



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

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## First regular session 2025

10–11 February 2025

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

## Organizational matters

### Report on the second regular session 2024, 10 to 11 September 2024<sup>1</sup>

#### I. Election of the Bureau

1. During the second regular session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), held at United Nations Headquarters, New York from 10 to 11 September 2024, Zoraya del Carmen Cano Franco, Deputy Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations, was elected President of the Executive Board for the remainder of 2024 (representing the Latin America and Caribbean States Group), after the previous President and Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations, Markova Concepción Jaramillo, ended her position in New York. Additionally, Michal Miarka, Deputy Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations, was elected Vice-President of the Executive Board for the remainder of 2024 (representing the Eastern European States group) after the previous Vice-President and Deputy Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations, Joanna Skoczek, ended her position in New York.

#### II. Organizational matters

2. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the second regular session ([UNW/2024/L.4](#)) and approved the report on its annual session from 18 to 20 June 2024 ([UNW/2024/6](#)). The Executive Board approved the draft annual workplan for 2025 ([UNW/2024/CRP.7](#)), as well as the provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session of 2025 ([UNW/2024/CRP.6](#)) to be held from 10 to 11 February 2025.

3. The Executive Board adopted four decisions: Decision 2024/9 – Report on the Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2022–2025; Decision 2024/10 – Comprehensive review of the

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UN-Women.



joint cost-recovery policy; Decision 2024/11 – Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/ United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and UN-Women; and Decision 2024/12 – JIU review of management and administration in UN-Women, which are contained in the annex to this report.

### **III. Opening statements**

4. The Vice-President of the Executive Board representing the Western Europe and Other States group opened the session by noting that the meeting adheres to the Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at United Nations system events. He congratulated the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on nearing three years in office and outlined the topics under discussion at the session.

5. In her opening statement, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director welcomed the newly elected President and Vice-President, and thanked the outgoing Ambassadors. She thanked the other members of the Bureau for their tireless support of UN-Women’s triple mandate on gender equality and the empowerment of women. She expressed appreciation of the support, guidance, leadership and wisdom that the Executive Board has provided to UN-Women.

6. Discussing the Summit of the Future, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted that the summit presented a once-in-a-generation opportunity and highlighted that compelling evidence suggests that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 offers one of the best solutions for the achievement of all SDGs. She added that UN-Women supports the dual approach of mainstreaming gender equality and having dedicated actions on gender equality in the outcome documents and their annexes, the Declaration on Future Generations and the Global Digital Compact. The Head of the Entity further highlighted the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, Sudan and Gaza, and stressed that UN-Women’s job is to be the unrelenting voice of these women. She stressed the need for a strong multilateral system to meet the interconnected challenges of our time.

7. Touching upon the upcoming release of UN-Women’s latest gender snapshot, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director highlighted that the new publication identified some positive developments, such as declining poverty and a narrowing gender gap in education, but added that the report articulates the ways in which the world remains off track for SDG 5. For example, she shared that it may take 137 years to eradicate extreme poverty for women and girls, 68 years to eradicate child marriage and 39 years to achieve gender parity in parliaments. The Head of the Entity noted that a commitment to doing better and doing so focused and fast is at the heart of what UN-Women proposes to be the true commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+30) in 2025.

8. Regarding Beijing+30, the Head of the Entity outlined the three areas of work that UN-Women will focus on in 2025 to ensure justice is done to the

legacy and vision of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: (1) working with Member States and other stakeholders to advance high-impact and high-return investment priorities actions at the country level; (2) working with civil society to ensure they have the voice and resources they need in the broadest sense to claim rights and influence action; and (3) working with the multilateral system to recommit to SDG 5, including the Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, so that it better delivers on gender equality.

9. Providing an update on UN-Women's pivot to regions and countries, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director mentioned that UN-Women has delegated greater authority to the regional and country levels in procurement, finance, human resources (HR) and project management, and has shifted resources to strengthen capacities directly linked to country-level results. She specified that UN-Women has allocated \$72.45 million to regions and countries as a one-time investment, and improved planning, monitoring and reporting structured to more intentionally deliver and measure UN-Women's impact on the ground for women and girls. The Head of the Entity added that UN-Women is now looking to leverage efficiency and effectiveness gains that come from placing positions in the right place (where financial costs are lower, the time zone is conducive to collaboration, the journey times are shorter and travel is less expensive). To that end, the Head of the Entity announced that three new locations alongside New York had been selected for hubs: Bangkok, Bonn and Nairobi. As a next step, she said that UN-Women will be exploring further details of these locations and has begun a business-unit-by-business-unit process of looking at all global functions to identify which are best relocated. She added that most relocations of functions are foreseen to take place in quarters three and four of 2025. She noted that UN-Women has listened carefully to lessons from United Nations sister agencies and shared that the Entity is working closely with its Staff Council to make sure that the personal situations of staff are considered with the maximum practical flexibility. She promised that UN-Women will do its best for every staff member. Regarding estimated cost savings associated with the pivot to countries and regions, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director noted that UN-Women expects the one-time costs associated with the move to be recouped through savings within one year, after which these savings can be reinvested in the service of UN-Women's mandate. She added that these changes will be integrated into the development of UN-Women's new Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and its integrated budget. She concluded by saying that she will continue to keep the Executive Board apprised of developments.

