level (Figure 1), up from 77 per cent in 2022. Early achievement of 2025 targets across 31 per cent of indicators stems from various factors; the midterm review will allow UN-Women to raise ambition in these areas.



### A. Impact 1: Governance and participation in public life

 **Total expenses  
2022–2023:  
\$153 million<sup>2</sup>**

28. UN-Women continued to support Member States to promote equal representation in governance institutions and processes, adequate financing, and the meaningful participation of women in all their diversity in public life, which remain critical to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. Country-level evidence produced with UN-Women’s support shows slow, uneven progress in meeting SDG targets for gender-responsive normative frameworks, laws, policies and institutions.

<sup>2</sup> The expense data disclosed in this report pertaining to UN-Women's Strategic Plan impact and organizational effectiveness and efficiency areas is preliminary. Complete, detailed financial data will be made available on UN-Women's Transparency Portal no later than one month prior to the June Executive Board annual session.

29. Comparable data collected by UN-Women, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) from 120 countries showed moderate progress on legal frameworks that advance gender equality (SDG 5.1.1). On equal participation in decision-making institutions, the increase in 2023 was less than half per cent for parliamentary seats, with women holding 26.5 per cent (SDG 5.5.1). The increase was just above 1 per cent for local government seats, reaching 35.5 per cent. In the executive branch of government, women headed 22.8 per cent of ministries. Data on women ministers, computed by UN-Women and reported for the first time, provides a solid baseline for monitoring progress. UN-Women also continued to support national parliaments and governments to enact legislation to increase women's representation in elected and appointed positions.
30. Building on the latest data for SDG indicator 5.c.1, collected by UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the OECD, the Entity analysed national budgets in 105 countries and areas (95 per cent of 110 available) and found significant achievements in gender-responsive policy adoption. The analysis identified strategies to strengthen gender mainstreaming in budget allocations, execution and audits. UN-Women continued its focused technical support on providing comprehensive gender analysis at all stages of public financial management for effective budget allocations and expenditure for gender equality.
31. Unequal gender norms continue to stall progress on ending HIV/AIDS for women. Data on SDG indicator 3.3.1 show that 75 per cent of new HIV infections among adolescents occurred in girls aged 10 to 19 years (2022). To reverse this trend, UN-Women supported gender-responsive HIV policies, institutions and budgets to improve access to services, in partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

## B. Impact 2: Women's economic empowerment



**Total expenses  
2022–2023:  
\$133 million**

32. UN-Women continues to invest in accelerating progress on women's economic empowerment, scaling up actions in care, employment creation, poverty eradication and access to social protection. However, meaningful assessment of progress remains challenging given the persistent lack of data on SDG indicators 5.4.1, on unpaid care work, and 1.3.1, on social protection systems coverage. Data collection and research initiatives, such as UN-Women's forecast on time use published in 2023, are important to address these gaps. Women's share of informal employment in total employment (SDG indicator 8.3.1) increased from 54.84 per cent in 2022 to 55.45 per cent in 2023, while that of men remained unchanged, continuing a post-COVID-19 pandemic trend that saw women lose jobs faster than men and regain them more slowly.
33. In 2023, UN-Women supported a United Nations General Assembly resolution to establish the International Day of Care and Support (A/RES/77/317) as well as a Human Rights Council resolution (54/6) on care as a right. UN-Women engaged the United Nations system on transforming care systems as critical to women's economic empowerment, including through joining the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection. As a member of the Operational Steering Committee of the Joint SDG Fund, the Entity was successful in securing the use of gender markers in proposal selection.
34. A corporate evaluation on women's economic empowerment found that UN-Women successfully helped align global norms, policies and standards for women's economic rights and worked effectively to build consensus and facilitate a coherent voice within relevant global policy dialogues. The Entity's new *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy* will build on findings from the evaluation and guide work going forward.

### C. Impact 3: Ending violence against women



**Total expenses 2022–  
2023:  
\$180 million**

35. The latest available estimates from 2018 revealed that 13 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15 to 49 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a male partner or ex-partner within the past 12 months (SDG 5.2.1). This is 3 per cent lower than two decades ago, indicating slow progress, all while new technology and digital tools have exacerbated existing and led to new forms of technology-facilitated violence against women.
36. In 2023, the five-year Spotlight Initiative concluded. The Initiative's midterm review affirmed it was a comprehensive, multistakeholder, evidence-based model for ending violence against women. UN-Women assumed the technical coherence agency role in over 70 per cent of the initiative's country and regional programmes, and allocated over \$86 million to predominantly women-led, women's rights or feminist civil society organizations.
37. As co-lead of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence, UN-Women created significant momentum by providing a shared vision and accountability framework, resulting in over \$5 billion in financial pledges on gender-based violence and the implementation of over 600 programmes.
38. With less than 0.2 per cent of ODA directed towards prevention, long-term, core and flexible funding for women's rights organizations working to prevent and address violence against women is urgently needed. To address this and enhance global advocacy, particularly given the pushback against women's rights, UN-Women and the European Union in 2023 committed to a 22-million-euro Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action to End Violence Against Women Programme in Latin America and Africa.

### D. Impact 4: Women, peace and security, humanitarian and disaster risk reduction



**Total expenses 2022–  
2023:  
\$217 million**

39. Amid the global escalation of conflicts and humanitarian crises, strengthening women's participation in peace, security, humanitarian action and resilience is imperative. In 2023, UN-Women increased efforts on women, peace and security worldwide, including by supporting women's participation in peace-making in **Colombia, the Great Lakes, the Sahel, Syria and Yemen**, among other contexts. UN-Women also helped secure strong language in Security Council resolution 2721 on Afghan women's political inclusion and a one-third participation target for women in United Nations-led and co-led peace processes.
40. However, available data still points to a decline in women's participation in decision-making in some key peace and security processes. UN-Women, in collaboration with partners, is intensifying efforts around data collection, advocacy and resource mobilization on women's participation in peace processes to reverse this decline.
41. Following two years of collective advocacy and the commitment secured to develop a gender action plan for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, UN-Women, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and UNFPA worked with United Nations



Member States and over 500 non-state stakeholders to agree on a concrete roadmap of actions for gender-responsive disaster risk reduction. UN-Women helped women build resilience to disasters across 59 countries, collaborating with government agencies and over 1,000 women's organizations.

42. As the newest IASC member, UN-Women stepped up its active engagement across all levels, securing a consistent focus on the needs of crisis-affected women and girls in decision-making processes, including in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, the Sudan and Ukraine**.
43. As co-chair of the IASC Gender Reference Group, UN-Women developed the *2023 IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report*, which highlighted persistent gaps and challenges in delivering gender policy commitments. In partnership with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other United Nations entities, international non-governmental organizations and local women's groups, UN-Women continued to address these gaps. The Entity supported humanitarian crisis responses in 27 countries, including by leading or co-leading Gender in Humanitarian Action working groups.

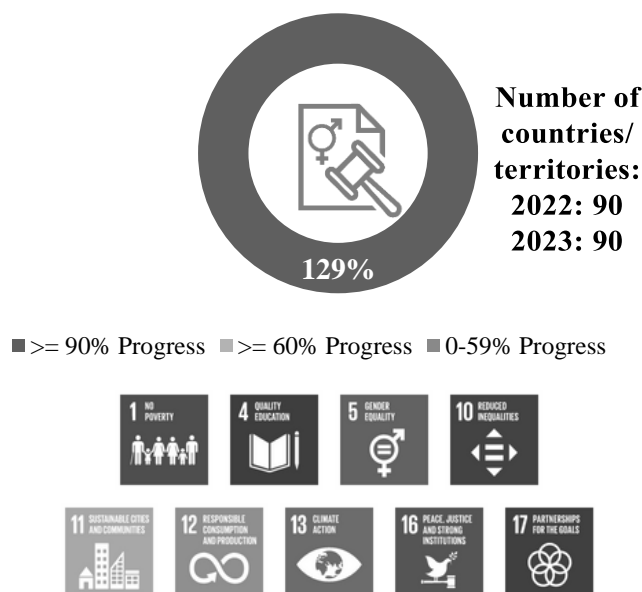
#### **The triple mandate in action**

Throughout 2023, UN-Women continued leveraging its triple mandate of normative support, United Nations system coordination and operational activities to deliver results for women and girls. Following the *Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*, the Entity worked alongside government authorities, local partners and communities to advance the 2022 Buenos Aires Commitment on Care, unlocking unprecedented political commitment to invest in care systems across countries. In **Ecuador**, a national dialogue supported by UN-Women led to the approval of the National Law on Human Care in April 2023, which established a national system of care and the right to care. A roadmap to operationalize the law was developed through the support and partnership of UN-Women with the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion and the ministries of health, education, labour and women's affairs. Using its coordination mandate, UN-Women also positioned care as a central component within a number of United Nations Country Team working groups, integrating local community-based care-systems, using cash for training and cash for work modalities, within a Multi-Partner Trust Fund programme for migrant populations.

