COORDINATING FOR GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS

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

UN WOMEN Independent Evaluation Office

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report, and the overall evaluation process, was informed and enriched by the participation of more than 467 stakeholders, many of whom actively contributed to the development of evaluation findings by serving as reference group members, attending focus group discussions and interviews, completing comprehensive surveys, and providing evidence about the impact of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) work in UN coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment. Without the support and active participation of all these women and men involved in the consultation process, this report would not have been possible.

The evaluation was conducted by an external evaluation company and led by Katrina Rojas from Universalia.

We would like to thank members of the **Evaluation Advisory Group** (Annalise Moser, Independent Gender and Development Consultant, and Bob Williams, Independent Organizational Consultant and Evaluator) and the **Internal Evaluation Reference Group** (Begona Lasagabaster, Chief, Leadership and Governance Section; Blerta Aliko, Head of Humanitarian Team; Daniel Seymour, Deputy Director, Programme Division; Meg Jones, Chief, Economic Empowerment Section; Michele Ribotta, Coordination Adviser, UN System Coordination Division; Nanette Braun, Chief, Communications and Advocacy; Nazneen Damji, Policy Advisor, HIV/AIDS, Policy Division; Paivi Kannisto, Chief Adviser, Peace and Security; Shane Sheils, Chief, Programme, Planning and Guidance Unit; Louise Nylin, Programme Adviser, ECA, Programme Division; and Katarina Salmela, Programme Specialist, Peace & Security, Policy Division) who provided thoughtful comments and insights, and invested significant time and effort during the inception phase to ensure that the evaluation would be of maximum value and use to the organization.

We are also grateful for the participation of members of the **External Evaluation Reference Group**, which included Anju Malhotra (Principal Adviser, Gender & Rights Unit; Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement Section in Division of Policy & Practice; UNICEF), Cai Cai (Chief of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Section, Social Development Division, UN-ESCAP), Dena Assaf (Deputy Director of UN-DOCO), Eugene Owusu (UN Ethiopia Resident Coordinator, UNDP), Eva Johansson (Gender Equality, Rights and Sustainable Development Adviser; Gender, Human Rights and Culture Branch — Technical Division; UNFPA), Jennifer Topping (UN Mozambique Resident Coordinator, UNDP), John Hendra (Senior Coordinator "UN Fit for Purpose" for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, UNDP), Libor Stloukal (Population Policy Officer; Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division; Economic and Social Development Department; FAO), Malayah Harper (Chief, Gender Equality and Diversity Division — Department of Rights; Gender, Prevention and Community Mobilisation; UNAIDS), Raphael F. Crowe (Senior Gender Specialist, Bureau for Gender Equality, ILO), Raquel Lagunas (Policy Advisor on Gender Mainstreaming, UNDP), Saori Terada (Women's Human Rights and Gender Section — Research and Right to Development Division, OHCHR), Sonsoles Ruedas (Director, Gender Office, Operations Management Department, UN World Food Programme), Janet Wieser (UNEG member for System-wide initiatives; Chief, Evaluation and Communications Research Unit, UN Department of Public Information) and Vanessa Erogbogbo (Women and Trade Programme Manager, Office of the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre).

The evaluation also benefited from active involvement and buy-in from the six country offices visited. We thank the **country representatives and staff** of these offices for all the dedicated time they invested in supporting the evaluation process and in facilitating the engagement and inclusion of a wide range of partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries of their work, in particular Fiji Multi-Country Office (Aleta Faye Miller, Multi-Country Office Representative), Jordan Country Office (Giuseppe Belsito, Country Representative), Kyrgyzstan Country Office (Gerald Günther, Country Representative), Malawi Country Office (Alice Harding Shackelford, previous Country Representative), Mali Country Office (Maxime Houinato, Country Representative) and Mexico Country Office (Ana Guezmes Garcia, Country Representative).

THE UNIVERSALIA EVALUATION TEAM:

Katrina Rojas
Gabriela Byron
Mary Picard
Elisabetta Micaro
Juan-David Gonzales
Katherine Wihry
Kristen Lankester

ADVISERS:

Charles Lusthaus
Maxine Olson
Joanne Sandler

Editor: Margo Alderton
Design: Dammsavage Inc.
Cover Photo: UN Photo/Marco Dormino

COORDINATING FOR GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS

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

New York, May 2016

UN WOMEN
Independent Evaluation Office

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEB	Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DaO	Delivering as One
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GTG	Gender Theme Group
HQ	Headquarters
IANWGE	Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OEEF	Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
PBF	UN Peacebuilding Fund
PSG	Peer Support Group
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RMS	Results Management System
RO	Regional Office
R-UNDG	Regional United Nations Development Group
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SPC	Strategic Planning and Coordination (Specialist)
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UN DOCO	United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

FOREWORD

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has a unique composite mandate that includes intergovernmental normative, operational, and United Nations (UN) system-wide and inter-agency coordination roles. The UN system coordination mandate encompasses aspects of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the UN system on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW), including regular monitoring of system-wide progress, and more broadly mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook this corporate evaluation to assess the progress made so far towards achieving GEEW results in the implementation of this mandate dimension, with the aim of informing future work. The evaluation covers all aspects of the UN coordination mandate and the articulation with the mandate to support normative and operational work on GEEW at the global, regional and country level.

The evaluation concluded that, despite a highly complex environment that challenges coordination efforts in the UN system, in only five years, UN Women has built a solid foundation for the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of its UN system coordination role. Despite limitations, UN Women has been able to demonstrate good practices at all levels of the organization. However, more needs to be done to ensure concrete demonstration of GEEW results and shared accountability for GEEW across the UN system. The evaluation also highlights the extent to which UN Women's strategic positioning 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. In addition, the evaluation found that the United Nations as a whole is not leading by example with regard to gender equality, including UN Women, despite the fact that UN Women has set some positive practices. Finally, 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 integration and implementation.

The evaluation makes eight recommendations by which UN Women should: (1) continue engaging in a strategic dialogue with other UN entities and Member States through existing mechanisms; (2) align the current Coordination Strategy with the Strategic Plan and current UN context; (3) align the scope of the mandate with its resource base; (4) provide operational guidance for UN Women staff; (5) enhance the role it plays in promoting UN system accountability for its commitments on GEEW; (6) strengthen its efforts to ensure that GEEW principles are consistently taken into account by the UN system in the areas of UN Women policy and programming expertise; (7) modify policies and practices in order to model a gender-responsive organization for the United Nations; and (8) strengthen gender-focused coordination mechanisms at Headquarters and in the field that have been key to UN Women's approach to implementing its UN coordination mandate.

We hope that this predominantly formative and forward-looking evaluation will be useful for UN Women management and Executive Board members in strengthening results of UN Women and the UN system at large on gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

Best regards,

Marco Segone
Director, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Corporate Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women's) Contribution to UN system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) was commissioned and managed by the Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women and was conducted by an external independent evaluation team between February 2015 and February 2016. The evaluation benefited from a broad diversity of voices and contributions from representatives of other UN entities, feminist and civil society groups, academics, and national and regional governments. Within UN Women, the evaluation was enhanced by valuable feedback provided by the Internal and External Reference Groups, the support of UN Women's UN Coordination Division staff and focal points in the programme and policy divisions, and inputs from the regional Strategic Planning and Coordination (SPC) Specialists..

PURPOSE

The corporate evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, effectiveness and organizational efficiency of UN Women's role in UN system coordination on GEEW. It also considered how a human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the implementation of this role. The evaluation explored the contributions of UN Women to UN system coordination on GEEW over the period 2011 to 2015 at country, regional and global levels, including the link between its coordination role and its operational and intergovernmental normative support roles.

While UN Women's role in UN system coordination on GEEW is often referred to as its coordination "mandate", this role is one of the three dimensions of its composite mandate, which also includes normative and operational roles in promoting gender equality.

METHODS

Systems thinking and feminist theory informed the evaluation team's efforts to answer the questions in the Terms of Reference. An overarching consideration was to understand how UN Women operates inside hierarchical structures and how it has attempted to open this system in ways that can foster transformative change in gender power relations within an inherently non-transformative context.

The evaluation used mixed methods including field observation, interviews, document review, country portfolio review and surveys. At the global level, emphasis was placed on four global issue areas that have been a critical part of UN Women UN system coordination work at Headquarters (HQ): Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Beijing+20, UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), and Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). The nature of coordination work, contributions, and challenges faced in policy or thematic areas were also explored.

Field-level perspectives were gathered through country visits and country case studies (Fiji, Kyrgyzstan, Jordan, Malawi, Mali and Mexico), Skype and telephone consultations with stakeholders in six countries (Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Serbia, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uruguay), and consultations with stakeholders in six regions, including members of regional-level United Nations Development Groups (R-UNDGs) and Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs). This coverage ensured that evaluation findings were informed by qualitative information from a variety of country contexts and across UN Women presence models (e.g., country office [CO], multi-country office [MCO], etc.). In total, the evaluation considered UN Women work in

26 countries, including 5 countries with no UN Women presence at the time of data collection.

Overall, the evaluation team consulted 467 stakeholders (at HQ, regional and country levels), most of whom were representatives of peer organizations in the UN system. Representatives of Member States (programme countries and donors) and, to a lesser extent, academia and civil society representatives were also consulted, particularly at the country level.

The evaluation team reviewed UN Women corporate, regional and country programming and reporting documents, including information from the Results Management System (RMS), UN system documents, evaluations and survey data from other studies.

Four surveys were conducted and used to complement other information sources. They targeted the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and UN-SWAP Focal Points at the global level, UN Women staff at the country level, members of Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) and other inter-agency working groups at the country level, as well as regional stakeholders from UNDG and RCM and their working groups.

BACKGROUND

UN Women has a three-fold mandate that includes intergovernmental normative, operational and inter-agency coordination roles. Among these, UN system coordination is the newest, as it was not formally included in the mandates of any of UN Women's predecessor entities. There are three components of UN Women's UN system coordination role as it is described in its founding resolution and subsequent strategic documents:

- **Leading**, by advocating to ensure that relevant gender equality and women's rights issues are on the UN system-wide agenda

- **Promoting accountability**, by strengthening capacity, coherence, monitoring and "answerability" for system-wide gender equality mandates, as well as individual agency reporting

- **Coordinating,** by engaging in system-wide and inter-agency efforts to jointly promote and advance gender equality at global, regional and national levels

UN Women's coordination role also encompasses support to gender mainstreaming across the system. Furthermore, UN Women has the responsibility (previously of its predecessor entity, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)) to follow up on gender parity commitments in the UN system. As a result, the UN coordination role is one of the distinct features of UN Women as an international "gender machinery."

Complementary to these roles and responsibilities, UN Women, as a UN entity, contributes to larger system-wide coordination efforts through established UN mechanisms to further coordination and cooperation on a whole range of substantive and management issues facing the UN system. These include the review of the UN financing architecture and other concerted efforts to promote the integrated approaches and cross-sectoral responses required by the interconnected nature of the recently adopted SDGs.

MAIN MESSAGES

The following main messages emerge from the findings and conclusions of this evaluation.

1. UN Women has implemented its UN system coordination role in a highly complex environment. The challenges in coordinating efforts in the UN system are well-known and widely acknowledged.

UN Women's UN system coordination role is about trying to leverage coordinated action to advance gender equality. Yet UN Women is trying to do this in a system with inherent challenges to coordination due to continued fragmentation, as reflected in the current UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) dialogue on the longer term positioning of the UN development system.

The evaluation confirmed the complexity of coordination efforts within the UN system and noted the specific challenges that UN Women faces. At the macro level, these include vertical accountability (i.e.,

entity accountability to HQ and Executive Boards) and competition for resources, which limit the ability of UN entities to focus on jointly identified priorities and horizontal (i.e., across entity) accountability mechanisms. At a micro level, UN staff members with common goals and values—including feminist values that are key for forging a shared identity and ensuring a transformative approach to gender equality work—face structural barriers in trying to foster a sense of community for gender equality work.

The ECOSOC dialogue and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide the space and highlight the need to reassess the factors that are inhibiting coordination and collaboration in the United Nations. UN Women has the opportunity to continue to influence these discussions in global structures, such as the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and processes, such as the ECOSOC dialogue and the QCPR. Addressing systemic limitations is also the responsibility of Member States, and hence of members of the Executive Board of UN Women and governing bodies of other UN entities, given that they have encouraged UN agencies to think, plan and work together coherently to deliver better results (particularly on GEEW), improve the relevance of initiatives, reinforce system accountability, and maximize collective impact.

2. In a short five years, UN Women has built a solid foundation for the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of its UN system 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 role in UN system coordination on GEEW has added value to the normative, intergovernmental, and operational work of the UN system. At the global level, often using consultative processes, UN Women has used its unique gender equality and women's empowerment-focused mandate and technical expertise to coordinate or lead processes culminating in the development and adoption of guiding (normative) frameworks and related UN commitments, such as the SDGs or the performance standards and processes for monitoring UN system performance on GEEW as outlined in the widely accepted UN-SWAP.

UN Women has been the driving force behind establishing or revitalizing several gender-related collaboration mechanisms, including: the global UN-SWAP network, regional and country level GTGs, and global and regional mechanisms of the UNDG in which UN Women is an active and acknowledged player. UN Women Regional Offices (ROs) have become critical advocates for GEEW in both strategic and operational coordination mechanisms and have also provided technical input to country level processes.

At the country normative level, UN Women has led or played a key role in UN system efforts to jointly advocate for GEEW that have contributed to changes in national policies or plans facilitated by the fact that national-level actors perceived the United Nations as speaking with one voice. UN Women has also worked with other UN entities to reduce duplication of efforts. It has strengthened joint reporting against normative frameworks, such as confidential reports for the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Periodic Review or UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and either encouraged or supported other UN entities in committing to applying these frameworks in their own programmatic (i.e., operational) work.

UN Women has also worked with other UN entities to strengthen the inclusion of GEEW in UN Country Teams' (UNCTs') workplans, Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). In this regard, it has encouraged links between global and regional normative frameworks for gender equality and human rights and between national priorities and UN system initiatives.

3. 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.

Although the way in which UN Women implements its UN coordination role varies in the diverse contexts in which it works, offices at HQ, regional and country

levels have developed promising strategies to address complex coordination issues and resource constraints related to its coordination role.

UN Women has been most successful when it has taken a participatory and consultative approach to engaging other UN entities. At HQ level, this has been best illustrated in the development and roll-out of the UN-SWAP, where more than 50 entities (including Secretariat Departments) were involved in designing the framework. Existing inter-agency mechanisms have begun to take ownership of certain indicator areas and there is a considerable sense of ownership of the UN-SWAP beyond UN Women. Similarly, UN Women effectively facilitated consultations with UN entities and Member States as part of the 2013 QCPR, resulting in stronger language on GEEW and a specific section addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Other good practices are those that help increase the evidence base on GEEW and identify the system's capacity and each entity's collaborative advantage on GEEW. At regional and country levels, for example, joint research and joint programming have provided an evidence base on issues of concern to regions, countries and UNCTs. UN Women ROs in East and Southern Africa and Asia and the Pacific have engaged in joint research with other UN partners on topics such as ending violence against women (EVAW) and extractive industries. In the West and Central Africa region, UN Women's RO carried out a mapping of UN gender capacity at the regional level for presentation to the UNDG with the potential to inform a more coherent regional level approach to GEEW based on a clear understanding of each entity's areas of strength and weakness. Similar mapping exercises are being conducted at HQ level and in other ROs, such as the Latin American and the Caribbean RO.

At the regional and country levels, UN Women has also played key roles in facilitating the sharing of technical and knowledge resources among other UN entities and strengthening the roles of GTGs. Examples include rosters of gender equality experts (Nepal, Fiji MCO) for humanitarian interventions or multiple knowledge-based products, such as trainings or online toolkits to support the operationalization of gender equality work. In several offices, such as the MCO in Fiji, UN Women has helped to clarify the purpose of the GTG, encourage the development of realistic workplans, extend the membership to relevant national stakeholders, and focus the GTG's work on issues that matter to the UNCT and the national context. Having clear, realistic and relevant Terms of Reference and workplans has helped GTGs achieve greater results. In order to play such roles, UN Women offices have overcome resource constraints, for example, by using project resources to fund a staff position that is dedicated to supporting the UN Women Representative in managing the GTG.

UN Women has also demonstrated how substantive or issue orientation of coordinated efforts enhances links to programming and GEEW results, often with regard to the enabling environment for gender equality in a particular context. In several countries reviewed, joint advocacy contributed to new or revised national legislation (such as the bill on early marriage passed in Malawi in 2015) or to national action plans and other frameworks to ensure greater gender mainstreaming in national policy. Colombia showed good practice in collaboration among UN Women, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to ensure that women were able to participate in peace process talks in Havana, Cuba.

The evaluation findings suggest that more can be done to clarify the nature of UN Women's UN system coordination role and better integrate its composite mandate. Its coordination role is often associated with processes in the UN system (related to planning, monitoring and reporting cycles linked to the UNDAF) and with a myriad of existing inter-agency coordination groups. However, its coordination role is not yet consistently articulated in a more purposeful approach to coordination in which coordination is one tool (along with normative work and operational activity) used to influence gender power relations and results for GEEW both within the UN system and in the country and regional settings where it works. Although in early stages of development, the Flagship Programming Initiatives (for example, in EVAW or women's economic empowerment [WEE]) are expected to provide

opportunities to demonstrate how coordination among UN entities is integrated in programming efforts, mobilized around a theory of change, and how it can strengthen the ability to deliver more transformative results for gender equality.

UN Women staff who represent UN Women in system and inter-agency coordination mechanisms and processes have varying levels of skill in engaging stakeholders in collaborative, participatory and respectful interactions. The ability to effectively engage stakeholders is highly valued in the context of inter-agency collaboration and fostering shared ownership of initiatives is the key. Stakeholders interviewed often mentioned the need for UN Women to build on existing strengths in the UN system, share resources with others, and know when to let others take the lead. These perspectives reflect the importance of reciprocity, trust and reputation—which are crucial for UN Women's role in the United Nations as a backbone entity on GEEW.

4. 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.

In UN Women's UN Coordination draft Theory of Change, coordination must advance concrete development results that change the options and opportunities for men, women, communities and countries. Overall, the evaluation has shown that—with the right people, resources and positioning—UN Women can support UN system coordination that leads to progress on GEEW at the country level. The evaluation documents a range of examples that illustrate joint UN entity contributions to strengthening the enabling environment for gender equality in a particular context (e.g., in terms of national legislation, policies or strategies). Nonetheless, the linkages between all of the work carried out through UN Women's UN system coordination role and progress on GEEW are currently difficult to discern.

Within UN Women, factors that limit demonstration of GEEW results include: insufficient resources; variability of skills, expertise and staffing across UN Women offices; and limitations in how the UN coordination role is conceived (i.e., as an additional task or as an integrated approach) and thus how it is reported on (i.e., focusing on substance or on UN processes). UN Women has not yet clearly articulated, demonstrated or operationalized the notion that UN coordination is part of a synergistic approach that is inherent in its mandate and/or that better UN system coordination leads to changes for women's rights and gender equality. UN Women's Coordination Strategy and the related Theory of Change provide a step in the right direction, but do not yet sufficiently clarify why and how contributions to the internal workings of the UN system (e.g., mainstreaming gender equality, implementation of UN Joint Gender Programmes) will lead to positive changes in the lives of women and men. Similarly, the Strategic Plan is not associated with an organizational theory of change that illustrates the synergies of the different roles that UN Women plays. As noted above, UN Women's Flagship Programming Initiatives offer a promising opportunity to demonstrate how collaborative initiatives can strengthen GEEW results and how the integrated mandate can be implemented to capitalize on its potential.

Across the United Nations, there is also limited evidence that improved UN system capacity for GEEW, to which UN Women has contributed (e.g., through tools, frameworks, knowledge, skills), has been systematically translated into more or stronger GEEW results (including performance in the UN system's programming and internal changes, such as gender parity). This is partly due to the challenges in implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy, including the fact that individual agencies and senior managers are ultimately responsible for mainstreaming gender in their institutions and programming—and for complying with the systems in place and monitoring mechanisms for gender equality within their own organizations. Despite noted progress in strengthening UNCT capacity for gender mainstreaming, UN Women is still (and, in some cases, increasingly) regarded as the main player expected to not only drive and monitor UNCT commitments to gender equality, but also to implement them, rather than the UNCT as a whole taking responsibility. Support by the leadership of the UNCT and the country's own gender equality

dynamics also affect the extent to which UN Women is able to promote and facilitate stronger integration of UN coordination within gender equality work and track the linkages between UN coordinated efforts and gender equality results.

These issues derive, at least in part, from the fact that incentives and enforcement mechanisms for GEEW performance standards and commitments within the UN system remain weak. The Executive Boards of UN agencies do not consistently demand strong performance on GEEW, which means that existing GEEW accountability mechanisms "lack teeth."

5. UN Women's strategic positioning for UN system 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. This affects the extent to which UN Women is strategically positioned to engage other UN actors in coordination-related efforts. The evaluation found that reputation based on expertise and authority (e.g., moral, financial or mandate-related) often became key levers to facilitate coordination.

UN Women's strategic positioning is only partially within its control. While it can develop and try to communicate its potential value added to other entities, whether and how other UN actors perceive, interpret and make use of UN Women's assets is strongly influenced by their own needs, stakes and interests.

Broadly speaking, UN Women's positioning for UN system coordination is acknowledged more consistently by others at the global level than in the field. This is due in part to the variety of national contexts and relationships between UN entities in the field and to the range of UN Women's implementation and presence modalities. At HQ level, UN Women's positioning is strong with regard to promoting accountability frameworks for GEEW commitments as it is seen as having the legitimacy (derived from its overall mandate) to do this. It is clearly positioned to lead on UN system coordination on cross-sectoral issues (as embodied for example in the SDGs), and advocacy and implementation of normative frameworks on GEEW (such as Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW).

UN Women's positioning in thematic and policy areas (such as EVAW, WEE, and women's political participation) has been more varied and contested at HQ, regional and country levels as there is a perception that it may infringe on the status, positioning and influence of other actors in these areas. In the area of humanitarian action, there appears to be a considerable gap between UN Women's potential to add value and other UN actors' acknowledgement and demand for UN Women's engagement. In work on gender-based violence, there is the opportunity for significant collaborative results, but also for competition due to the large number of entities working in the area and their desire to protect sub-areas of expertise and influence (for example, data on gender-based violence or harmful practices such as female genital mutilation). As a result, there are different and sometimes more limited interpretations of UN Women's coordination role in this area.

Key assets that the UN Women can draw upon in relation to its UN coordination role are:

- Its unique GEEW-focused mandate, which constitutes a strong asset in relation to issues such as the UN-SWAP or the SDGs that require a cross-sectoral perspective or a more holistic vision for GEEW—UN Women has a reputation for expertise, especially in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment in general. However, UN Women's reputation for expertise in specific thematic and/or policy areas varies in different contexts.

- Its access to extensive networks, especially grass-roots women's organizations, and specific government ministries (such as national gender machineries) that other UN entities do not normally reach. This constitutes an important asset in terms of UN Women's ability to facilitate inclusive consultation processes.

Issues that, until now, have tended to **challenge UN Women's strategic positioning** in relation to UN system coordination include the following:

- Field presence and operational work—What counts as a relevant organizational asset can vary slightly by issue and thematic area. For example, the fact that UN Women is not a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has been linked to the argument that it is not sufficiently operational to be a relevant player in the context of humanitarian action, even though there are examples of UN Women playing effective coordination roles in humanitarian settings.

- UN Women does not have the authority (including a policy setting role, as in the case of the Department of Political Affairs in electoral assistance) nor does it usually offer the financial incentives that other coordinating entities in the UN system may be able to provide (for example, the ability of UNAIDS to access funding through the Unified Budget Results and Accountability Framework and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' [OCHA's] access to pooled emergency funds).

- The existence of other entities with overlapping mandates for coordination in a particular thematic area creates a greater imperative for dialogue on complementarities. For example, in the area of women's electoral participation, the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs has a well-established coordination mandate for electoral assistance, which has made it more difficult for UN Women to clearly outline the foci and boundaries of a coordination role in this area.

Actual or perceived gaps in UN Women's operational capacity also negatively influence its ability to contribute to or lead inter-agency discussions at the global and field level in some areas. For example, some consulted stakeholders felt that UN Women is less able than other agencies with larger budgets to lead global discussions on different thematic areas because it lacks evidence based on its programming in the field. This is either because UN Women does not have extensive programming in the area, or because the internal channels that could feed this kind of experience and perspectives back to the global level do not exist or are weak. At the field level, the perception of lack of operational capacity also affects UN Women's credibility in terms of its UN coordination role. This is particularly the case in programme presence countries.

Formal inter-agency coordination mechanisms can provide a structure and legitimacy to coordination efforts. For example, in the area of women, peace and security (WPS), UN Women's positioning has been facilitated by the strong UN architecture for gender, peace and security that is accountable to the UN Security Council. UN Women has had a well-defined and legitimate role within this architecture due in part to the role that its predecessor, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), played in establishing key coordination mechanisms and frameworks for WPS. In contrast, in the context of humanitarian action, there is more limited institutional coordination on GEEW. The absence of a gender-specific inter-agency coordination mechanism and gender architecture and accountability framework in the humanitarian system, as well as the fact that UN Women has not been granted membership in the IASC, have meant that its positioning in different country contexts has varied according to factors such as the strength and perspective of Humanitarian Coordinators and the OCHA, and the capacity of UN Women offices.

6. 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 modeling the principles of gender equality that it promotes.

- Reaching 50:50 gender balance at all levels of the UN system remains a declared goal of the General Assembly, but only modest progress has been made in this area and there continues to be an inverse relationship between seniority and the representation of women. The ability of UN Women to influence

change in this regard has been negatively affected by insufficient leadership and support for gender parity within many UN entities.

- Many UN entities are not yet sufficiently investing in (or are decreasing investment in) their own gender architecture, as reflected in their performance on certain UN-SWAP indicators and increasing demands placed on UN Women in the field to help supplement capacity gaps in the system.

- The UN system and its individual entities are not yet consistently taking an underlying cause approach in programming. In the area of joint programming, the United Nations has not always provided evidence of more intersectoral, multidimensional work that can address some of the more structural causes of inequality.

The ability of the UN system to effectively model GEEW principles continues to be affected by gendered structures and organizational cultures that limit the extent to which gender equality principles can be understood, embraced and implemented. UN Women has a critical role to play in this regard and will be increasingly looked at with respect to how it models desired organizational culture and practices.

UN Women's own organizational culture reflects the fact that it has incorporated staff from predecessor organizations, particularly UNIFEM, as well as from many other UN agencies. They have brought a rich set of skills and knowledge of the UN system into UN Women, as well as the challenge of forging a coherent organizational approach and identity on the basis of core mandates. While mobility is fairly common in the UN system, few other agencies have had such an influx of new staff at the management level. UN Women was still establishing policies and processes when it began to integrate new staff members.

UN Women has set positive examples for other UN actors (e.g., it has the highest percentage of International Professional category female employees in the UN system). At the same time, UN Women's own policies and practices on issues such as maternity and/or paternity leave and overall working conditions are not yet considered best practice. This is due in part to bureaucratic constraints to setting internal policy, as UN Women must adhere to UN system policies and administrative rules for the international civil service.

Its engagement with civil society is another area where UN Women has demonstrated positive practices, but where it can further enhance its performance. It has encouraged diverse civil society actors to provide input into consultations for both global initiatives (such as Beijing+20) and national policy areas, including the development of national action plans, but it has not always met the expectations of civil society organizations (CSOs). Civil society representatives consulted for this evaluation suggested that UN Women could do more to engage CSOs strategically and facilitate engagement between CSOs and the UN system—as CSOs can play a critical role in extending civil society accountability on gender equality to the UN system at large. This will be particularly relevant as the United Nations looks to strengthen its partnerships with civil society as part of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7. 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 system coordination mandate.

UN Women started to implement its UN system 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. The under resourcing of UN Women reflects a pattern that is not without its own gendered considerations: there is a tradition of setting up gender equality institutions with broad mandates and insufficient resources that make it difficult for them to succeed.

The ongoing transition and under resourcing have negatively affected UN Women's ability to implement its coordination mandate. Some noted areas for

improvement may sort themselves out once recent structural changes have been in place long enough to become fully effective (e.g., the regional architecture). Some other issues, however, are likely to require targeted action, in particular the following:

- **Strategy and priority setting:** The UN Women Coordination Strategy has four outcome areas focused on the UN system that are not visibly aligned with the results of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The results of "coordination" are currently framed as part of the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework, yet there is a growing call for linking UN system coordination to development results. UN Women's Coordination Strategy and related Theory of Change describe the dimensions of UN Women's UN coordination role, but they do not help clarify the purpose and intent of this role and how it is related to and integrated with the other roles (normative, operational) in its composite mandate. Field level strategies and plans do not yet consistently articulate a clear focus or priorities within the coordination role, or illustrate an integrated approach to all dimensions of the UN Women mandate. UN Women does not yet have mechanisms to facilitate the systematic assessment of UN coordination needs and demands in the field, or criteria or guidance for making choices about which of these to prioritize and how to address them, or for ways to account for changes in the lives and rights of women that result.

- **Operational guidance:** UN Women's Coordination Strategy and Theory of Change have not been translated into guidance to help set priorities and clarify what is expected from UN Women in different thematic and/or geographic contexts. Nor do they address how these expectations may be adjusted in contexts where UN Women's ability to play a role in UN system coordination and integrate all dimensions of the UN Women mandate is constrained (for example, in countries where UN Women has programme presence). As a result, both UN Women staff and UN partners have a range of understandings and expectations of the Entity's UN coordination mandate. UN Women staff in ROs and COs often note that there is insufficient tailored support and guidance for field-level coordination work. Consequently, the extent and the nature of field-level data collection, analysis and reporting on UN system coordination activities and results vary—creating challenges for accountability and organizational learning.

- **Staffing:** UN Women has faced challenges in linking global initiatives to the field and vice versa. There are a limited number of staff members at HQ responsible for responding to needs in the field, and these responsibilities are distributed across divisions. UN Women ROs note insufficient staff to provide support and guidance to the country level, with key staff linked to the Programme Division having to divide their attention between implementation of UN coordination work at the regional level, advice on UN system coordination at the country level, and programme planning and reporting responsibilities. ROs have not been able to consistently respond to demands from COs for more specialized/tailored support, either in coordination more generally or in the thematic areas of expertise related to inter-agency work (e.g., through thematic advisers based in RO). COs have also stressed that staffing constraints have affected their capacity for effective integration of UN system coordination efforts.

- **Ensuring internal coherence:** UN Women's UN system coordination role is part of an organization-wide mandate. Several key divisions have a strong role to play in shaping and ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of UN Women's overall approach to UN system coordination and the interlinkages between the three complementary dimensions of its mandate: the UN Coordination Division, Intergovernmental Support Division, Policy Division, and Programme Division, and ROs and COs. Shared responsibility for coordination between divisions is appropriate given the aim of ensuring that coordination is truly an entity-wide role that is well integrated with other areas of the mandate and not limited to one unit. It is also appropriate given the overlapping but distinct approaches, networks and expertise required for system-wide coordination work on the one hand and inter-agency

coordination on the other. At the same time, having coordination related responsibilities split between different divisions can be a barrier to coherence (in terms of messaging and guidance), synergies and efficiency. This applies to the relationships between divisions at HQ and to the relationships between HQ and the field.

The evaluation notes various examples of how UN Women has been able to address different types of constraints (bureaucratic, financial and capacity) both in the field and at HQ. Often, it has been the personal strengths of individuals representing UN Women that have been able to partly mitigate the effects of limited guidance and/or resources linked to its coordination mandate.

Overall, the evaluation concludes that UN Women has made an important difference in the GEEW landscape in the UN system. While there are ways in which UN Women can potentially improve its strategy, approach, integration and resourcing of UN system coordination (identified in the recommendations), much of its success will hinge on the culture, practices and behaviors of other actors of the UN system, including Member States.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In its first five years, UN Women has made consistent and productive efforts to implement its composite mandate on GEEW. Over this period, there has been considerable progress with regard to enhancing the UN system's gender equality capacity, promoting greater accountability for GEEW in the United Nations, and increasing the focus on gender equality results, including through the SDGs.

The evaluation found that many factors that affect UN Women's ability to implement its UN system coordination mandate on GEEW are inherent to the UN system and lie outside UN Women's control and/or sphere of influence (e.g., the vertical architecture of the UN system, competition for resources, mandate boundaries and overlaps, the leadership provided by Resident Coordinators [RCs], leadership in the UNCTs, personalities, etc.). Similarly, the effects of chronic underfunding for UN Women cannot be underestimated.

Issues for consideration of Member States and UN system

Member States and members of the Executive Board play important roles in UN system coordination on GEEW for several reasons: (a) they entrusted UN Women with an ambitious and complex mandate that requires stakeholders with different stakes in the UN system to accept its role; (b) they are on the boards of UN entities and can bring their perspectives on the importance of UN system coordination on GEEW to board discussions, especially in discussions of strategy and results; (c) as Board Members, they also have a role in holding the UN system accountable for its gender equality commitments and can, for example, ask about entity performance on the UN-SWAP; and (d) they committed to fund the new Entity, UN Women, and have noted the value of the UN system coordination function, but have not resourced it appropriately. Donor Member States in particular need to consider the conflicting messages that they transmit to the United Nations by providing earmarked resources and demanding accountability for agency-specific results, while supporting intergovernmental processes and normative frameworks such as the new SDGs that require an alternative way of working. They need to be aware of the effects that competition for resources has on collaborative work within the United Nations.

UN system actors all have different stakes in the UN system, in the coordination of GEEW, and in their relationships with UN Women. Other UN entities also need to reflect on the incentives for coordination and/or collaboration in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In particular, one of the challenges will be integrated delivery and reporting on results across entities. There may be a need for additional incentives (such as pooled funding mechanisms) for joint work on GEEW and reconsideration of how entities report on shared results.

Recommendations to UN Women Senior Management

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. They are intended to inform UN Women deliberations during the Mid-term Review of its Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and other strategic processes, including the next Strategic Plan. The recommendations are geared towards expanding and enhancing the foundations that have been built in UN Women's first five years.

Because UN coordination on GEEW is part of a composite and organization-wide mandate (i.e., responsibility for it does not lie in one UN Women division), in order to encourage collective decision-making and response, all recommendations are directed to UN Women in general. However, the narrative description of the recommendation includes references to specific divisions that could take leadership for some of the initiatives.

The recommendations are divided into **strategic** and **operational** recommendations. The strategic recommendations are focused on UN Women's engagement with the external environment, which is largely outside of its control and key aspects of UN Women's guiding documents that could better reflect the strategic importance of the UN coordination mandate. Operational recommendations encompass actions that are largely internal to UN Women, although some may require consultation with external actors.

Strategic recommendations

1. UN Women should 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 catalyze greater system coordination and coherence, particularly on GEEW.

This evaluation confirmed what other studies have pointed out about the inherent challenges to coordination in the United Nations, which affect the ability of UN Women to implement its UN system coordination mandate on GEEW.

We recognize that many issues are beyond UN Women's control or sphere of influence—UN Women is just one actor in a complex and dynamic system. Yet UN Women does have a seat at the table and can take steps to nudge the system forward, an endeavour that it has already begun in order to ensure that gender equality principles are taken seriously and result in transformative change for women and girls.

Systemic issues such as vertical accountability, weak incentives for coordination, the still-limited capacity of other UN entities to address GEEW, inconsistent support from the RC system, and varying stakeholder expectations of UN Women's mandate are best addressed through existing system-wide mechanisms (such as the CEB and its pillars, in particular the UNDG), Member State directives (such as the QCPR), and the demands that Member States place on UN entities. This recommendation suggests that UN Women's Senior Management identify key priorities for advocacy in inter-agency mechanisms and through other types of arrangements (e.g., agreements on collaborative advantages or standards of practice with individual entities).

Senior Management should continue to support the United Nations in overcoming systemic challenges and engage in high-level dialogue with a view to strengthening complementary mandates. Such engagement would position UN Women as forward looking and help resolve confusion about its UN coordination role and leadership on the ground, thus potentially alleviating pressure for field offices to have to clarify and negotiate roles on a case-by-case basis.

Potential actions to be considered should be based on insights derived from UN Women's experience thus far in implementing its UN system coordination role for GEEW. Likewise, potential actions should complement broader discussions in the context of QCPR and the ECOSOC dialogues on long-term positioning of the UN development system.

2. UN Women should 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/changes for gender equality.

UN Women has made laudable efforts to reinforce and clarify its UN system coordination mandate both externally and internally, while implementing the mandate at the same time. Yet entities in the UN system, as well as UN Women staff, note that the mandate requires greater clarification. This, together with the changes in the global context reflected in the SDGs and the ECOSOC dialogues on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system, provides a strong rationale for UN Women to review and clarify its UN system coordination mandate and fully align its Coordination Strategy (Implementation Strategy for UN Women's System-wide and Inter-agency Mandates) with its Strategic Plan. This process includes making the difference between substance and process coordination more explicit and the need to emphasize how UN Women integrates coordination with other areas of its mandate in order to contribute to development results in GEEW.

3. UN Women should align the scope of its mandate with its resource base.

UN Women has faced constraints in funding its coordination role, establishing synergies and setting priorities among the different dimensions of its composite mandate. Recognizing the limited funding base and that the Institutional Budget for UN Women may not increase, resourcing the coordination role will require either: (a) re-allocating or re-aligning existing core and Institutional Budget resources; (b) better integrating financing for the coordination function within programming initiatives in the Entity's resource mobilization strategy; or (c) reducing the scope of the mandate to align with current resource levels. This will require clearly communicating to Member States/Board of Directors the implications of underfunding for UN Women's ability to cover all dimensions of UN system coordination on GEEW. In light of current discussions on UN pooled financing mechanisms to bridge the SDGs financing gap, other complementary financial solutions could be taken into account.

If it is decided that the current scope of UN Women's mandate will be maintained, then the resources to support it in the field will need to be found or re-allocated. Flagship initiatives provide one example of a strategic effort to integrate UN coordination, operational activities and normative work in UN Women's impact areas. This kind of strategy can be used to leverage additional resources for GEEW work in the UN system, not only for UN Women.

Operational recommendations

4. UN Women should provide operational guidance for UN Women staff on how to approach, plan, implement and report on the Entity's UN system coordination role in different geographic and thematic contexts.

Due to the rapid evolution of the organization and its regional architecture—and the challenges of priority setting—there are still gaps in strategic alignment and operational guidance provided to policy areas and the field. The evaluation team heard repeated requests from UN Women staff at the country and regional level, and from the different policy areas, for guidance from HQ that could be adapted to their particular contexts. Often, the guidance requested was for tools, examples and documented experiences that could help them avoid duplication of effort.

The UN Coordination Division and Policy and Programme Divisions should work together to identify the type of guidance to prioritize in the short and medium term. Such guidance should also emphasize UN Women's role in ensuring that its support for UN system coordination adds significant transformative value—that is, that it nudges the UN system to do a better job in analysing and addressing underlying causes of gender inequality.

5. UN Women should enhance the role it plays in promoting UN system accountability for its commitments on GEEW.

UN Women has been effective in promoting the UN system's "answerability" for its commitments in GEEW, e.g., through the UN-SWAP, the role of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations, and by serving as

the Secretariat and/or contributing inputs for global studies commissioned by the UN Secretary-General or inter-governmental bodies.

a) UN Women should continue to monitor and guide the UN system in strengthening implementation of its gender equality commitments and ensuring that the GEEW agenda retains its transformative potential and does not become a technocratic exercise. In doing so, it needs to ensure that greater attention is paid to related processes (consultation, feedback) and recognize that its role in promoting answerability—and challenging the system to do better—can lead to tensions with other entities, depending on how it is exercised.

b) In playing this role, UN Women can and should draw more systematically on the important external "check" on the UN system that civil society can provide. UN Women has a global and articulate civil society constituency, which is one of its primary sources of strength and influence. The alliance between UN Women and civil society can contribute to helping the United Nations explore approaches that are more transformative with regard to gender power relations. It will be crucial to have partnerships with the women's rights networks that played such a fundamental role in the creation of UN Women. Since it is often difficult to be a critic from within, leveraging relationships with civil society networks outside the UN system could be strategic in terms of eliciting honest critiques of the UN system that aim to improve its coherence and results.

c) UN Women's Coordination Division should continue to enhance accountability of the UN system through UN-SWAP and harmonize existing accountability mechanisms.

6. UN Women should strengthen its efforts to ensure that GEEW principles are consistently taken into account by the UN system in the areas of UN Women's policy and programming expertise.

This recommendation suggests actions to strengthen UN Women's strategic positioning as a coordinating entity on GEEW in its thematic areas of work (outlined in its Strategic Plan 2014-2017). Work in these areas is led by the Policy Division and the Humanitarian Unit (Programme Division). We have not made specific recommendations for each thematic area, given that they are at different stages of evolution and operate in different coordinating contexts. The one exception is Humanitarian Action, where the evidence from country case studies and regional and HQ level inquiries converges and where we recommend specific actions for UN Women to consider.