#### **IV. Structured dialogue on financing**

10. In her opening remarks, the Deputy Executive Director thanked the Executive Board for its political and financial support to UN-Women. She noted that 86 Member States contributed voluntary resources to UN-Women in 2023 and shared that the total revenue of UN-Women in 2023 stood at \$586 million, with two thirds of voluntary contributions provided by governments. She highlighted the transformative potential of investing in gender equality and women's empowerment, noting that investing in gender equality is not only crucial for achieving SDG 5, but also central to advancing

the broader 2030 Agenda. She underscored the importance of structured dialogues on financing as they provide an opportunity to discuss the flexible and predictable funding priorities that enable UN-Women to achieve the most with the resources it receives, while navigating tighter fiscal spaces and increasingly complex global conditions.

11. The Director of Strategic Partnerships presented the report on the Structured Dialogue on Financing, noting the system-wide trend of declining core to non-core ratios across the development system. He shared that UN-Women's ratio is currently at 30:70 and stated the belief that the appropriate minimum ratio for achieving UN-Women's mandate is at least 40 per cent core resources. He thanked Member States for contributing to regular resources and other resources, while noting that UN-Women's regular resources increased by 7 per cent and its other resources by 1.5 per cent in 2023, marking only the third time in the Entity's history that regular resources had grown faster than other resources. Despite this positive development, the Director of Strategic Partnerships shared that UN-Women's projections for 2024 are not encouraging, as the Entity is projecting a \$36 million gap relative to the integrated budget for regular resources in 2023. He called on Member States to consider donating to UN-Women before the end of the year and thanked the 77 government partners that contributed regular resources in 2023, particularly those making multi-year commitments. Discussing diversification of funding, the Director of Strategic Partnerships shared that there had been growth in strategic note funding and strong pooled funding. He flagged that National Committees generated almost \$5.25 million in 2023, making them UN-Women's seventeenth largest donor of regular resources. He closed by adding that the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director has made investments into the National Committees for resource mobilization activities from the unallocated balances.

12. Upon the opening of the floor for comments, Member States commended the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director for her leadership and expressed their appreciation of UN-Women's tireless efforts to advance the rights of women and girls around the world. Delegations welcomed the newly elected President and Vice-President. Numerous delegations referred to the upcoming Summit of the Future and the seventy-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, and noted that these are crucial opportunities to renew the international community's commitments to the 2030 Agenda and gender equality. Similarly, a delegation highlighted the High-Level Political Forum's in-depth review of SDG 5 in 2025 and the implementation of the Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan as important moments for attention, dialogue and progress. Member States emphasized the importance of the upcoming Beijing+30 and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Security Council resolution on Women, Peace and Security to collectively secure progress and avoid further backsliding. Looking ahead to the formulation of UN-Women's new Strategic Plan 2026–2029, delegations stressed the need to adapt and transform to meet the pressing needs of women and girls globally and to connect stakeholders to empower women and girls in all their diversity. On the topic of UN-Women's pivot to countries and regions, delegations expressed appreciation for the shift of focus to the impact of UN-Women's work on women in their daily lives and the results on the ground with greater involvement of local offices, but also requested more information on the optimization process. Regarding the Report on the Structured Dialogue

on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, one Member State speaking on behalf of 24 countries stressed the importance of unearmarked, flexible, sustainable and predictable funding to UN-Women, noting that this is key to deliver on UN-Women’s triple mandate, contribute to the SDGs and ensure strong internal oversight systems. To encourage more support for core funding, the group called on UN-Women to improve its evidence-based communication and storytelling to increase visibility and incentives for core funding at the global, regional and country levels. It also encouraged UN-Women to minimize internal competition for resources and to continue to fund core functions with core funding, and to continue efforts to broaden the donor base and to diversify types of funding.

13. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director thanked delegations for their comments and answered questions related to the report on the structured dialogue on financing, while highlighting new partnerships with international financial institutions and joint programmes. With regards to the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, the Head of the Entity provided further details about the establishment of a new Secretariat that will be supporting the governing bodies overseeing this plan’s implementation across the system. The Deputy Executive Director further explained the critical importance of core resources and UN-Women’s cooperation with international financial institutions to advance gender-responsive financing. She discussed the ways in which UN-Women is looking to broaden its donor base and diversify its funding, and provided more details on UN-Women’s pivot to regions and countries. The Director of the Strategy, Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division then answered questions related to the impact of the reduction of regular resources on UN-Women’s business model. The Director responded to several questions posed on the report on the structured dialogue on financing, noting for example how UN-Women has made a number of investments to generate better results data and developed a highlights report to explain results achieved by the Entity. The Deputy Executive Director shared further details on UN-Women’s plans for Beijing+30. The Director of the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division responded to questions from Member States on rural women and care work, also highlighting UN-Women’s work on advancing women, peace and security at the regional, global and national levels.

## **V. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters**

14. The Executive Board was presented with the comprehensive review of the joint cost-recovery policy ([DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2024/1](#)). The Director of the Strategy, Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division thanked delegations for their continued guidance and engagement on the topics of cost recovery and cost classification, and appreciated UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA for their collaboration and cooperation on the review of the joint cost-recovery policy. Following the approval of the policy by the Executive Board in 2020 and the request for a review of the policy in 2024, the Director reaffirmed that there is considerable value in continuing with a harmonized approach and only making revisions where it would improve the transparency of costs and enhance full cost recovery. She proceeded to highlight four conclusions from the review. First, the review concluded that the joint cost-recovery policy has proven very helpful in enabling full cost recovery and driving harmonization

among the agencies. Second, she highlighted the proposal to maintain indirect cost recovery rates, as previously approved by the Executive Boards given the variability in agency sizes and business models. Third, she shared that the agencies have made a few small clarifications to the grouping of cost classification categories, including the introduction of enabling functions as a cost classification category to align with the definition as approved by the Finance and Budget Network and the renaming of the development activities category to include humanitarian activities. Fourth, she added that the revised policy reflects some minor revisions to underscore the importance of ensuring full recovery of both direct and indirect costs. The Director shared that all agencies would continue to report at the level of the detailed cost classification categories in their respective integrated budgets, and on the cost recovery waivers as currently reported in the annual report of the Executive Director. On next steps, she stated that the agencies would work expeditiously to update their own respective internal policies, guidance materials, tools and standard operating procedures based on this new policy, which will then be reflected in UN-Women's next integrated budget 2026–2027.

15. Member States thanked UN-Women for conducting the comprehensive review of the joint cost-recovery policy alongside UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, and for keeping the Executive Board informed throughout the process. One delegation called for regular annual consolidated reporting of the cost-recovery statistics, including a detailed table from each agency, listing each discounted waiver and the corresponding financial impact to allow Member States to make financial comparisons. It further highlighted the need to protect regular resources and acknowledged the marginal benefits of differentiated rates while noting that discounted rates for thematic contributions have not resulted in significant growth in thematic resources. Another delegation highlighted that applying the harmonized cost-recovery rate remains important, as does further minimizing the use of waivers to help ensure that the effective cost-recovery rates can further increase. It expressed its interest in hearing more about the next steps planned after the changes go into effect and encouraged UN-Women to include in its programme and project proposals an explanation note with the rationale behind the included costs. It invited UN-Women to explore where costs related to oversight and Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse can be included as direct costs, highlighting that these can be forms of operational support and services directly linked to programme or project implementation. The delegation encouraged UN-Women to continue to inform the Executive Board about recurring challenges related to cost recovery at the country level and further expressed interest in knowing how UN-Women will continue to work together with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF in developing its agency-specific policies, as well as its guidance to country offices on the updated policy. Another Member State emphasized that harmonization remains its priority and welcomed the changes made to the policy, especially the elements that lead to further harmonization with the broader United Nations system. It highlighted that during the next four years, the focus should be on the implementation of this full cost recovery, with a particular focus on direct cost recovery. It urged the four agencies to develop communication materials in simple language to support the acceptance of direct cost recovery, especially at the country level.

16. In response to Member States' interventions, the Director of the Strategy, Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division stated that the development of

a full set of procedures, guidance materials, tools and checklists, including budget templates and FAQs, is already under way and highlighted the importance of continued awareness-raising and dialogue to explain the costs that are directly linked to the implementation of projects and programmes. On waivers, she reaffirmed UN-Women's strong track record in and commitment to reducing the use of waivers. The Chief of Budget added that every year, UN-Women looks at best practices and updates existing guidance accordingly. Furthermore, he highlighted that the main challenges faced in operationalizing the full cost recovery include donors' different responses to cost recovery across agencies and countries, as well as limited staff capacities in country offices. The Director of the Division of Management and Administration added that after the finalization of the procedures and the toolkits, there will be sensitization and capacity-training efforts across the regions. He further explained that efforts will be undertaken to familiarize donors with the requirements and need for full recovery of direct costs.