### III. Performance under the seven systemic outcomes

#### A. Outcome 1: Global normative frameworks and gender-responsive laws, policies and institutions

Figure 2: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



44. In 2023, UN-Women continued to provide technical support to Member States to strengthen the development of global norms and standards, achieving an average output attainment rate of 129 per cent for 2022 and 2023 (128 per cent in 2023). In 2023, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council included a gender perspective in 46 and 79 per cent of adopted resolutions, respectively, and the Security Council integrated language on women, peace, and security in 55 per cent of its resolutions. Compared to 2022, there was a slight decrease on average due to continued pushback on gender equality and a relatively higher proportion of procedural resolutions adopted in 2023 within the Security Council.
45. At the national and local levels, UN-Women supported the integration of gender equality norms and principles into laws, policies, strategies, action plans and institutions. In 2023, 91 laws were adopted, revised or repealed to advance gender equality (157 in 2022). In **Bahrain**, a law allowing rapists to avoid prosecution if they married their victims was repealed. Efforts to promote gender balance in decision-making continued. In **Colombia**, the new law on the National Development Plan promotes parity in political and economic leadership, including in implementing the country's peace agreement. In **Sierra Leone**, the implementation of key legal frameworks on gender equality resulted in 2023 in increased representation of women at all levels to 30.4 per cent in the Parliament, 34 per cent in local councils and 31.3 per cent appointed to cabinet positions. In the **Republic of Moldova**, a law on the establishment of the first-ever National Agency for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was approved.
46. UN-Women supported the adoption of 141 multisectoral policies, strategies and action plans with a focus on gender equality at the national and local levels, similar to the number in 2022. **Türkiye's** Twelfth National Development Plan for the first time enacted temporary special measures to increase the participation and representation of women in all decision-making spaces in public and private life. Six additional national action plans on women, peace and security with monitoring frameworks were adopted. In **Sri Lanka**, the first national action plan on women, peace and security marks significant progress in embedding

gender-responsiveness into conflict and crisis response, while strengthening the role of women's leadership in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

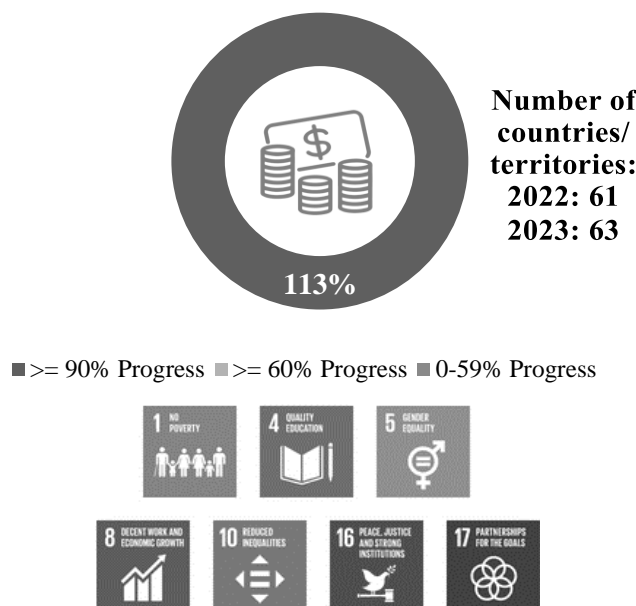
47. These results were achieved through partnerships across multiple sectors and employing various strategies, such as strengthening capacities and facilitating 866 multistakeholder dialogues that promoted the engagement of governments with civil society, including through the UN Trust Fund. Almost 2,000 duty-bearers' and rights-holders' institutions have enhanced capacities to promote and influence gender-responsive legislation.
48. Thirty government institutions (26 in 2022) that coordinate national HIV responses enhanced gender expertise and accessed knowledge and tools to integrate gender equality into national HIV strategies, demonstrating increased demand to tackle inequalities. The new National Strategic Plan for HIV 2023–2027 in **Burundi** prioritized outcomes on ending gender-based discrimination and violence against women. Support continued to increase accountability for commitments aligned with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). UN-Women supported 17 United Nations Country Teams (100 per cent of all reporting countries) to submit reports to the CEDAW Committee.
49. The midterm review reinforced the importance of the use of robust data, including from SDG monitoring by UN-Women, and the promotion of an enabling environment for gender equality as imperative to accelerate progress towards gender-responsive normative frameworks, policies, laws and institutions. Going forward, UN-Women will refine the scope of indicators and adjust milestones and targets as needed.

#### **Innovation and technology**

The agreed conclusions of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women on innovation, technological change and education in the digital age expanded the global normative framework for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The conclusions included 97 per cent of recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General, prepared by UN-Women, that informed the deliberations. Further, the Year of Action, launched by the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation, to place gender equality at the heart of the Global Digital Compact led to a Joint Statement and Call to Action endorsed by 10 Member States and over 100 women's rights organizations and activists.

## B. Outcome 2: Financing for gender equality

Figure 3: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones

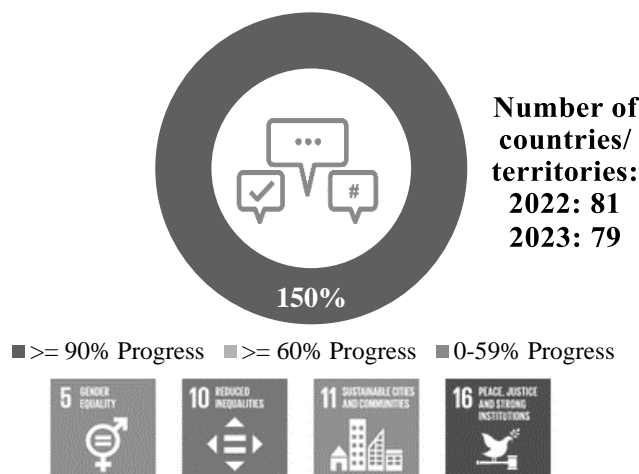


50. Over the past two years, UN-Women has supported Member States in 63 countries to drive greater public and private resources to policies and programmes advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment; the average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 113 per cent (105 per cent in 2023).
51. National financing frameworks provide a structured plan to align resources with gender equality policy objectives. In 2023, UN-Women supported eight additional countries (seven in 2022) to introduce gender equality in these frameworks. In **Grenada**, the 2024 Budget Framework Paper provided instructions to mainstream gender in strategic objectives and performance measures for budget preparation, resulting in all 28 ministries and departments providing expenditure estimates for sectoral gender priorities. UN-Women continued its efforts to increase national budget allocations to gender equality by strengthening methodologies and approaches. In **Morocco**, a new comprehensive methodology to track budget allocations to gender equality was piloted in the Ministry of Education and Youth, with plans to roll it out to other sectors in 2024. In 2023, UN-Women strengthened the capacities of 236 partner institutions to integrate gender equality into fiscal laws, policies and standards. As a direct result of enhanced capacities, in **Timor-Leste**, civil society organizations advocated for women’s safety via community audit demonstrations, spurring action by the Ministry of Public Works to allocate budgets in the 2023 and 2024 annual plans to enhance women’s safety in public spaces.
52. UN-Women supported government partners to conduct 23 gender financing assessments, contributing to costing assessments of gender budget gaps and the provision of recommendations for improving public services. In **Türkiye**, gender-responsive budgeting analyses in four municipalities evaluated youth, sport and transportation services, and provided recommendations for improving gender-responsive service delivery. In **Nepal**, UN-Women partnered with the National Planning Commission and Institute of Integrated Development Studies to analyse care coverage and conduct costing assessments in the education and health sectors. Findings were presented in inter-ministerial dialogues to unlock greater fiscal investment in care systems and infrastructure.

