



# **COORDINATING FOR GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS**

**Corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to  
UN system coordination on gender equality and the  
empowerment of women**

**Evaluation Brief**

**May 2016**



In 2010, the General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) to assist Member States and the UN system in progressing more effectively and efficiently towards realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW). Today, UN Women plays a crucial coordination role within the UN system to achieve this goal.

UN Women's UN coordination role includes three aspects: leadership and advocacy related to "agenda setting" in the United Nations; promoting accountability of the UN system in relation to its GEEW commitments; and coordinating by engaging in system-wide and inter-agency efforts that promote and advance GEEW at global, regional and national levels. Additionally, UN Women has the responsibility to follow up on gender parity commitments in the UN system.

The UN coordination role is an "organizational" mandate that is not limited to any one division, unit or level of the organization, including the decentralized level.

The Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women undertook a corporate evaluation of this UN system coordination role. Access the full report at <http://gate.unwomen.org>

## What are the main evaluation conclusions?

The following main messages emerged from the findings and conclusions of this evaluation:

**UN Women has implemented its UN coordination role in a highly complex environment. The challenges in coordinating efforts in the UN system are well known and widely acknowledged.** At the macro level, these challenges include strong *vertical accountability mechanisms* to entities' own Headquarters and competition for resources. These challenges limit the ability of UN entities to focus on jointly identified priorities and on *horizontal accountability mechanisms* among entities. At the micro level, UN staff members with common goals and values—including feminist values that are key for forging a shared identity and a transformative approach to gender equality work—face challenges in trying to foster a sense of community for GEEW work.

**In five years, UN-Women has built a solid foundation for the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of its UN coordination role. It has made notable contributions to strengthening UN system coherence, capacity, mobilization and accountability for GEEW related work.**

UN Women's implementation of its mandate on UN coordination has added value to the normative, intergovernmental and operational work of the UN system.

**Despite external challenges, internal limitations and the short time it has been in operation, UN Women in its UN coordination role has been able to demonstrate good practices.** UN Women has been most successful when it has taken a participatory and consultative approach to engaging other UN entities.

**More needs to be done to ensure concrete demonstration of GEEW results of UN system coordination and shared accountability for GEEW across the UN system.** Clear linkages between the work carried out through UN Women's UN coordination role and results on GEEW are currently difficult to discern.

**UN Women's strategic positioning for UN coordination is shaped not only by its existing assets, but also by the extent to which UN partners recognize its added value and demand its coordination efforts.** Given the vertical structure of the UN system, coordination relies on the voluntary cooperation of UN entities. The evaluation found that reputation based on expertise and authority often become key levers to facilitate coordination. In addition, dimensions of reciprocity and trust constitute core relationships to ensure successful coordination. Whether and how other UN actors perceive, interpret and make use of UN Women's assets is also strongly influenced by their own needs, stakes and interests. The implementation of UN Women's UN coordination mandate is therefore subject to the multiple perspectives and competing interests of individual agencies.




**The United Nations is not leading by example with regard to gender equality. While UN Women has set some positive practices as examples for other UN entities, it does not yet consistently model principles of GEEW.** To date, the UN system is not yet consistently modelling the principles of GEEW that it promotes—as shown in the modest progress made so far in reaching a 50:50 gender balance.






**UN Women's rapid evolution has required ongoing adjustments in systems and practices that have not yet consistently translated into efficient and effective support for implementation of the UN coordination mandate.** UN Women started to implement its UN coordination function while establishing itself as an entity. As in any organization undergoing change, the transformations have been accompanied by uncertainties about processes, systems, roles and responsibilities, and have been compounded by chronic under resourcing.