## **VI. JIU review of management and administration**

17. In her opening remarks, the Deputy Executive Director thanked JIU for conducting the first management and administration review of UN-Women. She shared that UN-Women would use the review's findings and recommendations to further enhance efficiency and effectiveness across the organization to accelerate the achievement of its mandate and mission. She stated that out of the nine formal recommendations identified by JIU, UN-Women has accepted all five recommendations addressed to the Entity and stands ready to support the Executive Board in its consideration of the remaining four recommendations that are addressed to the Executive Board. She also confirmed that UN-Women welcomes the 53 informal recommendations. Further, she shared that implementation of the recommendations is currently already under way and that, moving forward, UN-Women will continue to focus its efforts in the areas that require improvement, including the development of its next strategic plan and integrated budget.

18. The JIU Inspectors presented the findings of their review to the Executive Board, highlighting that the formal recommendations tackled areas such as governance, executive management, accountability and internal control, financial resources, knowledge management and HR management. They stated that as per usual practice, follow-up information on the recommendations will be recorded on the JIU web-based tracking system and reported to the General Assembly. They further shared that the report has a supplementary paper with additional observations pertaining to the mandate of UN-Women. On the formal recommendations, the Inspectors welcomed the launch in April 2024 of an updated internal governance framework as an anticipated response to their recommendation on the matter. They emphasized that the functioning of, and the synergies among, management committees must be improved based on renewed management as well as transparent and accountable practices that are enhanced by broader composition to ensure a whole-of-organization buy-in on decisions. They recommended the inclusion of a detailed organization chart showing UN-Women's structure in the documentation submitted to the Board and on the UN-Women website. The

Inspectors highlighted the fundamental constraints imposed by UN-Women's financial framework in terms of predictability, sustainability and flexibility of funding, expressing concern that the current ratio of regular and other resources may lead to corporate functions being under-resourced in a context of expanding activities, therefore exposing the Entity to a series of gaps and risks. To alleviate this concern, they recommended the need to develop standard operating procedures to complement existing guidelines and further operationalize the cost-recovery policy issued by UN-Women. A crucial area highlighted is the Pivoting to Regions and Countries initiative and the need to ensure that decentralization and resource reallocation reforms are conducted in a more inclusive manner, engaging UN-Women personnel at large, particularly field representatives, and are communicated with clearly defined and tangible objectives, accompanied by a business case based on the cost-benefit analysis, addressing not only economic aspects but also expected improvements in terms of substantive work. In terms of oversight, the strengthening of the second line of defence within UN-Women, including the institutionalization of the statement of internal control, remains highly relevant and the Inspectors proposed the establishment of a comprehensive action plan for strengthening the second line of defence within UN-Women. On HR management, they included two specific recommendations with a broad range of objectives. The first aims at preparing a corporate HR strategy for the Entity, notably addressing the necessary dimensions of the pivot to regions and countries. The second focuses on the analysis and reporting on the use of the specific contractual modalities for the affiliate workforce. The Inspectors noted that almost all recommendations include a mechanism for reporting to the Executive Board. Providing further context of the UN-Women management and administration review, they highlighted three major points. First, UN-Women is the only United Nations organ fully dedicated to the realization of transformative change in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Second, this review comes at a very critical point in UN-Women's joint work with all other United Nations entities on the 2030 Agenda, which means implementation of actions or recommendations proposed based on this review should start soon to ensure that UN-Women will be able to deliver its promises on the 2030 Agenda. Third, focus should be on actions required to make sure that UN-Women is fit for purpose, particularly after five years of implementation of the Secretary-General's plan for repositioning the United Nations development system.

19. The Director of the Strategy, Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division presented UN-Women's management response to the JIU report. She reported that UN-Women has already made substantial progress in implementing some of the recommendations addressed to the Executive Director and has offered some management insights to assist in the Executive Board's consideration of the recommendations addressed to the Board. On internal governance, she noted that under the updated internal governance policy framework, UN-Women continues to improve not only the effectiveness of its management committees, but also the promotion of collaboration between them and the involvement of field offices in decision-making. She added that the Entity's organization chart is regularly published, as part of both the integrated budget and the regular budget processes, using a harmonized format together with other United Nations entities. On the Pivoting to Regions and Countries initiative, she reiterated its aim to bring



people, resources and delegation of authority closer to the women and girls the Entity serves, to maximize the impact of its work. She affirmed UN-Women's commitment to ensuring that this initiative is implemented in a transparent, consultative and evidence-based manner, and is complemented by a strong second line of defence. In the area of financial resources, she acknowledged the imbalance between regular and other resources, and stated that UN-Women is actively working to address this challenge by enhancing results reporting and transparency, increasing visibility for all its funding partners, including for regular resources, and advocating for flexible and predictable funding, such as through strategic notes and thematic funding windows. On HR, she announced the development of a new HR strategy towards the Entity's goal of ensuring an empowered and diverse workforce. Linked to this, she confirmed that UN-Women will update its organizational effectiveness indicators to ensure that it is monitoring and reporting on progress in the most critical areas.