53. UN-Women continued its high performance in strengthening capacities of national partners to apply gender-responsive budgeting tools, reaching 646 state and non-state institutions in 2023. In **Jordan**, UN-Women supported the development of a new gender budget tagging methodology, resulting in more effective tracking of financial allocations to gender-responsive policies and programmes. In **Zimbabwe**, with the support of UN-Women, 31 of 39 ministries, departments and agencies (79 per cent) submitted Gender-Responsive Budget statement proposals for inclusion in the 2024 National Gender Budget Statement, an essential accountability tool for aligning budget allocations with gender equality priorities.
54. In 2023, UN-Women supported the introduction of 17 new and innovative financing tools to strengthen capital markets and increase financing for gender equality and women's empowerment. Since 2022, 68 such tools have been introduced, including **Mexico's** Sustainable Taxonomy. A global first, the taxonomy defines gender equality as a priority objective, ensuring that public financing supports investment in closing gender gaps.
55. Within the United Nations, the Peacebuilding Fund allocated 47.35 per cent of its funding to support gender equality, up from 46.75 per cent in 2022. The Fund's application and monitoring of the Gender Equality Marker supported by UN-Women remains a model across the United Nations system for similar funds.
56. The midterm review highlighted the progressive growth of work under outcome 2, with emerging systemic and cross-thematic achievements on gender-responsive budgeting. Expanded knowledge, data products and capacities in partner institutions have contributed to these results. Going forward, UN-Women will raise the ambition for multistakeholder capacity strengthening and targeted technical support to strengthen gender mainstreaming in financing frameworks and systems.

### C. Outcome 3: Positive social norms, including through engaging men and boys

**Figure 4: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones**



57. In the second year of the Strategic Plan, UN-Women further consolidated its framework to advance positive social norms, partnering with feminist experts including from the Global South to advance seven research initiatives that expanded available evidence on social norms change for gender equality. The research, along with recommendations of a global expert group meeting, ongoing internal reviews and a corporate evaluation of social norms work, are informing a more coherent, evidence-based, intersectional and feminist institutional approach to social norms for UN-Women and its partners. Informed by this learning, UN-Women will use the midterm review to consolidate and revise indicators in this area of work.
58. Work at the country and regional levels in 2023 involved UN-Women engaging with a diverse range of partners to support 262 programmes, including through the UN Trust Fund, that addressed social norms change at the community and/or organizational levels. In the **Arab States**, the regional Men, Women and Gender Equality programme succeeded in reducing discriminatory attitudes in communities in **Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco** and the **State of Palestine**, reaching 150,102 people. In **Nepal**, under the five-year Story-Telling Initiative led by local women and feminist organizations, 40 self-help groups from 35 wards challenged gender discriminatory norms and weakened community support for the harmful practice of isolating menstruating women.
59. Given the pervasive imbalance of power in decision-making spaces, UN-Women works with male leaders and male heads of household to increase accountability for promoting positive social norms. UN-Women enlisted traditional and faith-based leaders as informed and influential gender equality advocates against harmful discriminatory practices and norms. Showcasing the power of collective action and community engagement in achieving positive changes, in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) through the Spotlight Initiative, a full ban on female genital mutilation was adopted by traditional leaders in **Liberia**. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, chiefs and religious leaders signed four acts of commitment to combat harmful discriminatory practices, while 90 positive masculinity clubs were established. In **Fiji**, support to faith-based organizations in three communities to challenge traditional gender roles within the family resulted in a rise

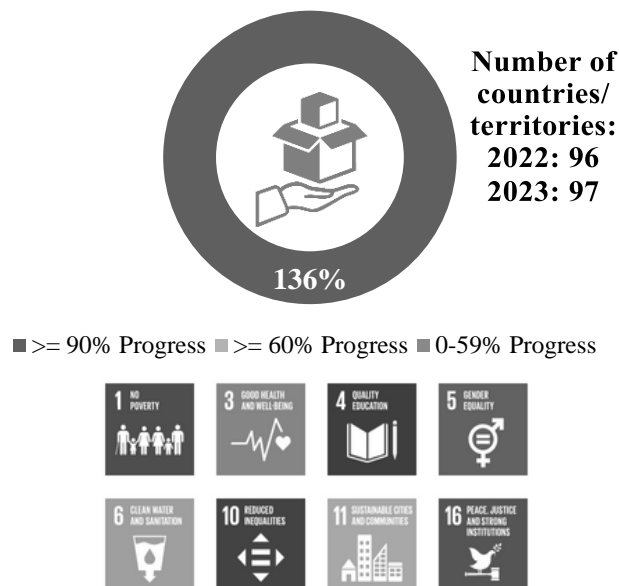
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in the portion of participating men sharing domestic responsibilities, from 63 to 96.3 per cent.

60. UN-Women has been partnering with schools and universities, ensuring the engagement of younger generations in changing negative social and gender roles. In **Bangladesh**, five secondary schools adapted play-based activities to address gender stereotypes; in **Mexico**, the Safe Campus project involved over 700 students, teachers and sports coaches to prevent violence against women; and in **Kenya**, 23 universities adopted policies and practices to address the sexual harassment of students by staff, up from three in 2019.
61. Leveraging sport, UN-Women partnered with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in **Latin America** on a cross-regional knowledge initiative to advance gender equality in and through sport policy and practice and accelerate progress on the gender dimensions of the SDGs. In the **Pacific**, the Get into Rugby PLUS programme, which promotes gender equality and non-violence through rugby and life skills training, won a prestigious Leaders Sports Award. UN-Women will further invest in broadening partnerships within the sport ecosystem, including the IOC, International Federation of Association Football and World Rugby Union.
62. Since the start of the Strategic Plan, 15 additional countries have adopted comprehensive, coordinated, multisectoral and evidence-based violence prevention strategies. In **Zimbabwe**, UN-Women supported the development of a National Gender-Based Violence Strategy and helped operationalize the Spotlight High-Level Political Compact on Ending Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices.

## D. Outcome 4: Women's equitable access to services, goods and resources

Figure 5: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



63. Inadequate public investments in essential services and care infrastructure continue to impede women's ability to fully participate in the economy, live free from violence, and access justice and social protection. In 2023, UN-Women further accelerated efforts to realize equitable access to services, goods and resources.
64. Women's rights to land and other productive resources are essential for livelihoods and well-being. SDG indicators 5.a.1(a) and (b) show unequal ownership of and insecure rights over agricultural land. The share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land is 35.6 per cent on average (latest available data) for the 40 countries reporting on this indicator; a gender gap of 20 per cent persists in the proportion of the agricultural population with secure rights over agricultural land. Gender disparities in land rights are indicative of the pervasive structural inequality women face, which is also reflected in their access to goods and services.
65. Throughout 2023, UN-Women accelerated women's equitable access to services, goods and resources by supporting national policies, institutional capacities and platforms, and services designed to support women. In 2023, the Entity worked with 37 countries (surpassing the milestone of 30) to implement multisectoral systems, strategies and/or programmes to advance women's equal access to and use of services, goods and resources, including social protection. In **Nigeria**, with the support of UN-Women, the President approved the first Women's Economic Empowerment Policy. The Policy established a high-level advisory council, with UN-Women as the secretariat, and identified gender-responsive procurement as a key accelerator of economic opportunities for women.
66. Helping to ensure that goods, services and resources meet women's needs, UN-Women supported 2,501 institutions across 58 countries (surpassing the milestone), equipping them with practical tools, such as through capacity building to governments and companies to increase their procurement from women's enterprises. In **China**, UN-Women worked with government officials and local practitioners to support rural women in agribusiness, resulting in the launch and growth of 43 women-led start-ups.