Policy areas in general

a) UN Women should strengthen its thought leadership capacity in its thematic areas. Expertise is one of the key factors that strengthen its reputation and credibility as a coordinating Entity. The development of organizational expertise (as opposed to periodically contracted expertise) does have resource implications. However, it may also be possible to leverage strategic partnerships with civil society and academia to engage in research that can inform the UN system's work in certain thematic areas.

b) UN Women should enhance its analytical capacity by convening actors and sponsoring system-wide assessments of collective experiences/undertakings in key thematic areas that include an exploration of underlying causes of gender inequality. This could be a powerful way to enhance UN Women's credibility as an agency that catalyzes greater learning among entities.

c) As noted in Recommendation 1, UN Women should engage in discussions with principals and/or the Senior Management of other UN entities to ensure that there are standards of practice in place and clarity with respect to each entity's role and collaborative advantage in the thematic areas. This will ensure that work in the field is smoother and better coordinated.

Humanitarian action

UN Women has come a long way in the two years since its humanitarian strategy was adopted (2014) and it began its engagement in this area. Although it is still having difficulties gaining acknowledgement

for its value added as a specialized entity with a UN coordination mandate in GEEW, the evaluation notes several good practices it has developed in different contexts. UN Women's strategy has been to leverage its composite mandate—normative, coordination and operational—to ensure that GEEW is incorporated in humanitarian action and contributes to humanitarian effectiveness through integrating gender equality across the work of all clusters. These good practices are important for UN Women to build on while continuing to strengthen its engagement in this area.

While UN Women has made positive contributions to the IASC's Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action Reference Group, the issue is whether or not it will be able to play an equally relevant role consistently within the current institutional coordination mechanisms for GEEW that exist at a global level and in the field.

In order to ensure that UN Women can continue to play an effective role in this (unfortunately) expanding area of work for the United Nations, it should:

d) Continue to move towards more systematic and consistent engagement in coordinating GEEW for humanitarian action, drawing on its partnership with OCHA. Its humanitarian strategy emphasizes upstream advocacy, guidance and standard setting, accountability, and capacity building. These are aligned with its UN system coordination mandate, and appear to be contributions that are welcomed by partners such as OCHA.

e) Propose a review of the "gender architecture" and accountability framework for gender equality in the humanitarian area, which would include identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current coordinating structures on GEEW. The lack of gender architecture can be interpreted as one of the challenges for coordination and positioning of UN Women within the larger humanitarian system.

f) Continue its advocacy to become a member of the IASC, which would give it a stronger voice in the humanitarian system.

g) Create a repository of "results" that shed light on the unique role UN Women can fulfil and that no other entity is undertaking. Estimate the cost of inaction on gender equality in terms of lives, women's and girls' plights, and other consequences (short and long term).

7. UN Women should modify policies and practices in order to model a gender-responsive organization for the United Nations.

UN Women is part and parcel of the UN policies and administrative rules. Thus it may be constrained in the extent to which it can modify policies for the international civil service. Therefore, this recommendation must be discussed by Senior Management in terms of what can be done to push the boundaries of those externally-driven policies and procedures (e.g., under Recommendation 1) and what is possible to change internally within the remit of UN Women.

In the effort to lead by example, UN Women should strive to demonstrate best practices in its own organizational policies and practices, culture, approaches to programming, etc. Examples include reviewing maternity and paternity leaves and flexible work policies, promoting an egalitarian organizational culture that capitalizes on staff members' passion for the mandate, and promoting transformative programming models. UN Women's ability to lead by example in these areas will enhance its credibility in guiding the system. Senior Management should identify key gaps and prioritize areas that it will strengthen to move towards UN Women becoming a model entity.

8. UN Women should strengthen gender-focused coordination mechanisms at HQ and in the field that have been key in the Entity's approach to implementing its UN coordination mandate.

As part of its efforts to strengthen coherence, tap into synergies, and reduce duplication on GEEW in the UN system, UN Women has taken steps to strengthen inter-agency groups such as the IANWGE and the UNDG Gender Equality Task Team at the global level,

and GTGs or Results Groups at the regional and national levels. These groups have contributed to GEEW capacity and results, but there is a need to further improve their relevance and effectiveness. There may be a need, for example, to streamline groups at HQ (such as IANWGE and the UNDG Gender Equality Task Team), to increase shared ownership of these groups and to ensure ongoing relevance to the United Nations and national and/or regional contexts. These mechanisms are particularly critical for UN Women's role as a backbone organization for collective efforts on GEEW in the United Nations.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to United Nations System Coordination on GEEW. The evaluation was commissioned and managed by the Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women and was conducted by an external independent evaluation team between February 2015 and February 2016.

The report is presented in five chapters: background, context, findings, promising practices and lessons, and conclusions and recommendations. Appendices are presented in Volume II.

1.2 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Evaluation purpose and objectives

This corporate evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, effectiveness and organizational efficiency of the component of UN Women's mandate that involves UN system coordination on GEEW.[1] The findings will be used for strategic decision-making, organizational learning and accountability, as well as for generating knowledge on what works and what doesn't in key aspects of UN system-wide and inter-agency coordination work to advance gender equality at global, regional and country levels. The evaluation is also expected to feed into UN Women's efforts to promote the gender equality goal and gender mainstreaming in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the next QCPR. In addition, findings from this evaluation will inform the mid-term review of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2014-2017, and other strategic processes, such as the development of the next Strategic Plan.

1 Variously referred to in documents and throughout the report as UN Women's "system-wide and inter-agency mandate," "coordination mandate," or "coordination role."

The targeted users of the evaluation are the UN Women Executive Board and UN Member States in general; CEB; RCs and UNCTs; RCM and regional UNDGs (R-UNDGs); UN Women Senior Management and staff at the global, regional and country levels; and, secondarily, senior management and staff of other UN entities working on GEEW at global, regional and country levels, and key stakeholders in the area of coordination, among others.

As defined in the evaluation Terms of Reference (see Volume II, Appendix I), the objectives of the evaluation were to:

a) Assess the relevance of UN Women's contribution to the UN system coordination on GEEW at global, regional and national levels, as well as in the different UN Women impact areas.

b) Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of UN Women results through its UN coordination mandate on GEEW, as defined in the 2011-2013 and 2014-2017 strategic plans, including the organizational mechanisms to ensure efficient linkages and feedback loop between HQ and the field, and between the UN Women Coordination Division and other divisions in HQ.

c) Analyse how a human rights-based approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the UN Women coordination mandate.

d) Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples and innovations of work supported by UN Women in UN coordination on GEEW at global, regional and country levels.

e) Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's coordination on GEEW in the UN system at global, regional and country levels.

The findings and conclusions in the report are organized according to these criteria and the guiding questions for the evaluation.

Evaluation scope

The evaluation is global in its scope. It addresses the different dimensions of UN Women's contribution to UN system coordination over the period 2011 to 2015 at country, regional and global levels including:

- Both operational work and intergovernmental normative support, and the integration among all mandate dimensions
- UN Women policy areas (women's leadership and participation, WEE, WPS and humanitarian action, EVAW, governance and national planning)[2]
- UN Women work in research and data and capacity development

The evaluation was framed as a formative evaluation. It aims to assess progress and contributions to date but is primarily designed to inform learning.

1.3 EVALUATION METHODS

The corporate evaluation was based on the main evaluation criteria in the Terms of Reference (relevance, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, and gender equality and human rights), in United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations[3] and in UN Women's evaluation handbook.[4] An approved Evaluation Matrix (see Volume II, Appendix II) outlined the evaluation questions, illustrative sub-questions, and indicators, methods and sources.

2 In this report we refer to "policy" areas that are linked to five of the six impact areas in UN Women's Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The sixth impact area is related to global norms, policies and standards on GEEW and is also covered by the evaluation.

3 United Nations Evaluation Group. 2014. "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation". http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616.

4 UN Women Independent Evaluation Office. 2015. "How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation—Evaluation Handbook".

Other normative agreements guiding the work of UN Women

- SDGs (and previously the MDGs)
- UN Security Council resolutions on WPS, and sexual violence in conflict: 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), and 2242 (2015)
- ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 and resolution 2011/5
- UN system CEB policy on gender equality and women's empowerment and its corresponding system-wide action plan (UN-SWAP)

Evaluation approach

The evaluation adopted a human rights and gender equality responsive approach. It was grounded in the human rights frameworks for UN Women, including CEDAW and its optional protocol, also known as the "international bill of women's rights," and the Beijing Platform for Action, which sets forth governments' commitments to enhance women's rights. The spirit of these agreements has been affirmed by other normative agreements (see sidebar).

The evaluation adopted the principles of empowerment and fair power relations, inclusiveness, transparency and accountability, and participation and reflection. It drew from two inter-related approaches: systems thinking and feminist theory. Together, these approaches form a synergistic and overlapping critical base for this evaluation. Both are centered on the key questions: Where does power lie, and how is it exercised?

Systems thinking is a way of perceiving the world that acknowledges the complex, dynamic and contextually embedded nature of social systems. In this evaluation, a systems approach helped illustrate the complexity of the different situations in which UN Women exercises its mandate to coordinate the UN system on GEEW.

A system...

"A system is a set of entities that are seen by someone as interacting together to do (achieve) something."[5]

In this evaluation, the notion of systems applies to different units of analysis, for example: the UN system as a whole (globally), the UN at the regional or country level, and UN Women itself.

A systems approach has three interrelated aspects:[6]

- Understanding the **relationships** in the system—What are the elements of the system, how do they interact, and where is power seen to lie? What is at stake for key stakeholders?

- Understanding the **boundaries** in the system—What are the organizational boundaries and existing mechanisms including for coordination? Who is "in" or "out", and whose perspectives are valued?

- Engaging with **multiple-perspectives** within the system—Who are the stakeholders, and what are their perceptions of different actors within the system? How do different understandings affect the way stakeholders act?

For the purposes of this evaluation, **feminist theory** is concerned with power relations and construction of identities that determine one's roles and responsibilities in a context of inequality between women and men. Feminist theory can help us understand the nature of relationships among various systems and actors. A central dimension of the evaluation has been to understand how UN Women operates in a traditionally patriarchal system of hierarchical structures and the efforts that it has made to open this system in ways that can foster transformative change in gender power relations within an inherently non-transformatory context.[7]

As part of the effort to make this evaluation responsive to gender equality and human rights, the evaluation team aimed to:

- Understand how certain dimensions of the UN system (i.e., structures, boundaries, relationships, norms, values, culture, etc.) disincentivize or foster gender equality and affect the promotion of GEEW by the UN system

- Assess the extent to which UN Women has used its coordination mandate to influence the UN system, or at least key actors within the United Nations, to challenge these dimensions in the various systems considered by this evaluation (e.g., on the underlying causes of GEEW in selected UN Women's impact areas at the country and regional levels, and on global development frameworks such as the SDGs at the global level; extent to which UN Women pursues a feminist agenda with the UNCT; extent to which CCAs address the structural causes of gender inequality; extent to which UN Women seeks to affect deep structural changes through the UNDAF and influence on the UNCT)

- Capture ways in which the organizational culture in UN Women enables consistency between internal policies and external operations and coordination with the UN system by ensuring that strategic and feminist-oriented gender expertise is not diminished as a result of more technocratic project management needs, and promotes a less-gendered and more horizontal approach to its internal organization

In doing so, the evaluation team considered how gender mainstreaming and "deep structures" within organizations, including UN Women, have affected

5 Dick Morris. 2005. "Thinking About Systems for Sustainable Lifestyles". Open University Systems Society, Newsletter 39.

6 For more detail, please see the Inception Report.

7 Standing, H. 2004. "Gender, Myth and Fable: The Perils of Mainstreaming in Sector Bureaucracies". IDS Bulletin 35:82-8, http://dx.doi.org.

Deep structures

An organizational concept referring to "the hidden sites and processes of power and influence, the implicit culture, the informal values and systems of reward and recognition, all of which have enormous impact on how people and the organization actually function." [8]

and will affect efforts to achieve more transformative change in gender-power relations.[9]

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process consisted of four phases:

1. **Inception (February 2015 – June 2015):** Consultations between the evaluation team and the Independent Evaluation Office, stakeholder mapping, inception meetings with reference groups and other key stakeholders at UN Women HQ, finalization of selection criteria for the country portfolio review, country case study and virtual consultation country selection, finalization of methodology, and submission of draft Inception Report

2. **Data collection (May 2015 – January 2016):** In-depth review of planning and programme documents; portfolio review of 26 countries; 4 surveys (IANWGE members and UN-SWAP Focal Points, UN Women staff, GTGs and other inter-agency groups at the country level, and regional stakeholders); evaluation team visits to HQ and 6 case-study countries; additional Skype and telephone interviews at the global level. Virtual consultations by Skype and telephone were also carried out with stakeholders in 6 regions and 11 countries, including programme presence and non-presence countries.

3. **Analysis and reporting (August 2015 – March 2016):** Analysis and interpretation of data, drafting and submission of HQ and country case studies, briefing on preliminary findings, submission of draft and final reports.

4. **Dissemination and follow up (April 2016 – December 2016):** Development of a management response, publication of the evaluation report, presentation of the evaluation to the Executive Board, uploading of the published report to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) website, and production of other knowledge products and learning events, such as webinars, articles, briefs, etc.

ETHICS

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy and UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system. All evaluation team members signed a statement indicating their commitment to the UN Women code of conduct. [10]

The evaluation team members ensured the confidentiality of interviewed stakeholders and acted with cultural sensitivity, paying particular attention to the respect of women's human rights.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following methods were used to collect data for the evaluation.

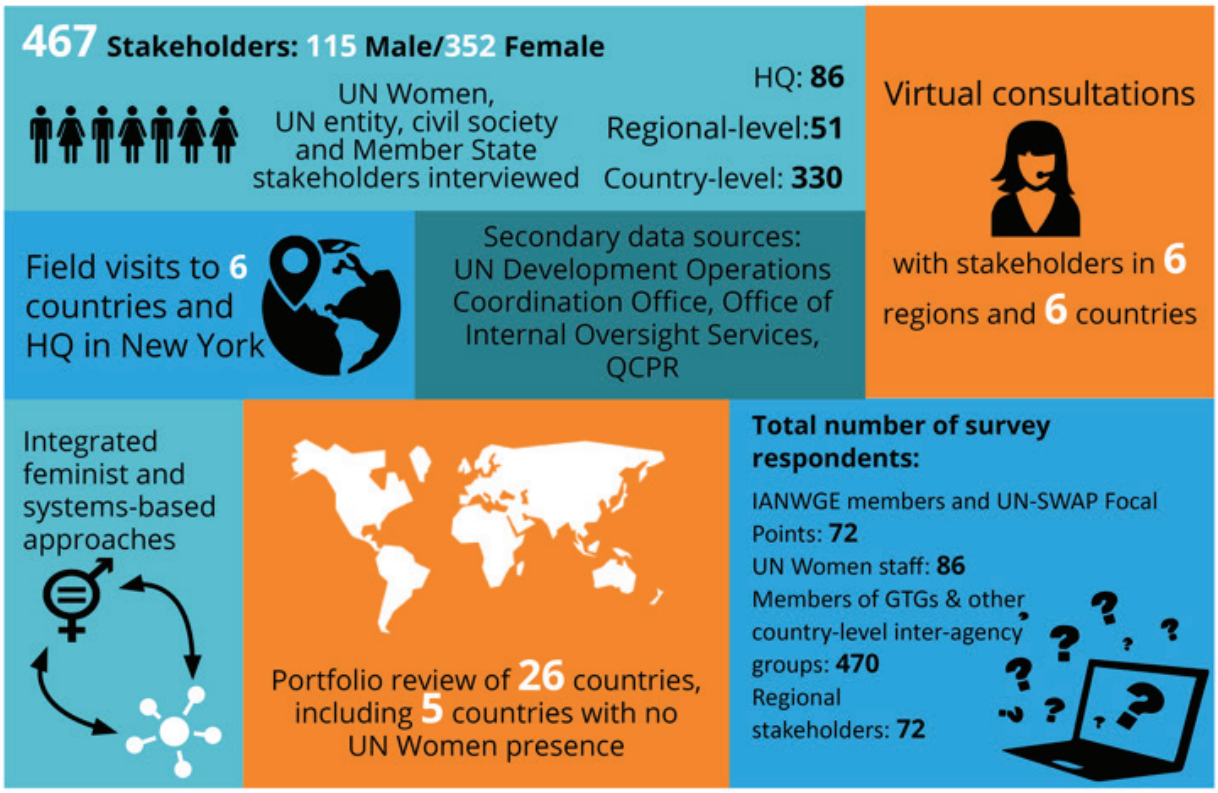
- **Interviews:** Overall, the evaluation interviewed 467 stakeholders (at HQ, regional, and country levels). All individual and group interviews followed agreed-upon interview protocols tailored to categories of

8 Batliwala, S. 2010. "Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud".

9 Within the UN system, one of the key approaches to gender equality is mainstreaming. Although this approach culminated in the Beijing Platform for Action, it has received feminist criticism for becoming institutionalized and losing sight of the political nature of the struggle for equality. Feminist have also noted that an organization's norms, values, behaviour and practices are determined not so much by visible or direct power, but rather by the "deep structure" of organizations. Source: Batliwala, 2010.

10 The UN Women evaluation code of conduct is based on UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System to ensure that the rights of individuals involved are respected.

Figure 1.1 Methods overview



stakeholders and aligned with the overall evaluation framework. Interviews were semi-structured but flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee discussed. Please see Volume II, Appendix III for a list of stakeholders consulted and Volume II, Appendix IV for sample interview protocols.

- **Document and secondary data review:** During the inception phase, the evaluation team reviewed key documents. During the data collection phase, the team carried out an in-depth review of documents to generate information to address the key evaluation criteria and questions outlined in the evaluation matrix. These included, among others, UN Women corporate documents, corporate and regional evaluations, regional and country programming documents, data mining of UN Women RMS, UN system documents, evaluations and reviews, survey data,[11] and other relevant articles and websites. A regional evaluation focused on the UN Women's UN system coordination role on GEEW in the Europe and Central Asia region was conducted in parallel and also informed this study. Please see Volume II, Appendix V for the list of documents consulted.

- In addition, the evaluation team was able to draw on survey data from the UNDG's Information Management System established in 2015, which was made available by the UN Development Operations

11 The evaluation drew on relevant data from QCPR monitoring surveys administered by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, data that informed the 2015 evaluation of UN Women's normative support function (E/AC.51/2015/9), and the evaluation of UNDP's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. In addition, other UN Women evaluations, studies and secondary data were consulted.

Coordination Office (UN DOCO)[12] and on other evaluations from the UN system, such as the recent evaluation of UNDP Contributions to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

- **Country portfolio review**: The purpose of the portfolio review was to provide a broad overview of types of UN Women presence and work of COs in a purposeful sample of 26 countries. The criteria for country selection and the list of countries included are presented in Volume II, Appendix VI. Documents reviewed for the portfolio review included, among others: UNDAFs and recent CCAs, UN Women Strategic Notes, Development Results Frameworks, Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Frameworks (OEEFs), Annual Workplans, UN Women Annual Reports, GTG plans and reports, RC Annual Reports, and CEDAW concluding observations. The evaluation team drew mainly from 2012 -2015 documentation for the review, with greater weight given to the most recent Strategic Notes and UN Women reports from 2013 and 2014. The team also analysed documents from 2011 and pre-2011 (such as evaluations and reports of both UN Women and the UN system) when available. The portfolio review is presented in Volume II, Appendix VII.

- **Country case studies**: The purpose of case studies was to illustrate how UN Women's UN system coordination mandate has been implemented in six countries, describe perceived contributions to results and/or key achievements, identify promising practices, and explore relationships between country-level actors and how those relationships affect different modalities of UN system coordination. The case study countries were selected to reflect UN Women's operational and structural diversity in the region. See sampling criteria in Volume II, Appendix VI.

Countries selected for case study field missions[13]

Fiji MCO: MCO in a small island context, disaster-prone region

Jordan: CO covering the impact of the Syrian crisis on Jordan, humanitarian context, [14] upper-middle income country

Kyrgyzstan: CO, lower-middle income country, DaO country

Malawi: CO, humanitarian context, low income country, DaO country

Mali: CO, UN stabilization mission, humanitarian context, low income country

Mexico: CO, upper-middle income country

- Six countries were selected for field missions to collect in-depth data (see sidebar). During the case study field missions, which were conducted over five days in each country, the evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews, group interviews, and/or participatory sessions or workshops with UN Women staff (including stakeholder/influence mapping),[15] members of the GTG, the RC, Heads of Agency or other representatives of resident UN entities, representatives of national women's machineries and central ministries, and gender advocates from CSOs.

- **Case study on global initiatives (issue focused):** The purpose of this case study (also referred to as the "HQ case study") was to illustrate types of UN system

12 The UNDG Information Management System contains data from 131 UNCTs (132 country records). Data were collected for the first time in 2015 through the new UNDG Information Management System. Data entry was based on the perceptions of the RC Offices in consultation with the UNCTs. The data were entered between May and July 2015 and, as this is the first time baseline data are available, they may include progress achieved in early 2015.

13 As per the criteria described in Volume II, Appendix VI, all of the country case study and virtual consultation countries were vetted with the ROs.

14 Criteria used to establish whether or not a country is in a humanitarian context include: (a) country level presence of an active OCHA; or (b) country having received more than USD 30 million in humanitarian funding in a single year since 2011 according to OCHA Financial Tracking Service.

15 Mapping exercises were one of the techniques used for gathering data from group discussions with UN Women staff in the field. The success of these exercises varied. While the data added value to the evidence base in each case, the exercise did not produce the same type of product (visual map) for comparison.

coordination and the contributions made to select intergovernmental and inter-agency processes, namely Beijing +20 / Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 59, the Post-2015 Development Agenda (SDGs),[16] and the QCPR. The UN-SWAP, a system-wide coordination and accountability mechanism for GEEW, was the fourth area of inquiry. Several of these issue areas also had implications for coordination at the regional and country levels. The case study drew on a review of documents, interviews and group discussions at HQ in New York, and Skype and telephone interviews with other stakeholders at global, regional and country levels.

- **Country virtual consultations:** The evaluation team conducted a series of Skype and telephone interviews with stakeholders identified by UN Women in six countries distributed across the six regions (Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Serbia, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uruguay). The purpose of these consultations was to better understand the type of UN system coordination approaches and results identified in UN Women programming documents and the extent to which UN system efforts have worked or not worked in particular contexts and with different arrangements for UN GEEW coordination. For example, the evaluation team interviews included countries where UN Women country staff are located in the RC's Office, and the Independent Evaluation Office conducted additional interviews with stakeholders in countries where UN Women is a non-resident agency (Argentina, Eritrea, Malaysia and Montenegro) and in Algeria, where UN Women has programme presence.

- **Regional virtual consultations:** Skype and telephone consultations were carried out with stakeholders in each of the six regions to better understand UN Women's regional level coordination approaches and contributions. Stakeholders included UN Women Regional Directors, Strategic Planning and Coordination (SPC) specialists, members of the R-UNDGs, and RCMs, and members of working groups at the regional level (e.g., Peer Support Groups [PSGs], GTGs, etc.). Thus, Regional Directors and other staff from ROs of various other UN entities were consulted.

- **Survey:** To a more limited extent, the evaluation drew on data from four surveys as shown in Table 1.1. Survey data are presented in Volume II, Appendix VIII.

Table 1.1 Survey overview

Target group	Survey period	Population	Responses[17] (%)
IANWGE members and UN-SWAP Focal Points	Online for 3+ weeks November 24-December 18	426	72 (17%)
UN Women staff at country level	Online for 3 weeks November 27-December 18	453	86 (19%)
GTGs and other inter-agency working groups	Online for 6+ weeks December 9 - January 21	2,489	470 (19%)
Regional stakeholders from R-UNDGs and RCMs, and their working groups	Online for 3+weeks January 5 - 29	402	72 (18%)

16 The evaluation took place during the deliberations and final Member State adoption of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this document, we refer to the "post-2015 Agenda/process" when talking about the process leading up to the adoption of the SDGs in September 2015 and refer to the "2030 Agenda" when talking about the follow up to the SDGs and the current context.

17 The responses reflect the number of completed surveys. If respondents began but did not complete the survey, their responses were not counted in the calculation of the response rate. That explains why the N on some questions (especially at the beginning of the questionnaires) may be higher.

DATA ANALYSIS

The evaluation team used a combination of data analysis methods (descriptive analysis, content analysis, quantitative/statistical analysis and comparative analysis). This mixed methods approach allowed for triangulation and ensured that findings were supported by a range of sources and types of data (subjective, objective, quantitative). For the portfolio review and the issue-focused (HQ) case study, the evaluation team used Dedoose qualitative data analysis software to facilitate coding, filtering and synthesizing data. Validation of data was encouraged through an iterative process to ensure that interpretations were correct, particularly for country case studies. In most cases, an online discussion was held with the UN Women country representative and other colleagues to make sure that all the necessary information was properly taken into account. A full description of the data analysis is available in the August 2015 Inception Report, Section 2.6.

EVALUATION ASSUMPTIONS, CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

- The evaluation faced some constraints and limitations, most of which were anticipated in the evaluation Inception Report and workplan.

- **Timing**: There was an extended design phase, to some extent warranted by the complexity of the evaluation. In the data collection phase, one overarching constraint was the time frame for the evaluation, which included the summer holiday period. However, case study missions and interviews had to be organized before and during this period, and there were difficulties in reaching some stakeholders, which led to protracted data collection.

- **Evaluability**: As noted in the Inception Report, although UN Women has a corporate strategy and results framework for its system-wide and inter-agency mandate (updated in 2014), this is not yet used consistently in the organization. Evaluability was further limited by the type of information available (which was inconsistent across countries) and by lack of baseline data on UN system coordination on GEEW before the creation of UN Women. Also, since aggregable, systematic data were not always available, the team sought examples from the data that illustrated how UN Women has contributed through its coordination mandate.

- **Portfolio review**: As anticipated in the Inception Report, available country reports did not address all of the issues of interest to the evaluation, nor were they consistent in format or content. Consequently, it was difficult to collate and analyse data across countries for each aspect considered in the portfolio analysis framework. Information was more complete from 2014 onwards, when efforts to improve reporting mechanisms started to yield results.

- **Surveys**: There is no agreement in the literature on what constitutes an acceptable survey response rate.[18] In this evaluation, since response rates were less than 20 per cent, the evaluation team used survey data with caution and as a supportive additional source of data to complement the richer qualitative data found in the case studies. The evaluation team also used other surveys and secondary data to minimize survey fatigue and build on existing evidence.

- **Coverage of issues and organizational units of analysis:** The evaluation Terms of Reference included a broad range of evaluation questions, issues and thematic areas, and organizational units to be addressed. Despite adjustments in methodology (for example, adding a series of consultations at the regional level), it was not possible to achieve the same depth of data and analysis for each region, on each issue area (explored in the issue-focused case study at the global level), or in each of UN Women's policy or impact areas. At the regional level, in particular, it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive analysis of each RO.

18 For example, see the discussion at: http://socialnorms.org/what-is-an-acceptable-survey-response-rate.

- **Triangulation**: The evaluation relied considerably on perceptual data (mostly from interviews). This type of data is valuable in that it reflects a diversity of stakeholder perspectives on UN Women's coordination mandate and supports a systems approach, which values respondents' positionality, i.e., the meaning they create based on their own multiple and overlapping identities. The evaluation made efforts to supplement interview data with data from other sources (document review, secondary survey data, content analysis, etc.) when possible.

2. EVALUATION CONTEXT

2.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter describes the context for the corporate evaluation and includes sections on the UN system, UN Women's internal context, UN Women's system-wide and inter-agency mandate, and stakes and stakeholder relationships.

2.2 UN SYSTEM

The creation of UN Women and the agency's coordination mandate need to be understood against the backdrop of broader reform processes within the UN development system that have centred on the notion of institutional coherence. Over the past two decades in various resolutions and meetings, UN Member States have reiterated calls for the United Nations to increase its efficiency and effectiveness and reduce duplication and fragmentation. They have encouraged UN agencies to think, plan and work together coherently to deliver results better, to improve the relevance of initiatives and to maximize collective impact.[19] During the term of office of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1997-2006) and, since then, under Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the UN reform agenda has been dominated by the notion of institutional coherence.[20]

A global structure is in place to enhance coordination among UN agencies. It is structured around the CEB, which is supported by the High-level Committee on Programmes, High-level Committee on Management and UNDG.

Table 2.1 shows some important milestones in the ongoing UN reform process. For a more complete timeline of UN reform milestones, including those specific to GEEW, please see Volume II, Appendix IX.

Despite noteworthy successes, efforts to improve coordination and coherence at the country level continue to be limited by the current structure and governance of the UN development system.

The reforms of the past decades, culminating in the Delivering as One (DaO) approach and the related Standard Operating Procedures, are widely regarded as major steps towards tighter coordination and UN system coherence.[21] As of October 2015, more than 50 countries have voluntarily adopted (or have requested to adopt) the DaO approach.[22] The DaO Programme strategy has allowed the UN development system to more adequately address cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality and HIV/AIDS, and support governments on multidisciplinary development concerns such as economic development and the environment.[23]

Nevertheless, progress in relation to the DaO strategies and envisaged results has been uneven and the UN system continues to be criticized for its continued lack of coherence, i.e., a seeming inability to work together or to coalesce around an agreed system of priorities.[24] This is particularly observable at the country level where efforts at reform and strengthening of the RC system have not consistently produced the desired effects.[25]

19 UN Evaluation Management Group. 2012. "Independent Evaluation of Delivering as One, Summary Report".; Charlesworth, H., and C. Chinkine. 2013. "The Creation of UN Women". Regnet Research Paper, Centre for International Governance and Justice, 2014/7.; UNICEF. 2015. "Delivering Better Results for Children: A Handy Guide on UN Coherence"; Charlesworth, H., and C. Chinkine. 2013. "The New United Nations Gender Architecture: A Room with a View?" Max Planck Yearbook of the United Nations Law, 17, 1–60.

20 Charlesworth and Chinkine 2013.

21 Burley, J., and K. Malik. 2015. "Dialogue on the Longer-term Positioning of the UN Development System: The United Nations and its Functions"; Jenks, B., and B. Aklilu. 2014. "Draft Discussion Paper on the Longer-term Positioning of the UN Development System in the Post-2015 Development Agenda".

22 See: https://undg.org/home/guidance-policies/delivering-as-one.

23 Independent Evaluation of Delivering as One, 2012; Burley and Malik 2015.

24 Independent Evaluation of Delivering as One, 2012.

25 Burley and Malik 2015.

Table 2.1 Milestones in UN reform process

2006	The Secretary-General's High-level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence recommended that the UN system should "Deliver as One" (DaO) at the country level with one leader, one programme, one budget and, where appropriate, one office.
2008	General Assembly Resolution 62/277 stated that subsequent consultations on system-wide coherence would focus on harmonization of business practices, funding, governance, gender equality and the empowerment of women, and DaO at country and regional levels.
2010	Resolution A/RES/64/289 established UN Women in response to acknowledged weaknesses in the UN system's ability to effectively and coherently address issues of GEEW.
2012	QCPR resolution (67/226), which provided the UN system its mandate for development operations for 2013-2016, highlighted several areas for improved functioning in relation to system coherence, e.g., related to the RC system, DaO, and simplification and harmonization of business practices.
2014	UNDG Standard Operating Procedures were developed to support a second generation of DaO for countries wishing to adopt the approach.

Important reasons for the noted challenges are the continued fragmentation of the UN system, including the compartmentalization of the three pillars of human rights, peace and security, and development.[26] The UN development system was originally established on the basis of autonomous agencies that would focus on a specific issue and cooperate in a decentralized manner without any central direction. Specialized UN agencies continue to have separate governing bodies, and staff accountabilities at the country, regional and HQ level tend to be agency-specific. As a consequence, horizontal accountability (i.e., between agencies) has remained weak, and effective coordination at the country level remains largely dependent on the leadership skills of the respective RC.[27] In addition, inter-agency coordination continues to be based on voluntary participation and lacks strong incentives including accountability measures.[28] Addressing these systemic weaknesses may require a process of rethinking the UN's institutional architecture.

A second but related challenge to UN development system coordination is the issue of funding. Based on donor preferences, UN funds and programmes are increasingly reliant on often earmarked non-core funding. Non-core funding represented 76 per cent of all funding in 2013 versus only 58 per cent in 2007. At the same time, contributions to DaO related One Funds[29] have been declining, and remaining donors are increasingly earmarking resources within these funds. These factors foster competition rather than collaboration and coordination among UN agencies, and limit the ability of UNCTs to focus on jointly identified priorities.[30] A more integrated, coordinated organiza-

26 UNDG. 2015. ECOSOC Dialogue on the "Longer-term Positioning of the UN Development System in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", Second Phase. See also Jenks, B., and B. Jones. 2013. "United Nations Development at a Crossroads". New York University Centre on International Cooperation, page 100.

27 Secretary-General. 2012. "Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System", Report of the Secretary-General No. A/67/93-E/2012/79, page 25-26.; Independent Evaluation of Delivering as One, 2012; Burley and Malik 2015.

28 Independent Evaluation of Delivering as One, 2012.

29 The One Fund is a Multi-Donor Trust Fund built around funding the identified gap in One Programme / UNDAFs. The aim is for UNCTs to use joint resource mobilization strategies to ensure that identified priorities are funded. Donors are encouraged to pool un-earmarked or loosely earmarked funds. The One Funds are administered by the UNDP's Multi Partner Trust Fund Office and overseen by national One Fund Steering Committees that decided on the allocation of mobilized resources.

30 In addition to governance and finance, the ECOSOC dialogues on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system acknowledge that the functions, partnerships, organization, impact and capacity of the UN development system must be re-conceptualized in light of the 2030 Development Agenda.

tional model is needed in the UN development system and across pillars at the country level underpinned by enhanced coherence in funding.

The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as articulated in the SDGs, requires the international community, including the UN development system, to expand their existing notions of collaboration and coordination.

On 25 September 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1 "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which announced 17 SDGs and 169 targets.[31] While the SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and seek to complete what those did not achieve, they also constitute a significant departure from the previous agenda in that they are:

- **Integrated**: Where the MDGs were largely vertical and somewhat siloed, the SDGs bring together the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, and combine climate change and development in one framework. Overall, the 2030 Agenda is more integrated and horizontal.

- **Universal**: While the MDGs reflected and drove a largely North-South agenda, the SDGs are universal and will apply in all countries, regardless of their development status.[32]

Both the World Bank Group and the UN development system have been conducting internal discussions regarding their strategic positioning in order to be "fit for purpose" to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This includes reflections on how to achieve, on the one hand, integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development; and on the other hand, coherence and coordination between the human rights, peace and security, and development mandates of the UN system.[33] It is also widely acknowledged that the UN development system must evolve to meet the challenges posed by a rapidly changing external development environment. Key drivers of this change include, among others, the decline of importance and level of official development assistance, the proliferation of development actors, growing numbers of middle-income countries, rising inequality and multiplying humanitarian crises.[34]

Recent discussions within the UN development system and the wider international community have raised questions about whether or not the DaO approach represents a sufficiently strategic response to these challenges, or whether it is time for a more radical review of organizational arrangements within the UN development system, including structural reform (and potential integration) at HQ.[35] This is based on the view that the SDGs call for much tighter global policy coherence than what can be provided through the current siloed multilateral system with its emphasis on institutional distinctiveness.[36] Another challenge for the UN development system is how to identify means of engagement and implementation that allow for a universal response.

2.3 UN WOMEN'S INTERNAL CONTEXT

UN Women was established by General Assembly Resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence to assist Member States and the UN system in progressing more effectively and efficiently towards the goal of achieving

31 See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

32 UNDG. 2015. ECOSOC Dialogue on the "Longer-term Positioning of the UN Development System in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", Second Phase. UNDG Perspectives on Functions.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 UNDG 2015. See also Jenks and Aklilu 2014; Burley and Malik 2015; Jenks and Jones 2013.

36 The upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of the General Assembly of operational activities for development will also provide an important opportunity for Member States to transform this instrument into a more strategic framework for guiding the UN development system in its support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Source: UNDG. 2015. ECOSOC Dialogue on the "Longer-term Positioning of the UN Development System in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", Second Phase.

GEEW.[37] The entity was designed "fit-for-purpose" in that its mandate cuts across the three pillars of the United Nations (development, peace and security, and human rights), and integrates normative support, coordination functions and operational activities (see below). UN Women is strategically positioned to advance GEEW within the context of a more coherent UN system, making the entity's establishment a notable milestone in the UN reform process. UN Women's inter-governmental normative, operational, and inter-agency coordination roles are outlined as follows:

- **Normative role:** Support inter-governmental bodies, such as CSW, ECOSOC and the General Assembly in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms

- **Operational role:** Help Member States implement international standards and forge effective partnerships with civil society

- **Coordination role:** Promote the accountability of the UN system on GEEW, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress, and more broadly mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations[38]

UN Women operates under an Executive Director at the level of Under-Secretary-General. It comprises Pillar 1 on Intergovernmental support, coordination and strategic partnerships and Pillar 2 on Policy and programme activities, each led by an Assistant-Secretary-General. UN Women's structure also includes the Management and Administration Division, the Human Resources Office, and the Independent Evaluation Office. In addition, there are six ROs (in Nairobi, Cairo, Dakar, Bangkok, Panama and Istanbul), six MCOs, 47 COs and 30 programme presence countries.[39]

Throughout the period under review, and continuing today, UN Women has undergone a rapid evolution that included but went beyond the initial consolidation of its predecessor entities into a new UN agency. Notable changes included a change in leadership, with Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka taking over from Michelle Bachelet as UN Women Executive Director in August 2013 and the decentralization process that involved setting up ROs.

Regional offices

ROs gradually obtained full delegation of authority from HQ to supervise all UN Women representatives in the region in 2013-2014.[40]

All ROs are responsible for "managerial and programme oversight, quality assurance, technical and operational support and policy advice for COs in their region, including with regard to UN Women normative function."[41] This notably includes:

Regional programming

- Country programming in programme presence countries

- Programmatic support for country-level programming (in COs and MCOs), programme management support (including results-based management planning, reporting review of Strategic Notes and

37 Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN Women. 2013. "Progress Made on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategic Plan, 2011-2013". Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director No. UNW/2013/3.

38 Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to UN-system Coordination on GEEW, Terms of Reference.

39 UN Women. 2015. "Integrated Budget Estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the Biennium 2016-2017", page 13.

40 According to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (UNW/2012/11) delegation of authority for ROs means having the authority to approve medium value transactions, conduct national recruitment, supervise COs and MCOs and develop regional strategies and approaches. This includes authority to approve projects up to USD 3 million.

41 UN Women. 2012. "Regional Architecture: Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Implications and Implementation Plan—Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director".

evaluations), and acts as a knowledge sharing and triangular cooperation hub

- Operational support to COs, MCOs and programme presence offices for administrative processes related to procurement, travel, human resources, finance, IT and security[42]

- At the regional level, as indicated in Section 2.4, the RO is involved in key inter-agency mechanisms including the R-UNDG, the RCM, and more specifically in the PSG (ensuring GEEW mainstreaming in CCA/UNDAF), and through the Regional Working Group on Gender (to provide inter-agency coordination support to UNCTs and GTGs) [43]

Country offices and multi-country offices

COs and MCOs are offices where there is a Representative (P-5 or D-1) and sufficient capacity to take charge of delegation of authority. In the initial design of the regional architecture, sufficient capacity was ensured by a minimum of five staff (Representative, Operations Officer and administrative staff) in accordance with recommendations from field capacity assessment.[44] Delegation of authority for COs and MCOs means they have the authority to manage country programmes and conduct lower-value transactions up to USD 1 million. The Representative is the Head of Agency and sits on the UNCT.[45] The main difference for MCOs is that the Representative is simultaneously in charge of more than one country and also sits on multiple UNCTs.

42 Ibid.

43 For those countries without a UN Women presence and/or limited inter-agency gender capacity, the RO coordinates under the PSG mechanism to work jointly with the gender advisers from UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF ROs to provide joint customized technical support to the respective UNCTs.

44 Ibid.

45 ACABQ (Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions). 2012. "Regional Architecture, Progress Towards a Harmonized Cost-recovery Policy and Proposed Approach for Calculating the Operational Reserve for the United Nations Entity for Gender—Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and UN Women".; ACABQ. 2014. "Report on the Implementation of UN Women's Regional Architecture, Nov 2012 - Nov 2014".

Programme presence offices

Programme presence offices are led by senior gender advisers to the RC and UNCT or by project personnel; unlike COs, they do not have Representatives.[46] In practice, the type of presence and autonomy of these offices vary significantly. A brief overview of programme presence countries is provided in Volume II, Appendix XI.

EVOLUTION

UN Women combined the mandates and assets of the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). It has incorporated staff from predecessor organizations, particularly UNIFEM, as well as from many other

Regional architecture

The roll out of the regional architecture was approved at the end of 2012 and has only recently been completed. According to the document establishing this structure,[47] HQ will focus on high-level strategic oversight and global technical and policy knowledge and provide greater support to country and regionally focused inter-agency processes as well as to the UN Women normative role. The ROs provide managerial and programme oversight of COs and MCOs, quality assurance, technical and operational support and policy advice, support knowledge sharing and undertake inter-agency coordination at the regional level.[48]

46 UN Women. 2012. "Regional Architecture: Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Implications and Implementation Plan—Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director".