20. After the opening of the floor, Member States thanked the JIU Inspectors for conducting this comprehensive and useful review, and expressed gratitude to UN-Women for providing the management response, and the willingness and commitment to address all the formal recommendations. One delegation requested the Inspectors to share which recommendations should be prioritized by UN-Women and the Executive Board, and which recommendations, if left unaddressed, posed the largest risk. It further requested to hear the JIU Inspectors' suggestions on how the Executive Board's new risk management and organizational culture agenda items should be utilized, including focus areas for discussion considering the review and its recommendations related to the two agenda items. The delegation inquired about how UN-Women will use this review for the development of its next strategic plan and integrated budget, and requested UN-Women to elaborate on its new HR management strategy. Another delegation inquired whether UN-Women had remedied and increased transparency on the convening and documenting of senior management meetings. It further inquired whether the procedure for reviewing policies encourages or requires engagement with personnel at Headquarters and in the field to facilitate buy-in and ensure the policies are fit for purpose. A different Member State asked the JIU Inspectors to further elaborate on how the perceived absence of a cohesive financial management structure that would overcome siloed work has had negative implications regarding the capacity of UN-Women to attract more core resources. While noting that the funding landscape might not change, the delegation emphasized the need to focus on alleviating some of the pressure and inquired on how UN-Women plans to accelerate action around this. It expressed that UN-Women should focus on progressing and finalizing recommendations that have been on the agenda for a long time, such as pivoting to regions and countries, as well as the strengthening of the second line of defence. A different delegation highlighted the need for more transparency and effective communication with the field in the Entity's executive management, particularly around the Pivoting to Regions and Countries initiative to ensure inclusion and a clearer vision on substantive and economic returns.

21. In response to Member States' interventions, the JIU Inspectors highlighted that all nine recommendations are critically important, but priority should be given to the HR management strategy without prejudice to the other recommendations. They emphasized the need for reform to align and reallocate personnel and the budget to support UN-Women's triple mandate.

The Deputy Executive Directors and Director of the Strategy, Planning, Resources and Effectiveness Division responded to Member States, highlighting that all independent sources of information and insights, including JIU, will be integrated into the development of the upcoming strategic plan. They confirmed that the Global Management Team has been meeting regularly and that clear terms of reference (TOR) and operating procedures have been developed, including reporting lines and coordination among the bodies. They reiterated the need to invest in the Entity's HR management and capacity in the second line of defence.

## **VII. JIU review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women**

22. The Vice-President of the Executive Board representing the Western Europe and Other States group provided an update on the implementation of the assessment of how the Executive Board executes its governance and oversight functions, with a particular focus on the JIU report ([JIU//REP/2023/7](#)), as mandated by the Decision 2024/3 of the Executive Board. He noted that following the decision, the Bureau of the Executive Board of UN-Women, through its President, has engaged with the respective presidents of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and UNICEF in a series of discussions and meetings. He highlighted that the Bureau will work diligently with its regional groups to facilitate the nomination of Member States to participate in the working group by early January 2025 to ensure that the working group will be confirmed by the participating Executive Boards by a silence procedure ahead of the first regular session in 2025. He added that the development of the TOR for the working group will be a consultative process involving cross-Board and cross-regional collaboration, with the draft TOR expected to be presented for adoption at the first regular session 2025. He emphasized that Member States must lead an inclusive and transparent consultation process, reflecting their collective commitment to achieving the highest standards of governance for the Executive Board. He noted that the Bureau is committed to ensuring a smooth and seamless process of transition to the new Bureau members in January 2025 and confirmed that there will be a standing agenda item on the process at each formal session moving forward. He stated that a joint informal consultation with JIU will be convened in mid-January 2025, and that UN-Women management and Heads of independent offices are expected to submit their information notes in November 2024. Regarding the UN-Women Executive Board, he expressed the Bureau's confidence and trust in UN-Women's leadership and operations and noted that the Bureau feels that UN-Women has fulfilled governance and reporting requirements in a transparent and compliant manner.

