



# META-SYNTHESIS OF UN WOMEN EVALUATIONS – 2017/2018

Final Report



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**Produced by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services of UN Women (IEAS)**

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# META-SYNTHESIS OF UN WOMEN EVALUATIONS – 2017/2018



## **INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND AUDIT SERVICES (IEAS)**

Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

UN WOMEN

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# ACRONYMS

<b>CPE</b>	Country Portfolio Evaluation
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ESA</b>	East and Southern Africa
<b>EVAW</b>	Ending Violence Against Women
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
<b>FGE</b>	Fund for Gender Equality
<b>FGM</b>	Female Genital Mutilation
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
<b>GRB</b>	Gender Responsive Budgeting
<b>GSC</b>	Gender Scorecard
<b>GTG</b>	Gender Thematic Group
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IEAS</b>	Independent Evaluation and Audit Services
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>RBM</b>	Results-Based Management
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDS</b>	United Nations Development System
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolutions

<b>UNSDCF</b>	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>VAW</b>	Violence Against Women
<b>WCA</b>	West and Central Africa
<b>WEE</b>	Women's Economic Empowerment
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WLPP</b>	Women's Leadership and Political Participation
<b>WPS</b>	Women Peace Security

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The purpose of this meta-synthesis is to contribute to organizational learning and effective knowledge management through the identification of recurring findings, lessons learned and evidence on the key areas of work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The synthesis will help to inform the forthcoming mid-term review of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and other corporate and country-level processes. The synthesis has captured internal and external enablers that drive or impede progress towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

This is the first synthesis conducted during the current UN Women Strategic Plan; however, it should be noted that it drew on the evaluation of programmes and interventions that were designed and implemented during the previous Strategic Plan. Nonetheless, the results achieved and reported contribute to current Strategic Plan outcomes and the findings are expected to inform and provide insights for future implementation.<sup>1</sup>

The meta-synthesis is based on 39 evaluation reports completed during 2017 and 2018 of UN Women supported programmes and interventions valued at US\$ 527 million,<sup>2</sup> covering 80 countries overall (through global and regional evaluations) and 25 individual countries through country-specific evaluations.<sup>3</sup> The evaluation reports included for the synthesis were rated either good (19) or very good (18), while two were rated fair by GERAAS.<sup>4</sup>

## Approach and methodology

The approach to this synthesis is complementary to previous meta-analyses; however, the analytical framework has been revised taking into consideration UN Women's institutional growth and maturity and in line with current Strategic Plan priorities. The revised analytical framework takes at its heart the complementarity of UN Women's integrated mandate spanning normative support; UN coordination and operational activities, including features related to organizational effectiveness and efficiency of results; and internal and external factors that are reported to enable or inhibit performance.

The meta-synthesis was based solely on a desk review of corporate and decentralized evaluation reports. The synthesis involved both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The analysis was undertaken in accordance with the pre-established OECD-DAC approach for conducting development effectiveness reviews. The data for analysis was extracted from the key findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in the 39 evaluation reports, as well as the lessons learned and good practices identified. Each evaluation report was reviewed and analysed considering the evaluation findings/insights with reference to: (i) relevance; (ii) the achievement of objectives and expected results (effectiveness); (iii) efficiency; (iv) the culture of results; and (v) sustainability, and the respective subcriteria. The findings on 15 subcriteria were rated "highly satisfactory," "satisfactory," "unsatisfactory" and "highly unsatisfactory." The synthesis identified contributing factors, both enabling and hindering, for the five main criteria.

<sup>1</sup> The Strategic Plan 2014–2017 had six Impact Areas, while the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 has five Outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> Includes US\$ 203.5 million and US\$ 84 million of two global/corporate evaluations (see Annex 1 for evaluation titles).

<sup>3</sup> Compiled from evaluation reports reviewed for the synthesis.

<sup>4</sup> Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System.

## Key Insights

### OVERARCHING CONCLUSION

**Overall, UN Women has achieved and sustained its strategic positioning across its integrated mandate often in volatile, complex and resource-constrained settings. However, UN Women's continued effectiveness critically depends on its ability to protect and sustain policy gains and to establish clear and robust policy-practice linkages to influence social norm changes at community, household and individual levels.**

Notwithstanding constraining financial and human resources, UN Women has been able to leverage its institutional expertise and integrated mandate to advance gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Despite relatively limited resources, there is growing recognition that UN Women has contributed to a stronger enabling environment to support GEWE. UN Women's strategic partnerships have to a great extent led to important results, particularly in its normative work. Although not on a large scale, programmatic interventions supported by UN Women have yielded positive changes in a number of women's lives. UN Women also achieved key results in greater prioritization and coordination of GEWE-related issues in the United Nations Development System (UNDS).