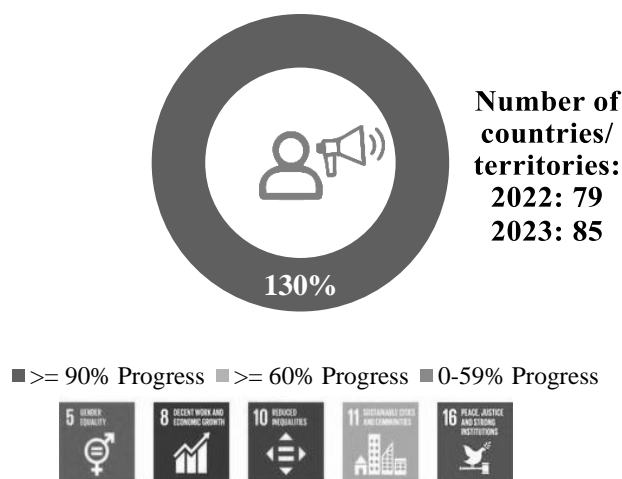
67. In 2023, in 29 countries UN-Women supported the development and/or implementation of guidelines, protocols and standard operating procedures to strengthen essential services for survivors of violence. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, 10 cantons and 29 municipalities adopted protocols on cooperation between service providers and developed local action plans for enhanced service provision, in line with international standards. Thirty-four countries reported increased numbers of women accessing services after experiencing violence or discrimination.
68. UN-Women implemented new multistakeholder initiatives to prevent and respond to sexual violence in 32 countries (exceeding the milestone), all of which included a focus on sexual harassment; twenty-one countries adapted their approach to urban settings, three to conflict-affected settings, and four to workplace settings. The Entity continued to provide psychosocial assistance and access to other gender-based violence services, trainings on leadership and empowerment for livelihoods, and cash transfers in humanitarian settings. UN-Women supported 56,253 individuals (exceeding the milestone), the majority of whom were women, to access legal aid and other justice services in 2023.
69. Nearly all indicators under outcome 4 met or surpassed milestones, achieving an average output attainment rate of 136 per cent for 2022 and 2023 (137 per cent in 2023). Building on findings from the midterm review, UN-Women will continue to integrate ending violence against women and women’s economic empowerment initiatives and adapt to new and emerging priority policy areas as it advances implementation of its forthcoming *Strategy for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus*.

#### **Climate change**

At the twenty-eighth Conference of Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN-Women advocated for key issues, strengthened partnerships and expanded knowledge. Through technical guidance, direct engagement with the COP28 Presidency, support to parties and the convening of side events, UN-Women played a crucial role in integrating gender equality priorities across multiple conference outcomes. On climate finance, a decision on the Adaptation Fund included gender-responsive measures. The Just Transition Work Programme agreed in the UAE Consensus recognizes human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment through an intersectional lens. Through the Generation Equality Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition, UN-Women convened nearly 100 multistakeholder organizations and launched its “Feminist Climate Justice: A framework for action” report.

## E. Outcome 5: Women’s voice, leadership and agency

Figure 6: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



70. Work by UN-Women under this outcome area is more important than ever amid worsening conflicts, humanitarian crises, economic distress and backlash against women’s rights. In **Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar and Ukraine**, among other places, UN-Women remained a steadfast partner for women and girls in the most challenging contexts, significantly increasing its engagement with civil society compared to the previous year. The average output attainment rate under this outcome area for 2022 and 2023 was 130 per cent (134 per cent in 2023).
71. Women human rights defenders, journalists, peacebuilders and women seeking or holding public office continued to face high levels of in-person and online violence. While the issue goes well beyond association with the United Nations, between May 2022 and April 2023 OHCHR documented 140 incidents of reprisals and intimidation for cooperation with the United Nations, affecting at least 108 women and girls. To address violence against women in politics, UN-Women engaged in coordinated advocacy and joint programming in over 18 countries to support 43 new initiatives, including legal reforms and dedicated policies and protocols. UN-Women remained a strong advocate for sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including through multistakeholder partnerships in the Generation Equality Action Coalition to advance progress on SDG indicator 5.6.1, which still only stands at 56 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 having decision-making power over their bodies.
72. UN-Women upheld its unwavering commitment to increasing quality, flexible, regular funding to civil society organizations, disbursing over \$50 million in 2023 to support groups working to advance the rights of women, youth and adolescent girls. This included \$37.9 million from the WPHF to support local women’s organizations in crisis and conflict settings; and the UN Trust Fund having over 80 per cent of its portfolio dedicated to women living with disabilities, women and girl refugees, and lesbian, bisexual and trans women in crisis and non-crisis settings.
73. In 2023, UN-Women strengthened the capacities of over 125,000 women and girls (a 45 per cent increase from 2022), including those living with and/or affected by HIV, to participate in public life and exercise leadership in various domains, from human rights education to political participation. The Entity provided technical capacity development to nearly 6,000 civil society and women’s rights organizations in 48 countries to influence laws and policies, humanitarian responses and peacebuilding.

74. Globally, UN-Women supported nearly 5,000 dialogues and/or platforms (a 40 per cent increase from 2022) that enabled the meaningful engagement of civil society organizations, including in **Afghanistan, Burundi, Fiji, Thailand** and **Yemen**. The Entity facilitated their direct inputs to high-level international dialogues, including the Commission on the Status of Women, Security Council and Peacebuilding Commission. Following youth-focused capacity-building sessions, over 100 youth leaders contributed to policy discussions at the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum. These events provided platforms for young feminists to connect, learn and strategize with each other.
75. In humanitarian settings, UN-Women continued to facilitate local women's leadership in planning and access to funding. In 2023, the Entity ensured systematic coordination to centre-stage the voices of women's organizations to inform humanitarian decision-making, including through over 600 local women's organizations across nine countries.
76. Globally, over 4,500 dialogues, mechanisms and/or platforms were created and sustained to enable meaningful and safe participation and engagement by gender equality advocates and civil society organizations. This includes humanitarian settings such as **Afghanistan**, where, as the secretariat of the Afghan Women Advisory Group to the Humanitarian Country Team, UN-Women helped increase the visibility and positioning of gender equality in humanitarian discussions. In partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, UN-Women conducted in-person and online consultations reaching hundreds of women in 33 out of 34 provinces.
77. Women's and girls' voice, agency and leadership in decision-making remain key to UN-Women's work across all regions. The Entity will enhance efforts to support the meaningful participation of civil society and women's rights organizations leading up to the Summit of the Future, 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and 25th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

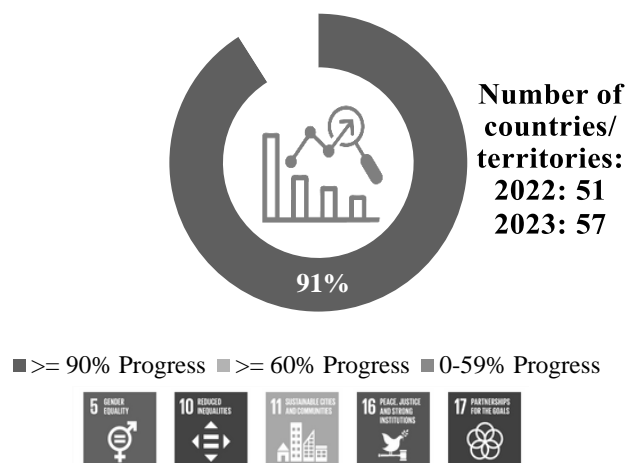
**Leaving no one behind**

Leaving no one behind is a key principle firmly embedded in UN-Women's Strategic Plan. It cuts across all systemic outcome areas and embodies human rights principles of equality, participation and non-discrimination.