47 Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN Women. 2012. "Regional Architecture: Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Implications and Implementation Plan". September 18.

48 Ibid, page 1

Table 2.2 Total voluntary contributions (USD, thousands)[50]

Year	Regular resources (core)	Other resources (non-core)	Total
2015 (provisional data)	136,004	170,976	306,980
2014	163,664	159,160	322,824
2013	156,958	118,465	275,423
2012	114,086	93,676	207,762

UN agencies. This has brought a rich set of skills and knowledge of the UN system into UN Women, as well as the challenge of forging a coherent organizational approach and identity. While mobility is fairly common in the UN system, few other agencies have had such an influx of new staff at the management level. UN Women was still in the process of establishing policies and processes and had only a short institutional history when it began to integrate new staff members. As a result, corporate culture and identity remain in a complex transitional stage during which there are likely to be discussions about organizational values as well as conflicting priorities, including about the implementation of its multipronged UN coordination remit in different contexts and at different levels.

UN Women was the first new agency to be created under the UN reform process, providing an opportunity to experiment with new modalities. However, it also had the potential to disturb the established ways of doing things. Despite widespread support within the United Nations for the establishment of UN Women and even more so externally—overall by feminist groups and women's organizations and key Member States—the specific roles of UN Women and the various dimensions of its mandate have been subject to debate, especially in its early years. Among these are budget expectations in relation to the size and scope of the mandate, how operational work relates to overlapping mandates with other agencies, and the need to clarify the leadership role of UN Women in relation to the responsibility of each UN agency to apply the UN-SWAP (CEB/2006/2). Five years have given UN Women time to establish itself, its policies, its structure, and to some extent, its unique identity and have given other agencies a chance to adapt to UN Women and its mandate, although the transition and adjustment process is ongoing.

UN Women's evolution since its creation in 2010 has taken place against the backdrop of chronic underfunding. The Gender Equality Architecture Reform—a global movement based on consultation with and building on the opinions of women worldwide at the CSW in 2008—proposed an annual budget for the new agency of USD 1 billion, which was reduced by half on the recommendation of the Secretary-General.[49] Also, although UN Women financial statements indicate a steady increase in voluntary contributions from 2012 to 2014, provisional data indicate a decline in total voluntary contributions from a high of USD 322.8 million in 2014 to USD 307 million in 2015 (see Table 2.2). In short, UN Women has had to carry out its broad global mandate with one quarter to one third of the budget originally proposed by the advocates for the agency, and it is still considerably short of the amount recommended by the Secretary-General at its inception. Although UN Women has found creative ways to function within these financial limitations, the funding shortfall is a constant underlying issue in the ability of UN Women to fulfil its mandate and meet the high expectations set for it. Ultimately, change without additional resources will be challenging.

49 Charlesworth and Chinkine 2013, page 15.

50 Sources: UN Women. 2015. "UN Women Annual Report 2014-2015"; UN Women. 2014. "UN Women Annual Report 2013-2014"; UN Women. 2013. "UN Women Annual Report 2012-2013"; and provisional 2015 data provided by UN Women's Division of Management and Administration.

2.4 UN WOMEN'S SYSTEM-WIDE AND INTER-AGENCY MANDATE

UN Women's UN system coordination role on GEEW is its newest role, as it was not formally included in or adopted from the mandates of any of its predecessor entities. Some GEEW coordination existed prior to the establishment of UN Women through inter-agency participation in groups such as IANWGE and the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, and inter-agency mechanisms at the global (i.e., on WPS) and country level.

The UN system GEEW coordination role is an "organizational" mandate that is not limited to any one division, unit or level of the organization. Although UN Women has a UN System Coordination Division (in Pillar 1, as described above), it is the Entity as a whole that is responsible for implementing the mandate. In general terms, the Coordination Division and the Policy Division focus on global-level coordinating structures, activities and processes, while the Programme Division focuses on those at the regional and country level. The Programme Division does, however, engage in coordination work at the global level when it has a programmatic focus (e.g., within the UNDG). The Coordination Division is the custodian of the organization's Coordination Strategy and its focus is mainly on system-wide coordination (both on GEEW and in support of large UN coordination processes). However, it also provides support to UN coordination work in[52] UN Women field offices though its interactions with the SPC Specialists, support to capacity building through training, and a web-based community of practice. ROs play various roles: they all have a coordination role at the regional level (e.g., participation in the R-UNDG) and they provide support to COs and MCOs in their efforts to promote more effective inter-agency coordination at the country level. The role of ROs with respect to coordination at the country level differs depending on the type of UN Women presence in each country. MCOs also have a coordination role, and COs are responsible for UN system coordination on GEEW in

Definition and debate on gender mainstreaming

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is defined as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality." (ECOSOC, 1997)

In the 20 years since the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), feminist scholars have monitored, assessed and debated gender mainstreaming as an approach to advancing GEEW. While gender mainstreaming has helped integrate women into the development agenda (e.g., by considering them in analyses and programming, including GEEW targets in performance measurement frameworks, etc.), many see gender mainstreaming as insufficiently transformative. Among other things, critics argue that the strategy is too "narrow" given the complexity of gender relations and the contexts in which these relations play out;[51] that gender mainstreaming fails to place women's strategic interests at the forefront of development agendas; and that gender mainstreaming is too often a technical exercise that happens in the absence of funding and accountability. [52]

51 Subrahmaniam 2007 in Sweetman, C. 2012. "Introduction to the Special Issue: Beyond Gender Mainstreaming". Gender & Development, 20(3), 389–403

52 For these and other critiques see: Sweetman 2012; and Mukhopadhyay, M. 2004. "Mainstreaming Gender or 'Streaming' Gender Away: Feminists Marooned in the Development Business". IDS Bulletin, 35(4), 95–103.

the UNCT in collaboration with the RC. (These roles and responsibilities are further examined in Section 3.5 on organizational efficiency.) There are three dimensions of UN Women's coordination role, as described in its founding resolution[53] and Strategic Plan 2014-2017. In 2015, UN Women developed a draft Theory of Change for UN system coordination on GEEW that defines its UN system coordination role as including the following three aspects:

- **Leading**, by advocating to ensure that relevant gender equality and women's rights issues are on the UN system-wide agenda
- **Promoting accountability,** by strengthening capacity, coherence, monitoring and "answerability" for system-wide gender equality mandates, as well as individual agency reporting (e.g., with the UN-SWAP)
- **Coordinating,** by engaging in system-wide and inter-agency efforts to jointly promote and advance gender equality at global, regional and national levels

The coordination role is largely geared to support comprehensive gender mainstreaming across the UN system, which has been a long-standing strategy of the United Nations in its efforts to contribute to gender equality, yet is also debated as an approach in that it does not pointedly seek the transformative and "deep structure" change in organizations and societies that is required (see box on page 26).

In addition, UN Women has adopted the responsibility to follow up on gender-parity commitments in the UN system (previously the responsibility of its predecessor entity OSAGI).

53 A/RES/64/289, para. 53.

UN Women Coordination Strategy outcomes

- Enhanced UN system coherence and mobilization of joint action for GEEW
- Increased system-wide gender mainstreaming
- System-wide application of accountability frameworks for GEEW
- Improved gender balance and the status of women in the UN system

In March 2012, UN Women articulated a strategy for implementing its UN system-wide and inter-agency mandate, (i.e., its coordination role). The strategy was updated in 2014 and aims to define, clarify, and communicate the nature of the mandate, and manage expectations with regard to the different roles that are part of the mandate. The strategy identifies the four key outcome areas of UN Women's UN system coordination role (see sidebar) and different work streams that will contribute to those.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Table 2.3 provides an overview of common coordination mechanisms that UN Women uses at various levels to implement its UN system coordination mandate. The table is not comprehensive, and does not illustrate, for example, Flagship Programme Initiatives, which offer a promising new way to coordinate programming with UN partners in support of theories of change developed in each of UN Women's Impact Areas.

Table 2.3 Overview of key coordination mechanisms and practices utilized by UN Women

Global	Regional	Country
Inter-agency coordination structures[54]		
• CEB, High-level Committee on Programmes, High-level Committee on Management, UNDG • UNDG Gender Equality Task Team*[55] • IANWGE* • Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (UN Statistics Division is Secretariat of the group) • On sectoral and functional issues, there are diverse inter-agency mechanisms (Inter-agency Coordination Mechanism for UN Electoral Assistance, Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, Inter-Agency Group on CEDAW Reporting, UNEG, etc.) • Global network of UN-SWAP focal points*	• R-UNDG, RCM, PSG • Inter-agency working groups (gender-focused, non-gender focused) • Inter-agency groups (e.g., PSG in Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean, Programme Advisory Committee in Europe and Central Asia) • Advocates for the creation of or participates in other ad hoc inter-agency groups such as the UNDG Asia and the Pacific Working Group on Addressing Extremism leading to discrimination against women in law and in practice	• UNCT • GTGs • Result Groups on Gender • Other inter-agency working groups • Support to other Result Groups
Joint policy or advocacy action		
• Beijing+20, SDGs, QCPR • Policy areas such as WPS, EVAW, WEE, HIV/AIDS, women's political participation	Beijing+20 regional review • Regional preparatory meetings for CSW and other inter-governmental fora • Regional campaigns or initiatives (land tenure, child marriage, gender statistics and WPS)	• UNiTE campaign • Policy issues in the specific context • Beijing+20 • SDGs • Other national campaigns • Human rights convention work (i.e. CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of the Child, etc.)
Joint programmes and Joint programming		
Global joint programmes in which UN Women participates (e.g., Essential Services Package for Gender-based Violence, H4+[56], Acceleration of Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Programme[57], Evidence and Data for Gender Equality [EDGE] Initiative); HIV/AIDS	Regional joint programmes addressing issues shared among a group of countries (EVAW in Asia and the Pacific)	Large number of joint programmes[58] (mostly gender joint programmes but also joint programmes covering other thematic areas to which UN Women contributed)

54 In some cases, UN Women chairs, co-chairs or participates.
55 An * indicates inter-agency coordination structures led (or co-led) by UN Women at HQ.
56 http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/global_strategy_women_children/en/
57 http://eca.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/kyrgyzstan/economic-empowerment#sthash.fPAtJZdV.dpuf
58 For example, the portfolio review identified UN Women's involvement in 58 joint programmes between 2011 and 2015 across the 26 countries reviewed.

Global	Regional	Country
Shared standards, accountability and reporting mechanisms (system wide)		
• UN-SWAP institutional standards • Secretary-General's 7-point Action Plan on WPS • Secretary-General's Report on Improvement on the Status of Women in the UN System • Secretary-General and high-level panel reports	• No specific accountability mechanisms for regional level • UNCT performance scorecard is promoted by RO	• UNCT performance scorecard
Shared tools and approaches for UN system		
• Gender mainstreaming guidelines, UNEG evaluation guidelines • Development of comparable gender indicators through the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) Initiative • Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence Against Women • International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics) • EmpowerWomen.org, also referred to as the "Knowledge Gateway on Women's Economic Empowerment"		Gender mainstreaming strategies UN system gender capacity assessments
Capacity building		
• UN Women Training Center • UN Coordination Division/RO regional training	• Technical support and facilitation of training on gender mainstreaming in UNDAFs to UNCTs through the PSGs	• Training on gender mainstreaming in UNDAFs • Technical advice by UN Women or the GTGs to a UN agency on GEEW
Gender mainstreaming in UN planning frameworks		
• UNDG Task Team Guidelines (e.g., Resource Book for Mainstreaming Gender in UN Common Programming at the Country Level) • Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming Guidance Note	• Training of trainers for gender mainstreaming in UNDAFs	• Addressing gender dimensions in the UNDAF documents (including evaluations) • Reviewing and mainstreaming gender in DaO programme documents, by UN Women or the GTGs • Research or analysis of gender issues to support the CCA or UNDAF • Integrating gender-sensitive SDGs in planning documents
Pooled funding mechanisms		
UN Trust Fund on EVAW		Joint programming on GEEW may be funded by One Fund or other pooled funding mechanism at country level

2.5 THE CONCEPT OF COORDINATION

As noted in the previous section, UN Women's definition of coordination, for the purposes of the Theory of Change, includes the three aspects embedded in the UN Women mandate: UN Women 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. Each of these roles is influenced by other entities and has different implications for actors in the UN system. Knowing when and how to project or take on these different roles is one of the challenges of implementing such a mandate.

The United Nations has highly structured ways of coordinating among its entities. For example, at the country level, UN Women is part and parcel of the UNCT and the coordination that is provided by the RC. Yet ultimately the success of these formal structures depends on relationships and adjustments among different stakeholders. And in many ways, UN Women's skills in galvanizing and bringing people together lend credibility both to its "leadership/agenda setting role" and to its ability to "promote answerability." Similarly, UN Women's "leadership" is critical if it is to bring people together to collaborate.

This section thus focuses on the concept of coordination more broadly, as the idea of "working together to achieve common goals," and explores the success factors of a more organic concept of coordination.

The literature reviewed and the empirical data collected for this evaluation indicate that many factors influence the extent, nature, dynamics and, ultimately, the results of coordination efforts.[59] In this evaluation we use the framework suggested by Thomson, Perry and Miller, which argues that collective action is essentially shaped by three key core relationships: reciprocity, trust and reputation.[60]

Factors that facilitate coordination

Trust—Belief that others will make good faith efforts to act on their commitments, but trust takes time and implies repeated interaction amongst partners

Backbone and leadership—Individuals leading the process have good skills for working with others and are able to generate enthusiasm for a common cause

Shared purpose—Having a common agenda and a clear purpose

Shared values—Having a common set of beliefs and values about the work, such as a feminist perspective

Mutual benefits—From participating in the coordinating mechanism or collaboration

Decision-making—Participatory, as well as clear and transparent process for making decisions

Role clarity—Clear leadership and clear roles and responsibilities in the group

Communication—Clear and sufficient channels of communication (written and verbal) among members

Commitment to collaboration—Clear workplan and objectives to help guide implementation and clear statement of work

Shared monitoring of progress—Mechanisms for monitoring and tracking the group's activities

Resources—Sufficient and appropriate in terms of both people and finances; pooled funds tend to be more effective

59 See, for example, Olson, C. A., Balmer, J. T., and G. Mejicano. 2011. "Factors Contributing to Successful Interorganizational Collaboration: *The Case of CS2day". Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 31(S1), S3–S12.

60 Thomson, A. M., Perry, J. L., and T.K. Miller. 2007. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Collaboration". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 1–34.

- **Reciprocity:** Shared values, a clear and shared purpose or reason for coming together and mutual benefits from participating in a coordinating mechanism or collaboration. This is closely linked to perceptions of whether or not the share of resources (people, finances) contributed by each partner is appropriate and fair and whether or not the lines of authority and responsibility among the group are clear and accepted.

- **Trust:** The existence of a common belief among a group of actors that members of the group will make good faith efforts to behave in accordance with existing commitments, and that other members of the group are committed to collaboration and the mission of the group (i.e., a feminist agenda in the case of working groups that are focused on gender equality). Developing trust takes time and implies the need for repeated interaction among partners. Clear and participatory processes for making decisions, a clear sense of roles and responsibilities in the group, and clear and sufficient channels of communications can facilitate trust within a group.

- **Reputation:** The extent to which actors (individuals or organizations) are known for their expertise and experience in the area addressed by the collaboration. This is particularly important for those individuals or organizations taking (or aspiring to take) a leadership role among the collaborating actors. Reputation also relates to whether or not participating organizations have and assign a sufficient number of the right people at the right level to related tasks.[61] This is an important point for UN Women as different stakeholders value and expect the Entity to demonstrate its expertise in different thematic areas or in its operational work, yet "reputation" is built not only on substantive knowledge but also on the allocation of human resources.

The establishment of these core relationships for collective action relies on leadership, which is another aspect of UN Women's UN coordination role. The leadership required in the coordination role requires both content (ideas, approaches) and process skills (soft skills) in order to foster coordination among other entities.

2.6 STAKEHOLDERS AND STAKES

In applying systems thinking, the evaluation team conducted a brief stakeholder analysis in the countries visited and in the policy/thematic/or impact areas in which UN Women engages. This section provides an overview of the evaluation team's perspective on the stakeholders and the stakes[62] they have in the systems in which UN Women is mandated to play a coordination role. Stakeholders and stakes are analysed in order to gain clearer insights on influence and power dynamics among actors in a particular situation. The evaluation team has tried to frame these stakes in a generic way—by looking at patterns in the relationships—so that they are applicable to global, regional and country levels. In using this approach, it was necessary to exclude the contextual issues and power dynamics that affect stakeholders and their stakes in each setting. Each country and region has its own particularities.

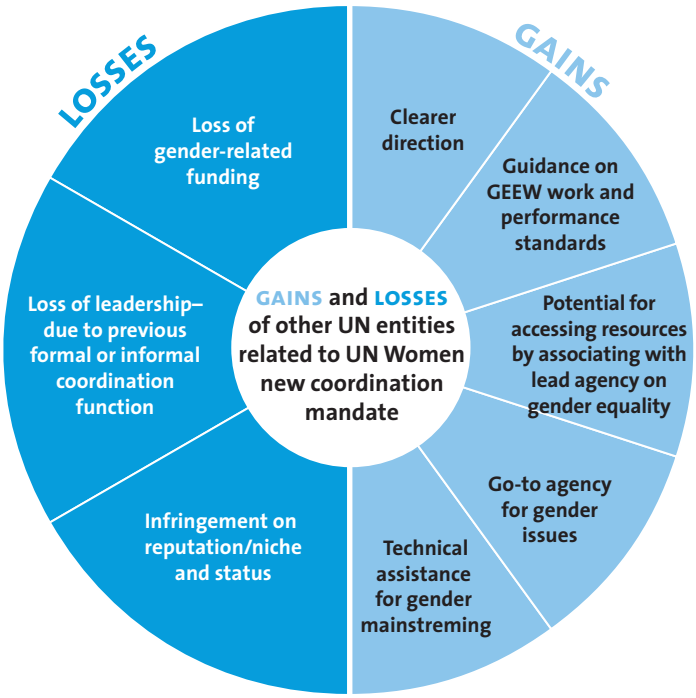
Types of stakeholders and stakes

If one were to consider all of the individuals, organizations, informal groups and networks, and formal groups and networks that have a bearing on cooperation and collaboration among actors in the United Nations, there would be a seemingly infinite number of stakeholders across the systems of interest to this evaluation. Thus, the evaluation put boundaries on the analysis by focusing only on UN entities (including the Secretariat) and clustering UN entities into different

61 Unless individuals representing the various parent organizations are "fully empowered by their organizations to make judgments about what they may commit to [in the collaboration], they will constantly have to check in with their "parents before action can happen." This can exacerbate tensions in the collaboration. Source: Thompson et al. p. 5

62 Stakes are what drive stakeholders to do what they do. They are values and motivations that stakeholders bring to a situation when enacting their stakeholder roles. Source: Williams, B., and S. Van't Hof. 2014. Wicked "Solutions: A Systems Approach to Complex Problems".

Figure 2.1 Gains and losses of other UN entities arising from UN Women's coordination mandate



types of stakeholders.[63] Consequently, this is an admittedly simplistic analysis as it does not examine the complexities of relationships with UNCTs, RCs, R-UNDGs, RCMs, etc. The section also highlights the key issues that affect UN entities' perspectives on UN Women's coordination mandate. The analysis is based on interviews and documents reviewed at country, regional and global levels.

Many UN entities have witnessed gains and losses with the creation of UN Women, a new entity with the additional mandated role of UN system coordination on GEEW. This role encompasses leading, collaborating with, and promoting accountability of other UN entities in relation to GEEW. See Figure 2.1.

63 The focus is on the organizations/entities as actors in the UN system. In effect, we have set a boundary here and are not analysing individual perspectives in the system. However, organizations are not monolithic and individuals within an organization may offer very different perspectives. Often, gender advisers and gender focal points (among others) may identify their stakes with the gender agenda across the system, putting it above institutional stakes in terms of priority. In addition, this section does not analyse the stakes of civil society or member states; their perspectives will be brought into the findings to the extent data are available.

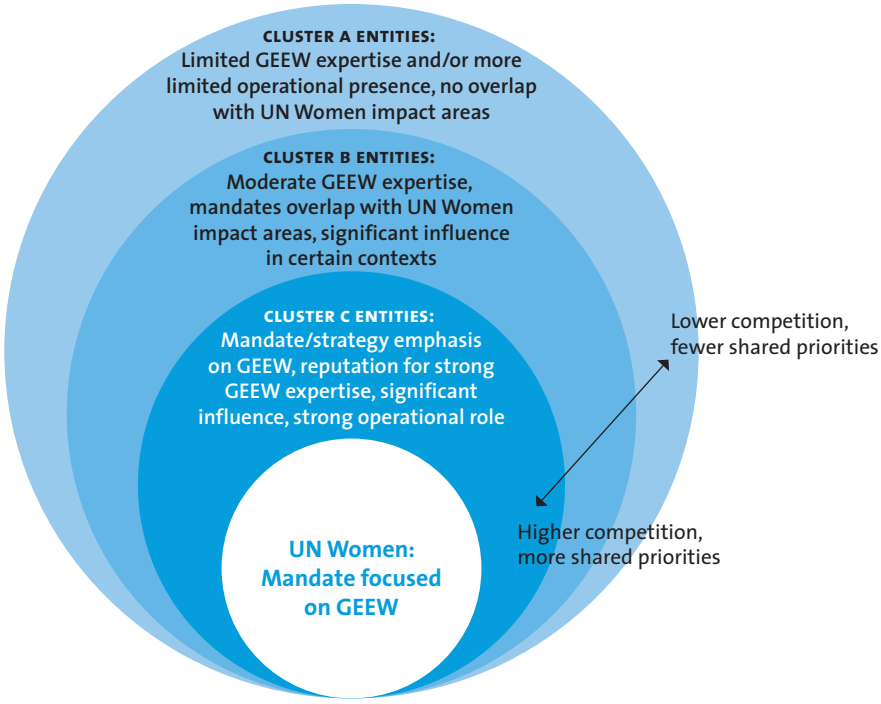
The evaluation team identified three primary clusters of UN entities that may respond differently to the changes in political economy or power dynamics now that there is a new player involved in coordination. These are shown in Figure 2.2 and described below. This is neither an exhaustive nor definitive mapping of all UN entities,[64] but it provides a way of summarizing insights deriving from the empirical data.

Cluster A: Entities with limited GEEW expertise or small presence in the contexts in which UN Women operates. There is less direct overlap in the mandates of these entities. For the most part, these entities are not leading GEEW work in different contexts. Specialized agencies, especially those with small field operations and less in-house capacity at the country level, tend to see a more natural alliance with UN Women and report that it helps them deepen their gender approach.

- **Gains:** UN Women offers reputation, expertise, guidance, technical support, shared standards and

64 The evaluation team was not able to conduct in-depth assessments of each of the entities.

Figure 2.2 Clusters of UN entities in relation to GEEW expertise and influence



potential for accessing resources through joint initiatives and is therefore beneficial from a political economy perspective.

- **Losses:** No evident losses.

Cluster B: Entities with moderate GEEW expertise that may have significant influence in the contexts in which UN Women operates. Their mandates overlap with some of the thematic areas of work outlined in UN Women's Strategic Plan (e.g., EVAW, peace and security and humanitarian action, women's political participation, WEE). These entities may play coordinating and/or lead roles with respect to GEEW in certain contexts or policy areas (e.g., humanitarian contexts or in electoral assistance policy).

- **Gains:** UN Women offers clear leadership and direction on inter-governmental processes and normative standards with regard to GEEW at the global level (e.g., related to CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action), shared institutional gender mainstreaming standards, additional gender expertise in the system and shared priorities on GEEW.

- **Losses:** Loss of leadership due to shared coordination role, loss of gender-related funding and loss of flexibility in some contexts (not beneficial from a political economy perspective).

Cluster C: Entities whose mandates and strategies emphasize GEEW, have a reputation for strong GEEW expertise and have a strong operational role. These entities have a high level of influence in the thematic and operational contexts in which UN Women operates and continue to play leadership roles in the gender architecture, especially in countries where UN Women has no presence. There is some degree of overlap in the mandates of these entities with UN Women as well as discussions and debates about respective responsibilities and collaborative advantages for deciding who does what in certain areas, such as programming and advocacy for women, adolescents and girls, or in EVAW. There are different

Cluster A includes entities with smaller presence in any particular context or agencies such as United Nations Office for Project Services, United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and others

Cluster B includes World Health Organization, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UN Department of Political Affairs, World Food Programme, UNHCR, OHCHR, and others

Cluster C includes UNFPA, UNDP, and UNICEF

perspectives or ways of framing the issues due to differences in mandates or possibly in ideologies.

- **Gains:** UN Women offers clear leadership and/or direction on inter-governmental processes and normative standards with regard to GEEW at the global level (e.g., related to CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action), additional gender expertise in the United Nations, enhanced convening power with CSOs and national institutional mechanisms for gender equality, potential to capitalize on shared priorities and synergies, and shared institutional gender mainstreaming standards.

- **Losses:** Loss of leadership, loss of gender-related funding (not beneficial from a political economy perspective) and loss of role of main interlocutor with government gender authorities.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter presents findings on the four evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, gender equality and human rights, and organizational efficiency.

3.2 RELEVANCE OF UN WOMEN'S WORK IN RELATION TO ITS COORDINATION MANDATE

This section examines the relevance of UN Women's UN system coordination approach. It also considers the strategic positioning of UN Women for carrying out that mandate.

Evaluation question: To what extent has UN Women established a relevant, realistic, strategic, innovative and clear approach for its UN system coordination mandate in normative, intergovernmental and operational work at global, regional and country levels?

Finding 1: In response to the complex and multifaceted nature of its coordination mandate, UN Women's context-specific approaches to implementation have been generally relevant and appropriate.

UN Women articulated its overall approach to coordination in its Strategy for the System-wide and Inter-agency Mandates and Functions of UN Women (updated 2015). Due to the diversity of contexts in which UN Women works, the way in which it implements its coordination mandate on the ground is situation-specific and emerges from the combination of coordination mechanisms and practices utilized by each UN Women office at the global, regional and country level. (See Section 2.4 for the range of coordination mechanisms).

The approaches of four COs help to illustrate some such differences:

- The Mexico CO defines UN Women's normative mandate (and normative work of the UN system) as the entry point for coordinating with other entities. It builds on inter-agency collaboration with a small cluster of agencies.

- The Mali CO defines its UN system coordination role in the context of a broader multi-stakeholder coordination effort to help bring development partners (including bilateral donors) together in order to align development cooperation with national priorities and needs.

- The Malawi CO explicitly defines an approach in which UN Women "does nothing alone" and thus all of its programming is done jointly.

- The Jordan CO is increasing its influence in UN humanitarian efforts by: participating in humanitarian projects (e.g., OASIS project in the Za'atari camp, Hemayati joint project and vulnerability assessment), taking a leadership role in support of the Jordanian Response Plan, and increasing its participation in several working groups (including acting as secretariat for the Protection Group).

These different entry points and approaches are defined in large part by UN Women representatives after they scan the environment in which they are working.

Despite the differences, one common aspect is that, for the most part, UN Women has built on existing inter-agency structures and mechanisms for coordination in the UN system such as: inter-agency working groups, joint programmes, working within the UNCT, using existing tools such as UNCT Performance Indicators for GEEW known as "Scorecard", etc. There are exceptions,

of course, such as the network of UN-SWAP focal points newly established by UN Women.

At the regional level, UN Women ROs have also built on coordination structures that already existed, such as RCMs, which are led by the Economic Commissions, and the R-UNDGs and PSGs. As noted in other studies, the regional context for coordination is affected by:

- Lack of clarity in the respective mandates of the R-UNDG and the RCM, which often results in perceptions of overlap, competition and duplication of efforts between these groups. This has been accentuated as the R-UNDG has increasingly moved to upstream policy work.[65]

- Different definitions of what constitutes a "region," with the Economic Commission for Europe (established in 1947) comprising 56 member countries that include many in Western Europe that do not fall under the remit of the UNDG; the Economic Commission for Africa (established in 1958) that covers all the African continent while UN Women divides the continent in three under three ROs; or the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), established in 1973, which covers 18 Arab countries, although not the same countries that the UN Women Arab States RO covers .

- Different "hubs" or locations for regional management offices. In East Asia and the Pacific, for example R-UNDG and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) have benefited from co-location for several years, as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is not the case in Europe and Central Asia or the African continent, most notably in East and Southern Africa, where various cities (Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Pretoria, Johannesburg) host regional and global organizations.

- Each region has different dynamics in terms of the relative strength of these different groups, the existence of other regional coordination mechanisms (such as an IASC Working Group), and the relationships between them. ROs have sometimes filled gaps in the existing regional GEEW coordination architecture by establishing inter-agency groups focused on GEEW when these did not exist (e.g., in the Europe and Central Asia region, the creation of the Regional Working Group on GEEW; and in East Asia and Pacific region, a standing IASC Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action) or by revitalizing them (e.g., Latin America and the Caribbean where it became one of the most active inter-agency groups in the region). The UNiTE campaign[66] has also been an important entry point for more system-wide coordination at the regional and country level (e.g., Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific emphasize the particular importance of UNiTE as a platform for coordination on EVAW).

The combination of practices and mechanisms that UN Women has chosen or that has emerged in a particular geographic or thematic context appears to be based on a number of factors, in particular the following:

- Whether other actors in the UN system already have (or aim for) a formal coordinating function in the respective area (e.g., the UN Department of Political Affairs in relation to electoral assistance)

- Whether there are area-specific coordination structures, including on GEEW, that pre-date the creation of UN Women (e.g., IASC)

- The extent to which there are emerging opportunities for collaboration and/or gaps in guidance, leadership or support for GEEW-related issues (e.g., at the country level, in mainstreaming gender across the UNCT, or with regard to multi-stakeholder coordination on GEEW in a development or humanitarian setting, or at the regional level, for example, when there is a need for more focused or strategic guidance at the level of UNDG or RCM)

65 Joint Inspection Unit. 2015. "Cooperation among United Nations Regional Commissions", p. 37. Online: https://www.unjiu.org/en/reports-notes/JIU%20Products/JIU_REP_2015_3_English.pdf.

66 http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/

- UN Women's comparative strengths (expertise, experience, networks, reputation and clout) in the respective thematic and/or geographic context and UN Women's ability to scan the environment and identify the gaps and potential entry points

- The extent to which GEEW is at the core of a specific thematic area, which, in turn, affects the purpose, foci and approach(es) to coordination undertaken by UN Women. For example, while areas such as EVAW and WEE are primarily focused on gender equality issues, in other areas such as humanitarian action and HIV/AIDS, gender equality is a cross-cutting issue, only one among various perspectives and priorities that actors are concerned with, in which case there may be a greater need for UN Women's attention to gender mainstreaming.

Finding 2: Despite efforts to communicate both within UN Women and in the UN system, there is still a lack of clarity and a range of interpretations of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate.

While most consulted stakeholders at all levels were generally aware of the coordination mandate, their knowledge varied considerably in terms of how the mandate had translated into concrete approaches in their particular geographic or thematic context.[67]

In addition, UN Women's system coordination mandate on GEEW is sometimes confused (even by staff of UN Women) with the overall coordination mandate shared by all UN agencies in pursuit of greater system coherence and DaO. This is reflected in the varying extent to which UN Women's coordination role is associated primarily with processes in the UN system (related to planning, monitoring and reporting cycles linked to UNDAF) and a myriad of existing inter-agency coordination groups, as opposed to a more purposeful approach to coordination that explicitly recognizes the Entity's unique role as the gender machinery in the United Nations. In this approach, coordination is one tool (along with normative work and operational activity) used to influence gendered power relations both within the UN system, and in country and regional settings where it works, and to affect results for GEEW. (This is further discussed in Finding 3.) As noted by stakeholders and observed by the evaluators, there is a risk of getting bogged down in UN coordination structures and processes that grow every day in light of the evolving demands for UN coherence, reform and relevance. In part, this is due to the lack of a clear strategy and theory of change thinking throughout UN Women with regard to the UN system coordination role on GEEW.

Among stakeholders who were aware of what UN Women had done to implement this mandate, their perceptions of the relevance of UN Women's coordination approaches appeared to be closely linked to their views on the extent to which the agency was well positioned and able to fulfill a coordinating role in their particular context (see Finding 3 below).

Broadly speaking, stakeholders tended to describe UN Women's coordination approaches as appropriate when these involved UN Women in a facilitating role and were focused on bringing actors together as equals. They were more likely to describe the coordination approaches as inappropriate when these involved UN Women in a more directive role, which they perceived as "telling people what to do" and/or when the approach was considered insufficiently inclusive or consultative.[68] In addition, stakeholders noted that the issue of funding often became contentious due to competition among entities, which is one of the factors that affect the extent to which UN

67 Uncertainty about UN Women's coordination mandate and its practical implications was noted most strongly among consulted HQ level interviewees from other UN entities, and less strongly among surveyed UN-SWAP network/IANWGE members and GTG members. UN Women staff had mixed views about the extent to which the coordination mandate was well understood by UN partners at the country level. Please see Volume II, Appendix VIII for detailed survey results. A general lack of clarity over the entity's coordination mandate was also noted in the 2015 evaluation of UN Women's normative support function (paragraph 57).

68 Interviews at the global level highlighted two examples where UN Women could have taken a more consultative approach: with respect to the Secretary-General's 2014 report on intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation (A/69/211) and with regard to the process of preparing the report for the High-level Panel on Peace Operations (although UN Women did not have a formal coordinating role in the latter).

Women is seen as a credible/legitimate actor. Yet at the same time, UN Women's UN system coordination role on GEEW could help leverage more funds for GEEW—not only for UN Women, but also for the system as the whole. UN Women has played such a role in mobilizing shared resources and/or pooled funds for the UN Trust Fund on EVAW, but, interestingly this was not mentioned frequently in interviews in the field or at HQ. This type of role also was not emphasized in the organizational strategy or Theory of Change on UN system coordination. [69] UN Women's contributions in increasing overall funding for GEEW for the system will become increasingly important in light of the potential for UN pooled funding mechanisms to facilitate integrated implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.[70]

Finding 3: UN Women's Coordination Strategy and related (draft) Theory of Change illustrate the Entity's (evolving) interpretation of its UN system coordination role. However, they do not yet articulate the transformative change for GEEW results that drives the coordination role or provide a clear foundation for operationalizing this role in a way that is integrated with the other dimensions of the UN Women mandate.

Prior to 2010, OSAGI, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and UNIFEM played coordinating roles on GEEW in different ways. UN Women, as the new "gender machinery" in the UN system, was given a formal coordination mandate on GEEW. This meant that it was navigating largely uncharted waters, as none of its predecessors had an equivalent type of remit with regard to influencing substantive changes on GEEW within the UN in its activities in human rights, peace and security, and development. Since 2010, UN Women's own interpretation of its UN system coordination mandate has continued to evolve.

Translating the broad UN system coordination mandate into a concrete strategy has been challenging,

UN Women's Coordination Strategy and draft Theory of Change describe "coordination" as comprising three dimensions. Two of these (leading, promoting accountability) carry connotations of being directive, i.e., of UN Women "telling others what to do", while the third dimension (coordinating[71]) implies a collaborative and thus more equal nature of interaction.

There is an inherent tension between being able to promote or call for greater answerability of the UN system and working collaboratively with entities in that system.

as UN Women's founding resolution outlines different roles for the Entity but does little to indicate which of these roles it should play in what situation, or what enforcement mechanisms exist (or are required) in relation to each role. This is complicated by inherent tensions between the different areas of work that the mandate comprises:

- Given the vertical structure of the UN system, coordination relies on the voluntary cooperation of UN entities. However, UN Women is also charged with promoting greater answerability of the UN system for its GEEW commitments, which some see as a "policing" role that may be at odds with efforts to facilitate voluntary cooperation or collaboration.

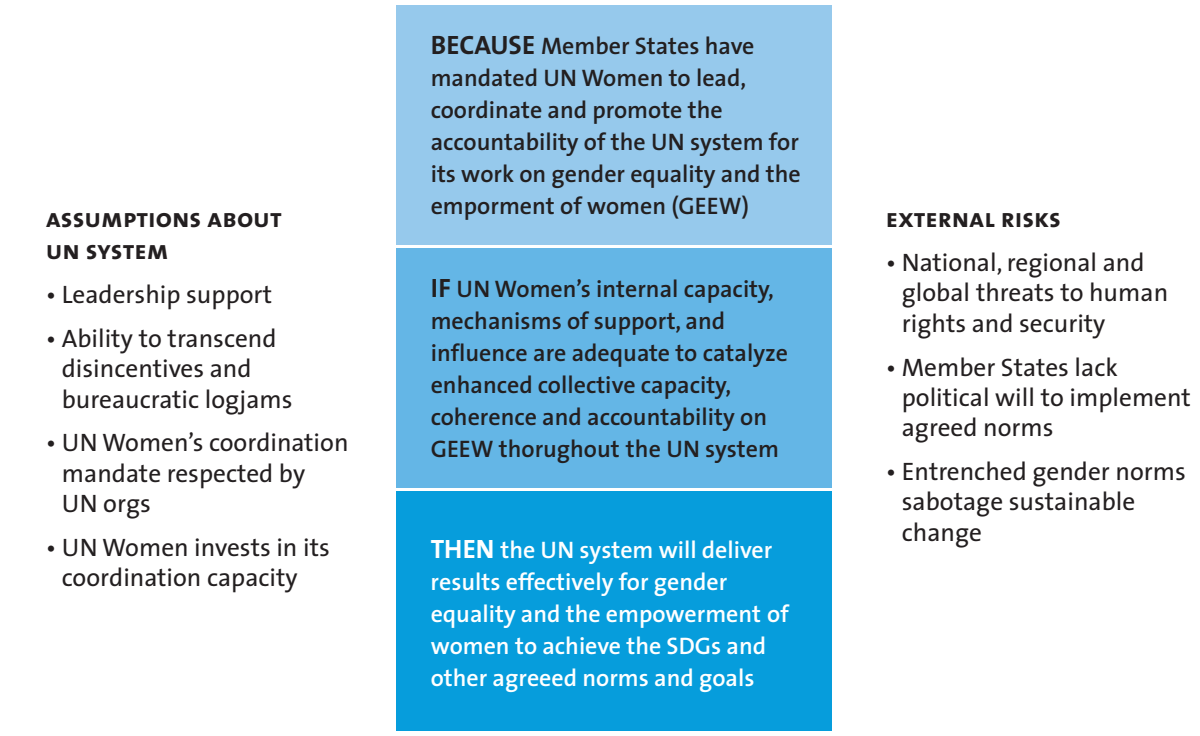
- Similarly, while there is the expectation that UN Women will contribute to more effective gender mainstreaming across the UN system, there is also recognition that individual UN agencies and leaders are ultimately responsible for mainstreaming gender into their institutions and programming. As noted in Section 2.4, debates on the usefulness and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a practice also suggest that there is a need to review and think critically about the experience and clarify the twin-track approach to gender equality at UN Women.

69 The Theory of Change notes that UN Women must have sufficient capacity to "devise and secure pooled resources for joint programmes and inter-agency coordination."

70 UNDG, "UNDG Discussion Paper: The Role of UN Pooled Financing Mechanisms to Deliver the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda", endorsed by UNDG on 28 March 2016.

71 The evaluation team notes that the definition put forward by UN Women is somewhat circular, given that it uses the term "coordination" to define "coordination". Based on how the third of the noted dimensions is described, a term such as "collaboration" might have been more appropriate.

Figure 3.1 UN Women draft Theory of Change for UN system coordination



By developing an explicit Strategy for the System-wide and Inter-agency Mandates and Functions of UN Women (updated 2015) and, most recently, an accompanying draft Theory of Change for UN System-wide Coordination for GEEW (see Figure 3.1), UN Women has made reasonable efforts to construct and communicate the facets of this UN system GEEW coordination role, and to go beyond the broad guidance provided in its founding resolution. These documents, however, do not yet provide clear strategic direction with regard to the purpose and intent of the coordination role of UN Women and in relation to the other roles (normative and operational) in its composite mandate. The coordination role is frequently seen in terms of process-oriented coordination and as an additional, time-consuming task on top of the others. Neither the Strategy nor the Theory of Change sufficiently clarify the envisaged results of UN system coordination on GEEW and the parameters for how UN Women is going to address its coordination mandate as a coherent organization. The need for direction is more acute at the field level than at HQ. However, it is also perceived that it is at HQ level that UN entities need to make additional efforts to clarify the mandate boundaries so that translation of the mandate in the field is guided by meaningful, discussed and agreed upon strategic frameworks. Current discussions about differences between "substantive" and "process" coordination are one illustration of the different visions and perspectives that are emerging with regard to coordination.