23. After the opening of the floor, Member States thanked the Bureau for the update provided and reiterated their gratitude to JIU for the report. A group of Member States noted that the report and some of its recommendations will have wide-ranging implications that require careful consideration of what is desirable and feasible. They stated that, as a result, decisions should not be rushed but well-informed, deliberate, and fully participatory and inclusive, and should also consider varying capacities. Another delegation looked forward to

receiving the initial review of the assessment from management and the independent offices of UN-Women, while noting that its own internal deliberations were ongoing, so it was not yet in a position to support implementation of any of the recommendations. It requested UN-Women's views on the assessment and its recommendations. A different Member State highlighted the timeliness of this review and the imperative to meaningfully reform the Executive Boards' governance and oversight structures to adapt to changing times.

24. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director reiterated that UN-Women welcomes the JIU report and its review process as a well-suited and useful step to review the effectiveness of its governing body, the Executive Board. She affirmed that UN-Women and its independent functions are ready to provide their perspectives in November as requested in Decision 2024/3. She affirmed UN-Women's readiness to support the working group as requested and needed. She reiterated that UN-Women remains fully committed to supporting Member States in this endeavour.

## **VIII. UN-Women's operational response at the regional level**

25. In her introductory remarks, the Deputy Executive Director noted that Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most unequal regions in the world today. She noted that the feminization of poverty in the region has a disproportionate effect on women, especially those of Indigenous and Afrodescendant populations. She shared that UN-Women has prioritized the care agenda to help unlock women's autonomy and improve access to formal job markets. She acknowledged the legislative success that countries in the region have had in advancing national care policies and highlighted UN-Women's support in helping prepare legislation. She went on to note the complex issues facing the region, including criminal activities, internal conflicts, trafficking, natural disasters and climate change. She noted that the region has the highest rates of murder and femicide globally, highlighting the structural violence that women face. The Deputy Executive Director went on to acknowledge the importance of women in decision-making roles as a vital way to achieve SDG 5. In this regard, she congratulated Mexico on the election of a female president. She noted the context of the global pushback on women's rights and UN-Women's new pushback strategy on this launched in 2023, stating that UN-Women has applied this strategy throughout the region. She went on to detail the large number of countries and territories that UN-Women has presence in, noting that UN-Women has positioned itself as a leader in providing assistance throughout the region. She noted the central role that Haiti has in UN-Women's work in the region, particularly in the domain of women, peace and security. The Deputy Executive Director concluded by thanking Caribbean parliamentarians for their work in supporting women, peace and security, and women's human rights in Haiti.

26. UN-Women's Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean began her presentation by stating that UN-Women has four programmatic priorities in the region. The first of these is governance and participation in public life. UN-Women achieves this through working with parliaments, civil society, political parties and leaders to strengthen gender-responsive laws, gender-responsive policies and institutions. She went on to detail various

legislative policies that UN-Women has supported to aid women in politics, especially with regard to addressing violence against women in political spaces. She went on to note that UN-Women has worked to achieve women's economic empowerment through the effective establishment of care systems in public, private and community-based settings. On ending violence against women, she stated that UN-Women is working with all stakeholders to ensure that there are legal frameworks that protect women both at home and in external environments. On the women, peace, security and humanitarian agenda, she stated that there are over 73 million people on the move from several countries in the region. UN-Women is working with Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and other United Nations entities to ensure that systems of protection are in place. She went on to praise the European Union's Spotlight Initiative for its effectiveness in benefiting a wide range of civil society groups and people across the region. She concluded by stating that UN-Women has worked to help governments support the gender and climate agendas together in the region.

27. Upon the opening of the floor for comments, one Member State thanked UN-Women for the informative and inspiring presentation. It acknowledged the achievement of making progress in the care agenda in the region through supporting the enactment of policy and system legislation in several countries in the region. The delegation went on to note with concern the high levels of gender-based violence and femicide in the region while recognizing the important role that the Spotlight Initiative has had in strengthening the criminalization of violence against women and increasing support for survivors. It asked how UN-Women plans to engage governments that have yet to consider enacting legislation on violence against women in the next strategic plan, as well as how UN-Women was working with stakeholders to generate a supportive environment for the adoption of such legislation. The delegation asked about the number of women candidates who were successful in getting re-elected in the region. In addition, it asked how UN-Women coordinates with other agencies engaged in technology-facilitated gender-based violence issues.

28. UN-Women's Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean thanked the delegation for its intervention and responded by stating that UN-Women uses specific road maps to ensure that the proper structures are in place to create mechanisms that allow care workers into the formal economy. On enacting legislation to criminalize violence against women, she stated that UN-Women works with all stakeholders to ensure that the most modern legislation is passed. The Regional Director stated that the number of women candidates re-elected to political office in the region is very low. She stated that the primary cause for this was violence. She shared that UN-Women has worked with UNDP to develop a knowledge product that identifies the causes of women leaving politics.