- To support the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, over 65 UN-Women offices implemented national and local initiatives providing normative guidance, integrated policy advice, operational support and capacity development. In the **State of Palestine**, revision to the Case Conference Manual incorporated guidance for the provision of services to women with disabilities who experience violence.
- UN-Women promoted the leadership and empowerment of women living with HIV in 34 countries (12 in 2022), providing training on advocacy and expanding access to decision-making spaces and economic empowerment opportunities. In **Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nigeria** and **South Africa**, support by UN-Women to the institutional strengthening of networks of women living with HIV resulted in more gender-responsive HIV strategies and implementation.
- In **Argentina's** Gran Chaco area, 2,504 indigenous and Creole women from 58 associations and over 10 productive sectors gained digital skills for their businesses
- UN-Women engaged in several inter-agency efforts, such as the United Nations Youth2030 Strategy, working with, among others, young people with disabilities; indigenous young people; black, Afro-descendent and young people of color; young migrants or refugees; young women living with HIV and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer plus youth (LGBTIQ+)
- UN-Women continued its active participation in the United Nations Network on Racism and the Protection of Minorities, supporting an inter-agency statement on the rights of girls with disabilities to live free from violence

## F. Outcome 6: Production, analysis and use of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and knowledge

Figure 7: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



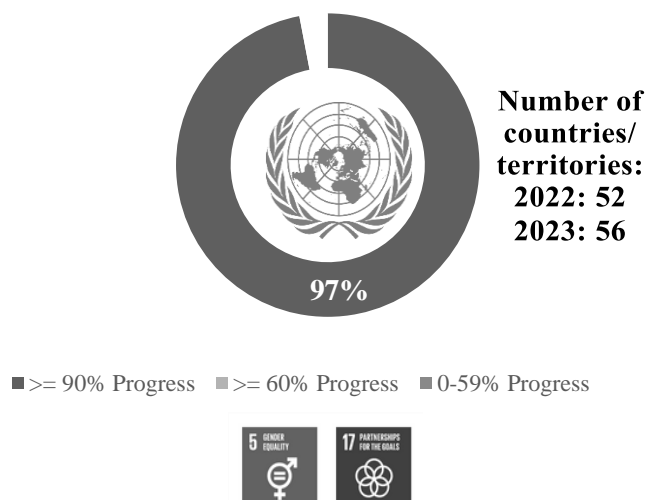
78. Despite advances in recent years, significant challenges to collecting and using timely and reliable gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data persist. Since 2018, UN-Women has invested nearly \$70 million in national, regional and global initiatives to strengthen the gender-responsiveness of statistical systems, including financing critical data collection, integrating gender statistics into national plans and strategies, and monitoring gender-related dimensions of the SDGs.
79. In 2023, UN-Women supported integration of gender statistics into 19 national plans (45 since 2022) and established 63 coordination mechanisms (46 in 2022) to improve production and use of gender statistics. Seventy-six gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data collection initiatives were supported, including 21 nationally representative household surveys, contributing to increased availability of gender-related SDG data, from 26 per cent in 2016 to 52 per cent in 2023. The data was used in over 40 countries in 2023, including to influence 15 policies (such as on care work, ending violence against women and constitutional amendments). In **Mongolia**, gender data on women's representation in Parliament was used to amend the Law of Parliament Election to increase the female nominations quota from 20 to 30 per cent. In **Senegal**, the first-ever time use survey and household satellite account, supported by UN-Women, prompted the Ministry of Economy to develop interventions to address women's unpaid care and domestic work. In **Georgia**, time-use survey data informed the Gender Impact Assessment of the Law of Public Service, yielding recommendations on gender-responsive employment policies for public servants.
80. UN-Women improved its focus on analysing gender statistics with an intersectional approach. In **Eastern and Southern Africa**, the Entity collaborated with the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to help develop and test a mental health and disability survey module, with potential for scale-up. As the co-convenor of the new Collaborative on Citizen Data, UN-Women is spearheading global efforts to fill critical gaps in data on less-visible groups and enhance citizen participation in evidence generation and government decision-making.
81. The 2023 edition of the flagship *Gender Snapshot* report, produced by UN-Women and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), affirmed the need for increased funding for gender equality, revealing a critical annual funding gap of approximately \$360 billion across 48 developing economies. Collaboration with UN-DESA

over the past 5 years has enhanced monitoring of gender-responsive implementation of the SDGs, including the need for dedicated resources for gender equality interventions.

82. In response to the rise of technology-facilitated violence against women, both existing and emerging forms, UN-Women led global efforts to develop standard methods for measurement, in partnership with UNFPA, the World Health Organization and national statistical offices.
83. UN-Women and UNDP published *The Paths to Equal*, a report highlighting global challenges faced by women and providing a roadmap for targeted interventions and policy reforms. The report introduced two new indices, the Women's Empowerment Index and the Global Gender Parity Index, which offer a comprehensive assessment of national progress in achieving gender equality.
84. UN-Women partnered with UN-Water to produce a report on SDG 6, titled *From commodity to common good: A feminist agenda to tackle the world's water crisis*. The report revealed how far the world is from realizing the right to water and sanitation for many women and girls and emphasized the need for a feminist approach to addressing the global water crisis.
85. Guided by a more decentralized approach, progress on producing and using gender statistics is delivering as expected; the average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 91 per cent (99 per cent in 2023). UN-Women continued to strengthen its position as a credible voice and partner on gender statistics, which are now increasingly included in statistical planning and informing gender-responsive policies.

## G. Outcome 7: United Nations system coordination for gender equality

Figure 8: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



86. In 2023, UN-Women intensified efforts to enhance United Nations system coordination to drive system-wide results; the average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 97 per cent (108 per cent in 2023). Sixty-six out of 108 (61 per cent) United Nations Country Teams reported either having visibly mainstreamed gender equality perspectives into all Cooperation Framework outcomes or having included a dedicated gender equality outcome. Sustained emphasis on United Nations joint programmes saw approximately 44 per cent in 2023 (38 per cent in 2021) focusing on SDG 5 and gender equality. In 2023, UN-Women's commitment to joint programmes continued, constituting 30 per cent of the Entity's expenses.
87. The UN-SWAP 2.0 has significantly advanced accountability, coordination and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system, with 78 per cent of ratings achieving or surpassing requirements in 2023. Ninety-seven United Nations Country Teams completed a UNCT-SWAP report in 2023, a 28 per cent increase over 2022, with 61 per cent of all ratings meeting or exceeding minimum requirements.
88. Following the Chief Executives Board's 2022 endorsement of the Gender Equality Marker, a United Nations Data Standard championed by UN-Women, 38 United Nations entities have adopted it, reflecting a strong commitment to advancing gender equality financing and accountability. In coordination with UN-Women, the United Nations Secretariat has developed online learning resources for effective gender tagging. In addition, 91 United Nations Country Teams are also using the marker for their Joint Work Plans through UN INFO. These accountability mechanisms represent a comprehensive approach to institutionalizing gender equality across all United Nations entities and United Nations Country Teams, a prerequisite for achieving all SDGs and ensuring that no one is left behind.
89. As co-chair of the Inter-agency Task Team on Temporary Special Measures, UN-Women launched the United Nations Gender Quota Portal, the United Nations' first global information hub on electoral gender quotas. This is proving instrumental in **Kenya**, where comparative knowledge informed country-wide consultations on implementing constitutional provisions on women's representation in elective offices.