Section 2 of the Theory of Change aims to clarify the envisaged linkages between, on the one hand, institutional results as outlined in the Coordination Strategy (e.g., enhanced UN system coherence, capacity and mobilization of joint action on GEEW performance and delivery) and on the other hand, contributions to development results. However, the examples of such contributions focus on the internal workings of the UN system (e.g., implementation of UN joint gender programmes) and do not clarify why and how related changes will lead to more effective and efficient achievement of positive changes in the lives of women and men.

There is a good reason why the Theory of Change avoids formulating specific development results: namely, that UN Women is not responsible for the development results of other UN actors.[72] One key purpose of the Theory of Change was to clarify the boundaries and limitations of what UN Women can be held, and hold itself, accountable for. This is essential in order for UN Women to more effectively integrate coordination into its strategy and planning (and into joint programming and other dimensions of the mandate). It is also particularly important in relation to managing expectations of external stakeholders outside of UN Women. Unlike other UN coordination mandates, UN Women's role is affected by the widely adopted gender mainstreaming strategy, a shared gender equality mandate in the United Nations, gender expertise in other UN entities, the turnover and movement of gender specialized staff among UN entities, and the many emerging areas in which gender equality can play a critical role (e.g., humanitarian action, water and sanitation, climate change, disaster risk reduction). However, neither the Theory of Change nor the Coordination Strategy are clear in regard to the envisaged linkages between effective UN coordination and progress in UN Women's priority (thematic/policy) areas, for example. (Should UN Women be focusing its "leadership" role on GEEW coordination in these areas?) A related issue is that the overall Strategic Plan did not have a Theory of Change and the contribution of UN system coordination on GEEW was not clearly articulated as a pathway to achieve the organization's Theory of Change.

Lack of clarity on these aspects has led to the perception that there is "limited guidance" about this area of the mandate, and to uncertainty among UN Women and its partners, especially on the ground, about what to do with the UN system coordination mandate, what to expect from it, and what it means in concrete terms. A Theory of Change spells out how an organization thinks that change processes take place and can be influenced. A strategy needs be informed by and build on a Theory of Change. The Theory of Change becomes the theoretical underpinning for the strategy and any resulting operational guidance and/or decision-making related to planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The Theory of Change should be seen as an iterative tool that is constantly tested, adjusted and adapted to different contexts.

In both countries and regions, there is still limited familiarity with and appropriation of the Coordination Strategy and Theory of Change. Most UN Women country level offices make only brief references to the UN system coordination role in their Strategic Notes and do not consistently reflect theory of change thinking with regard to UN system coordination on GEEW and how it relates to change processes at the country level. Staff sometimes identify the coordination role with process-oriented coordination and it is reported in terms of activities or organization of events (e.g., commemoration of Beijing + 20 anniversary, UNiTE campaign events, HeforShe). At the regional level, the East Asia and the Pacific RO developed a strategy and approach paper to help operationalize the coordination mandate, and the Arab States RO has just recently developed a Theory of Change that integrates coordination, advocacy, capacity building and normative roles in support of the Entity's impact areas.

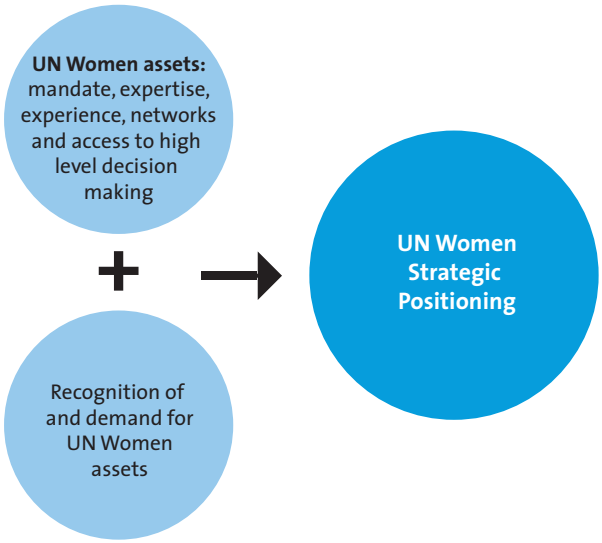
Evaluation question: To what extent is UN Women strategically positioned to enhance UN system coordination on GEEW, including UN system accountability on gender equality?

Finding 4: UN Women's strategic positioning is strongest in relation to coordinating issues that are (perceived as) addressing GEEW or gender mainstreaming in general. Its strategic positioning is more varied in relation to specific thematic and policy areas in which other UN actors have a declared stake.

Strategic positioning concerns UN Women's place in relation to other UN actors and the kind of value that it can add that is different from the contributions of other UN actors. Thus, strategic positioning is about UN Women's organizational assets that are relevant

72 As reaffirmed in the Theory of Change, "every entity in the UN system is ultimately accountable for delivering on the commitments to gender equality articulated in its mandate and overarching policies and programmes. UN Women plays a key leadership role in increasing and improving system-wide, inter-agency coordination and accountability on gender equality. It cannot take responsibility for what individual agencies or leaders in the UN produce or fail to produce."

Figure 3.2 UN Women strategic positioning



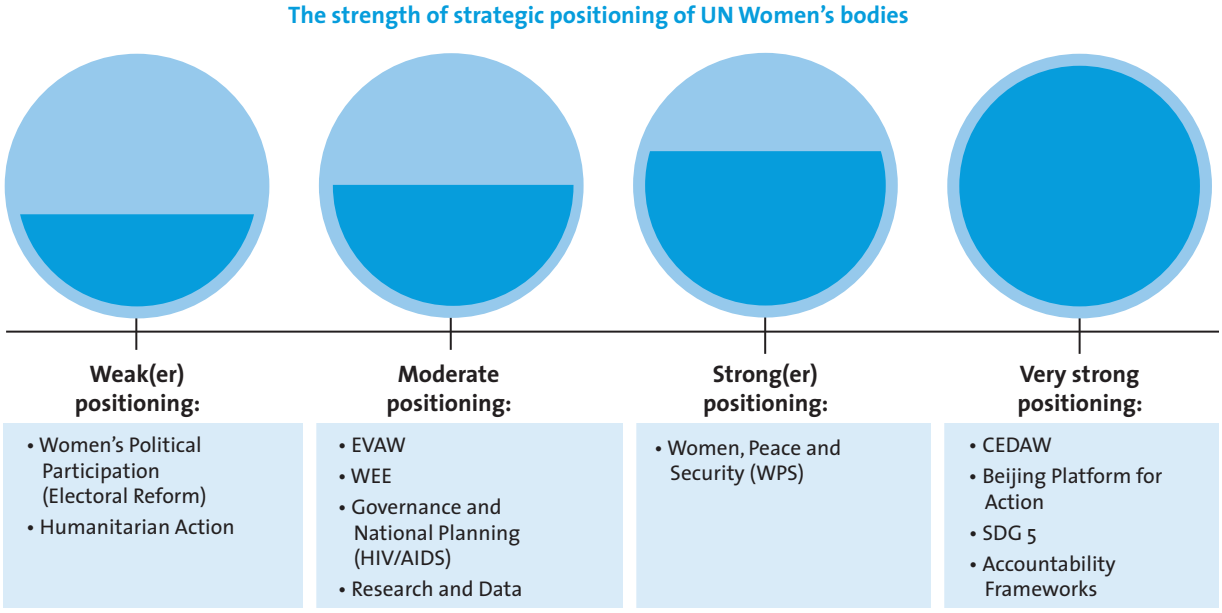
to system-wide coordination, and also about the agency's ability to communicate and be recognized for these assets by other UN actors. This latter aspect corresponds with stakeholder perceptions and expectations related to the potential value added of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate.

Evidence deriving from document review, country visits and stakeholder consultations indicates that UN Women's key assets in the context of system-wide coordination for GEEW are its:

- Cross-sectoral mandate with a unique focus on GEEW, more holistic approach to gender equality, and anchored in global normative agreements
- Access to high-level decision-making and coordinating bodies, which includes participation in groups such as the CEB, R-UNDG, and UNCT and becoming a co-sponsor of UNAIDS
- Technical expertise in relation to global (normative) frameworks for GEEW such as CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, Security Council Resolution 1325, and related monitoring and implementation mechanisms
- Experience and expertise related to gender mainstreaming and (to varying degrees) to GEEW in the context of specific thematic (sub)sectors
- Wide and diverse networks with women's advocates and their organizations around the world and resulting reputation for being well-positioned as a convener and facilitator, especially in processes that require bringing together duty bearers and rights holders at global, regional or country levels

The extent to which these assets are present and apply—or are perceived by other UN actors to apply—varies in different geographic and thematic contexts, which in turn influences UN Women's strategic positioning in these contexts. Broadly speaking, UN Women's positioning is stronger or more consistently acknowledged by others at the global level than in the field (i.e., regional and country level). In large part, this is due to the variation that is found in the field not only in terms of national dynamics but also in terms of UN stakeholders and their stakes (e.g., the power, funding, reputation) in a particular context and the variation in UN Women's specific capacities and type of presence. The perspectives of consulted stakeholders also suggest that UN Women's coordination

Figure 3.3 UN Women strategic positioning for coordination in different areas of its work



position tends to be stronger on cross-sectoral GEEW issues (as expressed in normative frameworks, for example) than in specific thematic areas in which UN Women works. In addition, UN Women's positioning is strong with regard to promoting accountability frameworks for GEEW commitments; it is seen as the entity that has the legitimacy (derived from its overall mandate) to do this.

Strategic positioning therefore plays out differently in regional and country contexts, depending not only on external barriers and opportunities but also on the individuals who represent UN Women in these offices and the expertise and networks that they bring, and the institutional and material support they receive in terms of expertise from HQ and ROs.

The noted variations in UN Women's strategic positioning in regard to its UN system coordination mandate are influenced by the following factors.

UN Women mandate and related stakes: The unique GEEW-focused mandate of UN Women is a stronger asset in the context of issues such as the UN-SWAP that require a cross-sectoral perspective. It tends to be weaker in the context of specific thematic areas or (sub)sectors that are also covered by the mandates of other UN entities. For example, while UN Women has a reputation for strong expertise and experience in the area of EVAW, the same applies to its sister agencies United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization and UNICEF. The strategic positioning is then translated to the specific dimensions of EVAW work in which each agency is most experienced.

UN Women's strategic positioning is also affected when there are other entities with overlapping mandates for coordination in a thematic area. For example, in the area of women's political participation, the Electoral Assistance Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs has a well-established coordination mandate for electoral assistance that includes issuing policies for the system. This has made it difficult for UN Women to clearly outline the boundaries of its coordination role in this area.

Reputation for expertise: While UN Women is widely recognized for its expertise in GEEW in general, its reputation for expertise in specific policy areas varies. This can depend on: the individual(s) representing UN Women, having specialized staff in a particular thematic or geographic context, the support it receives from specialized sections/staff at HQ or in the regions, whether or not and to what extent other UN actors

have a stake in and claim an expert and/or leadership role in the same area(s), and the extent to which it has clearly defined and communicated the nature of its expertise and how this differs from that of other UN actors. For example, in Mexico UN Women has clear expertise in feminicide that distinguishes it from other agencies (such as UNFPA) and helps it focus its work in EVAW. In Mali, collaboration with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (especially with Human Rights Division on issues of sexual violence in conflict situation) was facilitated once UN Women added a specialized adviser on WPS. At regional and country levels, UN Women is not yet consistently known for its expertise in the area of data and statistics, including in EVAW, which affects its credibility when engaging with other organizations in discussions about indicators and data to be used in monitoring SDGs. (UNFPA and other entities feel that they have a lot more institutional know-how in the area of data and statistics.) However, the boundaries in agency expertise are often blurred as gender specialized staff move from one agency to another.

Field presence and operational work: What counts as a relevant organizational asset can vary slightly by issue and thematic area. For example, the fact that UN Women is not a member of the IASC has been linked to the argument that it is not sufficiently operational to be a relevant player in the context of humanitarian action—even though there are examples of UN Women playing effective coordination roles in humanitarian settings. (See Volume II, Appendix X for a Technical Note on UN Women coordination role in Humanitarian Context.) Similarly, in the area of WPS, while UN Women's coordination role at the global level is widely acknowledged, this does not extend consistently to the field, where it has small presence when compared to, for example, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and is therefore not always seen to be able to add value.

Actual or perceived gaps in UN Women's operational capacity also negatively influence its ability to contribute to or lead inter-agency discussions at the global level in some areas. For example, some consulted stakeholders noted that UN Women is seen as less able than other larger agencies to lead global discussions on different thematic areas based on evidence from its programming because of its lack of field experience. This is either because UN Women does not have extensive programming in the respective area, or because the internal channels that could feed this kind of experience back to the global level do not exist or are weak.[73] At the field level, in some countries, some stakeholders feel that UN Women lacks significant operational capacity; this perception is particularly strong in programme presence countries. Some unfavourable views on its operational capacity are linked to how UN Women makes strategic choices in each setting—it is not always seen to prioritize, and is seen to get involved in everything. There are conflicting perceptions about the need to expand UN Women's work to new areas of relevance (e.g., climate change, disaster reduction, humanitarian action) while also knowing when to step out if there is no capacity for meaningful participation.

Existence (or absence) of inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and UN Women's participation and role in these: Formal inter-agency coordination mechanisms provide a structure and legitimacy to coordination efforts. As such:

- In the area of WPS, UN Women's positioning in relation to its coordination mandate has been facilitated by the strong gender, peace and security architecture in the United Nations that is accountable to the UN Security Council. UN Women has had a well-defined and legitimate role within this global architecture, due in part to the role that its predecessor, UNIFEM, played in establishing key coordination mechanisms and frameworks for WPS.

- In contrast, in the context of humanitarian action, there is more limited institutional coordination of GEEW. Therefore, as noted in UN Women's Humanitarian Strategy, the responsibility for ensuring that humanitarian action integrates a

73 A similar point was also noted in the 2015 evaluation of UN Women's normative support function (paragraph 45) and the 2014 Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network assessment (quoted in 2015 evaluation of UN Women's normative support function para 47), which observed insufficient HQ/field office linkages that were hampering the implementation of normative gains.

gender dimension often falls to the IASC Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action Reference Group at the policy level and to its operational arm, GenCAP, and to a handful of gender "champions" at programmatic field level.[74] It is important to note that there remains a lack of accountability in this regard. The absence of a GEEW-specific inter-agency coordination mechanism, and the fact that (until now) UN Women has not been granted membership in the broader coordination mechanism IASC, have meant that its positioning in each regional and country context has varied according to a number of factors, including the strength of the Humanitarian Coordinator, OCHA, and UN Women, and the relationships between these actors in a particular setting. In Asia Pacific, UN Women and OCHA collaboration has led to a good practice in regional coordination work, through the creation of a regional IASC Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action, which was pivotal in coordination on the ground in Nepal in 2015 when surge capacity was sent from different agencies in the region. In Jordan, UN Women has been increasingly active in humanitarian inter-agency fora, reflecting the effects of its efforts to become a relevant actor in the country's humanitarian context. In the areas of EVAW and WEE, where no global inter-agency mechanisms for coordination on GEEW exist, UN Women has, for the most part, approached its coordination mandate by seeking collaboration with clusters of one or more other UN entities. UN Women has strong expertise in these areas but has not yet carved out a unique coordination role.[75] In EVAW, the UN Trust Fund on EVAW was established in 1996 to support actions to eliminate violence against women and girls. In 2008, the Fund began awarding grants to UNCTs. At the global level, the UN Trust Fund on EVAW was referenced by one stakeholder as having contributed to UN system coordination in the field by incentivizing joint work among UN agencies. Consultations with stakeholders at the country level indicate that the Fund is well known and is a source of funding for many joint programmes. At the regional and country level, the UNiTE campaign has often provided a platform for ongoing UN system coordination as well as coordination with other actors, especially civil society.

74 UN Women. 2014, June 20. "Humanitarian Strategy 2014-2017". It is important to note that Reference groups in the IASC are voluntary communities of practice. GenCap is a project established before UN Women to support the integration of gender into humanitarian activities at fairly short notice and for a limited period. See Volume II, Appendix X

75 There was little desire amongst external stakeholders interviewed for a formal coordination mechanism in the areas of WEE and EVAW at this point in time, although it was not excluded for the future. One stakeholder felt that greater clarification of roles and responsibilities for entities engaged in EVAW would facilitate future work, especially as the United Nations positions itself to support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

3.3.1 Overview

The assessment of effectiveness in this evaluation was a challenging task given the different organizational strategies and results frameworks that are currently guiding UN system coordination work and the only recently developed organizational Theory of Change in this area. UN Women has a Results Framework for System-wide and Inter-agency Mandates 2014-2015 and has incorporated results and indicators associated with UN system coordination in its Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

The findings in this section reflect on these different frameworks as appropriate and the section is organized to reflect the primary outcomes of the UN Women Coordination Strategy (see Section 2.4) and other aspects of effectiveness identified in the evaluation questions in the Terms of Reference. Thus, the section provides findings in the areas of:

- Enhanced UN system coherence and mobilization of joint action
- Increased system-wide gender mainstreaming
- Contributions to progress towards GEEW
- System-wide application of accountability frameworks for GEEW
- Improvement in gender balance and the status of women in the UN system

3.3.2 Enhanced coherence and mobilization of joint action

Evaluation question: To what extent has UN Women contributed to progress towards UN system-wide coordination in relation to coherence and mobilization, including in UN Women policy areas and in global system-wide coordination mechanisms?

UN Women provides a definition of "coherence" in its Coordination Strategy, which stresses that the overall system must reinforce common goals and consistent working methods in promoting GEEW.[76] This section examines UN Women contributions in mobilizing joint action and enhancing coherence both at the global and field level. It also addresses related concepts of synergies (understood as attempts to join up efforts so that their whole is greater than the sum of its parts) and reduced duplication.

Finding 5: At the global level, UN Women has made notable contributions to strengthening system-wide coherence and mobilization for GEEW through intergovernmental processes and policy areas.

UN Women has made a variety of contributions to UN system coherence—especially in and through global system-wide coordination mechanisms and, to a more varied extent, in its main policy areas. Some examples are summarized below.

Sustainable Development Goals

Stakeholders consulted and documents reviewed illustrate how UN Women contributed to system-wide processes that led to a UN-system endorsed proposal of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and mainstreaming into the other SDGs.[77] Work around the SDGs integrated coordination and normative support and is linked to operational activities due to its direct implications for the type of support that Member States may require to localize and implement the SDGs. Key observations on UN Women's approach in this context include:

- Negotiations on the post-2015 agenda were led by Member States and the structures and mechanisms for coordinating UN system inputs were determined externally to UN Women. Because of this, UN Women had to work as a member of or resource to existing mechanisms, as opposed to taking a leading role as it does with CSW. Consequently, UN Women's inputs were more substantive than process oriented.

- UN Women was able to engage the UN system and Member States in the post-2015 process from several entry points. It was a member of both the UN Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Technical Support Team, which provided support to the Member-State-led Open Working Group. UN Women used its role as Secretariat and Chair of IANWGE and membership in the CEB, High-level Committee on Programmes and UNDG to advocate for a strong GEEW focus in the new development agenda.

- UN Women established the groundwork for a gender goal early in the process, thereby contributing to relatively widespread support for a standalone SDG on gender equality.

- UN Women ROs also advocated, through R-UNDGs and RCMs, for the need of a standalone goal on gender equality in the Post 2015 agenda. These efforts generally converged and relied on the regional CSW and Beijing +20 Review processes.

- Consulted stakeholders had mixed views on the success of UN Women in integrating GEEW

76 Coherence is a system-wide approach promoted by the General Assembly, which, in terms of gender equality work, is the call for the United Nations to increase efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into all issues under their consideration, not only with regard to their mandates but also in all UN summits and conferences. The common objective is to promote gender equality based on full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and other normative frameworks. Source: UN Women Coordination Division. 2014. "Implementation Strategy for the System-Wide and Inter-Agency Mandates and Functions of UN Women, Annex IV".

77 More than half of survey respondents from IANWGE and the UN-SWAP focal point network somewhat or strongly agree that UN Women contributed to effective system-wide coordination on GEEW in the context of the SDGs (n=73).

IANWGE

IANWGE is a network of Gender Focal Points representing 25 entities of the UN system. It was established in 2001 following the creation of the CEB. UN Women is Chair of IANWGE and also serves as the Network's Secretariat.[78]

As noted throughout several of the global issue areas examined by this evaluation, IANWGE has been a key mechanism for UN Women in its efforts to engage the UN system. During the past two years, UN Women has taken steps to strengthen the role and profile of the network, but data collected to date suggests that more could be done to engage network members in this process.

Members of IANWGE who were consulted on the relevance and effectiveness of the group as an inter-agency coordination mechanism had mixed views. Those who commented positively on IANWGE most often cited its utility as a platform for bringing focal points together and as a forum for knowledge and information sharing. At the same time, survey respondents expressed the desire for: (a) greater clarity with respect to IANWGE's mandate and more clearly defined roles and responsibilities; (b) shared leadership (and ownership) of the network, in particular with respect to defining the agenda and chairing meetings; and (c) a more participatory environment, with greater opportunities for substantive discussions and strategic thinking. Data from interviews largely corroborate these sentiments.

perspectives throughout the SDGs (i.e., outside of the gender equality-specific goal 5). Some stakeholders felt UN Women had made considerable efforts and contributions to this end, while others felt that it lacked the substantive expertise and/or capacity to contribute to negotiations around other goals.

Beijing+20

Both document review and stakeholder consultations[79] indicate that UN Women took on a widely acknowledged leadership role for the Beijing +20 process, which required a massive mobilization effort and contributed to not only the immediate outcome of the review of the Beijing Platform for Action at CSW 59, but also momentum for strong integration of GEEW in the Post-2015 Agenda. This mobilization effort took place at global, regional and country levels.

- At the global level, UN Women used inter-agency platforms (e.g., IANWGE, UNDG Gender Equality Task Team and High-level Committee on Programmes) to brief UN system partners, elicit input, strategize, build consensus, and formulate joint positions/statements in the period leading up to CSW 59. For example, UN Women led, in consultation with IANWGE, the preparation of a joint CEB statement to CSW 59 on the occasion of Beijing+20 that Helen Clark, head of UNDP, presented to the Commission on behalf of the UN system.

- The credibility of the review process was enhanced by the fact that UN Women used a multi-pronged and multi-event approach that engaged UN stakeholders and other stakeholders at different levels. Its collaboration with the regional economic commissions began early in the preparatory phase and included a joint guidance note (with UN Regional Commissions) on national and regional consultations. Further illustration of the UN Women RO contributions to the Beijing+20 review at the regional level are provided in Finding 6.

- The CEB statement on the occasion of Beijing+20 reflected the pledge of the UN system and fed directly into the Political Declaration. Nonetheless, the Political Declaration deriving from CSW 59 and the negotiation process established by Member

78 IANWGE. (n.d.). "Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality". Retrieved from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/

79 A majority of IANWGE member and UN-SWAP Focal Point survey respondents (62 per cent) somewhat or strongly agreed that UN Women contributed to system-wide coordination as part of Beijing+20.

States was not universally well received, particularly by civil society groups.

Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review

The QCPR is an important directive for UN entities (primarily funds and programmes) that, by explicitly addressing GEEW, validates and re-affirms UN system milestones related to GEEW (including gender mainstreaming performance standards such as UN-SWAP and the UNCT Gender Scorecard). The QCPR is thus a key tool for enhancing horizontal coherence and accountability in the United Nations. In addition, because funds and programmes adapt their strategic plans to the QCPR and Executive Board members pay attention to QCPR implementation, the QCPR increases "vertical" accountability within UN entities. Nevertheless, the effective reach of QCPR remains at HQ level, with decreased influence on coordinated action of UN entities at the country level. It also reaffirms the coordination role of UN Women with regard to operational activities for development.

- UN Women was recognized by external stakeholders for its contributions to ensuring that gender equality was strongly integrated in QCPR. Compared to the content of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review conducted in 2007, the QCPR places greater emphasis on gender. The QCPR also includes a paragraph dedicated to GEEW, which is absent in the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

- The QCPR reflects many of the "asks" that UN Women developed and refined with input from key stakeholders. At an ECOSOC side event, the UNDG Task Team Chair presented roughly 18 GEEW-related elements for possible inclusion in the QCPR. These were based on the "asks" drafted by UN Women and refined by UNDG Task Team members. Eleven of these were adopted, in part or in full, as recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the QCPR.[80] Member States, in turn, adopted several of these recommendations as part of A/RES/67/226 on the QCPR.[81]

Policy areas

UN Women has made notable contributions to UN system coherence in its main policy areas through the following modalities:

- **Stronger accountability and learning about implementation:** Shaping normative commitments including accountability frameworks, e.g., in WPS, WEE and women's political participation. In the area of WPS, for example, through its coordination of analysis, data and the development of policy recommendations for reports and briefings to the Security Council, UN Women helped inform key outcomes such as Security Council Resolutions 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015) on WPS and plays an active role in their follow-up. In 2015, UN Women contributed to the three high-level peace and security reviews of peace operations, the peacebuilding architecture, and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). Collaboration and information sharing between the Secretariats for the three reviews ensured synergies in messaging and recommendations. UN Women also contributed to CEDAW General Recommendation 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and is active in its implementation.

- **Agenda setting role:** Contributing to effective inter-agency and intergovernmental processes, e.g., in the areas of WPS, WEE and EVAW. UN Women's WEE Section, for example, supports intergovernmental processes, such as CSW, ECOSOC and the General Assembly in the establishment of normative frameworks on WEE. The section also supports system-wide processes, such as Beijing+20 and discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. The first-ever High-level Panel on WEE, kicked off

80 Secretary-General. 2012, August 15. "Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System: Recommendations".

81 In paragraph 81, for example, Member States request the organizations of the UN development system to "substantially increase the investment in and focus on outcomes and outputs related to gender equality and women's empowerment in United Nations development framework programmes." Source: A/RES/67/226. 2012, December 21.

during the 60th session of the CSW, intends to put WEE at the top of the international agenda, including by defining actions to speed up progress under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[82]

- **Support to implementation:** Joint action and/or programming, e.g., in EVAW, WPS, WEE, and women's political participation. One key example is the Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (with UNFPA, UNDP, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and World Health Organization), which aims to achieve global consensus on standards and guidelines for delivering essential services. Other initiatives in the area of EVAW in which UN Women participates include the Together for Girls partnership, the Safe Cities Global Initiative, and the Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign.

- Support to implementation also comprises joint knowledge resources and/or capacity development, e.g., in EVAW, WPS, WEE, and women's political participation. UN Women maintains several online platforms, including "I Know Politics," an online workspace for those interested in advancing women in politics. Intended users include elected officials, candidates, political party leaders and members, and researchers, amongst others. UN Women and UNDP work closely to co-author joint documents on a variety of topics, which provide practical guidance on how to integrate GEEW at the field level.[83]

Evaluation question: To what extent have UN Women's approaches to UN system coordination on GEEW been effective (in contributing to the immediate results of coherence, synergies and reduced duplication) at the country level?

Finding 6: UN Women has contributed to enhancing coherence, fostering synergies and reducing duplication among UN entities in the field. Related efforts have faced ongoing challenges largely deriving from the vertical structure of the UN system.

There are examples of how UN Women has used its coordination role to contribute to greater coherence and synergies and reduced duplication with regard to UN work on gender equality at country and regional levels. Nevertheless, there is a complex and uneven record of effective and consistent UN system coordination and coherence because of key influencing factors. As noted in Section 2.2, these include persistent agency competition over resources in an environment where funding is increasingly scarce, and related friction with respect to mandate boundaries in specific programmatic areas or spheres of activity of the United Nations. Additional frictions hinge around ideological boundaries, such as conceptual approaches to prostitution as sex work, gender binary or LGBT-inclusive definitions of discrimination, and conflicting concepts around the specificity of gender-based violence. One indication of remaining gaps is that the civil society representatives consulted for this evaluation voiced a need for greater coherence of action in the United Nations, i.e., the need to go beyond a mere coherence of overall intent.

The following contributions are organized by the key coordination mechanisms that UN Women has played a role in since 2011.

Role in Regional UN Development Groups and Regional Coordinating Mechanisms

At the regional level, UN Women has been involved in R-UNDGs and the RCMs, which are high-level coordinating bodies that can facilitate coherence in approaches to UN operational and normative work on GEEW. UN Women's political advocacy and technical contributions in R-UNDGs have led to stronger substantive engagement within these teams, for example in the Asia Pacific region where UN Women's engagement in the UNDG Asia and the Pacific during the Beijing+20 review led to the establishment of a UNDG Task Team on gender and extremism. This team aimed to analyse the impact of extremism on the

82 http://www.unwomen.org/es/news/stories/2016/3/press-release-highlevel-panel-on-wee-holds-inaugural-meeting#sthash.iVAas8Ma.dpuf

83 The HQ case study provides additional examples.

discrimination of women and girls.[84] In other regions (Europe and Central Asia), UN Women has been actively engaged in establishing new inter-agency mechanisms, such as the Programme Advisory Group, to ensure greater coherence of action across UN entities in the region. It has been active in all R-UNDG PSGs either as a Member (East and Southern Africa RO, Europe and Central Asia RO, and West and Central Africa RO), as the Chair (Arab States RO), or as a Co-chair (Latin America and the Caribbean RO). The PSG is the operational arm of the UNDG and provides quality assurance to UNCTs for the UNDAF roll-out process or CCA development. As noted in Finding 10, UN Women's contributions in the PSG have been recognized across all six regions.

Overall, 68 per cent of regional survey respondents believe UN Women has been effective or very effective at mainstreaming gender in UN regional work.[85] UN Women's role in R-UNDG and in UNDG task forces at HQ is also critical in addressing the contextual factors (internal to the UN system).

UN Women used its role in the RCM by blending the different dimensions of its mandate to help strengthen linkages between its normative and UN system coordination roles and improve coherence of approach at the regional level and feed into global processes, as illustrated below.

In East and Southern Africa, UN Women was involved in the regional consultations to reach a common agenda for Africa in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It was also involved in the January 2014 pre-CSW regional meetings and provided opportunities for CSOs and government representatives to engage in discussions that led to the formulation of a strong call for a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In Europe and Central Asia, UN Women collaborated with the UN Economic Commission for Europe and a CSO on the regional Beijing+20 review and was the co-organizer and co-host of the meetings conducted in Geneva in 2014. It notably developed concept notes for two panels "Women's representation in policy and decision-making" with UNDP and "Way forward: Gender equality for inclusive and sustainable societies" with the UN Economic Commission for Europe. UN Women provided financial support to ensure participation of some government representatives and CSOs in Beijing+20 meetings.

In Asia and the Pacific, UN Women provided technical and financial support to conduct the regional preparatory meeting for CSW 58 in Bangkok in 2014, the conclusions of which formed a substantive baseline for the regional review of the Regional Beijing+20 Review. With ESCAP, UN Women ensured CSO participation in these meetings.

Survey respondents at the regional level suggest that UN Women is effective in: providing strategic inputs to inter-agency mechanisms (72 per cent, n=50) and with regard to its openness to work as partners with other UN entities (82 per cent, n=50) and coordinate with other entities (76 per cent, n=50). UN Women has established innovative coordination channels around substantive issues, for example in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the regional GTG has focused UN entity efforts on regional issue-focused flagship initiatives (on child marriage and land tenure), and in Asia Pacific, where it has been able to convene the UN around an *ad hoc* working group on extremism and discrimination against women (mentioned above).

A mapping of RO's coordination context is provided in Volume II, Appendix XVI.

Role in the UN Country Team

One of the most important differences between UN Women and its predecessor UNIFEM is that as a full-fledged UN agency, UN Women now has "a seat at the table" in key decision-making bodies at regional and country levels, such as R-UNDGs and UNCTs. It has been able to make contributions to UN system dynamics at the country level but there are various challenges depending on the type of office it has

84 These kinds of examples of substantive contributions in R-UNDGs are not well captured in UN Women's reporting in RMS from ROs.

85 Due to uneven response rates to the survey across regions, the data have not been disaggregated by region.

Member State perspectives on UN system coordination on GEEW

While improvements in coordination have been observed in certain cases, the representatives of Member States consulted for this evaluation at the country level did not always see or identify the effects of coordinated efforts on GEEW of the UN system. In countries like Mexico and Mali, government respondents indicated the need for greater integration of fundraising and programming efforts of different UN agencies on GEEW, given that entities still approach government agencies individually. Similarly, donors in country also pointed out the need for greater coordination among UN entities and greater clarity about each entity's comparative strength in the area of GEEW. Knowing that UN Women has a coordination role, they questioned whether or not that role could not be reinforced with regard to UN entities and their fundraising with donors for initiatives on GEEW.

These coordination issues, however, were raised against a backdrop of broad Member State recognition of the UN system's contributions in the area of gender equality. In both the 2014 and 2015 QCPR Monitoring Surveys of Programme Country Governments, gender equality was one of the top two thematic areas in which Member States judged the UN contribution as having been "especially significant." [87]

(programme presence offices or offices with full delegation of authority). [86] The main internal factors that affect UN Women's ability to influence UNCTs include: (a) the leadership of UN Women, including ability to generate momentum around key gender equality issues of relevance to the national context; (b) the availability of sufficient and predictable financial and human resources to be able to follow through on commitments made in the context of the UNCT; and (c) the capacity of UN Women to communicate and advocate within and beyond the UN system to keep GEEW questions on everyone's agenda. In countries where UN Women is not a resident agency and/or where there is limited inter-agency gender capacity, the RO works through the RC or GTG to provide support to the UNCT, mostly on request and based on opportunities that emerge.

Country-level respondents noted that as a member of the UNCT, UN Women can and does play a key role in keeping gender on the shared agenda and improving coherence of response. In addition to its contributions in UNDAF preparations (further described in Finding 10), data collected indicates that UN Women has done this in several ways:

- Bringing the required gender expertise to discussions on the UN system's full range of topics for engagement with its government counterparts (in essence, as one UN Women representative described it, serving as "gender adviser" to the UNCT)
- Promoting common messages from the United Nations, including joint statements, regarding key human rights issues; this often goes beyond the messages themselves in that the normative commitments are then translated into programming aspects of UNCT work
- Promoting and contributing to the preparation of UNCT's Confidential Report to CEDAW Committee
- Ensuring that GEEW is in the UNCT workplan and is discussed at UNCT retreats, including linkages between the UNCT's work and CEDAW concluding observations; contributing to annual report of RC/UNCT
- Conducting joint GEEW analytical work and ensuring GEEW is integrated in UNDAF at planning, mid-term review and evaluation stages

86 In programme presence countries, the UN Women potential for influence on UNCT varies according to the type of participation that it may have on the UNCT. See also Volume II, Appendix XI.

87 UN DESA (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs). 2016. "Report on QCPR Monitoring Survey of Programme Country Governments in 2015", pp. 21–22; UN DESA. 2014. "QCPR Monitoring Survey of Programme Countries 2014: Report", pp. 16–18.

- Compiling reports on UN contributions to GEEW, which is also seen as a way of communicating coherently about the work in this area.

Role with UN Resident Coordinator

UN Women's relationship with UN RCs is key to ensuring that it can maximize its influence in the UNCT. This is true across all countries and independent of the type of UN Women presence. The relationship with the RC becomes particularly critical in countries where it is not a resident agency or does not have delegation of authority (i.e., in programme presence or no presence countries). In those countries, RC support is the entry point for UN Women to successfully contribute to the UNCT in the abovementioned areas. While support from a strong RC can be beneficial to UN Women's coordination mandate, the absence of support from RC—or the relatively weaker influence of the RC in specific contexts—can present important barriers to UN system GEEW coordination. Thus, the limitations of the RC system can, to a certain extent, become limitations to UN Women's coordination mandate.

In several RC offices visited as part of the case studies, UN Women is recognized for being a collaborative player, both in regard to standard operating procedures and its efforts to ensure that the working groups that it chairs are among the most dynamic of the inter-agency mechanisms. One RC noted that UN Women could more forcefully carry the "One UN" banner by sharing and promoting not only its own work on GEEW but also the work of other UN entities.[88]

There is the potential for UN Women to engage even more in promoting consistent working methods and joint programming on substantive issues at the country level. One RC suggested that UN Women could play a stronger role in strategically mapping and understanding what agencies are doing in GEEW and ensuring more consistent use of concepts (gender parity, affirmative action and others) across the different entities. Similarly, UN Women's sponsoring of more collaborative work on gender operational activities across agencies (perhaps through pooled funding mechanisms) could be a valuable contribution. UN Women could more explicitly seek to enhance inter-agency learning by serving as a catalyst for it. It could develop an analytic capacity to bring together and sponsor UN-wide assessments of the collective experience of the United Nations in key thematic areas where more than one UN agency already works (for example, economic empowerment).

Role in Gender Theme Groups

GTGs exist at both the country and regional level.[89]

Country level

In 2014, there were 105 country-level GTGs around the world, of which 62 were led or co-led by UN Women.[90] Within the sample of 26 countries reviewed as part of portfolio review for this evaluation, 22 have GTGs and 18 are currently chaired or co-chaired by UN Women.[91] The UN Women Coordination Strategy notes that the GTG are a "major conduit, organizational framework and mobilization mechanism for joint action and better coordination of the work on GEEW at the country level."[92] It calls for its COs to take up leadership of the GTG where they have the capacity, for other agencies to chair where they do not have the capacity, and to negotiate where the situation is not clear. In practice, this has resulted in a number of modalities, including GTGs with extended membership, others with rotating chairs, cases where UN Women functions as the Secretariat, and cases where the GTG is supported by the RO. Across the five non-presence countries reviewed, for example, extended membership and rotating chairs were often cited as

88 For example, UN Women often has literature in a reception area, or gives literature to visitors. The RC encouraged UN Women not only to provide its own publications, but those of the UNCT, and even of other UN entities.

89 In some countries the UNCT has established a Result Group on Gender and the GTG function has been integrated into the Result Group on Gender (i.e., the GTG no longer exists). In this report, whenever we refer to GTGs, we include those Result Groups on Gender that have incorporated the functions of the GTG.

90 Secretary-General. 2014. "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System", page 13.

91 Thirteen are chaired and five are co-chaired by UN Women.

92 UN Women Coordination Division. 2014. "Implementation Strategy for the System-wide and Inter-agency Mandates and Functions of UN Women", Annex IV, page 19.

good practices for fostering ownership. In Volume II, Appendix XII, a Technical Note provides additional detail on key characteristics of GTGs.

Through the GTGs, UN Women has contributed to enhanced UN system coherence and mobilization, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 UN Women contributions to coherence and mobilization through GTGs and Results Groups on Gender[93]

Type of initiative	Examples
Planning, monitoring and reviewing joint projects and /or the UNDAF for gender content and consistency, gaps and duplication (further discussed in Finding 9)	The GTG in Colombia reported having taken a proactive stance by proposing elements that should be taken into account in the new UNDAF. In Serbia, UN Women and the GTG reported having ensured that gender equality was properly addressed in the new CCA and resulted in an entire section on the issue in the CCA. In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women reported that its role in the GTG allowed women and girls to be more prominently considered in the projects of UN agencies, funds and programmes. In Tunisia, the GTG chaired by UN Women facilitated discussions and identification of possible synergies in current and planned projects. In Jordan, UN Women supported the RC/Humanitarian Coordinator and UNCT in integrating gender in joint projects through the work of the Policy Specialist. The draft procedures for the Inter-agency Project Approval Committee include a gender "screen" on the basis of the gender marker to help systematize gender mainstreaming in joint programmes.
Supported, guided and/or followed up on the Gender Scorecard recommendations	In Cote d'Ivoire, the GTG supported the implementation of the Gender Scorecard with the broader objective to incentivize a stronger inclusion of gender equality in the new UNDAF.
Bringing together the UN system around the SDG, Beijing +20 national reviews, and CEDAW reporting	In Kyrgyzstan, Beijing+20 consultation efforts were prioritized in the GTG workplan for 2014 and were eventually conducted by UN Women with UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, OHCHR and RC office. The consultations led to a nation-wide campaign and helped inform to 4th National Periodic CEDAW Report. In Fiji, the Gender Working Group (GTG) supported national reporting on CEDAW by Pacific Island countries. In 2014, with the support of UN agencies and development partners, 10 Pacific Island countries submitted the *"2014 Asia Pacific Survey on Progress and Implementation of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action"* and 7 Pacific Island countries submitted the national reviews.
Developing common messages and joint activities for campaigns	In nine of the reviewed GTG workplans, wide audience advocacy campaigns, including the UNiTE campaign /Orange Day, HeforShe and Beijing+20, have been planned and coordinated in the GTG. Campaigns were conducted in at least 18 reviewed countries (see the GTG Technical Note in Volume II, Appendix XII).
Organizing other joint events	In 2014, the UN in South Africa organized through the GTG the National Gender Summit (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women), the Critical Thinking Forum (UN Women, UNFPA) as well as a forum on Financial Service Institutions (UNDP, UN Women). In Uruguay, UN Women and UN agencies organized and participated in workshops on gender and the labour market which was also attended by CSOs, academia and government and facilitated discussions around strategic priorities and roadmaps for the country useful both for UNDAF development and for national planning.

93 See Volume II, Appendix VII—Country Portfolio Review, where we reviewed GTG workplans and reports as well as UN Women documents.