29. The Deputy Executive Director thanked the Member State for its intervention and shared that UN-Women's current strategic plan includes four impact areas, all of which are linked to the reduction of gender inequality and the empowerment of women. She noted the important processes that Member States have been undertaking in preparation for Beijing+30 and the upcoming sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women by adopting

laws at the national level and submitting national reports and data. She added that data is an important tool in increasing women's involvement in decision-making processes, stating that UN-Women's goal is to get girls involved in leadership development at an early age. Responding to another point, she noted that the threat posed by technology-facilitated violence, and encouraged Member States to mitigate this to ensure greater participation of women in public spaces. The Director of the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division added that UN-Women uses data to actively work on cross-cutting issues in the region. Data is used to shape policies on areas such as the care economy and gender-based violence. She concluded by stating that UN-Women has led system-wide coordination on awareness-raising about the impacts of violence against women in public life.

## **IX. Field visit**

30. The Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations and Vice-President of the UN-Women Executive Board for 2024 presented the report of UN-Women's Executive Board field visit to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in 2024. The delegation was comprised of the President, three Vice-Presidents and additional members of the Executive Board. The main purpose of the field visit was to provide the Executive Board with an increased understanding of the impact of the programming portfolios of the UN-Women country offices in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the UN-Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office in Istanbul, and how UN-Women contributes to the implementation of the national development priorities of the two respective host countries. In addition, the field visit included a stop in Warsaw, Poland, which provided the delegation with an opportunity to meet with regional representatives of UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to learn about the response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis. The Ambassador noted that the delegation found that UN-Women has worked efficiently to assist the Governments of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine through implementation of its triple mandate in the field. He stated that through collaboration with the national governments, gender equality has been a cross-cutting priority in the national programmes of both countries. He added that the delegation observed a need for UN-Women Headquarters to engage in further reflection on how UN-Women can better leverage its triple mandate at the country and regional levels. The delegation urges UN-Women to continue to ensure that humanitarian capacities are met at the country level. He noted that the delegation advised that in reporting, clear linkages are made to show how results and outputs contribute towards global development goals. He concluded by thanking the Governments and peoples of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as UN-Women personnel for the successful implementation of the field visit.

31. Upon the opening of the floor, one Member State noted that UN-Women is an important partner in helping align national standards with global norms and assisting the country to help promote a better future for all. The Member State noted that the meetings held with high-level government officials in the Republic of Moldova indicated the deep commitment of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to the promotion of gender equality and women's

empowerment. Another Member State noted with satisfaction the growing role of women in the economy of Ukraine. The Member State went on to note with concern the increased number of cases of conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

## **X. Closing**

32. In her closing statement, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director congratulated the newly elected President of Panama and Vice-President of Poland. She went on to thank the other Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board, the representatives from Sweden, Tajikistan and Côte d'Ivoire for their coordination within their regional groups. She also thanked the facilitators of Australia, Panama and the United States of America for their expertise in facilitating decisions. The Head of the Entity went on to thank the Deputy Executive Directors, the Regional Directors, and the Executive Board Secretary and his team for their valuable support throughout the session.

33. Noting the upcoming negotiations for the Pact for the Future, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director expressed her confidence that the outcome will place the urgent needs of women and girls at its core. She conveyed her hope that the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will build on the energy from the Summit of the Future to amplify support in the multilateral system for women and girls everywhere. The Head of the Entity went on to note the upcoming review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adding that, with the support of the Executive Board, UN-Women will remain an effective enabler of action on SDG 5. She went on to note the challenges facing the implementation of SDG 5 and the broader 2030 Agenda, urging continued progress to overcome these obstacles.

34. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director urged the Executive Board to continue holding UN-Women to account through the recommendations in the JIU report. She agreed with the recommendations related to strengthening UN-Women's coordination mandate and emphasized that this will be central to UN-Women's next strategic plan, and mentioned that the placement of the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan Secretariat in her office is a testament to her commitment on this matter. The Head of the Entity observed that UN-Women has grown at a remarkable pace over the last decade while continuing to exceed delivery targets and receiving positive external audits. She affirmed that UN-Women remains committed to fully implementing the cost-recovery policy and recovering all direct project costs in accordance with the policy.

35. In closing, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director stated that the pace of the Entity's work is quickening and that she is looking forward to the first regular session of 2025 to continue UN-Women's work on and discussion of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards, anti-discrimination and risk management, audit matters and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting, as well as the development of UN-Women's next strategic plan. The Head of the Entity thanked the Executive Board for its support and noted the crucial

role that UN-Women's unique mandate has in advancing the aspirations of the Charter of the United Nations.