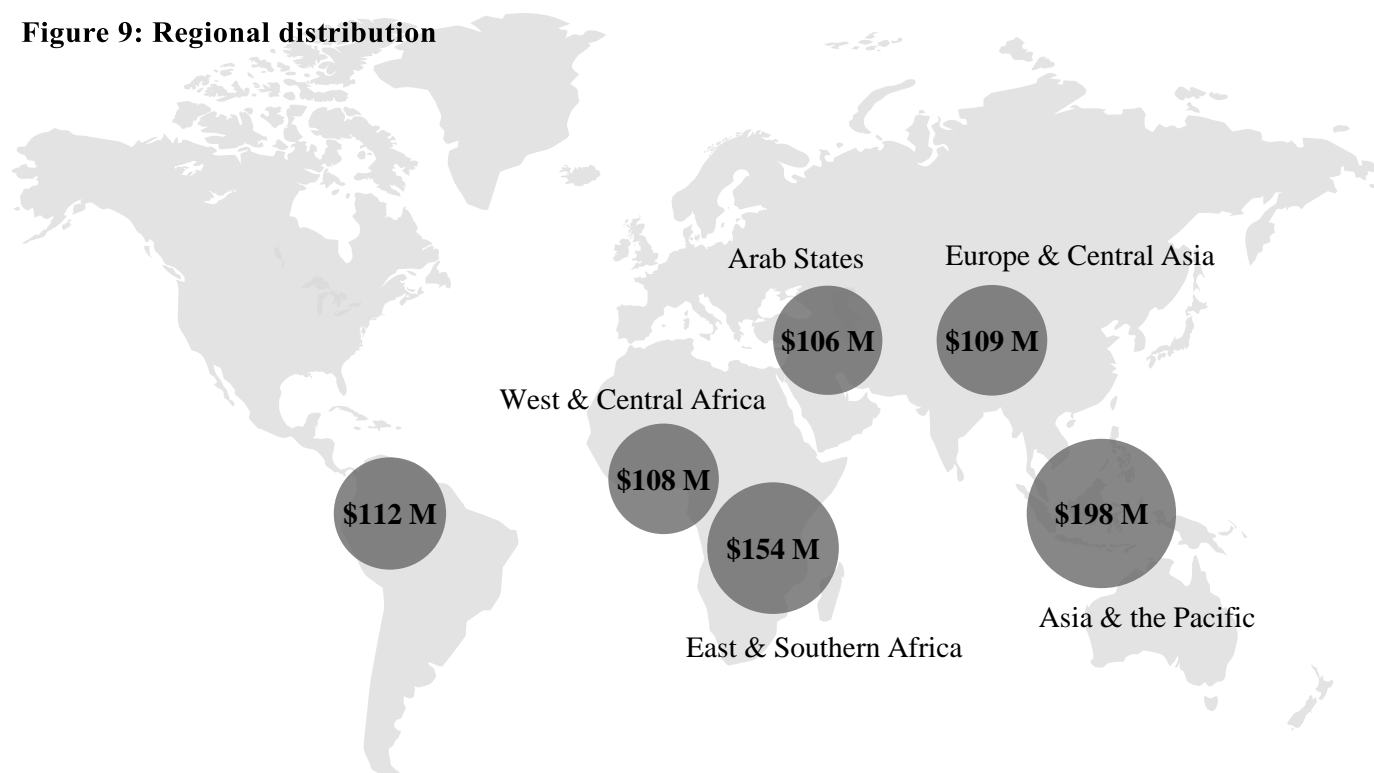
90. UN-Women leads all global coordination and intergovernmental mechanisms on women, peace and security, providing advisory support to the Security Council and monitoring progress to hold the United Nations accountable for commitments. Seventeen countries benefitted from 79 peacebuilding processes inclusive of young women.
91. Seventy-nine per cent of 2023 humanitarian response plans demonstrated meaningful integration of gender equality priorities, including provisions for women's livelihoods and access to resources, and ending violence against women. Through UN-Women's leadership role in the Regional Gender Task Force under the **Ukraine** Situation Regional Refugee Coordination Forum, capacities for gender mainstreaming among partner organizations in **the Republic of Moldova, Poland and Slovakia** were enhanced, gender analysis was integrated within the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, and a dedicated chapter was included in the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan. Leveraging a global and a cross-regional joint programme, in **Moldova** with UN-Women's leadership gender was mainstreamed into the National Program for Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities. Additionally, capacities of key stakeholders in **Moldova and Georgia** were strengthened on the prevention and elimination of multiple forms of discrimination, with a focus on women with disabilities and women refugees from **Ukraine**.
92. UN-Women strove to ensure a strategic approach to ending violence against women in United Nations joint planning processes as a cross-cutting issue that impacts multiple areas. While the Entity has been successful in integrating analysis on violence against women within common country analyses, greater efforts are required to ensure this carries through to Cooperation Frameworks.
93. UN-Women remained at the forefront of efforts to advance gender parity across the United Nations system, overseeing a network of over 500 gender focal points and supporting 130 United Nations entities, departments and offices to implement the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity.
94. Recognizing the importance of a common approach to addressing sexual harassment across the United Nations system, UN-Women continued its engagement in 2023 in the Chief Executives Board Taskforce on Addressing Sexual Harassment. The launch of the *United Nations System-wide Knowledge Hub on Addressing Sexual Harassment* centralized resources and best practices to combat sexual harassment within the United Nations system. The Entity leveraged experiences and expertise from its longstanding policy and programmatic work on ending sexual harassment in offline and online spaces and combatting the sexual harassment of women with disabilities.
95. Stocktaking at the midpoint of the Strategic Plan has confirmed the value of having a systemic outcome on United Nations coordination contributing to development results. This has improved the effectiveness and visibility of UN-Women's coordination work and strengthened accountability, including for comprehensive corporate reporting on system-wide commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.



## H. Programme expenses and types of contributions

96. Total expenses in 2023 reached \$551.29, compared to \$540.3 million in 2022. Geographically, over the period 2022 to 2023, the highest expenses were in Asia and the Pacific (\$197.8 million), followed by East and Southern Africa (\$153.6 million) (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Regional distribution**



97. By function, capacity development and technical assistance continued to be provided in most countries, followed by advocacy, communications and social mobilization, and support functions (in 90, 83 and 83 countries, respectively).

## IV. Strengthening organizational performance

98. The approach to structuring organizational effectiveness and efficiency results in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 has proven effective in driving corporate performance and enabling data-driven decision-making. Strong impetus came from the Quarterly Business Review, launched in 2022, which has become an integral, forward-looking management tool.

99. In support of its development results, UN-Women implemented over \$560 million in 2023, surpassing records set in 2021 and 2022.

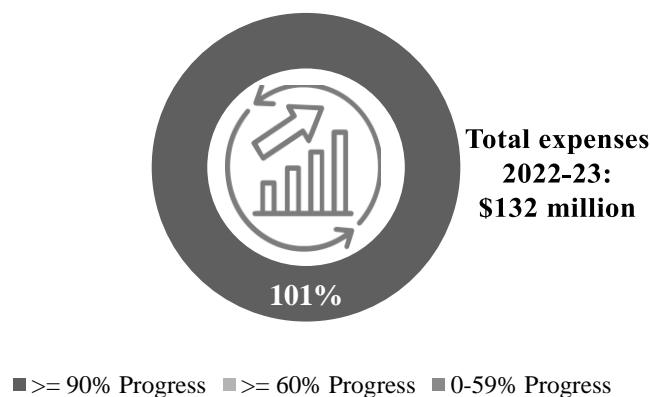
100. Despite challenges with the introduction of a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, UN-Women achieved good performance (within 10 per cent of 2023 milestones) on 78 per cent of organizational effectiveness and efficiency indicators. Among indicators that are part of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, 90 per cent achieved good performance.

101. UN-Women aims for continuous improvement, including by integrating technology, process enhancements and resource allocation closer to regions. Business model innovation,

refined programme costing and sustainable funding modalities remain priorities based on midterm review findings.

### A. Output 1: Assuring an accountable organization through principled performance

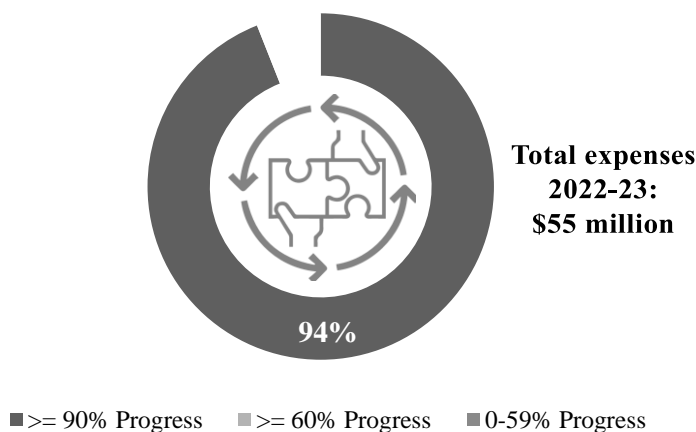
**Figure 10: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones**



102. For the twelfth consecutive year, UN-Women received an unqualified audit opinion. As in 2022, it met both milestones for internal and external audit recommendations. In 2022, UN-Women rolled out its first corporate risk appetite statement, and in 2023, it improved the performance of its enterprise risk policy and framework. The average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 101 per cent (same in 2023).
103. With the transition to a new ERP system, the International Aid Transparency Initiative score of UN-Women decreased slightly in 2023 but steps have been taken to reverse this going forward. Continued improvements in the Transparency Portal led to visualizations of Strategic Plan results and organizational efficiency and effectiveness data.
104. Over 2022 and 2023, UN-Women total expenses were \$1.09 billion, meeting 2022 and 2023 milestones.
105. In 2023, UN-Women met or exceeded 100 per cent of UN-SWAP minimum standards, outperforming the milestone.
106. Following recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit, UN-Women established an independent ethics function to uphold integrity and accountability.
107. A policy and procedure for social and environmental standards was promulgated in late 2023; a roll-out plan will support strong implementation.