## How can UN Women improve? Recommendations to move forward

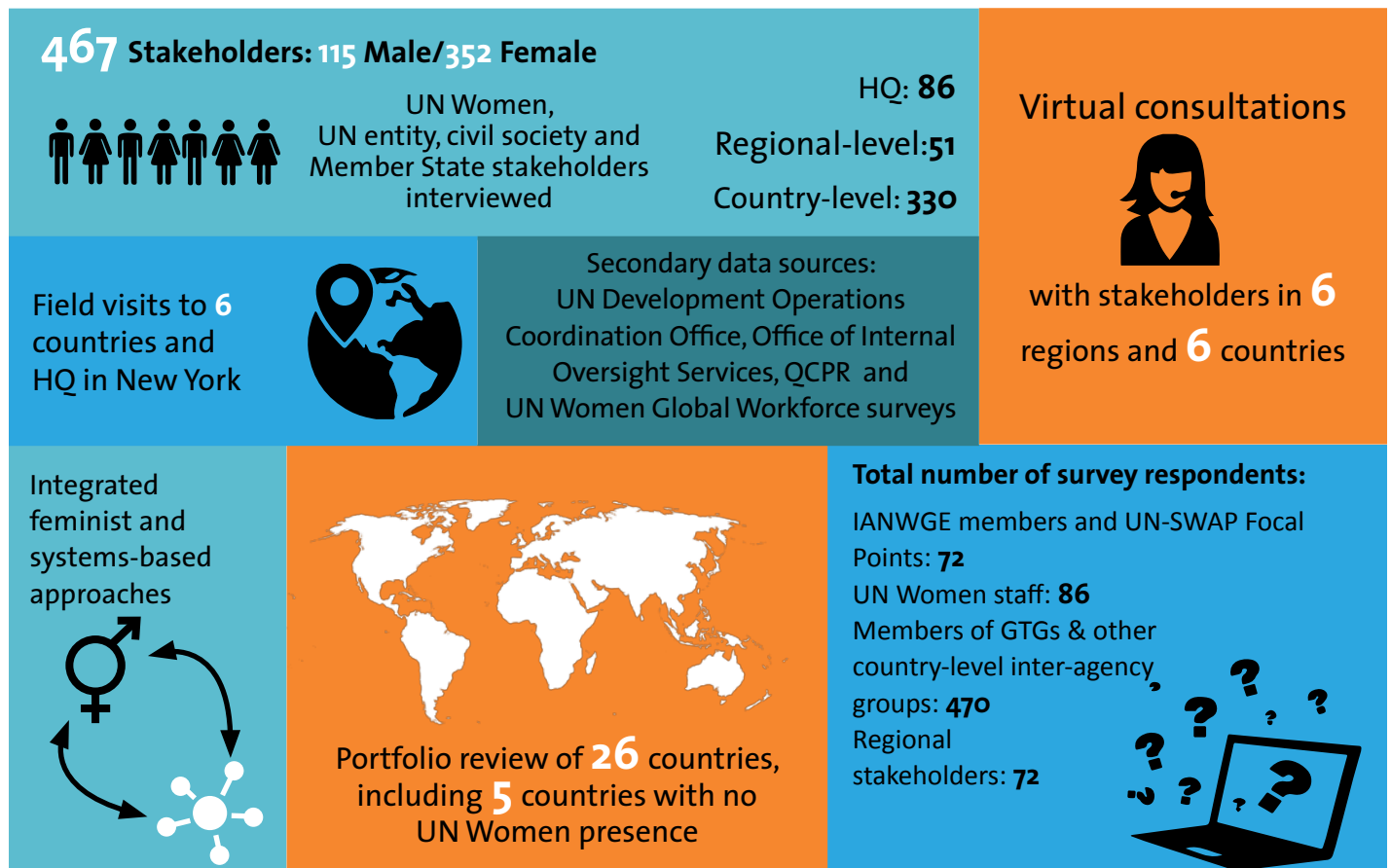
The following recommendations are based on the evaluation framework, the analysis that informed findings and conclusions, and discussions with the UN Women Internal and External Reference Groups and the Senior Management Team.

UN Women should:

-  1. Continue to actively engage in strategic dialogue with other UN entities and Member States, through existing mechanisms at all levels of the United Nations, to catalyse greater system coordination and coherence, particularly on GEEW.
-  2. Align the current Coordination Strategy with the Strategic Plan and current UN context, bringing greater focus on UN coordination as a means for development results and changes for GEEW.
-  3. Align the scope of UN Women's mandate with its resource base.

-  4. Provide operational guidance for UN Women staff on how to approach, plan, implement and report on UN Women's UN coordination role in different geographic and thematic contexts.
-  5. Enhance the role UN Women plays in promoting UN system accountability for its commitments on GEEW.
-  6. Strengthen UN Women efforts to ensure that GEEW principles are consistently taken into account by the UN system in the areas of UN Women's thematic expertise.
-  7. Modify policies and practices in order to model a gender-responsive organization for the United Nations.
-  8. Strengthen gender-focused coordination mechanisms at Headquarters and in the field that have been key in UN Women's approach to implementing its UN coordination mandate.

## Stakeholder data collected for this corporate evaluation



**UN Women** is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN member states as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

The **UN Women Independent Evaluation Office** main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision making and contribute to learning on the best ways to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality through normative, operational and coordination work. UN Women Independent Evaluation Office also strengthens capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments and civil society organizations.

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