36. The Ambassador of Tajikistan and Vice-President of the Executive Board concluded by conveying his appreciation to the Bureau and their experts for their vital support during and in the lead-up to the session. He highlighted the adoption of four decisions and thanked the facilitators for their skilful support in negotiating these outcomes. Additionally, he thanked the Executive Board Secretary and team for the invaluable support provided to the Bureau throughout its tenure.

37. The session was then adjourned.

## Annex I

### Decisions adopted at the second regular session of 2024

2024/9

#### Report on the Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2022-2025

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report on the Structured Dialogue on Financing the Results of the UN-Women Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 (UNW 2024/7), including progress made on entity-specific commitments of the funding compact;
2. *Encourages* UN-Women to include, in its existing reporting on the Structured Dialogue on Financing, an analysis on strategic considerations and future directions which takes challenges and risks of strategic importance for its funding and financing into consideration;
3. *Notes* the importance of sufficient, predictable regular resources, made available early in the year which is critical for UN-Women to effectively execute its normative, coordination and operational gender equality and women's empowerment mandate and strategically respond to complex humanitarian and development contexts and the Women, Peace and Security agenda;
4. *Notes* the importance of flexible, multi-year other resources, particularly through the direct funding of UN-Women Strategic Notes, which align programming with national development priorities and promote UN system-wide coherence in support of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
5. *Emphasizes* the importance of financing for gender equality and women's empowerment to support progress on Sustainable Development Goal 5 indicators;
6. *Welcomes* the new funding compact for the United Nations' support to the Sustainable Development Goals and calls on UN-Women and encourages Member States to fully implement their respective commitments, in line with relevant ECOSOC resolutions;
7. *Encourages* UN-Women to continue to engage with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to diversify its potential sources of funding and to strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions;
8. *Encourages* UN-Women to continue its engagement with Member States, through structured funding dialogues, on prioritizing contributions to regular resources, and shifting from highly earmarked to more predictable and flexible funding.

*11 September 2024*



**2024/10**

**Comprehensive review of the joint cost-recovery policy**

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Takes note* of the comprehensive review of the joint cost-recovery policy [DP/FPA/ICEF-UNW/2024/1];
2. *Acknowledges* the criticality of ensuring the recovery of all direct and indirect costs to programmes and projects;
3. *Resolves* that the joint cost-recovery policy, as outlined in document DP/FPA/ICEF-UNW/2024/1, supersedes the previous cost-recovery policy;
4. *Approves* the cost-classification categories, and their definitions outlined in the policy, effective 1 January 2026, as follows:
  - a) Development and humanitarian activities, with subcategories:
    - i. programmes;
    - ii. development effectiveness activities;
  - b) United Nations development coordination activities;
  - c) Enabling functions, with subcategories:
    - i. Management activities;
    - ii. Independent oversight and assurance activities;
    - iii. Special-purpose activities;
5. *Approves* the cost-recovery policy, including the methodology and rates as outlined in the policy;
6. *Recalls* decision 2020/8, paragraph 4 and requests UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to provide information requested therein, in a joint harmonized report, to be discussed under: its Structured Dialogue on Financing agenda item at the Second Regular Session each year;
7. *Further requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to continue to present, in a harmonized way, in its existing reporting, the calculations of the notional cost-recovery;
8. *Requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to present a comprehensive review of the cost-recovery policy and its implementation for decision at the Second Regular Session 2028, and further requests UN-Women, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to organize a joint briefing in 2027 to present a joint timeline for the review and preliminary observations and findings from the implementation of the cost-recovery policy.

*11 September 2024*

**2024/11**

**JIU review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of  
UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women**

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Recalls* its decision 2024/3, on the consideration of the JIU report (JIU/REP/2023/7), which requested the Bureau of the Executive Board of UN-Women to provide, in consultation with the bureaux of the participating Boards, an update on the implementation of this decision at the Second Regular Session 2024;
2. *Welcomes* the update provided by the Bureau at the Second Regular Session 2024.

*11 September 2024*

**2024/12**

**JIU Review of Management and Administration in UN-Women**

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Takes note* of the JIU report “Review of management and administration in the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)”, [JIU/REP/2024/1];
2. *Also notes* the need for further consideration by the Executive Board of the recommendations from the JIU’s review of management and administration in UN Women, including those addressed to the Executive Board and decides to continue to discuss the recommendations of the review, as appropriate, under existing agenda items;
3. *Requests* UN Women to provide a written update and informal briefing before the 2025 First Regular Session of the Board on the implementation plan of the Pivoting to Regions and Countries initiative, including a timeline, an elaboration of the substantive and economic returns, cost-benefit analysis, risk assessment and mitigation measures;
4. *Encourages* UN-Women to consider the informal recommendations with explicit links to the Pivoting to Regions and Countries initiative in developing the implementation plan.

*11 September 2024*