## B. Output 2: Advancing partnerships and resourcing; effectively influencing for impact and scale

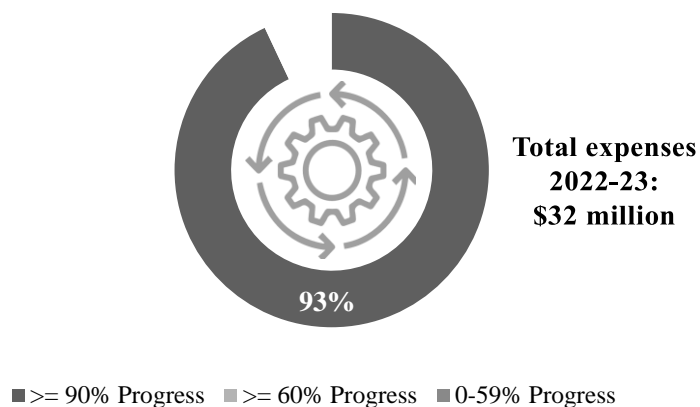
Figure 11: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



108. In 2023, the partnerships base supporting UN-Women’s mission expanded by 18 per cent, notably in private sector engagements and collaborations with financial institutions. Regular resources growth surpassed that of other resources for the second time since 2014, reflecting funding partners’ trust. UN-Women National Committees increased contributions to regular resources by 24 per cent compared to 2022, highlighting individual giving’s importance. The average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 94 per cent (92 per cent in 2023).
109. UN-Women’s communications showed increasing impact, with a 7.17 per cent rise in top-tier media coverage, social media reach increasing from 188.5 to 194 million, and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign impressions going up from 5.8 to 6.7 million, along with a 50 per cent increase in related page views. Additionally, the 2023 Gender Snapshot report received extensive media coverage with over 750 mentions, reaching an estimated 850 million globally. This resulted in significant policy advocacy opportunities, exemplified by an invitation from the European Parliament to present the report’s findings.
110. UN-Women’s private sector engagement was strengthened, with Women’s Empowerment Principles signatories increasing by 19 per cent in 2023 to 8,917 signatories in over 160 countries. The UN-Women-convened Unstereotype Alliance grew to 240 members across 5 continents, representing over half a trillion dollars a year of advertising spend, with market research showing improved gender equality indicators.
111. UN-Women continued to build capacities in transformative leadership and meaningful youth engagement practices, positioning young people as agents of change in key decision-making spaces.

### C. Output 3: Advancing business transformation

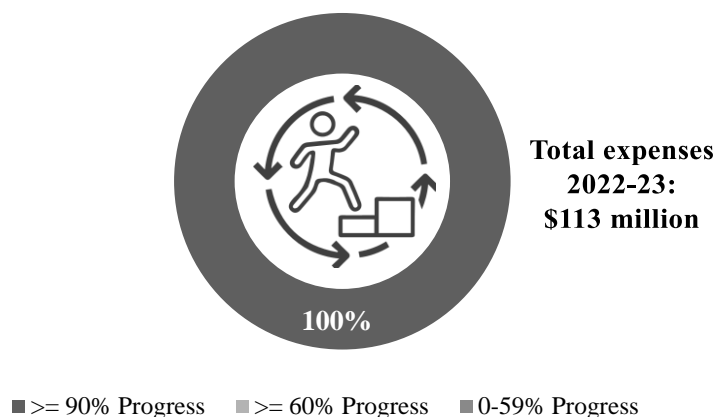
Figure 12: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



112. The Strategic Plan 2022–2025 made a commitment to developing a networked, effective development organization with business models that are fit-for-purpose, cost-effective, and focused on regions and countries. Similar to 2022, UN-Women in 2023 surpassed the milestone for shifting posts away from New York.
113. UN-Women significantly surpassed milestones for the number of organizational knowledge-sharing initiatives in 2022 and 2023, and met the milestone on continuous process improvements. The average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 93 per cent (92 per cent in 2023).
114. While the organization continued to drive implementation of office typologies, performance under these indicators was below milestones for the first two years of the Strategic Plan. UN-Women will place more emphasis on country office sustainability moving forward, especially in crisis and humanitarian contexts.
115. With limited opportunities in 2023 to increase common presence locations, the share of UN-Women presences in common premises remained the same as 2022. This remains a focus and is expected to increase in 2024–2025.

## D. Output 4: Nurturing an empowered workforce and advancing an inclusive UN-Women culture

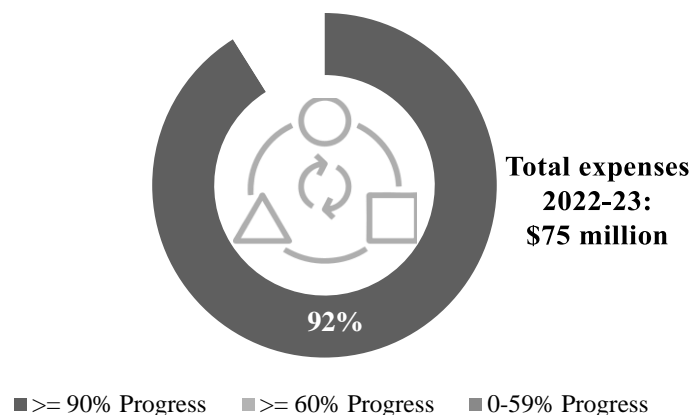
Figure 13: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



116. UN-Women remains committed to increasing diversity and delivering results through an inclusive culture and leadership; the average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 100 per cent (98 per cent in 2023). In 2023, detailed briefings on the Global Staff Survey were conducted at the global and regional levels, which initiated action planning based on results.
117. In 2023, UN-Women adopted the United Nations common system parental leave framework. Initiated through advocacy by UN-Women, the framework standardizes parental leave across the United Nations.
118. Accessibility initiatives contributed to improvements for women and girls. In 2023, UN-Women supported women with disabilities to access information, knowledge, goods, resources and services through platforms and programmes in humanitarian and development settings, and through increased capacities to participate in public life and exercise leadership.
119. UN-Women launched a comprehensive indicators and metrics framework to concretely measure progress in addressing sexual misconduct, presented at the 2023 first regular session of the Executive Board.
120. To support its safeguarding efforts, UN-Women continued to deliver scenario-based training workshops on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The Entity provided personnel with a contextualized understanding of the pillars of the prevention and response framework and their corresponding rights and obligations, and coordinated a network of over 100 in-country focal points. The 2023 Report of the Secretary-General on Special Measures for Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse recognizes UN-Women's initiatives as a good practice within the United Nations system.

## E. Output 5: Effective normative, programmatic and coordination products, services and processes

Figure 14: Progress against 2022 and 2023 milestones



121. The effective execution of business processes drives the delivery of UN-Women’s mandate. In 2023, UN-Women promulgated a planning, monitoring and reporting policy to ensure that planning, monitoring, reporting and communication on results happen in a harmonized and streamlined way, with one results structure, from the Strategic Plan to Strategic Notes, workplans and projects. This is a critical step in operationalizing the integrated approach of the Strategic Plan, as affirmed by the midterm review. UN-Women has also progressed in project management and programme partner management maturity, promulgating a Programme Partner Management Policy and associated procedures. The average output attainment rate for 2022 and 2023 was 92 per cent (88 per cent in 2023)
122. UN-Women maintained rigorous evaluations to gather evidence and insights supporting organizational learning and decision-making. All 51 completed evaluations received ratings of “good and above” from external assessments, an improvement from 86 per cent in 2022. UN-Women participated in 27 United Nations joint evaluation initiatives, representing 27 per cent of all such evaluations during the year. These included eight independent system-wide evaluations, including two global SDG evaluation syntheses and various Cooperation Framework evaluations. With increasing demand for evaluative evidence, UN-Women will enhance technical support and internal capacity-building efforts, prioritizing strategic evaluations.
123. The launch of the Gender Equality Accelerators superseded the indicator on signature initiatives, which will be covered under development results going forward.
124. In 2023, performance on response times in the service tracker system dropped below the milestone. This was related to implementing the new ERP system and performance is expected to rebound following system stabilisation.