Type of initiative	Examples
Coordinating training for capacity development of local partners (CSOs, government) or of UN agencies or donors	In Mali, the GTG committed to support the training of 80 mediators that could participate in national and international fora on conflict resolution for Mali. UN Women, through the GTG,[94] also carried out training of donors. In many other countries (such as Argentina, Mali, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Jordan, Timor-Leste, Uruguay), the GTG is expected to be the key mechanism for supporting capacity development on GEEW within the UN system. In Mexico, for example, the GTG conducted capacity assessment among the agencies of the UNCT and will develop a training plan to improve capacity in GEEW. A similar initiative was undertaken in Timor-Leste, where a multi-year UN staff capacity development plan is already in place.
Analytical products to inform government	In Myanmar, the GTG conducted research and data collection to inform the development and implementation of an operational plan for the National Strategic Plan for Advancement of Women 2013-2022. In Mali, a Situational Analysis undertaken by the GTG led to the discovery of sexual slaves in a women's prison. The GTG in Uruguay produced a review of the Uruguayan legislative agenda from a gender equality and intergenerational equality perspective. The initiative was financed through contributions from 10 agencies that are GTG members.

GTG members at the country level see their groups as providing key platforms for knowledge and information sharing about GEEW issues.[95] In addition, several of the practices used to help manage GTGs—such as developing workplans—are cited as examples of contributing to UN system coherence as they help avoid (or at least reduce) duplication and overlaps between agencies. For example, in Malawi, the GTG prepared a joint workplan for 2015 to harmonize its work with the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, while in the past agencies had worked in silos when interacting with this ministry. More generally, however, GTG workplans reviewed have a wide array of objectives, more often at the output and activity levels rather than at the outcome level. The different types of results articulated reflect diversity of country contexts and capacities of the GTG in each of those countries. They may also reflect insufficient or outdated guidance on the purpose and functioning of GTGs.

A 2010 review of UNDAFs found that strong GTGs that were well supported by senior management were key drivers for positive change on GEEW,[96] and this seems to hold true today. Nevertheless, the existence, relevance and functioning of many GTGs is affected by a number of challenges. First and foremost is the lack of support for GTG from the RC and UNCT in some countries. In some regions (such as Latin America and the Caribbean), the relevance of the GTG is questioned by senior management. The shift to Results Groups on Gender and disbanding of the GTG is seen by UN Women to reduce the priority given to GEEW on the UNCT.[97] In other regions (Europe and Central Asia, for example), Results Groups on Gender have taken on the GTG functions, and yet that transition is not perceived by UN Women to have affected the importance given to GEEW by the UNCT. Other factors that limit the relevance and effectiveness of GTG include the relative priority given to gender equality and women's empowerment in the particular country, limited funding for GTG functioning, limited or inconsistent interest and/or commitment from participating

94 The GTG in Mali is composed of a broader donor community and includes only a few UN agencies.

95 This was indicated by all of the GTGs consulted in the country case studies and supported by responses to this evaluation's global survey of GTG members: 79 per cent somewhat or strongly agreed that this was a key role of the group (n = 288). This was also noted in seven GTG workplans and reports of those considered in the portfolio review.

96 Rao, A. 2010. "Strengthening Gender Equality in United Nations Development Frameworks", page 17.

97 A 2010 review of UNDAFs also found that strong GTGs that were well supported by senior management were key drivers for positive change on GEEW. Thus the absence of RC and UNCT support for GTG is a concern. Source: Rao 2010.

agencies, absence of mechanisms to pool funds from different agencies for joint activities (e.g., in the Latin America and the Caribbean region), and varying levels of seniority and gender expertise of GTG members. As a consequence, GTGs at the country level vary considerably in their ability to influence the wider UNCT. The UNDG guidance for GTGs is out of date and could be enhanced to provide clearer directions with regard to purpose, organization and functioning, and planning, budgeting and reporting.

Regional Gender Theme Groups

Regional GTGs or equivalent groups exist in five regions, and are either under the R-UNDG, RCM, or linked to both of these regional coordinating mechanisms.[98] UN Women chairs or co-chairs these groups. The Regional GTGs play a role in advocacy and promoting coherence at the regional level and in coordinating support from ROs to country-level GTGs. In addition, in East Asia, the RO chairs regional sub-working groups of the Technical Working Group on GEEW based around certain substantive areas (such as UNiTE, Gender Statistics and WPS). These platforms produce and disseminate knowledge products, including a regional core set of gender indicators developed and approved by the ESCAP Committee on Statistics. Regional survey respondents considered regional level GTGs as key platforms to share knowledge, advocate on GEEW issues, and strengthen regional engagement. However, respondents had more mitigated views on their ability to foster coherence on GEEW across entities and to provide effective technical support to UNCTs and country-level GTGs.[99] The latter perception is further supported by the fact only 30 per cent of surveyed GTG members at the country level (n=287) believed they received sufficient support from the R-UNDG.

UN Women has supported the regional GTGs, and through them, many country-level GTGs in a number of ways, including:

- Providing seed funding to country-level GTGs even in countries where UN Women does not have presence (such as Cuba, Argentina and Costa Rica)
- Documenting experiences and assessing needs of GTGs (e.g., through mapping exercises, for example in Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean)
- Establishing a regional roster of UN gender experts for mainstreaming gender in the UNDAF in the context of the 2030 Agenda (e.g., in Europe and Central Asia this was done through a regional Training of Trainers, jointly organized with the UN Coordination Division in November 2015)
- Promoting the sharing of information among GTGs (e.g., Yammer online platform in Europe and Central Asia)
- Organizing regional issue-focused flagship initiatives, for example on child and early marriage as a harmful practice and access to land (Latin America and the Caribbean), that also link to the work of national GTGs

Participating in non-gender-specific working groups

UN Women also participates in other inter-agency groups at the country level to support mainstreaming of gender issues in other thematic areas and in the programming and operations of the United Nations. The evaluation did not explore UN Women's contributions in such working groups in great depth. However, case studies and survey results point to the following:

UN Women COs are identifying groups in their context where it makes most strategic sense to participate.

98 In West and Central Africa, there is an interagency group on gender-based violence that also focuses on other issues, but it is not referred to as a regional GTG.

99 A regional stakeholder survey indicated 81.5 per cent of respondents (n=38) agreed or strongly agreed that the GTG is a key platform for sharing good/promising practices in support of GEEW; 65.8 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the GTG is effectively advocating on GEEW issues in the work of the United Nations in the region; 68.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the GTG strengthens regional engagements to promote GEEW through regional and international initiatives and fora; a weaker 57.9 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the GTG fosters coherence across entities on issues focused on GEEW; and only 39.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the GTG provides effective technical support to UNCT and GTG at the country level.

Building back better for gender equality in Nepal

The April 2015 earthquake in Nepal provided an example of promising practice—converting a tragedy into an opportunity for gender mainstreaming through coordination.

With the endorsement of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Nepal, the Humanitarian Response Inter Cluster Gender Working Group, led and supported by the UN Women CO and a GenCap adviser, was established five days after the earthquake to ensure effective mainstreaming of gender equality in the earthquake response. One gender adviser or focal point was nominated by each cluster. The regional IASC Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action, established by UN Women and OCHA, was pivotal in supporting coordination when surge capacity was sent from different UN agencies in the region.

The Gender Working Group produced seven regular Gender Equality Updates, which have been rated across external and UN partners as excellent or good by 74 per cent of respondents, and as crucial or important for their work by 98 per cent. The Gender Working Group has ensured the incorporation of the gender marker in the Flash Appeal and is contributing to the development of a gender sensitive monitoring framework for the Flash Appeal with cluster-specific and aggregate gender indicators. A section on gender equality was included in the final Nepal Earthquake Humanitarian Response Report covering the period from 25 April 2015 to 30 September 2015. Extensive training in gender for emergency response has led to widespread results, including further integration of gender throughout the emergency-development continuum.

Planned actions for 2016 have been agreed upon between the OCHA and UN Women offices in Nepal. Key priority areas going forward include: (a) ensuring commitments on GEEW in the development of the IASC Emergency Response Preparedness Package for 2016, (b) ensuring integration and meaningful participation of women and women's groups (formal and informal) in identifying risk and plans in the Emergency Response Preparedness Package, (c) building on the earthquake response good practices to develop context-specific tools and guidance on gender equality for inclusion into the Emergency Response Preparedness Package, and (d) developing a joint accountability framework on GEEW through implementation of the Gender Marker and strengthening capacity of humanitarian actors/clusters, government counterparts and Humanitarian Country Team on the Gender Marker.

For example, in some cases (Mexico, Fiji, India, Jordan, Malawi, Serbia, South Africa, Uruguay), UN Women is targeting the Programme Management Team or the Operations Management Team of the UNCT, which is where key programme and operational issues are decided. In all country cases, UN Women participates in inter-agency working groups on communications, which are considered key groups for facilitating common messaging on gender and are especially useful in advocacy. In Fiji, where the Communications and Partnership Group was weak, UN Women acquired a communications specialist through a volunteer programme who has re-vamped the group, carried out a survey of public perceptions of the UN system, developed a workplan for the group, and got the UNCT to approve a budget. The feedback received via the survey and interviews of participants in these other working groups[100] suggest that when UN Women is present in the group, its technical expertise on GEEW is highly valued. In addition, most of these survey respondents (74.9 per cent) noted that issues

100 Through the global online survey of participants in inter-agency groups at country level. The survey included responses from members of GTGs (359); UNDAF results groups (230); monitoring and evaluation groups (94); Operations Management Teams (60); UNDAF Programme Management Teams (106); communications groups (79); and other groups (107), n=587. (Respondents could indicate affiliation with more than one group.)

of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and/or empowerment of women are on the standing agenda of their working group.

The case below reflects on the work of a coordinating mechanism in a humanitarian context.

Joint action

The case studies, consultations, and review of documents identified a number of examples of joint action that helped to foster coherence and take advantage of synergies across agencies. Joint action refers to the collaboration among two or more UN entities in pursuit of a common goal, but that is not necessarily part of a joint programme. These actions often emerge from the GTG. Examples of joint action were particularly notable in the areas of advocacy and policy advice aiming to introduce normative changes in national frameworks. Examples of contributions in these areas include:

- **Specific issue-focused campaigns at the country level:** UN Women coordinated the UNiTE Campaign/ Orange Day activities with the UN system in 15 of the 26 countries reviewed. It coordinated the HeforShe campaign in at least six countries and focused on national campaigns in three countries.

- **Advocacy efforts to influence national policy:** In some instances, communication efforts paved the way to higher level policy advice or influence. In Tunisia, planning meetings for the 16 Days of Activism allowed the United Nations to identify an opportunity to engage in discussions for the withdrawal of reservations to CEDAW. In Cote d'Ivoire, UN Women jointly advocated with UNAIDS and UNDP for the adoption of the law on HIV/AIDS, which was promulgated in July 2014. In Myanmar, UN Women jointly advocated for and supported the development of a comprehensive law to prevent violence against women and, under the GTG, it reviewed four race and religion laws. In Jordan, UN Women played a lead role in coordinating UN activities around 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence that increased momentum over the disputed article 308 of the Jordanian Penal Code, which allows a rapist to escape prosecution if he agrees to marry the victim (the main theme of the campaign in Jordan).

- **Advocacy on human rights issues:** In Mali, UN Women participated in preparatory meetings convened by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and issued a statement on "women rights issues in elections". In Malawi, for the International Day of the Rural Woman, UN Women, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and local partners held an event that brought together rural women from across the country to present, advocate and lobby on issues affecting them as subsistence farmers. A statement on their economic rights was endorsed by senior managers from the Ministry of Agriculture, circulated by media and eventually presented to the President.

- **Analytical products to inform government and facilitate gender mainstreaming:** In Myanmar, UN Women and the Food and Agriculture Organization conducted a desk study on gender in agriculture and rural development as well as an assessment of sectoral plans of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, and Environmental Conservation and Forestry. UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA conducted a Gender Gap Analysis in Colombia that provided disaggregated data at the departmental and municipal level to inform the next UNDAF on gender related humanitarian needs. In Myanmar, UN Women, UN RC and other entities conceived the publication "UN Good Practices on Gender Equality and Women's Rights".

Other examples are documented in Volume II, Appendix XIII.

There are some—but fewer—examples of joint actions that go beyond global advocacy campaigns (such as UNiTE, HeforShe Campaign, etc.) or that target regional advocacy (such as Latin American and the Caribbean RO's issue-focused flagship initiatives with emphasis on child marriage and women and land tenure). For example:

- The Share Fair on Rural Women's Technologies organized in October 2014 by UN Women, RO, International Fund for Agricultural Development,

Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme in East and Southern Africa region brought together 100 innovators from 14 African countries to learn from experts and share knowledge on rural technologies.

- In East and Southern Africa, a joint research initiative was undertaken by UN Women, United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP Poverty-Environment Initiative and World Bank in which the UN Women RO conducted a study costing the gender gap in agriculture in three countries. Other research on extractive industries was led by UN Women in collaboration with the Economic Commission of Africa.

- In the Asia and Pacific region, joint research emerging from joint programmes (such as the multi-country study on sexual violence) has also been an important means of contributing to the evidence base for UN entities working on a key regional issue in GEEW and jointly mobilizing resources in the growing number of middle income countries.

- A joint initiative enabling women's participation in political dialogue and the peace process in Syria was carried out by UN Women, UN Department of Political Affairs and the Government of Netherlands. The initiative created a platform—the Syrian Women Initiative—that brought together 40 women from Syria whose lobbying capacities were strengthened in an attempt to create a space for dialogue and facilitate a gender inclusive peacebuilding and transition process. UN Women supported a similar process with women activists in the context of the Libyan peace process. Its support influenced the Libyan Women Dialogue Track Meeting facilitated by the UN Support Mission in Libya held in Tunis in April 2015 and contributed to mainstreaming gender in the Peace Agreement draft.

Joint programmes

Joint programmes involving two or more UN entities can promote synergies and reduce the duplication of tasks across UN agencies. While there are also some examples (from interviews and evaluations) of how joint programmes helped draw out synergies and forge coherence from the design phase through implementation, these are few in number.

This evaluation did not review joint programmes in depth, particularly in light of the recent Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on GEEW in 2012. However, in five of the six case study countries (Mexico is an exception), joint programmes are an important part of the strategy of UN Women COs and key components of how they link the coordination mandate to their operational role. On the whole, joint gender programmes comprised 85 of the more than 300 joint programmes currently in existence, according to data from UN DOCO's 2015 survey of UN RCs.[101]

- In Malawi, representatives of UNAIDS and the Food and Agriculture Organization particularly noted that working with UN Women has allowed for a much deeper gender analysis in their programmes.

- Similarly, UNESCO in both Jordan and the Pacific sub region noted that UN Women's involvement had substantially improved the gender focus in the design of their joint programmes.

- In Jordan, joint programmes were used not only to promote a joint approach to GEEW but also to promote joint projects in general, which are not common in Jordan and are seen as a possible way to contribute to greater overall UN coordination.[102]

101 UNDG, Information Management System. The UNDG Information Management System contains data from 132 UNCTs. Data were collected for the first time in 2015 based on the perceptions of the RC Offices in consultation with the UNCTs. Trend analysis between 2014 and 2015 data should be treated with caution given the transition between data collection methods and definitions, and most importantly response rates.

102 UN Women Jordan mobilized two joint programmes on CEDAW and Beijing +20, the first with two agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA) and the second with six agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, World Health Organization, UNESCO, UNDP, United Nations Relief and Works Agency) to provide unified UN support to government reporting and broad consultation on these issues. Results included a well-informed government report on CEDAW and a broadly based national discourse on Beijing +20.

Regional joint programmes do not seem to be a common coordination approach for ROs, as only one regional joint programme ongoing during the period evaluated was identified in the plans and reports reviewed from six regions (i.e., Partners for Prevention Joint Programme with UNDP, UN Department of Political Affairs, UN Volunteers and UN Women in Asia Pacific).[103] Nonetheless, regional programmes may be good ways of bringing the UN system together at regional and country levels under specific substantive areas and enable contributions both in terms of research and in terms of level of resourcing for gender equality work. The Asia Pacific RO has had a positive experience in this regard. In the Europe and Central Asia region, for example, UN stakeholders expressed interest in such collaboration.

Joint programmes provide partner agencies (especially smaller ones) with the opportunity to augment their often limited internal gender resources with support from UN Women and make this possible with external funding (in particular from the One Fund).[104] In general, however, and regardless of the type of UN Women involvement, the implementation phase of joint programmes has not demonstrated a strong sense of partnership or joint vision amongst participating UN entities. This diminishes the overall effects of UN Women's potential influence on GEEW within the operational work of the UN system.

This evaluation confirms the findings of the Joint Evaluation on Joint Programmes on GEEW, which noted a sense of bilateralism (UN agencies working in silos) prevailing within the modality of joint programmes.[105] This does not mean that joint programmes do not achieve good results, but the potential for enhancing coherence, partnership and ownership in the UN system is under-exploited.

3.3.3 System-wide application of accountability frameworks

This section reports on UN Women's effectiveness in promoting accountability for GEEW in the UN system. As defined by the UN Women Coordination Strategy, accountability refers to the obligation of the UN system and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and taken by them and to be responsible for honouring their commitments, without qualification or exception.[106]

Evaluation question: At the global level, to what extent has UN Women contributed to progress (or lack of) towards UN system-wide coordination in relation to accountability, including through the UN-SWAP?

Finding 7: UN Women has significantly contributed to progress towards stronger UN system accountability for GEEW, in particular through the UN-SWAP.

UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

In 2011 and 2012, UN Women took on the task of coordinating the development of the UN-SWAP framework, a task in line with its mandate to lead, coordinate and promote the accountability of the UN system in its work on GEEW. The process involved more than 50 entities, Secretariat departments, offices and commissions, and the resulting framework was piloted by eight entities (ESCWA, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Organization for Migration, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF).

103 Latin America and the Caribbean UN Women RO recently presented a new joint programme for the eradication of child marriage with UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF and WHO.

104 One Funds, where they have existed, have been important in stimulating joint work (e.g., Uruguay, Kyrgyzstan). However, these funds are diminishing and it is not always a given that they will allocate any resources to gender equality. The responses to the UN DOCO survey of RCs illustrate the range in terms of allocations for gender equality in One Funds: If you have a One Fund, what is the percentage of One Fund resources allocated to gender equality? 0 per cent (7 countries), 2 per cent (Rwanda), 2.3 per cent (Maldives), 10 per cent (Montenegro, Tanzania), 10.9 per cent (Liberia), 12 per cent (Pakistan), 15 per cent (Kyrgyzstan), 22.53 per cent (Mozambique), 30 per cent (Albania), 35 per cent (Cape Verde, Papua New Guinea), 75 per cent (Ethiopia).

105 UN Women, "Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System, Final Synthesis Report, November 2013.

106 UN Women Coordination Division. 2014, December. "Implementation Strategy for the System-wide and Inter-Agency Mandates and Functions of UN Women".

The UN-SWAP is one of three inter-connecting mechanisms that comprise a comprehensive accountability framework for GEEW in the UN system. While the UN-SWAP's focus is on corporate processes and institutional arrangements at the entity level, the focus of the UNCT Performance Indicators for GEEW (Gender Scorecard) is on joint processes and institutional arrangements within the UNCT. The third mechanism, which is currently in the design phase, is intended to focus on gender equality development results at country and normative levels.[107]

The UN-SWAP framework assesses the performance of UN entities in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment based on 15 indicators within six areas highlighted as key for promoting gender equality in the CEB 2006 policy (see sidebar). UN entities are to meet all of the UN-SWAP performance standards by 2017. Those with a mainly technical focus may meet them by 2019.

The UN-SWAP represents several achievements with regard to strengthening UN system-wide accountability for its GEEW commitments.

- The UN-SWAP is the only accountability mechanism that is system-wide, applying equally to the Secretariat and all other entities.[108]

- The UN-SWAP contributes to GEEW awareness raising and greater GEEW coherence in the UN system by institutionalizing a common language and common performance standards. In doing so, the UN-SWAP can help individual UN agencies better identify what gender mainstreaming can look like in their respective contexts.

- The UN-SWAP has helped revitalize gender mainstreaming in participating entities by fostering various changes in institutional policy, strategy and systems.

UN-SWAP performance areas

1) Strengthening accountability
2) Enhancing results-based management for gender equality
3) Establishing oversight through monitoring, evaluation and reporting
4) Allocating sufficient human and financial resources
5) Developing and/or strengthening staff capacity and competency in gender mainstreaming
6) Ensuring coherence/coordination and knowledge/information management at the global, regional and national levels

Perspectives from UN entities on UN-SWAP

"UN Women has had very strong coordination and leadership on the UN-SWAP. That has been very valuable and speaks to the core of the agency's mandate." —UN entity

"The UN-SWAP has been in the making since 2006. It needed UN Women to come in and coordinate the approach. The fact that they've done it successfully is indicative of their innovation." —UN entity

- Processes related to UN-SWAP implementation, in particular the use of self-reporting and peer reviews, signify a high level of trust in the honesty, professionalism and dedication of all participating UN entities. While this can be seen as a weakness in terms of the accuracy of reported information, it is also seen as a strength in terms of creating a constructive environment for collaboration among equals.

- Reported UN-SWAP results are aggregated in the Secretary-General's report on Gender Mainstreaming, which means that there is no public "shaming" of individual agencies. At the same time, each agency head receives feedback on

107 UN Women. 2012, April. "UN System-wide Action Plan for Implementation of the CEB UN-SWAP on GEEW".

108 Another example of a system-wide mechanism is the Independent System-wide Evaluation Mechanism, which became operational in 2014. For more information, see: http://www.uniswem.org/mission.html.

the UN-SWAP performance of his or her entity in a letter from UN Women's Executive Director. The letter is an innovative and constructive strategy of rallying the support of senior management behind the UN-SWAP and spurring friendly competition between entities without assigning a rank.

- Existing inter-agency mechanisms have begun to take "ownership" of certain indicator areas (for example, UNEG and the indicator on evaluation). Stakeholder consultations indicate that, as a result, there is a considerable sense of ownership of the UN-SWAP beyond UN Women.

- Other entities in the United Nations are looking to emulate it (e.g., UN Environment Programme and the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples for mainstreaming indigenous peoples' rights), and the model is being adapted to different contexts including the private sector.[109]

One technical challenge of the UN-SWAP derives from the difficulty of setting relevant performance standards for 62 entities with differing mandates and capacities. At present, some indicators are vague and not easily measured, and in some areas, the bar is set fairly low. One example of efforts to develop more standardized and objective approaches to the assessment of indicators is the preparation of technical guidelines for assessing gender in evaluations (UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note) by UNEG.

Information deriving from UN-SWAP application provides valuable data on progress and remaining gaps in UN agency (and system) progress in relation to GEEW capacity. To date, while changes in institutional policies are evident, the extent to which these policies have led to changes in organizational culture and practices from HQ through to the field level is limited. The areas where most challenges remain are in GEEW capacity, resource tracking, resource mobilization and gender parity/gender architecture. Not surprisingly, these are areas that would require fairly extensive changes not only in organizational structures but also in internal cultures.

To date, not all entities report to their governing bodies on UN-SWAP performance, and there are no agreed upon repercussions for poor performance. This creates some limitations for accountability because there are no repercussions if commitments are not kept. Nonetheless, interviews with focal points in participating entities suggest that the UN-SWAP ratings are increasingly noticed inside organizations and the comparisons with other entities provide an incentive to improve performance. As the United Nations adds the third mechanism to its GEEW accountability framework (in addition to the UN-SWAP and Gender Scorecard) focused on gender equality development results at country and normative levels, there may be growing attention paid to overall accountability.

Other accountability tools

UN Women has also contributed to other tools for accountability of the UN system at the global level (country level efforts are detailed in the next finding below). Through the UNEG, UN Women contributes a GEEW perspective in the development of guidelines and accountability frameworks. UN Women has also played a role in monitoring implementation of the UN Secretary-General's 7-point action plan on gender-responsive peacebuilding, which among other things, commits UN entities to allocate 15 per cent of funds for peacebuilding to gender equality. The 2015 Global Study on the implementation of Resolution 1325 points out that, while allocations focusing on gender show an upward trend since 2011, much stronger efforts are needed to achieve the Secretary-General's 15 per cent goal.[110] Collaborative efforts between the Peacebuilding Support Office and UN Women,

109 In 2015, UN Women created a self-assessment tool inspired by the UN-SWAP accountability framework for GEEW and aligned to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles. The UN Women Private Sector Accountability Framework is now a provisional tool with which private sector actors can assess their gender-related performance. For more information see: http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/9/UN Women-private-sector-accountability-framework#sthash.QyBSzWgt.dpuf

110 Coomaraswamy, R. 2015. "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325". UN Women, page 380.

including around initiatives such as the Peacebuilding Fund's (PBF's) Gender Promotion Initiative and technical support to UNCT in peacebuilding contexts, are contributing to positive results with the PBF reaching the funding target for the first time in 2015.

Finding 8: UN accountability for GEEW commitments at the country level is a much greater challenge. Despite UN Women's efforts as an advocate, there is still limited uptake of horizontal accountability tools.

Although they are not all formally described in any document or overall accountability framework, UN system accountability for GEEW at the country level seems to include several elements: UNCT (as a collective) accountability, RC accountability, and entity accountability. Most of these focus on accountability for institutional readiness and performance. As noted in Finding 6 above, there is as of yet no accountability mechanism for UN system contributions to GEEW development results at the country level.

UN Country Team accountability (as a collective entity)

In its mandated role to "promote" accountability on GEEW in the UN system, UN Women has been a strong advocate for the use of the UNCT accountability framework (UNCT Performance Indicators for GEEW). However, to date, there has not been strong uptake of or commitment to this framework.

Half of the survey respondents at the regional level participating in the PSG (n=30) agree that UN Women was effective in promoting the use of GEEW accountability frameworks by UNCTs. Among GTG respondents at the country level, slightly more than 50 per cent agree that UN Women has contributed to the application of accountability framework (n=456).

The key framework for horizontal accountability is the UNCT Performance Indicators for GEEW (known as the Gender Scorecard), which assesses the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming by UNCTs, with a focus on joint processes and institutional arrangements. Recent directives for the UN development system have called for greater use of the Gender Scorecard. The QCPR requested that the UN development system expand and strengthen its work on GEEW including through the use of the Scorecard.[111] Since it was launched in 2008, there has been an increase in the use of the Scorecard, yet its use is still not at the expected levels. Less than 30 per cent of UNCTs have implemented the Gender Scorecard exercise, whereas the intention was for every UNCT to do so.[112] The desk review commissioned by the UNDG Gender Equality Task Team found that there had been improved performance in the majority of Scorecard areas, including programming, decision-making, partnerships, quality control and accountability, but limited or no progress related to UNCT capacities, budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation.[113] It suggested that there is still weak follow-up on Gender Scorecard recommendations, which in some cases may be a function of a "general lack of accountability within UNDAF programming and implementation processes."[114]

> Gender Scorecard exercises had been conducted in only 9 of the 26 countries considered in the country portfolio review. The situation in the six case study countries may be illustrative of the range of experiences with the Gender Scorecard globally. Scorecard exercises had been carried out in three of the six countries (Fiji, Jordan and Malawi). In two countries, recommendations have been acted on (for example in Fiji, one of the first Scorecards, prior to UN Women; and in Jordan in 2014) and both formed GTGs based on recommendations. In Mali, a Scorecard exercise was in the planning stages. In Mexico, the exercise was not carried out because the UNCT preferred a different approach that consisted of a capacity assessment of the UNCT on GEEW.

111 A/RES/67/226, para. 83.
112 UNDG. "UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Desk Review 2012-2014," June 18, 2015, p. iii.
113 The review analysed 19 scorecards conducted between 2012 and 2014 and compared results to a similar exercise carried out on scorecards conducted 2008 and 2011. UNDG. "UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Desk Review 2012-2014," June 18, 2015.
114 Ibid, p. iii

The sense of ownership of the Gender Scorecard, or the need to continue to reach higher standards, is not as strong as for the UN-SWAP.[115] In addition, at the UNCT level there are no repercussions if commitments are not met. This is likely due, at least in part, to the fact that the process of carrying out the Scorecard is usually very short and done with little participation or ownership of UNCT members. If commitments are not agreed and owned by the group, they are even less compelling.

Other potential mechanisms for UNCTs to promote horizontal accountability for GEEW results are gender mainstreaming strategies and rigorous and consistent monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF. The evidence on the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming strategies as an approach to enhancing UNCT accountability is inconclusive.[116] Mid-term reviews and evaluations of UNDAFs provide other mechanisms for ensuring that the UN has delivered on its GEEW commitments, but these exercises have not been consistent in quality or in providing sufficient analysis of the gender dimensions in the context and implementation of programming in the UNDAF. Again, the current tools are mostly process oriented and do not ensure accountability for GEEW development results.

Individual agency (UN Country Team members) accountability

Individual entities have formal mutual accountability to RC and to UNCT goals (i.e., through UNCT workplans and UNDAFs). In practice, however, this mutual and horizontal accountability does not have much teeth, because there are no consequences if UN entities do not adhere to the mutually agreed commitments. Individual agencies use several different approaches to ensure GEEW accountability within their own organizations, including gender audits and the UNDP Gender Seal, a methodology that UN-SWAP highlighted as a good practice.[117] Its more participatory approach is considered an asset and future iterations of the Gender Scorecard may move increasingly in this direction. In addition to these organizational tools, interviewees noted the key role played by heads of agencies in providing leadership and creating space for greater work on GEEW. However, the extent to which they are held accountable for GEEW through performance review is not clear.

Resident Coordinator accountability

The RC system is managed by UNDP, but it is formally owned by all members of the UN development system as its functioning should be "participatory, collegial and mutually accountable."[118] The mutual accountability of the RC, UNCT (as a collective entity) and UNCT members is ensured by a reporting and appraisal process based on the Revised Performance Appraisal Tool for RCs and UNCTs: Assessment of Results and Competencies. Two elements of this process have implications for UN Women's GEEW coordination mandate:

- UN RCs and UNCTs receive annual managerial feedback from the R-UNDG team in an appraisal meeting. Interestingly however, only Regional Directors serving as D2 or above can be directly involved in the appraisal process. Otherwise, feedback must be submitted by any other D2 or above staff (at RO or HQ) with relevant responsibility for oversight of the concerned country.[119] In the current regional architecture, all UN Women Regional

115 The UN SWAP is not widely known or used at the country level, nor is it is intended as a tool for country teams. However it could have relevance at this level because some of the areas where entities tend to underperform are also discussed in inter-agency mechanisms such as the Operations Management Team, where there is shared development of Human Resources and recruiting policies, harassment policies, flexible, work, work place daycare, etc. The Operations Management Team could also play a role in monitoring compliance with provisions for Gender Focal Points terms of reference and time allocation, for example.

116 Only 1 of the 26 countries considered in the country portfolio review has developed a gender mainstreaming strategy (Kyrgyzstan). This strategy was not monitored or implemented. Four other countries (Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan) have recently developed such strategies, but it is still too early to assess their effectiveness.

117 UN Women. 2015, December. "UN System-wide Action Plan for implementation of the CEB Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women—Performance Indicators and Technical Notes".

118 UNDG. 2014. UN Resident Coordination Generic job description.

119 UNDG. 2013, December. "Explanatory Note for the UN RC/Humanitarian Coordinator/Designated Official & UNCT Performance Appraisal Process".

Directors are D1, thus limiting their ability to directly assess RC performance and clearly enforce its GEEW coordination mandate though the RCs and UNCTs.

- The Revised Performance Appraisal Tool for RCs and UNCTs suggests mutual accountability around GEEW will be systematically taken into account in the "development" goal of UNCTs and RCs as the tool now explicitly mentions that key principles (including gender equality, results-based management, environmental sustainability, human rights-based approach, etc.) must be included in the country analysis and UNDAF.[120] Interestingly, that is the only reference to gender equality. There is no mention of if or how performance on a Gender Scorecard could be used, which would seem particularly relevant for the section on UNCT as a collective entity.

In addition to improvements in the approach to performance review, UNDG (through UN DOCO) has also introduced changes to the way that it recruits and trains RCs in order to place greater emphasis on RC knowledge and awareness of and commitment to GEEW. These are positive steps forward in the RC system. UN Women staff at country and regional levels suggest that more can be done to ensure RCs have greater accountability for how the United Nations as an institution is addressing and delivering on GEEW results. Accountability for GEEW in the UN system at the country level remains dispersed.

3.3.4 Gender mainstreaming

Evaluation question: At the global level, to what extent has UN Women contributed to progress (or lack of) towards UN system-wide coordination in relation to gender mainstreaming, including in research and statistics?

As noted in Section 2.4, gender mainstreaming as a strategy for contributing to gender equality has been generally accepted at least since Beijing in 1995.

UN accountability for GEEW at the regional level

Although the evaluation did not explicitly address accountability at the regional level, it seems that accountability for GEEW at the regional level was not clearly stated in the documents reviewed.

In the accountability frameworks considered in this finding, from UN-SWAP to the UNCT scorecard, where does the regional level fit in?

In principle, both regions and countries provide inputs to UN-SWAP reporting through the HQ of the individual entities. The R-UNDG encourages UNCT to be accountable for GEEW (by applying the Gender Scorecard) and is involved in the performance appraisal of the RC and the UNCT. However, the accountability of the R-UNDG and the RCM for GEEW commitments is not clear in the current structure and approach for ensuring overall institutional accountability for meeting the UN GEEW commitments.

A two-pronged approach is needed to ensure gender mainstreaming: **institutional**—addressing the internal dynamics of development organizations, their structures, policies, systems and procedures; and **operational**—activities designed to change the programmes of work in which institutions are engaged.[121] The application of these approaches is discussed in the following findings, first at the global level and then in the field.

Finding 9: At the global level, UN Women has contributed to strengthening UN system capacity for gender mainstreaming. However, the extent to which individual UN entities use this capacity still varies.

At a global level, UN Women has contributed to gender mainstreaming through a range of efforts that are often linked to coordination mechanisms.

120 UNDG. 2015, November. "Revised Performance Appraisal Tool for RCs and UNCTs: Assessment of Results and Competencies (ARC)".

121 Porter, F. (ed), and C. Sweetman (ed). 2005. "Mainstreaming Gender in Development: A Critical Review".

Advancing UN system capacity for institutional gender mainstreaming through the UN-SWAP

The UN-SWAP was designed to advance gender mainstreaming at an institutional level. In addition to the accountability dimension described above (Section 3.3.3), the UN-SWAP team has provided capacity development tools and support. Stakeholder feedback suggests that UN Women's support to the implementation of the UN-SWAP is both accessible and helpful. More than half of survey respondents (n=68) agreed or strongly agreed that their agency has access to sufficient technical support from UN Women, and one third strongly agreed that UN Women's technical support is valuable in helping them meet their UN-SWAP targets. Capacity building was also a common theme among interview respondents who reflected positively on the technical assistance they received from UN Women in gender mainstreaming (particularly the development of gender policies). The UN-SWAP framework is concrete and practical, providing a basis upon which entities with limited gender capacity can move forward and more systematically address gender equality and women's empowerment. As one UN entity respondent noted, "Mainstreaming should be in our bloodstream, but it's not. The UN-SWAP is a catalyst for all parts of the UN system to focus on gender."

Supporting both institutional and operational mainstreaming capacity through training

A complementary strategy has been to support UN system gender mainstreaming capacity through training. Globally, the UN Women Training Center offers an array of courses, both face-to-face and through its e-Learning Campus, to UN and external partners (government, civil society and other stakeholders). Several courses were developed jointly with other UN entities and as a follow-up to work on the UN-SWAP. For example, the Training Centre's flagship course, "I Know Gender—An Introduction to Gender Equality," was developed in collaboration with the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, and World Food Programme.[122] The Centre offers other UN system coherence-related courses including "Empowering UN System Gender Focal Points," which helps Gender Focal Points better understand and apply gender mainstreaming tools in their work (created in collaboration with International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization), and "Gender Equality, UN Coherence and You," which strengthens consistency and coherence in programming by helping participants build a common conceptual and practical understanding of gender equality (developed by UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP).

The Training Centre is still in the process of developing and refining its resources and services. The e-Learning Campus became fully operational in 2015. Although the evaluation did not explore knowledge and use of the Training Centre's resources in depth, these did not appear to be well known among UN system staff, even within the GTGs.

UN Women's capacity development role

"It's a very useful role and we work a lot together, but I think they could do a lot more if they were better resourced. UN Women is strapped for cash and people. If they were better off, there's more they could do. We've had a very positive experience working together, but UN Women doesn't always respond as quickly and efficiently as we'd like because of resource constraints."—UN entity

Providing gender guidance and access to GEEW-related resources

In addition, UN Women produces and supports a variety of capacity building resources in the area of GEEW, ranging from guidance materials to gender mainstreaming databases. The following are several examples:

122 In 2015, 10,201 participants took the course, an increase from 1,324 in 2014.

- Through the UNDG Gender Equality Task Team, UN Women supported the rollout of the Gender Equality Marker Guidance Note (2013) and the Resource Book for Mainstreaming Gender in UN Common Programming at the Country Level (2014); contributed to the follow-up and dissemination of "Mapping of human resources working on gender equality across the UN system" (2012); and helped establish the UNDG Gender Experts Roster (among other things). As noted above, in Jordan, UN Women contributed to drafting procedures for the Inter-agency Project Approval Committee that included a gender "screen" on the gender marker to help systematize gender mainstreaming in joint programmes.

- UN Women's UN System Coordination Division authored a Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming (2014) and maintains repositories of information on the gender mainstreaming policies of UN entities, resources and tools for capacity development on gender mainstreaming, and official documentation on UN system-wide policy.

- The Training Centre developed the Gender Equality Capacity Assessment Tool (2014), which offers guidance on assessing gender equality needs and demands from within and outside the UN system, and established a Roster of Training Experts comprising 156 practitioners who are available to assist stakeholders in the design and implementation of gender equality training.

- Feedback from UN Women staff in the field—both regional and country level—suggests that there is some confusion about the different rosters (UN Women rosters, UNDG rosters, UN Staff College rosters) and limited knowledge of how to access them. Consequently, these resources may be underutilized.

Evaluation question: What has been the progress UN Women has made to strengthen the UN RC system and UNCT capacities to mainstream gender into UNDAFs and other joint programming initiatives at the field level?

Finding 10: UN Women has strengthened UN system capacities for gender mainstreaming in programming initiatives at the field level. Over the period under review, there has been notable progress in integrating GEEW in preparation of UNDAFs. Greater attention needs to be paid to implementation, resource allocation and monitoring of GEEW-related commitments.

In the field, UN Women has provided support to country teams using a twin track approach to ensure that gender is integrated into UN programming activities, either through gender focused outcomes or mainstreamed into other results areas.

Common Country Assessment and UN Development Assistance Framework

One of the priority areas has been to ensure that there is sound analytical work on gender equality for the UNCT (through the CCA) and to integrate gender equality in the primary planning framework for the United Nations (UNDAF or equivalent).[123] This has usually been done through the GTG in support of the UNCT.

Over the past five years, there has been critical progress in the number of UNDAFs that are giving priority to gender equality through gender-specific outcomes. The UNDG (through UN DOCO) looks at all existing UNDAFs cumulatively. Its latest report indicates that 61 per cent of UNDAFs now have gender-specific results at the outcome level.[124] Other data from UN DOCO suggest that 79 out of 132 countries have UNDAFs (or equivalent) with specific gender results at the outcome level. These data reflect the continuous trend in improvement with regard to how UNCTs are emphasizing gender equality in their planning frameworks.[125] In the country portfolio review of 26 countries conducted

123 Only four countries in the portfolio have CCAs that were developed during the period covered by this evaluation (2011-2015). Remaining countries had CCAs that could date back to 1997 or that were not available on UNDG website.

124 Reported by UN Women.

125 Secretary-General. 2014. "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into All Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System", April 17, 2014, p. 15-22.

for this evaluation, 14 out of 21 UNDAFs included gender outcomes.

The data suggest that there is room to continue to improve the quality of application of the twin-track approach to gender. Beyond a gender-specific outcome, integrating gender issues in the results frameworks of planning documents is also important. Reviews of a small sample of UNDAFs indicate, however, that having a dedicated gender outcome does not mean that gender issues are effectively mainstreamed across the key strategic areas.[126] This was found not only in the UNDG Desk Review of UNDAFs (14 countries),the evaluation team's review of UNDAFs included in the country portfolio, but also in the 2016 UN Women Europe and Central Asia RO Desk Review of 12 UNDAFs in Europe and Central Asia.[127]

A detailed review of country portfolio and case study UNDAFs confirms that there is a lack of consistency and/or thoroughness in the way that gender is integrated. The intended results for gender equality in the UNDAF results matrices are varied, and it is not always clear what constitutes a "gender outcome" (e.g., maternal and infant health may be considered gender because they involve women but do not necessarily promote equality or empowerment). In addition, results can be worded vaguely (e.g., "with a gender perspective"). Some outcomes without gender considerations can include outputs and indicators that demonstrate a high degree of gender mainstreaming. Conversely, some outcomes that mention "gender sensitive" do not actually develop this into any meaningful or measurable results.