## V. Lessons learned and ways forward

125. The midterm review of the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025 yielded several important findings and recommendations. Conducted using a mixed-methods approach, including a wide-ranging meta-analysis of evaluations, audits and assessments and a series of interviews, focus group discussions and consultations with key stakeholders at all levels, the midterm review will guide work over the remaining two years of the Strategic Plan as well as the design of the Strategic Plan 2026–2029. Efforts to accelerate the realization of women’s rights and right-track the SDGs will also be actively pursued through crucial adjustments to the integrated result and resources framework.

126. **The Strategic Plan 2022–2025, defined by an integrated approach with cross-thematic systemic outcome areas, was recognized as the strongest, most consultative and innovative plan to-date.** Work will continue to internalize the new design, by increasing institutional support for “new ways of working” and developing a comprehensive set of structures and mechanisms at all levels (global, regional and country) that help break thematic silos and bolster the delivery of synergistic results. UN-Women will develop systematic and coherent approaches to major intervention strategies (such as capacity development and policy advocacy) to achieve higher-level, more sustainable results. Additionally, as highlighted by the midterm review, the Entity will strengthen the interconnections between the three dimensions of its mandate to more systematically embed the implementation of normative commitments into operational work, towards making women’s rights a lived reality.
127. **The work of UN-Women is grounded in international frameworks for gender equality and aligns with national priorities and stakeholders’ needs.** The relevance of key programming frameworks to national and right-holders’ priorities is high, although resource constraints sometimes limit operational support to vulnerable groups of women and girls. Going forward, UN-Women will continue advancing the gender equality commitments of Our Common Agenda and leverage every available opportunity to ensure that women’s rights remain front and centre in the final years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
128. **Across regions, good models are emerging and demonstrating how cross-cutting themes and principles, such as leaving no one behind, social norms change, climate change, private sector engagement and innovation, can inform programming.** Learning from these good practices, UN-Women will more clearly articulate corporate theories of change and approaches to drive consistent and optimal uptake of cross-cutting themes in its interventions. This will support the successful negotiation of a strategic tension identified in the midterm review between the need to focus and prioritize on one hand, and the need to integrate cross-cutting themes of growing concern and relevance on the other. Work on advancing positive social norms, including through identifying and helping to rebalance unequal power dynamics and pushing forward against the pushback on women’s rights, is central to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. This requires greater organizational investment and attention as well as inter-agency collaboration.
129. **While strong relationships between UN-Women and diverse groups of feminist and women-led organizations, including in humanitarian and crisis settings, represent a clear comparative advantage, adherence to the principle of leaving no one behind remains uneven across programmes.** A re-evaluation and renewed commitment to the full articulation of this principle in the Entity’s work is required to ensure a consistent, comprehensive approach. Intersectional approaches in humanitarian and crisis contexts merit particular attention, including the use of participatory approaches and co-creation (as distinct from consultations). These can help to meet women’s diverse needs based on intersecting and context-specific characteristics, and support the continuous assessment of inequalities and adaptive programming. Building on midterm review findings, UN-Women is committed to more systematically integrating the leave no one behind principle across its interventions for the remainder of the current Strategic Plan.
130. **UN-Women has successfully established itself as an advocate for gender equality within United Nations Country Teams in a repositioned United Nations development system.** Challenges in realizing the full potential of reforms need to be addressed at the systemic level. Stronger incentives for joint work are required. All stakeholders need to recognize and embrace the increased costs and associated implications of integrated programme design and implementation. In particular, UN-Women’s commitment to its United Nations coordination work needs to be comprehensively embedded into joint

programmes. Relying on the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, UN-Women will continue to strategically deploy its triple mandate across a variety of development and crisis contexts to mobilize the United Nations system to deliver on women's rights.

131. **Within the United Nations development system, UN-Women's coordination mandate is considered a strategic asset in collaborating and coordinating efforts to advance women's rights with other entities.** To fully leverage its coordination mandate for maximum impact, UN-Women will further clarify and integrate efforts across its thematic areas, including through the Gender Equality Accelerators, and articulate a minimum coordination menu of services for its engagement in countries where it does not have a physical presence. The Entity will make particular efforts to capitalize on successful coordination in the initial phases of programming so efforts are sustained in implementation and more fully translated into impacts on the lives of women and girls. UN-Women will use the United Nations Sustainable Development Group output indicator framework, developed collaboratively by United Nations entities under the leadership of the Development Coordination Office and launched in late 2022, as the entry point for inter-agency collaboration in pursuing women's rights and the SDGs.
132. **The importance of long-term, flexible funding to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency cannot be overstated.** Many UN-Women offices face resource mobilization challenges and rely on short-term and smaller project funding, which affects their ability to design and deliver transformative and sustainable interventions. The midterm review demonstrated conclusively that flexible funding (including through the softly-earmarked Strategic Note direct funding modality) improved, inter alia, the effectiveness of United Nations coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment and the engagement of UN-Women in joint programmes. Strategic Note direct funding provides an opportunity, therefore, for resolving the paradoxical situation of UN-Women's coordination work being simultaneously highly valued and underfunded. The Entity is including a review of potential rationalisation of business units to ensure resources are less thinly spread, and working with funding partners to further promote loosely-earmarked and multi-year non-core funding, in particular for country offices through Strategic Note direct funding.
133. **Building on its new role as an IASC member and strong gender analysis offering, UN-Women has succeeded in integrating gender equality priorities in United Nations-led humanitarian planning.** The midterm review affirmed that the Entity's unique value addition in humanitarian settings is of a catalytic, advisory and technical nature and based on its partnerships with women-led and women-focused organizations. There is a need to better articulate and support this offering, including through developing a corporate nexus approach and finalizing crisis response policies and emergency activation protocols. UN-Women will invest in better understanding how to strengthen the design of interventions to shift from achieving short-term results, such as through protecting and enhancing the livelihoods of crisis-affected women, to building longer-term resilience and systems for more sustainable gains. In response to rising humanitarian needs, the Entity will seek to increase the number of personnel with crisis response capacities at all levels to more effectively advance women's rights in crisis contexts.
134. **Efforts by UN-Women to enhance organizational effectiveness and efficiency continue to improve with forward-looking management processes.** The Business Review Committee and Quarterly Business Review have emerged as important vehicles for driving corporate performance. While governance, risk management and control processes are now established, accountability for operationalization will be further strengthened. UN-Women will make concerted efforts to reduce the turnover of personnel and a reliance on non-staff personnel, as both factors impact organizational performance based on the midterm review. More work will be done to enable consistent understanding of the high-growth business model to drive impact at scale.



135. **Finally, the midterm review identified the need to improve both the attainment of measurable, context-specific results in countries and communicate consolidated results globally.** Building on the launch of a corporate planning, monitoring and reporting policy in late 2023, additional investments will be made to improve capacities across the planning, monitoring and reporting cycles, paying greater attention to their interdependencies. This will facilitate the related shift from a project to a programme approach and lead to stronger attainment and communication of integrated results at all levels. In a resource-constrained environment, there is a clear need to balance standardization with more flexible and adaptable approaches, and the support of funding partners in particular will be crucial in striking the right balance.

## **VI. Elements for a draft decision**

The Executive Board may wish to,

- (a) Take 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 2022–2025, including the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, and commend UN-Women on its strong performance to date;
  - (b) Take note with concern of the funding gap in regular resources, and encourage all countries in a position to do so to increase voluntary contributions for the full and effective implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, and encourage strengthened partnerships in this regard;
  - (c) Decide to transmit the report to the Economic and Social Council.
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