The UN Women Europe and Central Asia RO conducted a desk review of 12 UNDAFs for the 2016-2020 period and their respective CCAs in the region and found that while significant efforts had been made to integrate gender across UNDAFs, there were still some gaps in systematically promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in these planning frameworks. These included: ensuring stronger gender analysis in CCAs that are then clearly reflected in UNDAFs; ensuring that UNDAFs include gender-responsive indicators; ensuring consistency in the integration of gender across all thematic areas (including environment and disaster risk reduction); and considering all relevant vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (such as LGTBT persons). One external factor that affects the design of the UNDAF is the lack of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data. Although there are no similar reviews from other regions, the Europe and Central Asia desk review pointed out recurring themes and challenges with the integration of GEEW in the UN planning documents. This kind of review offers a promising practice in the sense that it offers an evidence base that can stimulate discussion at regional and country levels about gender-related strengths and ongoing limitations with regard to the UNDAF planning framework and related analytical work.

A more gender-sensitive planning document and results matrix are necessary but not sufficient for gender mainstreaming in common country programming. The institutional effects of UN Women's coordination efforts in the planning stage are subsequently affected by funding and processes for implementation, monitoring and evaluation—external factors that are often outside of UN Women's control.

UN agencies also need to raise funds for gender-related outcomes and outputs. The UNDAFs in the 26 countries in the portfolio review rarely included a budget or any indication of the resources to be allocated to the UNDAF, including any gender results. The UNDG desk review of UNDAFs commencing in 2015 also found that many of the 14 UNDAFs reviewed that year were often lacking a Common Budgetary Framework and breakdown of funding provided by agency, thus lacking key information required "to

126 For example, in a desk review of 14 countries, UNDAF results matrices do not reflect gender-based or pro-poor disaggregated indicators. UNDG. 2015, October. "Desk Review of UNDAFs Commencing in 2015", page 7.

127 UN Women. 2016. "Desk Review of 12 UNDAFs in Europe and Central Asia: Application of Twin-Track Approach of Gender in UNDAFS and CCAs to Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women", prepared by UN Women Europe and Central Asia RO, February 2016.

enhance transparency and accountability of the UN at the country level."[128]

UNDAF implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation have also been sources of concern as it is in these stages when the GEEW commitments are put into action and the United Nations can subsequently be held accountable for them. In the QCPR survey of programme countries, governments commented that UNDAF has improved the planning phase but there is room for improvement at the implementation phase: "Agencies are more wedded to their individual programmes than to the UNDAF."[129] This is a risk to GEEW work unless GEEW is also deeply embedded in the individual agency programmes. In most countries visited, UN Women participated in the monitoring, reporting and evaluation of the UNDAF. In Kyrgyzstan, this role helped to point out gaps in gender mainstreaming during the mid-term review of the UNDAF.

UN Women ROs play an important role through the PSGs, which provide guidance and support to UNCTs in the development of the UNDAFs, including the five programming principles, among which are gender and human rights. UN Women provides UNCTs with training and support in gender. This also helps to strengthen, reinforce and complement the contribution of the CO to gender in the UNDAF. As noted above, this role of UN Women has been appreciated by regional stakeholders involved in PSGs across all of the ROs. Among regional survey respondents, most have very positive views of UN Women's work in the PSG with regard to building capacities of GTGs and UNCTs to mainstream gender in UNDAFs. Respondents also have a very positive view of UN Women's contribution to PSGs with regard to its technical expertise on GEEW and its capacity to position GEEW in the UN and UNCT agenda.

Training and technical support to agencies

According to the UN DOCO data from a 2015 survey of RCs, 67 countries out of 132 surveyed received capacity building for UN staff on the issue of gender mainstreaming in the past year.[130] This suggests that there is a degree of demand for training in this area. In addition to the services provided by the UN Women Training Center, UN Women COs (with support from ROs) have supported gender mainstreaming by providing in-country training through the GTG. In Mexico and Timor-Leste, capacity assessments conducted by GTGs have identified capacity gaps among UN staff. The UNCT is now planning how to respond to these gaps, drawing on UN Women expertise.

UN Women has also been called on to provide technical support to entities on specific projects or initiatives, yet the scope of this role *vis-à-vis* what is expected from other agencies has not always been clear. In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women has responded to many requests for technical support or advice on gender mainstreaming from different parts of the UN system, including from specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and the PBF Secretariat. Several consulted UN entity stakeholders expressed the expectation that UN Women should have a stronger quality assurance role in PBF-funded projects (both by strengthening its own role in the review of project proposals and documents, as well as in strengthening the capacity of PBF programme staff). However, the same stakeholders did not address the question of the responsibility of other UN entities in supporting these processes, for example, by mobilizing and tracking funds to ensure sufficient capacity within the GTG or the PBF Secretariat. One way around case-by-case requests for technical advice is to engage in review and feedback on country programme documents that allow for more strategic engagement and planning of

128 UNDG. 2015, October. "Desk Review of UNDAFs Commencing in 2015". Further illustrating this problem, the UN-SWAP notes that two of the areas where entities are least meeting minimum standards are in resource allocation and tracking for gender.

129 Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2014. "QCPR Monitoring Survey of Programme Countries Report." United Nations, December 2014, page 18.

130 UNDG, Information Management System. The UNDG Information Management System contains data from 132 UNCTs. Data were collected for the first time in 2015 based on the perceptions of the RC Offices in consultation with the UNCTs. Trend analysis between 2014 and 2015 data should be treated with caution given the transition between data collection methods and definitions, and most importantly, response rates.

how UN Women can support individual entities. This practice was used during Kyrgyzstan Country Team's drafting of the PBF portfolio of projects and was also being tested by UN Women CO in Mexico.

Research and knowledge

Another element of mainstreaming is the development of knowledge products that will help promote a deeper and more coherent approach to mainstreaming across the system. This is provided to some extent through guidelines and training. However, knowledge generation and management, and deeper and more holistic and cross-sectoral analyses, are also highly valued by partners at the country level, and these expectations are not always met. Knowledge generation is difficult to resource; staff that are highly qualified are often frustrated at the many other demands on their time:

- In Tanzania, UN Women developed guidelines for incorporating and monitoring cross cutting issues in the UNDAF/DaO (with OHCHR), and in Jordan, UN Women developed tip sheets for integrating gender in the sectors of the Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2016-2018. In Myanmar, UN Women and Asian Development Bank consolidated a gender analysis including six areas related to the national plan for women, based on work begun by other agencies. UN Women also produced a collection of good practices in gender in Myanmar.

- In East and Southern Africa, UN Women's RO partnered with a CSO coalition to develop a policy brief on programming and advocacy on gender in the extractive industries. This was used to inform the approaches to this sector taken by UN Women COs and to inform collaboration with UNDP, United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank.

- In Asia and the Pacific, UN Women's RO is engaged in the Partners4Prevention Joint Programme with UNDP, UNFPA and UN Volunteers that was noted earlier. The Joint Programme's research component included a multi-country study on men and violence during the first phase of the project (2008-2013). The programme is now implementing prevention interventions in six countries.

There are also contributions from the global level that can support learning across UN entities and data needs at the field level. UN Women, in partnership with the UNEG and EvalPartners, commissioned a Joint Systemic Review of Gender Equality in Development to enhance learning and contribute to knowledge management systems on what works and what does not for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in development initiatives.[131] In addition, as part of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, UN Women helped develop 52 quantitative gender indicators to guide the national production and international compilation of gender statistics and establish a set of guidelines for measuring violence against women and girls.

3.3.5 Gender balance and status of women in the UN system

Evaluation question: At the global level, to what extent has UN Women contributed to progress (or lack of progress) towards UN system-wide coordination in relation to achieving a 50:50 gender balance?

Finding 11: While there has been modest progress towards the goal of achieving a 50:50 gender balance at all levels of the UN system, there continues to be an inverse relationship between seniority and the representation of women. The effectiveness of UN Women's contributions in this area is negatively affected by insufficient leadership and support for gender parity within many UN entities.

As noted in its resolution 68/140, reaching 50:50 gender balance at all levels throughout the UN system remains a declared goal of the General Assembly.

UN Women is tasked with supporting progress towards this goal, in particular through, but not limited to, the work of the Focal Point for Women in

131 Gender At Work. 2015. "Joint Systemic Review of Gender Equality in Development: A Review of System-wide and Corporate Gender Mainstreaming Policies and Strategies in the UN System", Full Draft Report for Comment, p. 5.

the United Nations located within the UN System Coordination Division. [132] UN Women has made key contributions in this regard through the following:

- **Monitoring and reporting** on the status of women in the UN system, particularly through the preparation of the Secretary-General's reports on the improvement of the status of women in the UN system. The reports and their recommendations are presented to the General Assembly's Third Committee and CSW to inform debates and resolutions. They capture information on the proportion of female appointments, promotions and separations for every UN entity and the system as a whole; policies and practices among entities; and key impediments to progress.

- The **UN-SWAP**, headed by UN Women, constitutes another tool for capturing progress towards the 50:50 goal, as it includes an indicator on gender architecture and parity.

- **Conducting surveys** of UN Women staff on issues related to gender balance.

- **Supporting UN system capacity development** relevant for gender parity, especially through the system-wide network of Gender Focal Points that is facilitated by UN Women. The network contributes to progress in relation to gender parity by strengthening the internal GEEW capacities of UN entities.

- Based on requests from other UN entities, **providing support for the development of gender balance strategies or other policies** suited to further the equal representation of women. UN Women has developed a template "Strategy on the status of women, including the equal representation of women" for use by all departments of the Secretariat. As of May 2015, UN Women had supported the preparation of 21 gender equality and parity policies.[133]

- **ROs have also played a role.** ROs in the Arab States and East and Southern Africa have both done studies on women in leadership positions in agencies at the regional level. The Arab States RO has carried out a workshop on women in leadership. Both of these were developed to improve the numbers of women in RC and other senior positions. In addition, in East and Southern Africa, the RO has a leadership development programme for women in the region, and in the Arab States, the RO has been playing a key role in the R-UNDG Thematic Group on Supporting Women Leaders for UN RC/UNCT Leadership.

Despite UN Women's efforts, data indicate that only limited progress was made towards achieving the goal of gender parity within the UN system during the period under review (2011-2015). As noted in Volume II, Appendix XIV, from 2011-2013 the representation of women in professional and higher categories increased marginally, from 40.9 per cent to 41.8 per cent overall. Parity was reached at P1-P2 levels, but otherwise, an inverse relationship between professional level and representation of women remains. [134] The percentage of women who are RCs increased from 37.1 per cent in 2011to 39.5 per cent in 2013, and National Professional Officers in the UN system are within 10 percentage points of achieving gender parity.[135] In the UN-SWAP (2014 reporting period), 77 per cent of entities reported that they had not achieved equal representation of women at the P-4

132 Additional responsibilities of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations include, *inter alia*: Participation in the debates of the Third Committee, the CSW and any other intergovernmental body as required; advocacy for and assistance to policy formulation for issues related to the improvement of the status of women in the UN system; participation and intervention in recruitment, promotion and placement processes to ensure that more women are recruited and promoted, in particular at decision-making levels; counseling, guidance and advocacy, for women staff members who contact the office; communication, outreach and information dissemination to ensure information sharing and cross pollination of good and progressive policy and practice between the UN entities and outside institutions committed to gender issues in the work place; organization of Expert Group Meetings and other relevant events associated with the status of women. From UN Women. (n.d.). "The Focal Point for Women". Retrieved from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fp.htm

133 Source: Internal documents provided by UN Women Coordination Division.

134 Secretary-General. 2014. "Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System". Report of the Secretary-General No. A/69/346, p. 7.

135 Ibid. pp. 14-15.

level and above, and this is one of the indicators with the poorest performance across the UN system.[136]

Progress towards gender parity has also been more limited in the context of UN peace operations. As of 31 December 2014, women made up 29 per cent of all professional staff in peace operations. The percentage of professional women decreases by rank—from 41 per cent at the P-2 level to 13 per cent at the Assistant Secretary-General level. By the end of 2014, women accounted for only 22 percent of the total number of heads of peace operations (6 out of 27).[137]

There are many factors that are likely to contribute to persistent challenges in achieving gender parity. The 2014 Secretary-General's report on the Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System noted, for example, underutilization of measures to promote gender balance in the hiring process and a lack of career development opportunities for women.[138] Relatedly, the most recent Secretary-General's report on gender mainstreaming cites Gender Focal Points' lack of seniority, under-resourced gender units, and insufficient support and leadership from senior management across UN entities. Underlying these organizational practices are the "deep structures" of the organization that maintain gender inequality, such as a culture that values hierarchy and prioritizes patronage. As further noted in Finding 15, achieving gender parity within the UN system will ultimately require much more significant change that touches on the underlying norms and culture of the organization.

136 Secretary-General. 2015, April 1. "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System: Report of the Secretary-General to ECOSOC".

137 High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. 2015. "Report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People". (No. A/70/95-S/2015/446).

138 Secretary-General. 2014. "Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System", Report of the Secretary-General No. A/69/346, pp. 41-46.

3.3.6 Progress on GEEW

Evaluation question: To what extent has UN Women's UN coordination mandate contributed to progress (or lack of progress) towards GEEW?

Finding 12: There are some examples of UN Women's coordination efforts having contributed to progress towards GEEW at the country level. Overall, however, there is insufficient data to make a consistent link between UN Women's coordination work and substantial changes on the ground.

As noted in the UN Women Coordination (draft) Theory of Change, "coordination is a means, not an end. It must advance concrete development results that change the options and opportunities for men, women, communities and countries."[139] Coordination is one of several means—along with normative and operational work—for achieving the six areas of development results outlined in UN Women's Strategic Plan.[140] However, as noted in Section 3.2 (relevance), existing strategic guidance within UN Women provides little information on how exactly coordination efforts are understood to contribute to the achievement of development results in these areas of focus.

Effective coordination is also conceptualized as a means to ensure that the UN system is better able to effectively deliver on GEEW-related results. However, until now, neither UN Women nor other UN entities have systematically tracked the specific effects of their coordination work on development results—which makes it difficult to systematically link achievements in UN system coordination with substantive changes on the ground.

139 UN Women's draft Theory of Change, May 2015, page 2.

140 The six impact areas of UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 are as follows: 1) women leadership and participation in decision-making; 2) women economic empowerment; 3) eliminating violence against women and girls; 4) peace and security and humanitarian action; 5) governance and national planning; 6) global norms, policies and standards.

In most of the countries reviewed for this evaluation, UN Women Strategic Notes and their respective Development Results Frameworks did not explicitly refer to intentions to use coordinated approaches to achieve development results.[141] Although OEEFs do include UN coordination results, they are process-oriented, i.e., focused on the internal processes of the United Nations such as UNDAF, use of Gender Scorecard, use of Gender Marker, etc.[142] Thus, for the most part, planning and reporting frameworks have not encouraged consideration of UN coordination as a strategy for achieving more substantive results. With the introduction in 2014 of a specific coordination question in the UN Women RMS, it is possible to extract examples of joint substantive results, as noted below.[143]

The following examples relate to UN system/joint UN entity contributions to strengthening the enabling environment for gender equality in a particular context (e.g., in terms of national legislation, policies or strategies). As such, the contributions helped put in place important conditions that can facilitate positive changes in the lives of women and men. In some cases, results of joint programmes may also reflect changes in capacity for service delivery. Other examples, notably drawn from the UN Women RMS, are provided in Volume II, Appendix XIII.

- **Joint advocacy contributing to new or revised national legislation**: In Malawi, a bill on early marriage that was stalled for 10 years was finally passed and became law in 2015 at least in part thanks to a strong and well-coordinated lobbying effort from the GTG and a combined UN initiative on the girl child and adolescent girls. UN Women catalyzed the joint UN effort by following the bill's trail, consistently asking about its progress and why it was stalled, working with the GTG and the joint UN initiative to lobby parliamentarians, and also used the visit of the UN Women Executive Director as an opportunity to advocate against child marriage in her key messages.

- **Joint UN technical input contributing to national action plans**: In Kyrgyzstan and Mali, UN Women played a (co-)coordinating role in multi-stakeholder processes that included UN, government and civil society actors, which led to the development and monitoring of national action plans related to Security Council Resolution 1325.

- **Joint dialogue contributing to strengthening a national framework for gender mainstreaming**: In Tanzania, through its leadership in the Development Partner Group, UN Women contributed to reviving a high-level forum for dialogue on gender equality led by the ministry responsible for gender, and including representatives from line ministries, academia and civil society. The resulting broader dialogue led to the adoption of guidelines for mainstreaming gender equality into the national "Big Results Now" framework for development and to the introduction of the Tanzanian government's first national gender profile.

- **Joint advocacy and dialogue helping to avoid policy setbacks**: In Mexico, a number of events in the last few years have increased concerns about women's human rights: the legislative process initiated in 2014 for a constitutional amendment to protecting life from conception in Nuevo Leon, the killing of a human rights activist in Chihuahua, and the killing of 43 students in Guerrero, among others. All of these triggered a coordinated and public response from the UNCT towards the government. UN Women played a key role (most notably with OHCHR, UNFPA and UNICEF) in the strong stances that the UNCT was able to take through joint statements expressing key human rights concerns. Joint statements were often complemented by direct joint dialogue and advocacy with key state government representatives. In Nuevo Leon, for example, the United Nations contributed to stopping the projected reform to restrain reproductive rights in the state through a joint statement addressed to the congress.

141 In the 26 countries reviewed, at least 19 had Strategic Notes but only 8 UN Women offices (COs and MCOs) explicitly planned their intentions to achieve coordinated results in the Development Results Framework.

142 All OEEFs have an output on the establishment of country level coordination mechanisms. However, these mechanisms are never linked to substantial development results.

143 The examples provided are indicative of the types of documented contributions and are not intended as an exhaustive list of documented results.

Flagship Programme Initiatives:
Aiming to scale up GEEW results through coordinated approaches

In response to an evolving development context, in 2015 UN Women developed 12 Flagship Programme Initiatives that allow it to:

- Scale up results through partnerships to meet the expectations for GEEW embedded in the SDGs and other intergovernmental decisions
- Ensure that the entity is fit for purpose to support the implementation of the SDGs at the national level
- Successfully access high-quality, non-core funding to complement its core resources and implement its strategic plan

The Flagship Programme Initiatives are multi-stakeholder scalable programmes that address multiple SDGs in a synergistic manner. Each is based on a comprehensive Theory of Change that identifies actions required by national, CSO, UN, official development assistance and private partners to achieve transformative results for women and girls.[144]

Because these initiatives were only launched in the latter half of 2015, they were not examined in depth as part of this evaluation. However, consultations carried out with UN Women staff suggest that they offer promising ways to both address the Entity's financial constraints (and raise necessary non-core funding) and work collectively—with UN entities and others—to achieve gender equality results. These initiatives are an opportunity to experiment with approaches that are win-win in terms of working with sister agencies and reducing the threat of greater competition for limited financial resources.

- **Joint policy advice and dialogue around international treaties:** In several countries, including India, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico and Tanzania, UN Women convened the UNCT or the GTG to draft and submit UNCT's confidential reports to CEDAW committee, thus influencing the Committee's Concluding Observations and recommendations to the country. UNCT's inputs are often taken into account by the Committee, such as in India, where 50 per cent of UNCT's recommendations were included in the Concluding Observations presented at the 58th session of the CEDAW in 2014 and on which the state party has to follow up.

- **Enabling women's participation in peace talks**: In Colombia, UN Women has coordinated with key UN and development partners, including UNDP, UNICEF and OHCHR to participate in the peace process talks in Havana, Cuba. These four agencies organized the Transitional Justice Forum that gathered approximately 100 women from different regions of the country and facilitated discussions to start reflecting about women's role in a post-conflict scenario. Four other victims' fora that included more than 1,500 women at the regional and national level were conducted and resulted in concrete proposals that were shared with negotiators in Havana. In addition, five victims delegations composed of 62 per cent women travelled to the Havana peace talks to participate to the fourth point of negotiations about victims and transitional justice measures. One of the delegations represented women's organizations and participated in discussions in the Gender Sub-commission. The United Nations, with two other national stakeholders, was responsible for leading the process and selecting delegations' participants

Overall, UN Women has shown that, with the right people, resources and positioning it can support UN coordination that leads to progress for GEEW at the country level. The linkages between its UN coordination role and progress for GEEW are currently hard to make for both external factors (including support by

144 UN Women. 2016. "Structured Dialogue on Financing: Report on Financing the UN-Women Strategic Plan, Including its Flagship Programme Initiatives", No. UNW/2016/CRP.1. Executive Board of UN Women.; UN Women. 2015. Flagship Programming Initiatives.

leadership of UNCT and the country's own dynamics) and internal factors. Among the internal factors, there are issues with regard to resourcing and variability of skills and staffing across UN Women offices. Yet there are also limitations due to: how the UN coordination role is conceived (as focusing on substance or on UN processes); whether or not the UN Women office engages in theory of change thinking that integrates UN coordination with operational and normative work and reflects this in its planning frameworks (Strategic Note, Development Results Framework, OEEF); and whether it then has the means to collect data that supports its reports on progress. UN Women HQ has a role to play—through resource mobilization, strategic direction and guidance—in helping to strengthen this linkage. It also has a role to play in discussing the nature of "collective" results, and reporting on those results within the broader context of the UNDG and its guidance on results-based management in the UN development system.

3.4 INCORPORATION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH IN UN WOMEN'S COORDINATION EFFORTS

This section examines the extent to which UN Women has incorporated a human rights-based approach and gender equality in the implementation of its UN system GEEW coordination role. The findings illustrate and highlight the extent to which UN Women's coordination role enhances application of key human rights frameworks, adopts other principles of human rights-based approaches, and addresses the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination.

Evaluation question: To what extent have a human rights-based approach and gender equality been incorporated in UN Women's UN system coordination efforts?

Finding 13: The UN system is framing its work within a human rights framework, which includes CEDAW. UN Women has used its UN system coordination role on GEEW to support this effort and strengthen linkages between global and regional normative frameworks and national priorities or initiatives.

Human rights is one of the three pillars underlying the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a programming principle that cuts across the work of the United Nations at the country level. At the global level, the United Nations is reporting greater alignment between normative and operational aspects of UNCT work, innovations in linking human rights follow-up and reporting processes, and stronger integration of human rights principles and recommendations in UNDAF results frameworks.[145]

As noted in Section 1.3, UN Women has been guided by organizational and UN system-wide objectives based on the key normative frameworks for human rights, and more specifically women's human rights (e.g., CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, International Conference on Population and Development and Universal Periodic Review). UN Women has helped mobilize other UN partners in advocating for human rights through its participation and leadership in UNCTs and GTGs and through joint actions with other UN entities in order to contribute to results in these areas. The normative mandate of UN Women has often provided an entry point for coordination with other UN actors, as in the case of Mexico.

As noted by one respondent at the global level, UN Women's main contribution in the context of inter-agency work has been to "*bring the women's rights perspective into the mainstream*."

- **Promoting and including human rights in UN programming frameworks:** In accordance with UNDG guidance on programming principles (which include human rights and gender equality), programming frameworks are usually framed in a way that acknowledges gaps and supports partner country implementation with regard to international human rights frameworks and mechanisms—although the

145 UNDG. 2015, October. "Desk Review of UNDAFs Commencing in 2015", page 6.

extent and depth of references to human rights frameworks (such as CEDAW) varies across the UNDAFs reviewed. As noted in Finding 9 (effectiveness), UN Women has played an important role in enhancing UNDAFs both at the regional level, through the PSG, and in the countries reviewed. UN Women is a member of the UNDG Human Rights Working Group (co-chairing in 2013) and as such contributed to the 2015 UNDG Guidance Note on Human Rights for RCs and Country Teams.

- **Joint reporting against normative frameworks:** Every UNCT is encouraged to submit a confidential report to the CEDAW Committee. As noted in the country portfolio review, UNCTs in 8 of the 26 countries submitted a confidential report to the CEDAW Committee, most often with the support of the GTG.[146] These reports are considered very important in that they bring UN agencies together on gender equality issues and provide an alternative means for the United Nations to advocate for issues that it feels need to be addressed by the government. CEDAW reporting was noted in interviews as a good practice in support of normative human rights frameworks. It is also seen as a good example of basing operational activities on a normative framework, an exercise that plays to UN Women's strength as an entity with both normative and operational roles. There are currently efforts at the country level to replicate this reporting practice and broaden it to all treaty bodies and agencies.

- **Strengthening implementation of normative frameworks:** One key dimension of UN work is reinforcing the capacity of the state (duty bearers) to fulfil the responsibilities of global and national normative frameworks, while recognizing challenges of national political, social and economic dynamics. UN Women is generally effective in supporting the development and implementation of norms and standards. However, it has been more successful in the former than the latter, as noted in the 2015 evaluation of UN Women's normative support work and its links to operational activities.[147] This is due to insufficient resources, as well as the broadness of UN Women's impact areas (and thus difficulty of developing tools and strategies for operationalizing strategic plan outcomes), and insufficient linkages between UN Women HQ and field offices, among other internal factors. External factors such as a lack of political will and capacity on the part of national actors and cultural resistance to GEEW also limit effectiveness.[148] Nonetheless, as illustrated in Finding 12 (on contributions to GEEW results), there is evidence that UN Women, together with other members of the UNCT, has supported governments in implementing normative frameworks. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, UN Women is collaborating with OHCHR to support the government in the development of a country action plan that lists priorities from the state CEDAW report and is also contributing to a national plan on human rights based on the Universal Periodic Review and other UN Treaty body recommendations.

Finding 14: UN Women often mobilizes rights holders to participate in and influence GEEW-related processes. Nevertheless, there is room for UN Women to further strengthen its engagement with civil society and better promote the UN system's broad and regular engagement with civil society as one way of promoting greater accountability.

The vital role of women's movements and the importance of consulting with civil society are stressed in the founding resolution of UN Women.[149] UN Women inherited a strong network in this regard from its predecessor, UNIFEM, and interviewees note this network as a strength that gives it credibility as a convening agency. Credibility is one of the factors that

146 Fiji, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Myanmar, Serbia, Tanzania and Tunisia reported being involved in the UNCT CEDAW reporting process.

147 Office of Internal Oversight Services. 2015, June. "Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women", UN Women.

148 Ibid., page 2.

149 Articles 54 and 55 of General Assembly resolution 64/289 (July 2010) establishing UN Women: *Recognizes* that CSOs, in particular women's organizations, play a vital role in promoting women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women (para. 54); *Requests* the head of the Entity to continue the existing practice of effective consultation with CSOs, and encourages their meaningful contribution to the work of the Entity (para. 55).

supports UN Women's leadership and its ability to set agendas and mobilize UN actors as part of its UN system GEEW coordination role.

At the global level, UN Women made efforts to engage civil society voices in global-level processes, including the SDGs and the review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action. In the lead up to the September 2015 Sustainable Development Summit, the United Nations organized a series of global level thematic consultations in collaboration with civil society, academia, the private sector, etc. UN Women co-convened (with UNICEF) the global thematic consultations on addressing inequalities. Likewise, as part of Beijing+20, UN Women engaged with civil society as part of global, regional and national-level review processes. By bringing the voices of civil society into these discussions, UN Women facilitates and enables a dialogue that can "raise the bar" with regard to greater coherence of the UN system on GEEW.

As noted in Finding 6, at the regional level, UN Women RO engagement with CSOs has been critical in linking its normative role and its UN system coordinating role on GEEW. For example, in East Asia and the Pacific, the RO's financial and technical support, as well as its ability to bring together women's organizations, was paramount in the organization of the regional review process for Beijing +20 and other inter-governmental fora. UN Women led this process, together with ESCAP, under the auspices of the RCM Thematic Working group on Gender.

At the country level, some UN Women offices take a broader interpretation of the "coordination" role that includes non-UN actors, including CSOs and other development partners. This has facilitated the convening of UN actors around specific initiatives. UN Women has been successful in using a multi-stakeholder approach to allow diverse civil society actors to provide input into consultations for both global initiatives (such as Beijing+20 reviews) and national policy areas, including the development of national action plans. UN Women has solid experience in multi-stakeholder engagement in the context of Security Council Resolution 1325 national action plans, which has often entailed jointly convening government, other UN entities and CSOs. This was identified in the thematic evaluation of WPS and confirmed by other data sources. In Mali, UN Women worked with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to jointly engage representatives of the women's movement in the process of developing the national action plan.

Also at the country level, UN Women supports Open Days on WPS in partnership with UN Department of Political Affairs, Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP. The Open Days provide an opportunity for local women to speak with senior UN leaders on issues of concern to them. Increased engagement with women's groups in the area of peace and security was advocated for across all three high-level peace and security reviews in 2015. All pointed to a growing and indisputable evidence-base on the impact of women's participation and leadership on the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and likelihood of sustainable peace. To respond to these findings, address financing gaps and accelerate results, UN Women and partners spearheaded the launch of the new Global Acceleration Instrument for WPS and Humanitarian Action, a pooled financing mechanism administered by the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund office to channel resources to women's civil society actors in peace and security contexts.[150] These examples illustrate how UN Women continues to play a broad coordination role that goes beyond the UN system.

But UN Women has not always met the expectations of CSOs. The small number of civil society representatives consulted for this evaluation highlighted both the positive and negative ways UN Women's relationship with civil society has changed following its transition from UNIFEM. In general, civil society partners appreciate the extra weight and resources that UN Women brings to gender equality at both national and global levels. However, respondents expressed disappointment about the extent to which UN Women engages with civil society and its ability to influence the UN system to be more inclusive. These respondents see UN Women as more mainstream and less able or

150 See: http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/GA100

inclined to push the envelope for women than its predecessor UNIFEM. As one civil society respondent commented: *"UN Women is supposed to have a critical voice in the UN system. It may feel very vulnerable... but its mandate is to speak out and push the issues. I don't think that's been happening very much."*

With respect to Beijing+20, in particular, two of the consulted stakeholders shared the view that the process leading up to CSW 59 had not been as inclusive and participatory as would have been desirable. However, they pointed out that it had not been the decision of UN Women, but rather the Bureau of the Commission, to have a formal declaration with limited consultation. Both respondents agreed, however, that UN Women could have been bolder and more proactive in its approach to incorporating the voices of women's organizations.[151]

UN Women's relationship with CSOs varies widely across contexts and is dependent on a number of factors including, among others: the strength and positioning of CSOs in the national context, the emphasis placed on civil society in the UN Women country strategy, previous relations with CSOs under UNIFEM, and the political alignment on key gender equality policy issues. Although they generally consider UN Women a good ally, CSO representatives expressed the following concerns:

- UNIFEM used to fund women's organizations; now UN Women sometimes competes with them.

- There are problems with the structure of Civil Society Advisory Groups as a formal mechanism for advising UN Women,[152] which have been implemented in a variety of ways with perhaps some lack of clarity in their purpose. In some cases, there is a high level of satisfaction with Civil Society Advisory Groups on both sides. In others, there is confusion and dissatisfaction with the role to the point that members have resigned.

Stakeholders consulted suggest that more can be done by UN Women to engage CSOs strategically and to facilitate engagement between CSOs (including the Civil Society Advisory Group) and the UN system.[153] In East Asia and the Pacific, for example, the RO is already considering how to do this in 2016. In particular, there is a sentiment amongst civil society stakeholders consulted at the global level that UN Women is not capitalizing on civil society's expertise when it comes to setting strategic priorities.

From a CSO perspective, UN Women provides high-level access to policymakers through promotion of participatory processes and spaces. For UN Women, CSOs present the possibility of pushing the boundaries of the agenda in a way that could be seen as inappropriate coming directly from a multilateral entity. Therefore, the relationship can strengthen UN Women's credibility to both lead and promote accountability of the UN system. Based on evidence collected as part of this evaluation, it is not clear that this relationship is being leveraged consistently, despite significant potential.

Evaluation question: To what extent does the coordination mandate undertaken by UN Women contribute to addressing the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination?

Finding 1: The UN system does not yet consistently identify and address the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination in its external work on GEEW or within the UN system itself.

151 For further critiques of the Beijing+20 process from a civil society perspective see: Shameem, N. 2015. at http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/csw-59-beijing-betrayed and Association for Women's Rights in Development 2015 at http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/awids-speech-opening-session-59th-session-commission-status-women.

152 Civil Society Advisory Groups are set up at all levels of the organization—HQ, regional and country level. They are made up of women nominated by their organizations but acting as individuals.

153 A separate corporate evaluation on Strategic Partnerships is underway and will look more closely at civil society as a strategic partnership.

External (programming) work of the United Nations

One of the tenets of a feminist approach is that women's lives are complex and multifaceted. Changes in one area may affect others, negatively or positively, in ways that may be planned or completely unanticipated. Agencies that work primarily in one sector (e.g., education, health or economic empowerment) often find it difficult to analyse the broader implications of their interventions on GEEW-related issues. Similarly, while they may be able to identify gender inequalities in their respective sector(s), these agencies often lack the capacity to trace these inequalities back to their underlying root causes, much less act on them.

UN system partners in the field (particularly those with strong internal gender expertise) expressed the expectation that UN Women will provide or at least assist in conducting this type of in-depth gender analysis across the board. This expectation is linked to the fact that, unlike agencies that work in silos, UN Women addresses gender equality holistically and can help other entities see how their work can fit into a broader and more strategic approach to addressing the underlying causes of gender inequalities.

To date, the UN system and its individual entities are not yet consistently taking an underlying cause approach in programming. In the area of joint programming, the UN experience has not always provided evidence of more intersectoral, multidimensional work that can address some of the more structural causes of inequality.[154]

Mainstreaming gender equality in the UNDAFs is another opportunity for addressing underlying causes of inequality. While UNDAFs have evolved in terms of their coherence in recent years, a 2010 assessment of UNDAFs noted that they were not very transformational in their approach to gender, even when there was a good analysis, and that they tended to be supply driven.[155] While that study referred to UNDAFs in place before UN Women was formed, the same issues echo today. A recent evaluation of the UNDAF in Malawi noted: "*The current UNDAF is designed to match agency service lines with national problems. The new UNDAF should be designed around select root causes of key national problems, and UNDAF Clusters should be designed to address those root causes.*"[156] As noted in Finding 10, the UN Women Europe and Central Asia RO desk review of 12 UNDAFs and their respective CCAs found that there were still gaps in systematically promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in these planning frameworks.[157]

The CCA is the tool used for identifying underlying causes of gender inequality and available evidence suggests that some progress has been made in improving the gender analysis of CCAs. The evaluation team was unable to conduct a comparative review of CCAs prior to or after the creation of UN Women. In most of the countries reviewed for the evaluation, these had not been undertaken recently and were therefore not indicative of UN Women's input. The Europe and Central Asia RO's review of CCAs in the region, however, did find that most CCAs discussed the underlying root causes of gender issues. Some had a separate, detailed section highlighting underlying root causes, while others made reference to long-standing patriarchal attitudes and norms that inhibit gender progress.[158] The 2010 UNDG guidelines call for UNDAFs to build on the CCAs. However, the 14 UNDAFs rolled out in 2015 made limited reference to the methodology used or how the findings were

154 MDGIF (MDG Achievement Fund), UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women. 2014, November. "Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System". UN Women, pages 6-7.

155 Rao, A. 2010. "Strengthening Gender Equality in United Nations Development Frameworks".

156 Olver, R. 2015, May 30. "UNDAF for Malawi 2012-2016: Evaluation Report", page 17. Note: Women's poverty and harmful gender roles and practices are noted as two (of several) key problem areas facing the country that would benefit from a root cause analysis.

157 UN Women. 2016, February. "Desk Review of 12 UNDAFs in Europe and Central Asia: Application of Twin-Track Approach of Gender in UNDAFs and CCAs to Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women", prepared by UN Women Europe and Central Asia RO.

158 Ibid.

integrated into the actual UNDAF.[159] The 12 UNDAFs and CCA reviewed by the UN Women Europe and Central Asia RO found a similar inconsistency in using the CCA to inform gender priorities in the UNDAF.

The issue of mainstreaming or integrating gender into existing structures versus transforming these structures is an important theoretical distinction. In practice, UN Women can work on both fronts and it does this when it is able to: (a) provide technical support for gender mainstreaming that includes both government commitment and a strong civil society movement to hold them to it; and (b) focus less on mainstreaming while addressing how power works in policy processes and by focusing less on organizations and more on the agents that inhabit them and what they can do to realize the more radical potential of gender mainstreaming.[160] This applies equally inside and outside the United Nations.

Internal to the United Nations

Inside the United Nations, gender mainstreaming efforts are affected by norms, values, behaviours and practices that are determined by the "deep structure" of organizations. These deep structures can be defined as: "the hidden sites and processes of power and influence, the implicit culture, the informal values and systems of reward and recognition, all of which have enormous impact on how people and the organization actually function."[161] In an organization, these can become the underlying causes of inequality.

One way in which such deep structures become apparent is differences in how UN entities interpret and assign value to GEEW. Broadly speaking, while for some entities GEEW is only one among several cross-cutting principles (equal to, for example, results-based management), for others it is a core value that they "live". Interviews at the country level suggest that there is often limited commitment to GEEW on the part of the heads of agencies.[162] This, in turn, influences how far the entity can and will go in analysing and addressing not only the most obvious gender (in)equality issues, but also their underlying causes in relation to both their external work and within the entity itself.

The demonstrated commitment of agency leadership is a key factor in how staff address gender challenges. Where there is less than full commitment from leadership, UN staff can sometimes receive contradictory messages, and need to decide where power lies. The UNDP Ethics Office notes that:

> *Organizational culture passes down from long serving staff to new hires and becomes embedded in how the organization operates. Thus, organizational culture is influenced and impacted not just by written regulations, rules and policies, but also by the unwritten code of 'how we really do things around here.' So, the organizational culture can be aligned with its stated values and policies (ethical), or it can be contradictory to those written statements (unethical). Very often, employees will do what they know is rewarded and will avoid doing what they know will be punished.*[163]

Various studies have made similar observations that relate to issues of organizational culture and deep structures within the UN system that run counter to the intent to resolve gender-based inequalities. For example:

159 UNDG. 2015, October. "Desk Review of UNDAFs Commencing in 2015", page 6. Note: This raises two challenges for UN Women and the broader UN system: (a) ensuring high level gender analysis in the context of the CCA, and (b) ensuring that it forms a pillar of the UNDAF, and then is implemented and monitored.

160 Eyben, R. 2010. "Subversively Accommodating: Feminist Bureaucrats and Gender Mainstreaming". *IDS Bulletin*, Volume 41 #2.

161 Batliwala 2010.

162 This observation is supported by the finding of the UN-SWAP report 2015 that members are not sufficiently investing in gender architecture: Although 92 per cent of entities have a gender focal point or equivalent, only 61 per cent of them are at the P-4 level and above, despite repeated calls from the General Assembly in its resolutions for focal points to be designated at a sufficiently high level and enjoy full access to senior management. Only 66 per cent of gender focal points have terms of reference in writing and only 47 per cent devote 20 per cent or more of their time to functions related to gender equality. Source: Secretary-General. 2015, April 1. "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective into all Policies and Programmes in the United Nations System—Report of the Secretary-General to ECOSOC", page 9.

163 Frankson Wallace, A. 2014, August 12. "Creating and Sustaining Ethical Organizational Culture". Retrieved from http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2014/8/12/creating-and-sustaining-ethical-organizational-culture-.html

- A recent UNDP evaluation of its gender mainstreaming strategy found that while UNDP had instituted policies and mandatory mechanisms to promote gender equality, its "organizational culture of promoting these remains weak." Data from the annual UNDP global staff survey indicated consistent differences in the way female and male staff members score issues dealing with empowerment, professional growth, fairness and/or respect, work-life balance and conflict management. Women generally scored these aspects less favourably than men. [164]

- The 2015 "Review of Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the UN System" led by UN Women in consultation with UNEG, EvalPartners and EvalGender+ found that UN entities established supportive policies to promote gender equality, but organizational culture limited their implementation and use. Although many of the evaluations covered the period prior to the UN-SWAP, several of the challenges identified are likely still relevant. The review found there was a gap between establishing (good) policies and promoting their actual implementation, with two main barriers cited. First, there was not yet buy-in by supervisors on the benefits of these policies. Second, staff did not take advantage of such policies because they felt they would have to work harder to manage work-life balance or that work demands would be difficult to schedule in different working arrangements.[165] A 2012 survey by the Joint Inspection Unit concluded that although the UN offers flexible working policies, the organizational culture does not encourage their use.[166]

- Haack (2014) proposed the notion of "glass walls" that continue to structure women's participation in UN organization leadership by channeling them into specific portfolios that are considered gender appropriate, and in general, reflect different degrees of importance compared to portfolios held by men.[167]

- Ferguson (2014) noted that gender mainstreaming in the context of international development assistance has tended to take the form of integration into existing institutional and political circumstances rather than the transformation of those contexts that need to be changed.[168] Given that integration has been the UN strategy for gender equality for decades, a legitimate question could be: Is integration itself not an effective strategy, or is there just not enough of it? Is it possible that enough integration will result in transformation?

The UN-SWAP includes some elements of accountability in this area (see Section 3.3.3, Finding 6). An entity is considered to meet requirements on the organizational culture indicator if *"Organizational culture fully supports promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women."*[169] Assessment criteria include application of UN ethics-related legal arrangements (e.g., policies to prevent discrimination and harassment); facilitative policies (e.g., maternity and paternity leaves, work-life balance), and monitoring mechanisms (e.g., global surveys and exit interviews).[170] As an accountability mechanism, this carries some weight, as managers need to report on it and gender advocates can use it as a standard. Hopefully, it will also shift the unwritten culture, although this would be difficult to measure.

164 UNDP Independent Evaluation Office. 2015. "Evaluation of the UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment", Executive Summary No. DP/2015/29, page 5.

165 UN Women Independent Evaluation Office. 2015, October. "Insight 15: UN Entities Established Supportive Policies to Promote Gender Equality, but Organizational Culture Limited their Implementation and Use". *Transform: The Magazine for Gender-Responsive Evaluation*, (5), 15.

166 As cited in UNDP Office of Human Resources. 2013. "Gender Parity Strategy 2013-2017", page 15.

167 Haack, K. 2014. "Breaking Barriers? Women's Representation and Leadership at the United Nation", pages 37-54.

168 Ferguson, L. 2015. "This is Our Gender Person: The Messy Business of Working as a Gender Expert in International Development". *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 17(3).

169 UN Women. 2015, December. "UN System-wide Action Plan for the Implementation of the CEB Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Performance Indicators and Technical Notes", page 48.

170 Good practices used to illustrate this include forms of online tracking systems for flexible work (ESCWA and OHCHR); flexible work, flexible parental leave and breastfeeding policies (UNAIDS); and an extension of the standard 16 week maternity leave to 24 weeks with full pay (UNICEF). In the most recent report (April 2015), 38 per cent of entities reported "meeting" these requirements, and 25 per cent exceeded them—which in addition to the indicator mentioned above, also requires leadership to promote these policies both in work and in implementation.

Finding 16: UN Women has set some positive examples but faces internal challenges in creating an enabling culture for gender equality. It has not yet become a model gender-responsive organization for other UN entities.

As of 31 December 2013, UN Women reported the highest percentage of women in the Professional category (79.3 per cent) and in higher categories (81 per cent) at both HQ and non-HQ locations.[171] However, the lowest scoring questions in the UN Women Global Workforce Survey 2014 were related to working conditions. Topics touched upon included: expectations to respond to phone calls and emails outside of reasonable work hours; career advancement based on strong performance; UN Women taking appropriate action in instances of harassment and abuse of authority; the existence of effective ways to resolve conflicts and grievances; and training necessary for employees to do their jobs effectively.[172] Responses to this evaluation's survey of UN Women staff at country level (n=453 respondents) also suggest that there are concerns among staff on issues of work-life balance.[173]

These data suggest that UN Women shares some of the culture challenges faced by other agencies striving to create a more enabling culture for gender equality.[174] But there is also an expectation that UN Women should do it better and that it should "walk the talk" and model how other agencies should work. An external UN-SWAP Focal Point noted, for example, that it was difficult to convince other agencies to follow the UN-SWAP when the UN Women office in that particular context had not yet carried out a gender audit or ethics training.

171 Secretary-General. 2014. "Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System", Report of the Secretary-General No. A/69/346, page 10.

172 Agenda Consulting (for UN Women). (n.d.). "UN Women Global Workforce Survey 2014 Overall Analysis Report".

173 In the survey of UN Women staff, 28.7 per cent somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement "UN Women consistently applies policies favorable to women's (and men's) advancement, such as flexible work hours, work/life balance, equal maternity/paternity leave, sexual harassment policies, etc." (n=87).

174 As noted above, the 2015 evaluation of UNDP's contribution to GEEW also presented staff survey data that illustrate similar concerns about working conditions.

Promising practices in Malawi CO

Prior to all weekly staff meetings, there is a half hour discussion of a key gender equality issue related to the normative framework or current issues

Open concept office encourages discussion and cross-sector information sharing and analysis

Open door policy of the Representative, so that staff can discuss issues as they arise

In recognition of limited advancement opportunities for contract staff and consultants, staff are provided with personal coaching (from an external professional)

In evaluation team meetings with the staff, the Representative speaks last and supplements or adds on anything that was missed, clearly encouraging the staff (at all levels) to express themselves freely

Results of this approach

A clearly committed, motivated, confident and empowered staff

Lively and critical discussion and analysis of gender issues, leading to competence and coherence in the gender message from UN Women to sister agencies and other partners

Efficiency—several UN partners commented on how much UN Women gets done with so few resources.

This evaluation did not include an organizational assessment, which would explore many more aspects of organizational culture. However, evaluation team observations and other data available suggest that there are many differences in the ways in which UN Women offices are organized, the type of interaction among staff and with management, and staff expectations.

One of the promising practices in leadership and management (see sidebar) demonstrates elements

of feminist transformative leadership.[175] At the global level, the approach taken in leading the UN-SWAP is also recognized for having some of these same characteristics.

3.5 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

This section provides insight into the internal factors that support or limit UN Women's ability to fulfill its coordination mandate.

Evaluation question: To what extent are operational mechanisms and capacities in place to make UN Women's approach to UN system coordination efficient and effective at global, regional and country levels?

Finding 17: The complexity and scope of existing demand for GEEW-related coordination in the United Nations is considerably more than what UN Women can provide given its current resources and priorities.

Two key concepts for answering this evaluation question are supply and demand: **supply** being what UN Women has to offer the UN system and other partner organizations at global, regional and country levels; and **demand** being what the UN system and individual entities need or request from UN Women in relation to its UN system coordination mandate. The question is the extent to which UN Women has been able to adequately (i.e., effectively and efficiently) match supply to demand.

Demands

The potential scope of what UN Women's UN system coordination mandate can entail is huge given that gender equality and women's rights are, and should, be incorporated in everything that the UN system does, both internally and externally. The evaluation identified the following types of demands that the UN system places on UN Women in order to better "Deliver as One" on its GEEW commitments, including in its support to Member States:

- **Definitions of standards** for what the UN system or individual agencies are expected to do to appropriately address GEEW (overall and in particular thematic or political settings)
- **Guidance and support on how to implement these standards.** This is expressed in requests for general guidance tools and resources that can help build the internal capacity of other UN actors, as well as in demand for hands-on technical support from UN Women to help others do something (e.g., develop a gender policy or a gender mainstreaming strategy, advice on integrating gender into programmes, and conducting better gender analysis)
- **Monitoring and reporting** on how the United Nations is progressing in implementing the norms and standards (e.g., the role played by UN Women on major global studies for the Secretary-General, as a Focal Point on Gender Equality in the UN system, or with the UN-SWAP)
- **Knowledge sharing** in the form of identifying good practices and sharing evidence about effective approaches to transforming gender power relations and contributing to equality, drawing on its own experience and those of others
- **Convening and leading on global, regional and country-level advocacy efforts** on key issues relevant for furthering the GEEW agenda (including the SDGs, the Beijing+20 reviews, as well as regional and country-specific issues)
- **Increasing demands for appropriate indicators and data** for monitoring the SDGs

It is not expected that UN Women deliver on these alone, but rather that it mobilize and draw on the

175 Batliwala 2010. Note: Feminist transformative leadership may be exercised in the following ways: using consultation, participation and consensus-building as modalities to exercise leadership; building consensus on the value of gender equality and gender justice; promoting not just women's empowerment but also the empowerment and transformation of men—in particular the most marginalized; creating spaces for other or new leaders to emerge; influencing agendas even without the formal power or authority to do so; valuing collective and multi-layered leadership as opposed to individual leadership; and valuing relationship-building.

collective strengths of the UN system in order to meet these demands. In many cases, it fulfills these roles through inter-agency mechanisms, such as the UNDG, UNCT, and regional or country-level gender thematic groups and other working groups.

However, the demands placed on UN Women are not only related to its UN system GEEW coordination role. UN Women has a composite mandate, which means that it must also deliver on its responsibilities in the areas of operational activities and normative and inter-governmental support.

Prioritizing demands

At all levels, UN Women frequently has to make decisions on what to focus on, what and whom to support through its UN system coordination mandate, and what not to do. In addition, decisions must be made on how to balance the demands of a more operational role (i.e., especially related to managing programming on the ground), its role in the normative area, and its role in coordinating not only the UN system, but also often broader groups of stakeholders in country.[176]

UN Women does have policies and mechanisms in place for priority setting, although not all of these establish clear parameters for prioritization.

- The UN Women Coordination Strategy and (draft) Theory of Change illustrate its awareness of the vastness of its mandate, and its intent to narrow it down to manageable areas of responsibility, while trying to set limits about what types of things are outside of its responsibility and/or could be better taken on by others. At the same time, this guidance is fairly broad and, as noted earlier, provides very limited operational clarity.

- UN Women's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 provides broad statements about priority (impact) areas and its mid-term review process provides a mechanism for updating priorities. The Coordination Strategy provides a broader range of results for the UN system, which are not fully aligned with the results of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. (See Volume II, Appendix XV). This creates some ambiguity with regard to strategic priorities.

- Similarly, regional and country programming plans (Strategic Notes and Annual Workplans) provide broad frameworks that illustrate priority areas of work. These field-level documents do not always demonstrate clear focus for or priorities within the UN coordination mandate. UN Women does not yet have mechanisms in place to facilitate the systematic analysis and assessment of existing coordination needs or demands, nor criteria or guidance for making choices about which of these to prioritize and how to address them (including what types of skills, expertise and profiles are required to do so).

- UN Women's system for managing performance and development of staff provides other opportunities for prioritization at the level of individual workplans. In 2014, the annual Performance Management Document for UN Women country representatives included standard corporate results and indicators on how UN Women is effectively leading on the achievement of UNCT results, thus increasing accountability for results of coordinated efforts.

Prioritization of UN system GEEW coordination is also related to the kinds of incentives for UN Women staff to work in a collaborative and coordinated way with other entities, versus on its own. Introducing UN coordination into the Performance Management Document gives signals that this is an important task. Stakeholders (through interviews and survey) also noted that it is difficult to prioritize UN coordination given programming (including performance on delivery rates) and resource mobilization demands. UN Women faces the same kind of competing incentives faced by other entities, in which the need for entity branding and funding resources can run counter to jointly innovating and collaborating to deliver on substantive change.

176 Several evaluations and assessments have noted the challenge of establishing synergies between these mandate areas such as the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network assessment (2014), UN Women meta synthesis of evaluations (2014), and the evaluation of UN Women's normative support function (2015).

Capacities for responding to demands

In this context, UN Women's capacities are important, both in terms of numbers, and in terms of whether or not, and to what extent, existing (human) resources are deliberately and adequately matched to the specific UN system-related needs and demands in a particular context.

In COs and MCOs, UN Women representatives are expected to have 50 per cent of their time allotted to tasks associated with UN system coordination.[177] This assignment of responsibility is associated with the type and level of position and expectations for the representative. However, it does not guarantee that the individual has enough time to dedicate or the specific skills that are most conducive to coordination tasks in that context. However, this is the only Integrated Budget funded position at country level.

The case studies suggest that, in practice, the staff time required for UN coordination-related activities is actually higher in COs, particularly in complex programming and coordinating contexts (e.g., with peacekeeping missions, humanitarian context).[178] In order to assist COs, UN Women has deployed regional WPS advisers to East and West Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific, and the Arab States, although some of these deployments have been very recent. In general, at the country level, there has been a need for more dedicated and funded time to support the coordination mandate. As a result, other staff members (such as National Programme Officers) were often called to play an important coordination role (chairing the GTG, other inter-agency mechanisms) in addition to the programme management tasks that are the foci of their position. Three of the case study countries (Malawi, Fiji and Jordan) bolstered their capacity for coordination by creating special staff positions from non-core funds.[179] These positions helped UN Women provide a dedicated Secretariat function in different coordinating mechanisms.

In countries where UN Women has programme presence, the resourcing of the UN coordination mandate is quite different. As illustrated in Volume II, Appendix XI on characteristics of programme presence countries, there is a range of programme presence "models" with different approaches to staffing and levels of programming resources. This includes countries in which UN Women has funded dedicated Gender Advisers for the UNCT (Turkey, Myanmar), whose sole function is to facilitate coordination on GEEW within the UNCT. In some countries, such as Uruguay, there is programme presence but no budgeted funds for programming. In others, such as Kosovo and Guinea-Bissau, staff are managing programme portfolios of USD one million or more.[180] Nonetheless, the corporate expectations for delivery on the UN coordination mandate appear to be the same.

In ROs, there have also been different capacity constraints for delivering on these multiple demands, as ROs are not all at the same stage of development. Several ROs were still completing appointment of thematic advisers or filling key vacancies in 2015. The Europe and Central Asia RO, the newest RO, only received full delegation of authority in early 2014 and was engaged in a restructuring process for most of that year, in addition to meeting expectations for delivering on the expected roles and responsibilities of the RO. Other ROs, such as West and Central Africa, underwent leadership transitions.

177 Based on the Integrated Budget Estimates for 2015-2016 in which approximately 3 per cent of the budget is allocated to UN development coordination, which covers post costs, including 50 per cent of the salary costs for Regional, MCO and CO Directors/Heads, and 100 per cent of SPC Specialists in ROs and salary costs for some positions in UN Coordination Division that are not covered by the Regular Budget of the United Nations. Email Communication, 04/02/2016, Division of Management and Administration.

178 The evaluation did not do a detailed time/task analysis in the COs. Thus the observations made here are based on issues that came up during interviews with UN Women staff, such as: the challenges in balancing programming responsibilities with coordination work, the need for a Deputy in order to facilitate coordination and more effectively respond to other areas of the UN Women mandate, and the demands placed on staff due to participating in and following up on commitments made in numerous inter-agency working groups, particularly in humanitarian settings.

179 The positions include Policy Specialist (Jordan), Programme Assistant for Interagency Coordination (Malawi) and Gender Group Coordinator (Fiji).

180 Based on Development Results Framework budget for 2014

These issues affected the capacity of the RO to deliver on their mandates with regard to both regional and country-level work, given that most RO staff, led by the Regional Director and Deputy Director, are involved in some aspect of UN system coordination of GEEW.

At the regional level, Regional Directors are expected to allocate 50 per cent of their time to UN system coordination. Deputy Directors and other staff also play roles in inter-agency mechanisms and other forms of coordination. In addition, UN Women created a Strategic Planning and Coordination (SPC) Specialist position that consolidated UN system coordination and planning functions. In principle, the position was supposed to entail a 50:50 split in time allocated to these two functional areas.[181] The value of this specialized position was recognized by stakeholders interviewed from UN entities in all regions—notably for its combination of gender expertise, planning expertise and understanding of coordination practices in the United Nations.

UN Women interviewees in regions commented that there were unrealistic expectations about what the SPC Specialist can do in a context where at least 50 per cent of his or her time has to be dedicated to the planning aspect of the job, which may include providing support to MCOs and programme presence offices, and, in some cases, to monitoring, reporting and training activities. In addition, the SPC Specialist also has a role to support the Regional Director on regional coordination platforms with regard to normative work. The inconsistent approach to staffing ROs to deliver on UN Women and regional UN demands for planning and coordination has also been an issue. While some ROs had only a SPC Specialist (e.g., Europe and Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Arab States), other ROs also had monitoring and reporting specialists at National Professional Officer C (NOC) level (e.g., East and Southern Africa, and West and Central Africa)—which allowed for a different distribution of tasks and allowed SPC Specialists to focus more on strategic planning and coordination. (See mapping of RO's coordination context in Volume II, Appendix XVI.) To alleviate part of the workload, the RO in East Asia and the Pacific recently created a Programme Analyst position. This has been a helpful mitigating strategy to address the concentration of responsibilities in the SPC Specialist position.

CO and RO staffing reflects the broader issue of financial under-resourcing of UN Women. As noted in Section 2.3, UN Women has had to carry out its broad global mandate with one quarter to one third of the budget originally proposed by the advocates for the agency, and it is still considerably short of the amount recommended by the Secretary-General at its inception. UN Women allocates only 3 per cent of its Integrated Budget to UN system coordination.[182]

UN Women has faced challenges in meeting all of the demands that it has confronted in different contexts. Often, it has met those demands by drawing on the personal commitment and skills of its staff. Interview and survey data suggest that implications include:

- UN Women has not always been able to make and/or follow through on innovative solutions that it proposes in the context of inter-agency groups because it does not have the staff resources necessary to provide continuity to the initiative.

- COs will be stretched in their capacity to meet the coordination challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. During the time of the field visits, COs expected that coordination demands would grow in the effort to localize the SDGs, not only Goal 5, but also in regard to mainstreaming gender equality in the other areas.

- ROs have not been able to consistently respond to demands from COs for more specialized or tailored support either in coordination more generally or

181 Originally, UN Women proposed creating two separate positions, but funding constraints led to the consolidation into one P4 post.

182 This is similar to the share of UNDP's budget allocated to coordination but higher than the share of UNICEF's coordination budget.

in the thematic areas of expertise (e.g., through thematic advisers based in ROs).[183]

Evaluation questions: To what extent has UN Women put in place mechanisms and capacities to ensure efficient UN coordination work across the various pillars and divisions within the Entity (including the connection of UN Women Coordination Division and other HQ level pillars or divisions of the Entity)? To what extent do initiatives on GEEW coordination implemented in the field feed into the global approach and vice versa?

Finding 18: UN Women's evolving organizational structure and processes do not yet consistently ensure efficiency and related synergies in UN system coordination work across the Entity.

During the period under review (2011-2015), UN Women has been rolling out its Regional Architecture, developing and enhancing systems (such as RMS), and at the same time responding to the external context in which it operates. In this dynamic internal context, efficiency is a challenge, because the change process means that individuals in the organization have to continuously adjust to new roles and responsibilities. Efficiency gains will be noted once there are stable processes and procedures. Within these overall limitations for efficiency, UN Women has tried to adapt its organizational structure[184] and processes to be more supportive of UN system coordination work.

UN Women's UN system coordination mandate is an organization-wide mandate. Several key divisions have a strong role to play in shaping and ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of UN Women's overall approach to UN system coordination: UN Coordination Division, Intergovernmental Support Division, Policy Division, and Programme Division, and ROs and COs.

Shared responsibility for coordination between divisions is appropriate given the aim of ensuring that coordination is truly an entity-wide mandate and not limited to one unit. It also reflects the overlapping but distinct approaches, networks and expertise required for system-wide coordination work on the one hand and inter-agency coordination on the other. At the same time, having coordination related responsibilities split between different divisions results in challenges in ensuring coherence (in terms of messaging and guidance), synergies and efficiency. This applies to the relationships between divisions at HQ and to the relationships between HQ and the field.[185]

Formal mechanisms in place to facilitate effective collaboration and exchange among divisions include: planning cycles (strategic planning and review and annual work planning); Senior Management Team meetings and, since 2014, extended Senior Management Team meetings, which include Regional Directors and take place two to three times per year;[186] and, more recently, meetings between Regional SPC Specialists and the UN Coordination and Programme Divisions. The meetings between the Regional SPC Specialists and the UN Coordination and Programme Divisions could be made more regular (including annual meetings in person) to facilitate HQ-RO exchange and cross-regional learning, which is an important HQ role that can be strengthened. In addition, special internal coordination mechanisms have been established on key issues (e.g., coordinating group for advocacy on SDGs and now localization of SDGs). Although formal mechanisms exist, stakeholders note that less structured approaches prevail at HQ in order to best respond to specific coordination needs.

183 One of the roles of the ROs is to provide oversight and technical support to countries. For the coordination function, support is primarily channeled through a Strategic Planning and Coordination (SPC) Specialist position, which allocates 50 per cent of time to the coordination function. At the same time, regional-level technical advisory expertise must also be provided to countries, which is critical for encouraging coordination initiatives that are focused on issues of substance in GEEW. In two of the regions (West and Central Africa and Europe and Central Asia), thematic advisers had only been deployed as recently as 2015.

184 Understood as roles, responsibilities and authority

185 The issue is not unique to the coordination mandate or to UN Women but is a problem for all decentralized organizations.

186 As of 2014, extended Senior Management Team meetings, include Regional Directors. These are scheduled two to three times a year. "Evaluation of UN Women's Normative Support Function", 2015, p. 17.

The challenges resulting from fragmentation at HQ include lack of communication and knowledge about others' activities within the organization, and challenges linking HQ activities to the field in thematic or policy areas, including research and data.[187] Additional challenges in linking global initiatives to field and vice versa relate to:

- There are few staff at HQ with the responsibility of responding to needs in the field and these are distributed across divisions: The UN Coordination Division team consists of 11 people, including the Director and eight other professional staff, one of which is dedicated (part-time) to providing support and guidance to the field in collaboration with the Programme Division (the primary interlocutor with the field). The Policy and Programme Divisions do not have staff dedicated to coordination in New York but integrate that role into their other functions.

- ROs are still evolving in their roles, particularly in terms of their capacity to play a bridging role between HQ and country levels.[188] In two of the six case studies, the UN Women offices in countries indicated that the role of the RO was not always clear. The Regional SPC Specialists (with 50 per cent of time, in principle, allocated to coordination) is the main contact point for coordination: he or she provides technical support and guidance to UN Women offices at the country level and is key in linking the field and HQ. However, this position has, in practice, encompassed a number of different functions as described in Finding 16 above. With considerable effort invested in the UNDAF cycle and UN Women's own results-based management procedures and addressing regional UN system coordination demands, there is no time for developing guidance for or providing tailored support to UN Women offices.

- UN Women staff in ROs and COs often note insufficient support and guidance on regional and country-level UN system coordination work.[189] This lack of direction is evidenced by considerable variation in how and the extent to which the corporate strategy and guidance on UN Women's coordination mandate (Coordination Strategy, Theory of Change) is reflected in field-level planning and implementation. The lack of direction is due to limited guidance, resources and standardized training materials from HQ and the constraints on existing Strategic Planning and Coordination staff in the ROs (as described above).

- The extent and the nature of field-level data collection, analysis and reporting on UN system coordination activities and results also vary as a result, creating challenges for accountability and organizational learning. In 2014, UN Women introduced a specific question in the RMS dedicated to UN system coordination, which asked about contributions to substantive change for women and girls. This allowed UN Women to begin to capture UN system coordination achievements. However, the reporting against the question was uneven, with most countries still reporting on activities and outputs, and often reflecting process-oriented UN coordination work. There are discussions about the wording of the question, and whether or not it can be improved to better capture the effects of joined up efforts for enabling results on gender equality and women's empowerment.

In recognition of challenges to ensuring coherence and synergies, UN Women has taken some steps to improve access to information and communications between HQ and the field. The Community of Practice on UN system coordination has been revitalized as a SharePoint site and is being continuously populated with ideas from the field. Also, there is now greater flexibility with respect to communications. COs are able to communicate both with the Programme Division and with the UN Coordination Division.

187 Only a small number of external stakeholders at the global level noted a lack of internal coordination or fragmentation within UN Women. These stakeholders noted some inconsistency in certain organizational positions (on some of the SDGs) and in thematic areas, such as EVAW (where work is divided between the policy area, UN Trust Fund on EVAW, HIV/AIDS, and the Secretary-General's campaign).

188 The RO in Europe and Central Asia was the last one to be established in 2014.

189 One-third of the UN Women country level staff responding to the survey (n=86) indicated that they did not receive sufficient support from the RO to carry out the UN system mandate.

Evaluation questions: Were there any constraints (e.g., political, practical, bureaucratic) to addressing the UN coordination mandate efficiently? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?

Finding 19: UN Women has been addressing some key constraints that it faced in delivering on its UN system GEEW coordination mandate. As it overcomes these constraints, efficiency will improve.

The notion of efficiency is generally concerned with how resources are translated into outputs. In coordination, the outputs are the coordination mechanisms or practices described in Table 2.1 (for example, participation or leadership in inter-agency groups or initiatives, or contributions in development of joint products). Constraints refer to the kinds of problems that affect UN Women's ability to deliver on these practices, therefore potentially compromising the efficiency of results of coordination. Table 3.2 illustrates the types of constraints faced by UN Women in the field (country and regional) and how it has tried to address these over the period 2011- 2015.

Table 3.2 Constraints to UN Women's UN coordination role

Country and regional constraints		Efforts to overcome constraints, 2011-2015
Bureaucratic	**Country level** Absence of full delegation of authority (in programme presence countries) or delays in receiving that delegation of authority have limited UN Women's ability to fully engage with the UNCT UN culture that pays more attention to status (position level) than to content/skills, which has also limited UN Women's ability to influence the UNCT in some contexts **Regional level** That same UN culture that emphasizes status and hierarchy affects the extent to which UN Women can participate in several processes (e.g., Regional Directors at D1 level cannot participate in the face-to-face performance appraisal of the RC)	Individuals ensured that they could get job done, despite bureaucratic delays Individuals draw on network, and relationships In some cases, UN Women participated in performance appraisal via HQ procedure established by UNDG
Time	**Country level** Insufficient time to dedicate to UN system coordination— balancing the demands of programmes versus coordination role can be a particular challenge Evolving organizational demands (such as RMS system) associated with need for better evidence of and accountability for results **Regional level** Evolving organizational demands (such as RMS system) associated with need for better evidence of and accountability for results	Individuals have put in more time and worked harder to deliver, yet this is not a sustainable practice

Country and regional constraints		Efforts to overcome constraints, 2011-2015
Human resources	**Country and regional** Lack of enough people and/or the necessary expertise and skill sets in certain contexts Unrealistic expectations of what can be accomplished by certain posts (e.g., SPC Specialists in ROs) Absence of specialized advisers, which can be critical in fulfilling certain coordination demands, for example in situations of conflict	Training provided to staff Added "Deputy" post in a few countries Added certain support positions (e.g., Programme Analyst post to support SPC Specialist in East Asia and the Pacific) Raised funds that allowed placement of specialized staff (e.g., for conflict settings)
Limited flexible and pooled funding	**Country and regional** UN Women has lacked flexible funding (including seed funding) to support coordinated efforts of UN system at field level Limited availability of pooled funding mechanisms to support coordinated work of UN system at field level	COs have found creative ways of re-assigning non-core resources to support this work COs are raising funds from private sector ROs are engaged in resource mobilization, and in Europe and Central Asia have added a Resource Mobilization Specialist position
Strategic direction and guidance	**Country and regional** Insufficient guidance and strategic direction provided by HQ with regard to priorities for UN system GEEW coordination, or guidance that is not useful to field	Plans to develop guidance and additional supportive materials Some ROs clarifying nature of this mandate through approach papers or Theories of Change
Navigating stakes of other entities	**Country and regional** As noted in Section 2.6, UN system stakeholders have particular stakes in each context, often related to funding, history, reputation, branding and overlapping mandates.	Environmental scanning and negotiation of spaces with actors on case by case basis Agreements on roles and responsibilities or standards of practice (negotiated at HQ or field level)

These constraints are mostly addressed through "mutual adjustment,"[190] which essentially refers to the capacity of people to make it happen. In several contexts, the personal strengths of individuals representing UN Women have been able to partly mitigate the effects of resource limitations on coordination related efforts. UN Women is often considered to be doing a lot with limited resources.

190 Mintzberg defines "mutual adjustment" as the shifts that are made among different actors, as they learn from each other and from their various responses to the environment in order to find a way of making things work for them. Mintzberg, H., and J. A. Waters. 1985. "Of Strategies, Deliberate and Emergent." *Strategic Management Journal* 6, no. 3 (September 1985): 257–72.

4. LESSONS AND PROMISING PRACTICES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section highlights a number of overarching lessons learned from UN Women's experience in implementing its UN system GEEW coordination mandate. The lessons are based on the empirical data of this evaluation and are relevant to UN Women and stakeholders in the UN system with an interest in improving inter-agency coordination and collaboration. Several of the lessons reflect on the key factors for successful coordination, as outlined in Section 2. 6: the importance of reciprocity, trust and reputation in being able to coordinate the work of others. The underlying importance of the role of leadership and of a "backbone" organization also emerges in these lessons.

The section also highlights promising practices from the field (both regional and country level) that appear to facilitate coordination and collaboration in general, or that link UN system coordination work to development results.

4.2 LESSONS LEARNED

- **Common vision matters.** Involved actors tend to appreciate coordination and collaboration efforts and assess them as most effective when these are organized around shared and specific objectives or tangible joint products such as reports, frameworks or guidelines. A focus on substance is therefore important to maintain motivation and interest. In addition, a shared vision and passion for equality creates a sense of community that enables innovation and fuels meaningful actions.

- **Incentives matter.** Among entities with vertical accountability (understood as a responsibility to respond and report to a HQ) efforts to enhance horizontal collaboration require incentives (clear benefits, value).

- **Credibility is crucial.** In the absence of financial resources as an incentive, credibility (or moral authority) to convene other actors is important. In this regard, UN Women's expertise and agenda setting role makes a difference.

- **Build institutional relations based on trust.** Coordination approaches that focus on working together, that are inclusive and consultative, and that build on trust and respect for the expertise and experience of other UN actors are more likely to be successful than top down, directive approaches. Networking has long been a staple of feminist global action, but it is different from traditional networking. It reflects a tradition of working through trust-based alliances in opposition to the dominant discourses and formal structures that the networks are resisting and seeking to change. Successful networking requires an intensive investment in relationships, which must be balanced with the time required for organizational and professional obligations.

- **Model behaviours**. Internal organizational integrity and consistency on GEEW are as important as technical knowledge and approaches used in gender mainstreaming work. Organizations embodying feminist approaches tend to be less hierarchical and less top down. They value multilayered and collective leadership, are introspective and critical about their own leadership, are innovative in organizational structures and governance practices, and infuse a dimension of advocacy in every job, activity and location.[191]

191 Srilatha Batliwala. 2010. "Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation", page 15.

- **Personal relationships and soft skills are key.** Inter-organizational relationships develop because of human beings and are run by human beings. The objective characteristics (e.g., education, expertise, kills) and soft skills (e.g., communication, leadership) as well as the subjective characteristics (such as personality traits) of individual managers and staff at different organizational levels affect the development of relationships and are a key factor for effective collaboration—more so when systems in place are not yet consolidated.

- **Formal structures help.** Formal coordination mechanisms can initiate and drive UN coordination on GEEW, and exclusion from such mechanisms (e.g., IASC) can affect UN Women's ability to engage with and influence other actors in certain contexts. Nevertheless, as illustrated by UN Women's work on EVAW, a formal coordination structure is not a fundamental condition for successful collaboration among actors.

- **Gender champions do make a difference.** Leaders who have experience and deep understanding of GEEW dynamics can and do mobilize others in support of transformative change in gender power relations.

Field-level lessons

- **Engage RCs as allies.** UN Women's coordination work at the country level is more effective when actively supported by the RC. This calls for a relationship in which UN Women considers itself (and is perceived to be) an ally and supporter of the RC. One way to facilitate that relationship is to communicate and promote good practices of other entities in GEEW.

- **Coordination is resource intensive.** Effective coordination at RO and CO levels requires dedicated human resources within UN Women. At the country level, at a minimum, UN Women needs to be able to provide solid, continued support to the GTG and/or the UNCT. Ideally, there should also be human and financial resources to engage in high-level proactive initiatives such as UN Women-led GTG and UNCT engagement with the national gender machinery and other national partners.

- **Coordination requires explicit and contextualized strategies**. Coordination works best when it is harmonized with the other two dimensions of UN Women's mandate and integrated into a deliberate strategy. In Malawi, for example, three of the four underlying principles of its strategy are: *Nothing alone*—every thematic intervention will be carried out with a relevant UN partner; *Build on what there is*; and *Leverage joint and multisectoral efforts*. Nepal, apart from the coordinated response to the earthquake (already noted in this report), has a deliberate strategy in its Strategic Note to put coordination across all of their work areas, drawing the attention of donors who funded a Junior Professional Officer position on coordination.

- **Credible presence matters.** Having a full-fledged CO with delegation of authority greatly facilitates, but is not a necessary condition for, the positioning of UN Women in relation to its coordination mandate. Where UN Women does not have COs (e.g., countries with programme presence or gender advisers), its influence on the UN system agenda is more dependent on the good will of the RC and other UN actors, as well as on the ability of individual UN Women staff members to circumnavigate the obstacles deriving from the Entity's limited presence.

- **Substantive issue focus can provide "greater glue" to coordinated efforts.** Experience in both regions and countries suggests that focusing work on specific and substantive issues can help maintain the interest and dynamism of a coordination mechanism (such as an inter-agency working group). In the United Nations, there are infinite numbers of meetings and UN coordination is associated with meetings and process, rather than with opportunities to jointly innovate and support transformative change for gender equality.

4.3 PROMISING PRACTICES FROM THE FIELD

The evaluation has highlighted the fact that the implementation of UN Women's GEEW coordination mandate varies, and has to vary, depending on the diverse contexts in which it works. At the same time, it noted the current lack of operational guidance to ROs and COs on how to effectively operationalize this mandate.

The following tables provide examples of how different UN Women offices have successfully addressed specific coordination issues in their contexts—at the country level and the regional level. Rather than providing normative guidance that would be replicable in each geographic or thematic context, this compilation provides the beginnings of a "toolbox" that ROs or COs can choose from and adapt to their specific situation and needs.

Table 4.1 Promising practices at the country level

Category	Practice	Why it is promising
Developing gender mainstreaming strategies to guide UNCT response to emergency	In Sierra Leone, UN Women played a key role in developing a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy to guide UNCT response to the Ebola crisis and address emerging gender dimensions of the Ebola Virus Disease in the country.	This clarifies roles and responsibilities of agencies and can facilitate implementation of the UN-wide mandate for gender mainstreaming.
Facilitating the sharing of technical and knowledge resources among UNCT members	Various practices have been identified, including Nepal where a roster of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Experts was created, and Fiji MCO, where a Surge Capacity List was established for humanitarian interventions. In Colombia, a Gender toolkit website was developed and operationalized. Nepal has also developed an Inventory of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Knowledge Products. In Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu, the GTG gender surge mechanism was successfully activated in 2014. These mechanisms are also being set up by ROs.	This increases operational efficiencies by coordinating GEEW-related resources, notably during humanitarian situations.
Revitalizing GTGs	In some countries, UN Women has helped to clarify the purpose of the GTG, encouraged development of realistic workplans, and helped focus the work of the GTG on issues that matter to the UNCT and the national context. In Fiji, the GTG is the only functioning outcome group of the five UNDAF outcome groups, as well as the only one with a dedicated coordinator. UN Women chairs the GTG and has a person dedicated to that task who ensures efficient follow up and communication.	Relevance to the UNCT and to the country context is critical for any inter-agency group. GTGs have been more active when members perceive a strategic purpose to their meetings. Thus, having clear, realistic and relevant workplans (i.e., that respond to development needs) has helped GTGs to achieve greater results.

Category	Practice	Why it is promising
Extending the GTG	Extended GTGs have been operating in some countries (Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Ukraine) and seem to have increased the sense of purpose of the group and exchanges between the United Nations and civil society. In Asia and the Pacific, the regional thematic Working Group on Gender Equality (which is part of the RCM) includes civil society. In Fiji, the UN Gender Group is increasing harmonization with regional government bodies such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and is developing a plan to articulate areas of collaboration and cooperation in relation to regional and international processes.	The involvement of external stakeholders can help to challenge the United Nations and bring different perspectives on the analysis of inequalities. Additionally, extended groups may facilitate national ownership of development interventions in line with the Paris Declaration and principles of aid effectiveness.
Pooled funds or One Fund as incentive for joint gender equality programming	In Uruguay, the One Fund has facilitated coordination around gender joint programmes, in a context where UN Women counts on little or no programming resources. Although the One Fund has not been replenished, it has contributed to the establishment of a collaborative culture in the UNCT that facilitates UN Women's implementation of its coordination mandate.	UNCT members in Uruguay and Guinea Bissau remarked on the value of having access to the One Fund. Funds made available to a team that is motivated and willing to work together towards a common goal can increase efficiencies and the effectiveness of their joint efforts.
Providing feedback on entities' strategies and working with other Working Groups on normative issues (convention work)	UN Women reviews and provides gender mainstreaming advice to peer agencies on their country strategies and programme documents (e.g., UN Women Mexico) and to the portfolio of country-level PBF Secretariat projects (e.g., through the GTG in Kyrgyzstan) and reviews the gender approach in UN joint programmes (Fiji MCO). The GTG in Fiji works with the Human Rights Working Group to ensure that a gender perspective was reflected in the Universal Periodic Reports of Fiji, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands.	This facilitates agency-specific ownership of GEEW mainstreaming at the implementation phase in the countries where UN Women has the capacity to provide this advisory service at the planning stage.
Making more visible/ reporting on the UN Women coordination mandate	In Malawi, the CO developed a framework for tracking activities and progress towards each of the four outcomes. At the country level, UN Women offices rarely report specifically on the UN Women Coordination Strategy.	This helps to make UN Women's work more visible as well as link it better to development results.
Carrying out joint policy advice and/or dialogue to strengthen gender equality and human rights situation in countries	In Mexico, Tunisia or Malawi, there was joint UN policy advice and/or dialogue with national governments to ensure compliance with gender equality and human rights commitments.	This increases UN credibility while advancing (or avoiding the backdrop) of countries' human rights and gender equality commitments.

Category	Practice	Why it is promising
Developing shared or common workplans with key national partners	The development of shared workplans between the United Nations and national partners (notably with the national gender machinery) has limited duplications, most notably in Malawi where the GTG has facilitated this process. In Fiji, the UN Gender Group is increasing harmonization with regional government bodies such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS).	This allows greater coherence and limits duplication, particularly for national partners that are often approached by or collaborate simultaneously with various UN entities.
Formally and informally integrating national humanitarian response mechanisms[192]	In the humanitarian field, progress on coordination has been made through an agreement between UN Women and OCHA, allowing for joint initiatives in spite of UN Women's lack of membership in IASC. This cooperation has been successfully replicated with a joint initiative in the Asia Pacific region with GenCap and OCHA, as well as by strong influence in input to the World Humanitarian Summit. UN Women Nepal contributed to establishment of the Humanitarian Response Inter Cluster Gender Working Group with the endorsement and support of the Humanitarian Coordinator and GenCap advisers five days after the earthquake in Nepal. UN Women's MCO in Fiji co-leads the Regional Protection cluster and the Regional GBV in Emergencies sub-cluster and played important roles in the clusters after Tropical Cyclone Winston.	This ensures gender-specific issues are effectively considered in humanitarian interventions. This approach allows for effective coordination and advocacy on GEEW in humanitarian fora.
Building UN system GEEW capacities	Capacity development is an area that has not been fully developed, although this is only partly within the coordination mandate. Apart from on-line training offered by UN Women, some COs (for example, Tanzania, Fiji, Uruguay) have opted for thematic seminars, workshops or forums with internal and external experts that both share internal (to the UN system) good practices and introduce additional experiences to further thought and practice in various gender issues. These are highly appreciated and very well attended.	In addition to increasing capacities and awareness of UN entities and staff, these initiatives help shape a common understanding and a common language related to issues that are specific to a country, thus facilitating future communication and coordinated actions.

192 For more information on UN Women's UN system coordination work in humanitarian settings, please see Appendix X.

Table 4.2 Promising practices at the regional level

Category	Practice	Why it is promising
Regional GTG support to national GTGs	In Europe and Central Asia or Latin America and the Caribbean, there has been mapping of capacity of GTGs, convening of GTGs, and knowledge-sharing platforms for country-level GTGs. The Asia Pacific RO provided support to Cambodia, Viet Nam, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including through the UNDG Asia and the Pacific, where UN Women is seen as one of the lead technical agencies. The RO also led the development and roll-out of an integrated training on human rights-based approach and GEEW for UNCTs. The Europe and Central Asia RO conducted a desk review of 12 UNDAFs and CCAs from a gender perspective to better understand how the twin track approach (i.e., gender mainstreaming and gender focus) has been applied and to generate some concrete recommendation to better integrate gender throughout the UNDAF planning process to promote GEEW.	GTGs often feel isolated and have been energized by the opportunity to exchange and learn from others.
Mapping of regional capacity on GEEW	In West and Central Africa, the RO carried out a mapping on UN gender capacity at the regional level for presentation to the UNDG.	Although effects of this mapping exercise are not yet known, it offers potential to inform a more coherent approach at the regional level, based on clear understanding of each UN entity's areas of strength and weakness.
Substantive/issue orientation of inter-agency working groups	In Latin America and the Caribbean, the RO has adopted a focus on flagship initiatives in the GTG. Asia and the Pacific RO has also created sub-working groups of the GTG focused on substantive areas (UNiTE, Gender Statistics and WPS) and have produced disseminated knowledge products under these platforms. The UNiTE Campaign has also been a key entry point for UN Women's coordination role and has been instrumental in bringing together UN agencies to work on a specific GEEW issue.	Focus on substantive issues seems to motivate the group and make its contributions more directly related to GEEW development results (as opposed to a more activity-based and process oriented focus for the GTG).
Developing Theory of Change	In the Arab States, the RO conceptualized a normative, coordination, advocacy and knowledge management Theory of Change.	This links the different roles of UN Women.

Category	Practice	Why it is promising
Strategic support to UNDG	UNDG for Asia and the Pacific established an *ad hoc* working group on "Addressing extremisms leading to discrimination against women in law and in practice". The UN Women Asia Pacific RO works with ESCAP on the organization of regional preparatory meetings for CSW and ensures gender is mainstreamed in other inter-governmental fora, such as the Asia and Pacific Forum on Sustainable development (which feeds into the High-level Political Forum). UN Women RO in Arab States chairs a UNDG theme group to enhance women's quota in managerial positions within the UN system as well as increasing the number of women RCs.	This engages senior leadership in discussions about critical and sensitive GEEW issues in the region and for the UN system.
Integrating gender in the IASC	In Asia and the Pacific, UN Women, in collaboration with OCHA created an *ad hoc* working group led by a GenCap adviser as part of the IASC at regional level. This evolved into a standing working group under IASC and played a critical role in supporting humanitarian response after the earthquake in Nepal.[193]	This helps to strengthen the gender architecture for humanitarian action at the regional level.
Joint programming and joint research at the regional level	In East and Southern Africa and in Asia and the Pacific, the ROs have engaged in joint research with other UN partners on topics such as EVAW and extractive industries.	This can illustrate the potential and the value added of regional level UN coordination that can provide evidence base on issues of concern to countries and UNCTs in the region.
Agreeing on a way of cooperating with key sister agencies at the regional level	In East and Central Asia, UN Women developed a regional partnership framework between UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women, the three entities based in Istanbul that set the parameters for operational cooperation among the entities.	Although the agreement is at an operational level, it can illustrate the potential to help identify who is doing what, helps address (operationally) the issue of overlapping mandates, and can help to clearly identify the strengths and collaborative advantages of each of the entities.

193 This has not been possible in all regions. In West and Central Africa, for example, UN Women did not appear to participate in the regional IASC at the time of this evaluation.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 Introduction

This Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to UN System Coordination on GEEW points out a number of the ongoing challenges for the United Nations to realize the ideal of a DaO organization. Today, the imperative for collaboration is even greater given the need for more integrated support for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In a short five years, UN Women has set solid foundations for the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of its UN system coordination role and its integration with the operational and normative roles that make the organization unique and fit for the purpose of this new development agenda. Overall, the evaluation concludes that UN Women has made an important difference in the GEEW landscape in the UN system. While there are ways in which UN Women can improve its strategy, approach and resourcing of UN coordination (identified in the recommendations in Section 5.2), much of its success will hinge on the culture, practices and behaviours of other actors of the UN system, including Member States.

The following conclusions summarize the main insights on the four evaluation criteria that derive from the findings and supporting evidence presented in Section 3 of this report.

5.1.2 Relevance

Conclusion 1: UN Women's UN coordination efforts fill gaps in the UN system's structure in relation to strengthening system capacity and actions for GEEW.

Based on Findings 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9

- UN Women's system-wide mandate has been and remains relevant to a widely recognized need to strengthen UN system coherence and abilities to effectively address GEEW at the global and field level, including within the UN system (gender parity).

- Prior to UN Women's work on the UN-SWAP, the UN system was lacking clearly formulated shared performance standards for GEEW and mechanisms to monitor related UN system progress.

- At the country level, there has been, and continues to be, a need to strengthen the GEEW capacity of and (shared) commitment to GEEW of UNCTs as well as of individual UN agencies. In regions, there is also recognition of the need for greater coherence of strategy and action both in advocacy of GEEW issues and in providing support to UNCTs. UN Women has been playing an important role in this regard. The global processes around formulating the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs required and benefited from a dedicated actor to engage the whole United Nations in rallying behind the demand for a stand-alone SDG on gender equality.

Conclusion 2: UN Women has made laudable efforts to adjust (internally and externally) the scope and nature of its UN system GEEW coordination role to address the different interpretations and expectations of stakeholders.

Based on Findings 1, 2, 3

- UN Women's Coordination Strategy and related draft Theory of Change are helpful documents in that they explicitly describe the different dimensions of UN Women's coordination role.

- As fairly high-level documents, neither the Strategy nor the draft Theory of Change provide specific guidance on what to expect from UN Women in different thematic and/or geographic contexts. As a result, both UN Women staff and UN partners, especially in the field, continue to have a range of understandings and expectations of UN Women's coordination role, which is not fully integrated in one overall unique mandate. This sometimes leads to frustration: Depending on the expectation, UN Women is perceived to either overstep the boundaries of its mandate or to underperform in implementing it.

Conclusion 3: UN Women's strategic positioning for UN system GEEW coordination is shaped not only by its existing assets, but also by the extent to which the potential value added of its coordination efforts is recognized and/or demanded by relevant UN partners.

Based on Findings 1, 3

- UN Women's own strategic positioning is only partially within its control. The Entity can develop and/or try to communicate its potential to add value based on its organizational assets (e.g., its expertise, experience and networks). However, whether or not and how other UN actors perceive, interpret and make use of UN Women's assets is strongly influenced by their respective needs, stakes and interests.

- To date, UN Women has tended to be more successful in communicating its value added in relation to general GEEW-related matters than in specific thematic areas.

- In the vertically organized UN system, coordination is a sensitive issue that is reliant on the voluntary cooperation of different entities. Anything that is perceived as UN Women trying "to tell others what to do" is often viewed with suspicion. In addition, the competition for resources in the United Nations serves as a disincentive for UN coordination and limits how and the extent to which UN Women can engage others in collaborative work in certain contexts or thematic areas.

- Global, normative guiding frameworks for GEEW is an area in which UN Women possesses unique organizational assets (its GEEW-focused mandate, relevant experience, expertise and reputation), and in which UN partners appear to be willing to recognize and benefit from these assets without fearing negative effects on their own agencies' positioning or influence.

- UN Women's positioning in different thematic or policy areas has been more varied and contested, as here the Entity's coordination mandate has had a stronger potential to infringe on the status, positioning and influence of other actors. In addition, the extent to which UN Women has been able to clearly formulate the (potential) value added deriving from its UN system coordination mandate in particular thematic areas has varied. The area of humanitarian action is a good example of where there appears to be a considerable gap between UN Women's potential to add value (and actual value added in certain contexts) and related demand from other UN actors.

- Whether or not UN Women's system coordination role is contested by other UN actors does not necessarily say anything about whether or not UN Women should strive to play a UN system coordination role in specific thematic or geographic areas. Evaluation observations do, however, point to the need for UN Women to have a clear understanding of where, why and how its coordination role may add value to what already exists in terms of UN capacities and expertise, and to try to clearly communicate this value added to other UN actors.

5.1.3 Effectiveness

Conclusion 4: UN Women's coordination on GEEW has provided added value when integrated with the normative, intergovernmental and operational work of the UN system.

Based on Findings 5, 6, 7

- In the context of this evaluation, the qualitative notion of "value added" relates to whether or not and how coordinated UN system efforts (led by or including UN Women in an active role) have contributed to more and/or higher quality results than are likely to have come about without coordination.

As illustrated by the various evaluation findings on UN Women's effectiveness, the Entity has added value to the UN system's work in a variety of ways, in particular:

- At the global level, often using consultative processes, UN Women has used its unique GEEW-focused mandate and technical expertise to coordinate or lead processes leading to the development and adoption of guiding (normative) frameworks and related UN commitments, such as spelled out in the SDGs (SDG 5). The available evidence suggests that UN Women contributed to establishing consensus on the need for a specific gender goal early on in the SDG process and helped facilitate informed consensus on the content (and thus quality) of the goal.

- The performance standards and processes for monitoring UN system performance on GEEW as outlined in the UN-SWAP would not have come about without UN Women taking on this task as part of its system-wide coordination mandate.

- In several cases, UN Women has been the driving force behind establishing or revitalizing a number of GEEW-related collaboration mechanisms, including the global UN-SWAP network, as well as regional and country level GTGs. These groups have been working on exchanging knowledge and/or facilitating joint action.

- UN Women ROs have become critical advocates for GEEW in both strategic and operational coordination mechanisms. They have also provided technical inputs to country level processes (e.g., UNDAF preparations) that have been much appreciated by other UN entities at both regional and country levels.

- At the country level, working with groups of other UN entities, UN Women has led or played a key role in UN system efforts to jointly advocate for GEEW-related issues. Some of these efforts have contributed to changes in national policy or plans, and it is likely that this has been facilitated by the fact that the United Nations was perceived to speak with one voice—thereby giving strong emphasis to the respective position. Similarly, UN Women has worked with other UN entities to reduce duplication of efforts, e.g., by providing coordinated support to selected national entities relevant to GEEW issues.

- UN Women's coordination efforts have contributed to UNCT members rallying around and promoting normative GEEW frameworks, such as CEDAW and Security Council Resolution 1325, and also committing to applying these frameworks in their own agency's programmatic (i.e., operational) work. Similarly, UN Women has worked with members of other agencies to strengthen the inclusion of GEEW in the work of the UNCT by incorporating it in CCAs and UNDAFs.

- Although in their early stages, the Flagship Programming Initiatives (for example in EVAW or WEE) are expected to provide opportunities to demonstrate how coordination among entities, mobilized around a theory of change, strengthens the ability to deliver results for gender equality.

- The main characteristics that have allowed UN Women to add value in and through its coordination role are its: GEEW-focused and cross-sectoral mandate; GEEW and thematic expertise and experience; extensive and diverse networks at global and country levels; and use of collaborative, inclusive and consultative processes. It has sometimes faced challenges in demonstrating its added value in contexts where it is seen to be encroaching on the specific thematic expertise that have also been the purview of other UN agencies.

Conclusion 5: Translating enhanced UN system capacity for gender mainstreaming into stronger performance for GEEW results remains a challenge.

Based on Findings 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

- There is very limited evidence on the extent to which improvements in UN system capacity for GEEW that UN Women has contributed to (e.g., through tools, frameworks, knowledge and skills) have been systematically translated into more or stronger GEEW-related activities or results. This lack of evidence of results relates both to changes in performance in the UN system's programming on the ground and to internal changes, such as the issue of gender parity in the UN system. This may be due in part to the fundamental nature of gender mainstreaming, which has been questioned as a strategy, because one can see progress in the process of mainstreaming (new policies and practices), with no evidence of transformative change for gender equality. It is also due to the very real "political" constraints in pushing the envelope from a feminist perspective. At the country level, for example, UN Women is still (and in some cases increasingly so) regarded as the main player expected to drive and monitor UNCT progress on GEEW commitments, rather than the UNCT as a whole taking responsibility for implementing these commitments.

- One main factor in this regard appears to be that incentives and enforcement mechanisms for GEEW performance standards and commitments within the UN system remain weak. The Executive Boards of UN agencies do not consistently demand strong performance on GEEW, which means that GEEW-related accountability mechanisms "lack teeth."

- A related issue is continued weaknesses within the UN system in articulating, reporting on, and conceptualizing contributions to collective impact/results. While staff of UN agencies, including UN Women, are encouraged by reform efforts in the UN system to prioritize their contributions to collective impact of the UN system over programming and reporting requirements of their own entities, this is contradicted by the actual reporting and accountability requirements applied by Executive Boards.

- In this regard, UN Women's work through inter-agency groups will be critical—especially, but not limited to, its engagement in gender-focused groups such as IANWGE and GTGs. The evaluation notes that there is a need to continuously strengthen these bodies.

5.1.4 Human rights and gender equality

Conclusion 6: The ability of the UN system and of UN Women to effectively model GEEW principles continues to be affected by internal structures and organizational cultures that limit the extent to which gender equality principles are fully adopted.

Based on Findings 13, 14, 15, 16

UN Women has effectively used its UN system coordination work to promote and support linkages between global and regional normative frameworks for gender equality and human rights, and between national priorities and UN system priorities and initiatives.

However, UN Women has not always been seen by consulted stakeholders to consistently apply and model human rights and gender equality principles.

- UN Women has made frequent efforts to mobilize and provide a voice to rights holders to influence GEEW-related processes, but it has not done so consistently and not always to the extent desired by these actors.

- UN Women has used consultative, participatory processes on numerous occasions to engage other UN system and external actors in the development of positions or products such as reports. In some cases, however, UN Women was perceived as having promoted its own role and position while neglecting the potential contributions of others.

- UN Women has inconsistently modeled what progressive, innovative, transformational, gender-friendly leadership and management might look like.

The same observations apply to the ability of the UN system as a whole to consistently apply and live by the human rights and gender equality principles that it promotes. The evaluation noted persistent gaps, for example, in ensuring gender parity within the UN system and in identifying and addressing the

underlying causes of inequality and discrimination in its analysis and programming.

Overall, this evaluation confirmed the findings of numerous previous studies that have observed persistent organizational cultures and deep structures within the UN system that limit progress in resolving gender-based inequalities. The evaluation also illustrates the conundrum for UN Women, which is to become equal in power to other UN organizations that are inherently bureaucratic and patriarchal, while at the same time triggering a transformation of the system of which it is a part.[194] This has mundane aspects to it, like challenging everyday procedures for procurement and contracting that impede partnerships with women's organizations, but also involves taking on more entrenched power structures, like challenging senior UN officials when their actions do not reflect the values of gender equality.

5.1.5 Organizational efficiency

Conclusion 7: UN Women's regional architecture was rolled out in 2014. The systems and processes to make it efficient are evolving and, as such, there are still inefficiencies that affect UN Women's efforts to implement its UN system coordination role.

Based on Findings 17, 18, 19

While UN Women has achieved positive results through its UN system coordination efforts, the demands and expectations with regard to its system coordination role exceed its current capacity. This is partly due to funding shortfalls, but it is also a matter of setting priorities within the organization and more fully integrating UN system coordination in normative and operational work. UN Women is still improving processes to support its regional architecture, and these are not yet demonstrating efficiency gains. During the period under review, there has been a lack of clarity and guidance from HQ on how to operationalize the UN system coordination mandate in different contexts, i.e., how to plan, implement, monitor and report on related activities and results, and how to make related decisions and choices. UN Women has faced a number of constraints in implementing the UN coordination mandate in its first five years. Yet its staff have also been creative in trying to work around many of those constraints to get the job done.

194 Sandler, J., and A. Rao. 2012. "Strategies of Feminist Bureaucrats: United Nations Experiences". *IDS Working Paper*, *2012*(#397), p.20.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 Introduction

In its first five years, UN Women has made consistent and productive efforts to implement its composite mandate on GEEW. Over this period, there has been considerable progress with regard to enhancing the UN system's GEEW capacity, promoting greater accountability for GEEW results, and increasing the focus on gender equality results, including through the SDGs.

The evaluation found that many factors that affect UN Women's ability to implement its UN system GEEW coordination mandate are inherent to the UN system and lie outside UN Women's control or sphere of influence (e.g., UN vertical architecture, competition for resources, RCs, leadership, commitments, personalities). Similarly, the effects of lack of funding for UN Women cannot be underestimated. Consequently, the recommendations begin with a discussion of issues that could be addressed by Member States and other UN actors—recognizing that all actors have different stakes in the United Nations, in GEEW, and in coordinated UN system efforts on GEEW (see Section 5.2.2).

The subsequent recommendations (Section 5.2.3) are made to UN Women and 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. They are intended to inform UN Women's deliberations during the Mid-Term Review of its Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and other strategic processes, including the next Strategic Plan. The recommendations are geared towards expanding and enhancing the foundations that have been built in the first five years.

UN coordination on GEEW is part of a composite mandate and an organization-wide mandate (i.e., responsibility for it does not lie in one UN Women division). In order to encourage collective decision-making and response, all recommendations are directed to UN Women in general, but the narrative descriptions of the recommendations include references to specific divisions that could take leadership for some of the initiatives.

5.2.2. Issues for consideration of Member States and the UN system

Member states and members of the Executive Board play important roles in UN system coordination on GEEW for several reasons: (a) they entrusted UN Women with a mandate that requires stakeholders with different stakes in the UN system to accept its role; (b) they are on the boards of all of these UN entities and can bring their perspectives on the importance of UN coordination on GEEW to board discussions, especially in discussions of strategy and results; (c) as members of the boards of these entities, they also have a role in holding the UN system accountable for its GEEW commitments and can ask about entity performance on the UN-SWAP, for example; and (d) they committed to fund UN Women and have noted the value of the UN system coordination function, but have not resourced it appropriately. Donor Member States in particular need to consider the conflicting messages that they transmit to the United Nations by providing earmarked resources and demanding accountability for agency-specific results, while supporting intergovernmental processes and normative frameworks such as the new SDGs that require another way of working. They need to be aware of the effects that competition for resources has on collaborative work of the United Nations.

UN system actors all have different stakes in the UN system, in the coordination of GEEW, and in their relationships with UN Women. Other UN entities also need to reflect on the incentives for coordination/collaboration in light of the changing context of Agenda 2030. In particular, one of the challenges will be "integrated" delivery and reporting on results across entities. There may be a need to reconsider how entities report on "shared" results.

5.2.3 Recommendations to UN Women Senior Management

The recommendations are divided into strategic and operational recommendations. The strategic recommendations are focused on UN Women's engagement with the external environment, which is largely outside of its control. Operational recommendations encompass actions that are largely internal to UN Women, although some of them may require consultation with other external actors.

Strategic recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

UN Women should continue to actively engage in strategic dialogue with other UN entities and Member States, through existing mechanisms at all levels, to catalyze greater system coordination and coherence, particularly on GEEW, within the United Nations.

This evaluation confirmed what other studies have also pointed out about the inherent challenges to GEEW coordination in the UN system, which also affect the ability of UN Women to implement this dimension of its mandate.

We recognize that many of the issues are beyond the sphere of control of UN Women—UN Women is just one actor in a complex and dynamic system. Yet UN Women does have a seat at the table and can take steps to at least nudge the system forward, which is,

in fact, what it has already had to do in order to ensure that GEEW principles are taken seriously and result in transformative change for women and girls.

Systemic issues such as vertical accountability, weak incentives for coordination, still limited capacity of other UN entities to address GEEW, inconsistent support from the RC system, and varying stakeholder expectations of UN Women's mandate are best addressed through existing system-wide mechanisms such as the CEB, through Member State directives such as QCPR, and through the demands that Member States place on UN entities. This recommendation suggests that the Senior Management identify key priorities for advocacy in inter-agency mechanisms and through other types of arrangements (e.g., agreements on collaborative advantages or standards of practice with individual entities).

Senior Management should continue to support the United Nations in overcoming systemic challenges and engage in high-level dialogue with a view to strengthening complementary mandates. Such engagement would position UN Women as forward looking and help resolve confusion about its UN coordination role and leadership on the ground, thus potentially alleviating pressure for field offices to have to clarify and negotiate roles on a case-by-case basis.

Potential actions to be considered should be based on insights derived from UN Women's experience thus far in implementing its UN system coordination role for GEEW. Likewise, potential actions should complement broader discussions in the context of QCPR and the ECOSOC dialogues on long-term positioning of the UN development system. Actions that can be considered build on what UN Women already does and include:

a) Through its role in high-level decision-making bodies, both globally (such as CEB), regionally (such as R-UNDG), and at the country level (UNCT), engage UN system senior leadership in discussions about the need to review and address systemic issues that are impeding the United Nations from supporting an agenda of transformative change in GEEW. This may include reviews in areas such as administrative rules and procedures, the RC system, harmonization of procedures and incentives for application of the joint modality in gender programming, etc.

b) Through inter-governmental processes, such as QCPR, remind Member States of the need to call for coordinated and coherent action on GEEW and to recognize UN Women as the gender machinery of the United Nations. This does not mean that it "does" everything, but that it galvanizes the strengths and capacities of all entities to address underlying inequalities.

c) Consistently pitch UN Women's approach to UN coordination on GEEW as a means to an end; communicate the purpose and importance of linking coordination initiatives with operational and normative work in order to achieve real change in gender equality on the ground.

d) Establish formal agreements with individual entities that specify roles and responsibilities in certain thematic areas and contexts, also referred to as collaborative advantages or standards of practice.

e) Promote pooled funding mechanisms for GEEW in the United Nations,[195] which would allow funds to be used as a unifier rather than as a source of division and competition. Funding, in particular, could be a powerful incentive for change if UN Women managed a large, multi-donor fund to support improved coordination and collective impact for GEEW. This is very much in line with the thinking behind the Flagship Programming Initiatives and UN Women's other recent contributions to UNDG discussions. Building on its experience with the UN Trust Fund on EVAW, UN Women can contribute to increasing the overall level of funding for GEEW to be implemented jointly with UN partners.

195 A per the UNDG Discussion Paper on "The Role of UN Pooled Financing Mechanisms to deliver the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda", endorsed by the UNDG on 28 March 2016.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

UN Women should 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/changes for gender equality.

UN Women has made laudable efforts to reinforce and clarify its UN system coordination mandate both externally and internally, while implementing the mandate at the same time. Yet entities in the UN system, as well as UN Women staff, note that the mandate requires greater clarification. This, together with the changes in the global context due the new demands of the SDGs and the ECOSOC dialogues on the positioning of the UN development system, provides a strong rationale for UN Women to review and clarify this mandate and fully align its Coordination Strategy (Implementation Strategy for UN Women's System-wide and Inter-agency mandates) with the UN Women Strategic Plan. This process includes making more explicit the difference between substance and process coordination and the need to emphasize how UN Women integrates coordination with other areas of its mandate in order to contribute to development results in GEEW.

As custodian for what is known as an "organizational mandate", the UN Coordination Division could take the lead in defining the actions to be considered in this process, such as:

a) Review and, as needed, redefine or sharpen the purpose, scope and/or foci of its UN coordination role in light of: (i) challenges in communicating or creating buy-in to this role in the past; and (ii) evolving global, UN and UN Women priorities. This effort should highlight what makes UN Women's UN coordination mandate distinct (as an international women's machinery) from the role that all other entities play in supporting a more coherent and coordinated United Nations.

b) Update the Implementation Strategy for UN Women's System-wide and Inter-agency mandates and its corresponding (draft) Theory of Change by clarifying the purpose and foci of coordination, in particular the difference between substantive and process coordination, and the link between institutional and development results/changes for gender equality that coordination is meant to achieve (linked to the Strategic Plan and the SDGs). This should be done by brainstorming with different parts of the organization.

c) UN coordination for GEEW/development results should help ensure that UN Women's operational and coordination work feed into its policy and normative work and vice versa in a cycle of mutually reinforcing learning and continuous improvement. It is also important to clarify how important UN coordination is to UN Women's mission in relation to the other areas of the mandate (normative and operational). UN Women should avoid having two different results frameworks. This could be done by further integrating elements of the current results frameworks into the OEEF and Development Results Framework, within the limits of currently agreed approaches to results-based management in the UNDG.

d) Give emphasis to influencing and working with the UN RC system to ensure a consistent approach to seeking the greatest complementarity between UN Women and the RC, rather than relying on the personal interest in and commitment to GEEW of individual RCs.

e) Promote a feminist approach to UN coordination that is cognizant of the need for a transformative agenda for gender inequality as opposed to technical responses that conform to the status quo. A feminist approach emphasizes the role of political advocacy, the strengthening of alliances, and building trust as key strategies for influencing institutions and facilitating change processes.

f) Define and clarify UN Women's UN coordination role *vis-à-vis* the characteristics of its regional architecture and different types of presence at country level (full DoA, programme office, no presence).

RECOMMENDATION 3:

UN Women should align the scope of its mandate with its resource base.

UN Women has faced constraints in funding its coordination role, establishing synergies, and setting priorities among the different dimensions of its composite mandate. Recognizing the limited funding base and that the Institutional Budget for UN Women may not increase, resourcing the coordination role will require either: (i) re-allocating or re-aligning existing core and Integrated Budget resources; (ii) better integrating financing for the coordination function in UN Women's resource mobilization strategy; or (iii) reducing the scope of the mandate to align with current resource levels. This will require clearly communicating to Member States and Board of Directors the implications of underfunding for UN Women's ability to cover all dimensions of UN system coordination on GEEW. In light of current discussions on UN pooled financing mechanisms to bridge the SDGs financing gap, other complementary financial solutions could be taken into account.

If it is decided that the current scope of UN Women's mandate will be maintained, then the resources to support it in the field will need to be found or re-allocated. This could include:

a) Designating additional staff at HQ and ROs to focus on field-level coordination issues both with a regional and a country perspective. This may require a realignment of resources to ensure coherence between the work that goes on in HQ and in the field. Given the huge demand for guidance in UN Women, where is the staff time going to come from?

b) Reviewing, based on additional evidence provided by the evaluation of the regional architecture, the types and distribution of staff positions in regions to ensure that they can support the coordination function. For example, in some regions SPC Specialists take on monitoring and reporting roles, yet in other regions there is a designated staff person for monitoring and reporting, which frees up time of the SPC Specialist that can be dedicated to translating guidance from HQ, etc.

c) Creating pockets of seed money for engaging in UN system-wide coordination joint programming or joint action in order to create capacity to jumpstart initiatives and empower innovators.

d) Country contexts with complex coordination environments (that include peacekeeping missions or protracted humanitarian crises) require additional staff resources to fulfill coordination roles. Given that resource constraints limit the addition of Integrated Budget posts at the country level, HQ and ROs could support COs in their efforts to raise non-core resources to fund positions to support coordination. At a minimum, it may be necessary to have a post that helps to fulfill Secretariat functions if that can free up others, including Representatives, to focus on strategic coordination.

e) Encouraging a move from processes to products that can be used and implemented by the system with a minimal workload for UN Women.

f) UN Women should explore other ways of integrating UN system coordination into its resource mobilization strategy. Flagship programmes, for example, could provide a key opportunity for promoting and funding coordinated efforts to address gender inequalities. UN Women could also encourage the development of pooled funding mechanisms at regional or country levels (such as a "gender mainstreaming fund") to facilitate joint work and support the UN system as a whole.

g) In aligning scope and resources, it will also be important to assess and define roles that are played by the different divisions and different levels of the organization. The UN Coordination Division is referred to as the custodian of the organization's strategy. For an organization-wide mandate, what does that mean? The expressed needs for information, tools and guidance from different parts of the organization suggest that there is a key "knowledge hub" role to be played by HQ.

Operational recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 4:

UN Women should provide operational guidance for UN Women staff on how to approach, plan, implement and report on its UN system coordination role in different geographic and thematic contexts.

Due to the rapid evolution of the organization and its regional architecture, and the challenges of priority setting, there are still gaps in strategic alignment and operational guidance provided to policy areas and the field. The evaluation team heard repeated requests from UN Women staff at country and regional levels, and from the different policy areas, for guidance from HQ that could be adapted to their particular contexts. Oftentimes, the guidance requested was for tools, examples and documented experience that could help them avoid duplication of effort.

The UN Coordination Division and Policy and Programme Divisions should work together to identify the type of guidance that should be prioritized in the short and medium term. Such guidance should also emphasize UN Women's role in ensuring that its support for UN system coordination adds significant transformative value—that is, that it nudges the UN system to do a better job in analysing and addressing underlying causes of gender inequality. It could notably include the following:

a) Develop clear statements of organizational priorities and expectations of UN system coordination on GEEW for UN Women offices at both regional and country levels.

   i) **Country level:** UN Women should clarify expectations with regard to implementation of the UN coordination mandate given different types of scenarios faced by offices in the field. For example, it may be appropriate to identify "minimum expectations" for UN system coordination on GEEW and provide a tool box that countries can draw from depending on their needs. UN Women could also provide tailored guidance to the field based on clusters of countries according to parameters that affect coordination work (e.g., type of UN Women presence, Upper Middle-Income Country/Middle Income-Country, conflict, humanitarian, RC leadership, etc.)

   ii) **Regional level:** UN Women should clarify expectations of ROs and their UN system coordination role at the regional level, especially with regard to RO support to UN coordination efforts in countries. This should take into account the different types of country presence (for example, providing potential criteria for engagement in countries where UN Women is a non-resident agency). ROs play a critical role in translating and adapting guidance to the regional context.

   iii) Ensure coherence of messages coming from HQ in order to reduce effects of competing incentives in UN Women for resource mobilization to fund operational work versus UN coordination.

b) Develop clear guidelines on communicating to other UN agencies about the nature of UN Women's UN system coordination mandate (i.e., what does UN Women mean by this?) so as not to be seen as taking over their work but trying to improve coherence in the system. In addition, this guidance should clarify UN Women's practices of "working together" or "working on its own" and the extent to which UN Women carries the banner of the United Nations versus its own banner.

c) Provide direction on how UN Women offices should plan and report on their efforts to deliver coordinated results on gender equality. Once the draft Theory of Change has been revised (to clarify how coordination is expected to facilitate development results), UN Women should provide additional guidance to the field on how to reflect coordination in their respective Strategic Notes and reports.

i) If UN Women wants its coordination work to link to development results, it will need to encourage this through its planning and reporting requirements. Recent improvements in the RMS in 2014 (with the addition of a specific question) are a step in the right direction, but reports from UN Women field offices do not always clearly identify the contributions made or how they were done jointly. As part of this, UN Women should encourage the development of theories of change at the country level, which could integrate the different components of the UN Women mandate.

ii) In light of the SDGs, UN Women should consider initiating a discussion with other entities on how the common approach to results-based planning can better support the integrative and collaborative approach that will be required to achieve the SDGs.[196] In addition UN Women should work with other UN entities to verify the assumed link between GEEW coordination and/or collaboration and improved development results, and also to contribute to learning on when and under what circumstances UN system or agency capacity for GEEW is translated into changes in behaviour and results. In this process, it may also be helpful to define different "levels" of results of UN system coordination, including notions of coherence, synergies and reduced duplication.

d) Develop an easily accessible repository of resources that include the following types of requests from the field and from policy areas:

i) Standardized training materials on the twin-track approach to UNDAFs, accountability in the UN system, gender mainstreaming in the SDGs and other materials used in UN coordination work on GEEW, which could be adapted to local contexts.

ii) Systematic global and regional rosters of gender experts based on agreed criteria, which can be useful for UN Women and for other UN entities. (Some COs and ROs do this on an *ad hoc* basis, but there is no institutional approach. These rosters, and those of other entities such as the UN Staff College, should be known and readily accessible to UN Women staff in the field.

iii) Specific examples of coordination mechanisms, "dos and don'ts" in the creation and management of inter-agency mechanisms (Terms of Reference, procedures), examples of Memoranda of Understanding, examples of agreements on standards of practice or operating relationships with other entities.

iv) Good practices on substantive UN coordination on GEEW at both country and regional levels, and that illustrate how the UN coordination role links to normative and operational roles.

v) Good practices in managing inter-agency coordination mechanisms, such as GTG.

e) Strengthen the feedback loop between the field and HQ on the evolving needs for guidance by ensuring systematic meetings, and if possible, at least one face-to-face meeting between SPC Specialists in the RO and HQ.

196 We understand that UN Women cannot act on its own in this regard and is constrained by the agreed approach to results-based management in UNDG.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

UN Women should enhance the role it plays in promoting UN system accountability for its commitments on GEEW.

UN Women has been effective in promoting the UN system's "answerability" for its commitments in GEEW, e.g., through the UN-SWAP, the role of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations, and by serving as the Secretariat and/or contributing inputs for global studies commissioned by the Secretary-General or inter-governmental bodies.

a) UN Women should continue to monitor and guide the UN system in strengthening implementation of its GEEW commitments. In doing so, it needs to ensure that greater attention is paid to related processes (consultation, feedback) and recognize that its role in promoting answerability—and challenging the system to do better—can lead to tensions with other entities, depending on how it is exercised.

b) In playing this role, UN Women can and should draw more systematically on the important external "check" on the United Nations that can be provided by civil society. UN Women has a global and articulate constituency, and this is one of its primary sources of strength and influence. The alliance between UN Women and civil society can contribute to helping the United Nations explore approaches that are more transformative with regard to gender power relations. It will be crucial to have partnerships with the women's rights networks that played such a fundamental role in the creation of UN Women. Since it is often difficult to be a critic from within, leveraging relationships with civil society networks outside the UN system could be strategic in terms of eliciting honest critiques of the UN system that aim to improve its coherence and results.

c) UN Women's UN Coordination Division should continue to enhance accountability of the UN system through the UN-SWAP and harmonize existing accountability mechanisms.

i) The UN-SWAP is an effective tool for promoting accountability of the UN system and has also provided a promising practice in terms of UN system coordination. UN Women should continue to coordinate enhancement of the UN-SWAP, including the roll out of an assessment framework that is focused on the achievement of gender equality results.

ii) UN Women is leading the update of the UN-SWAP and UNCT Scorecard with a view to achieving greater alignment between these two frameworks that have different target groups. In this process, UN Women should continue to explore the development of more standardized, objective tools for measuring and more progressive indicators.

iii) In addition, UN Women can further encourage the application of the UN-SWAP standards by using opportunities such as the Operations Management Team, the Programme Management Team and the UNCT to begin to proactively address issues that overlap in the UN-SWAP and the Gender Scorecard (capacity, gender markers) and issues such as resource allocation, gender architecture/parity, and organizational culture—all of which pertain to the UN-SWAP but can be supported and encouraged at the country level.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

UN Women should strengthen its efforts to ensure that GEEW principles are consistently taken into account by the UN system in the areas of UN Women's policy and programming expertise.

This recommendation suggests actions to strengthen UN Women's positioning for UN system coordination in the thematic areas of work included in its Strategic Plan 2014-2015. Work in these areas is led by the Policy Division and the Humanitarian Unit (Programme Division). We have not made specific recommendations for each thematic area, given that they are at different stages of evolution and operate in different coordinating contexts. The one exception is humanitarian action, where the evidence from country case studies, regional level, and HQ converges and where we recommend specific actions for UN Women to consider.

Policy areas in general

a) UN Women should strengthen its thought leadership capacity in thematic areas. Expertise is one of the key factors that strengthen its reputation and credibility as a coordinating entity. The development of organizational expertise (as opposed to periodically contracted expertise) does have resource implications. However, it may also be possible to leverage strategic partnerships with civil society and academia to engage in research that can inform the UN system's work in certain thematic areas.

b) UN Women should enhance its analytical capacity by convening actors and sponsoring system-wide assessments of collective experiences/undertakings in key thematic areas that include an exploration of underlying causes of gender inequality. This could be a powerful way to enhance UN Women's credibility as an agency that catalyzes greater learning among entities.

c) As noted in Recommendation 1, UN Women should engage in discussions with Principals and/or Senior Management of other UN entities to ensure that there are standards of practice in place and clarity with respect to each entity's role and collaborative advantage in the thematic areas. This will ensure that work in the field is smoother and better coordinated.

Humanitarian action

UN Women has come a long way in the two years since its humanitarian strategy was adopted and it began its engagement in this area. Although it is still having difficulties gaining acknowledgement for its value added as a specialized entity with a UN coordination mandate in GEEW, the evaluation notes several good practices it has developed in different contexts. UN Women's strategy has been to leverage its composite mandate—normative, coordination and operational—to ensure that GEEW is incorporated in humanitarian action and contributes to humanitarian effectiveness through integrating gender equality across the work of all clusters. These good practices are important for UN Women to build on while continuing to strengthen its engagement in this area.

While UN Women has made positive contributions to the IASC's Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action Reference Group, the issue is whether or not it will be able to play an equally relevant role consistently within the current institutional coordination mechanisms for GEEW that exist at a global level and in the field.

In order to ensure that UN Women can continue to play an effective role in this (unfortunately) expanding area of work for the United Nations, it should:

a) Continue to move towards more systematic and consistent engagement in coordinating GEEW for humanitarian action, drawing on its partnership with OCHA. Its humanitarian strategy emphasizes upstream advocacy, guidance and standard setting, accountability, and capacity building. These are aligned with its UN coordination mandate and appear to be contributions that are welcomed by partners such as OCHA.

b) Propose a review of the "gender architecture" and accountability framework for gender equality in the humanitarian area, which would include identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current

coordinating structures on GEEW. The lack of gender architecture can also be interpreted as one of the challenges for coordination and positioning of UN Women within the larger humanitarian system.

c) Continue its advocacy to become a member of the IASC, which would give it a stronger voice in the humanitarian system.

d) Create a repository of "results" that shed light on the unique role UN Women can fulfil and that no other entity is undertaking. Estimate the cost of inaction on gender equality in terms of lives, women's and girls' plight, and consequences (short and long term).

RECOMMENDATION 7:

UN Women should modify policies and practices in order to model a gender-responsive organization for the United Nations.

UN Women is part and parcel of the UN policies and administrative rules, which means it may be constrained in the extent to which it can modify policies for the international civil service. Thus, this recommendation must be discussed by Senior Management in terms of what can be done to push the boundaries of those externally-driven policies and procedures (e.g., under Recommendation 1) and what is possible to change internally within the remit of UN Women.

In the effort to lead by example, UN Women should strive to demonstrate best practice in its own organizational policies and practices, culture, approaches to programming, etc. Its performance in these areas will enhance its credibility in guiding the system. Senior Management should identify key gaps and prioritize areas that it will strengthen to move towards UN Women becoming a model entity by:

a) Reviewing formal institutional policies (such as parental leave, flexible work, childcare or sexual harassment) and how they are applied

b) Initiating and encouraging an internal reflection on organizational culture to:

   i) Ensure that UN Women moves towards an egalitarian model in which hierarchies support healthy routines instead of power divisions

   ii) Capitalize on staff members' passion for the mandate and reward that with public recognition

   iii) Enhance opportunities for new staff to learn about UN Women's mandate and the legal instruments and conceptual frameworks of gender equality

   iv) Enable openness to criticism (a requirement for learning) and courageous action for enhancing results

   v) Address recurring concerns about work-life balance in the organization

c) Developing and sharing knowledge about its operational programme models that demonstrate approaches that go beyond providing services or improving women's conditions and that move towards empowerment (Flagship Programming Initiatives may provide such an opportunity by demonstrating the positive impact of interventions in one thematic area in creating more equal gender relations in others)

d) All programme staff should have a very high level of knowledge and expertise in GEEW and all staff (including support staff, drivers, etc.) should model gender-sensitive behaviour

RECOMMENDATION 8:

UN Women should strengthen gender-focused inter-agency coordination mechanisms at HQ and in the field that have been key in the Entity's approach to implementing its UN coordination mandate.

As part of its efforts to strengthen coherence, tap into synergies, and reduce duplication on GEEW in the UN system, UN Women has contributed to and taken steps to strengthen inter-agency groups such as IANWGE and the UNDG Gender Equality Task Team at the global level, and GTGs at the regional and national level.[197] These groups have contributed to GEEW capacity and results, but there is a need to further improve their relevance and effectiveness. The following potential issues and areas should be considered for action:

a) Identifying how these groups (at least at the global level) could be either streamlined (for example, there is some overlap between IANWGE and Gender Equality Task Team of the UNDG) and/or elevated in terms of importance (for example, IANWGE position *vis-à-vis* the CEB). Consider whether or not there is a need for IANWGE to have both a high level mechanism (made up of principals) and a working level that is composed of the Gender Focal Points.

b) Increasing the shared ownership of several of these groups (especially GTGs), given that some UN agencies are happy to reduce their level of participation in GEEW issues and let UN Women take on more or all responsibility. In the medium to long term, this could undermine the relevance of these groups and their capacity to influence change. Similarly, relevance and effectiveness of IANWGE can be enhanced by clarifying its mandate and promoting more shared ownership of the network.

c) Updating the guidance on GTGs (now dated from 2005) to incorporate some of the promising practices identified in the evaluation, and incorporating the notion of "minimum expectations" or scenarios for GTGs depending on country and UNCT context.

d) Drawing on lessons from different experiences in coordinating inter-agency groups. The UN-SWAP focal point network provides a good model for encouraging ownership and participation by UN agencies. Good practices deriving from this network that could be applied to other working groups include seeking and crediting other agencies for good practices, and involving other agencies in decision-making.

e) Sharing experiences on the different roles being played by regional GTGs and the types of engagement that they have with RCM and UNDG and with GTGs at the country level.

197 Some GTGs at the national level have now been replaced by Results Groups that have taken on GTG functions. The reference to GTG encompasses both of these types of interagency groups.

220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017, USA
Tel: 212-906-6400
Fax: 212-906-6705

www.unwomen.org
www.facebook.com/unwomen
www.twitter.com/un_women
www.youtube.com/unwomen
www.flickr.com/unwomen

We encourage you to email us with your feedback: unwomen.eval@unwomen.org

---

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has a unique composite mandate that includes intergovernmental normative, operational, and UN system-wide and interagency coordination roles. The UN system coordination mandate encompasses aspects of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the UN system on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW), including regular monitoring of system-wide progress, and more broadly mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations.

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook this corporate evaluation to assess the progress made so far towards achieving GEEW results in the implementation of this dimension of its mandate, with the aim of informing future work. The evaluation covers all aspects of the UN coordination role and the articulation with the other dimensions of the mandate to support normative and operational work on GEEW at the global, regional and country level.

This evaluation addresses a number of critical questions, including: To what extent has UN Women's UN coordination mandate contributed to progress (or lack of) towards GEEW? To what extent have a human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming been incorporated in UN Women's UN-system coordination efforts? To what extent does the coordination mandate undertaken by UN Women contribute to addressing the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination?

This publication is a resource for those who wish to learn from the experience of UN Women in its contribution to UN-system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women.