However, evaluations stressed the need for increased attention towards protecting and sustaining policy gains and for further transforming normative gains into operational results. A strong case is emerging from evaluations to expand and deepen the focus on social norm change more coherently and consistently within programmes and Strategic Notes. The relative efficiency and fitness for purpose of the results-based and knowledge management mechanisms and processes could be further improved to better gather evidence on results and impacts and to use the information for informed decisions.

Moreover, UN Women could do more through UNDS and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to further promote the GEWE agenda by more forcefully highlighting gaps and suggesting areas of collaboration, joint advocacy, research, policy engagement and joint resource mobilization. UN Women should engage with donors and seek multiple avenues to secure multi-year resource commitments to produce tangible and lasting results. In general, evaluations called for UN Women to strike an appropriate balance between its scarce resources (human and financial) and the most relevant and effective interventions where its comparative and collaborative advantage is best exploited to yield greater impact.

### RELEVANCE

**UN Women supported programmes and interventions remain highly relevant. They are suited to the needs of target groups and are aligned with national priorities and international normative frameworks.**

Nearly all evaluations reported satisfactory or higher findings for the suitability of UN Women programmes to the needs of the target group and for its ability to develop effective partnerships; and two thirds of evaluation reports demonstrated highly satisfactory findings on interventions being aligned with national development goals and GEWE priorities.

Through its projects and programmes, UN Women targets marginalized and vulnerable groups, specifically women and girls in various contexts to address their needs and priorities. UN Women programming aligns well with national development plans and priorities and has responded to the centrality of national ownership and leadership. UN Women's partnerships have, to a great extent, led to strategically positioning gender issues in national agenda, debates and localized implementation. UN Women has also risen to the challenge of working in humanitarian contexts. While participatory approaches and needs assessments have been used in programme design, there is scope to have a more systematic needs assessment,

mapping and situational analysis for better-targeted assistance to ensure the “leave no one behind” principle is maintained. There is also scope to improve partnerships with local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and youth organizations.

## EFFECTIVENESS

**UN Women supported programmes and interventions have been effective in achieving their objectives and contributed towards the realization of GEWE. Nonetheless, the relatively small-scale interventions, limited human and financial resources, weak partner capacity and monitoring systems have, at times, affected performance. The extent of success also varied across countries.**

UN Women programmes and interventions have demonstrated positive development results and positive benefits for target group members in all thematic areas. UN Women has made a positive contribution in reaching out and raising the voices of vulnerable and disadvantaged women through advocacy and partnerships. UN Women’s influence has ensured notable contributions to engendering national policies, plans and strategies, including legal frameworks.

Many evaluations (69 per cent) reported satisfactory or higher findings in terms of programmes and interventions achieving their stated objectives.<sup>5</sup> Very strong satisfactory or better findings were reported on the ability of UN Women supported projects and interventions resulting in positive benefits for target group members (100 per cent – 39/39); and in changes made to national policies and programmes (97 per cent – 32/33). Despite moderate coverage, most evaluations addressing “positive differences made for a substantial number of beneficiaries” reported satisfactory or better findings (93 per cent – 25/27).

<sup>5</sup> The proportion of projects/interventions which achieved more than 75 per cent of their expected outputs and contributed to outcomes, including the most important.

UN Women’s holistic approach, focusing on knowledge, attitudes, practices and policies at multi-levels (legislative, institutional, community and individual) has proven effective in addressing the multidimensional aspects of gender equality. However, this was not always translated and implemented across all thematic areas.

Key drivers such as UN system coordination, advocacy, innovative approaches, capacity building and strategic partnerships have enabled UN Women to achieve results. Nevertheless, there is scope to leverage and build on these drivers for a longer-term impact. It is essential not to forget the unique strengths that UN Women brings as a knowledge hub on GEWE. While UN Women has been successful in contributing to GEWE results, weak theories of change, over-ambitious targets and limited resources have, at times, hindered success.

## EFFICIENCY

**UN Women has reportedly improved its programme and management efficiency, but its success largely depends on the capacity of partners, predictability of resources and other internal and external factors.**

Most evaluations (80 per cent – 24/30) reported satisfactory or better findings on cost-resource efficiency of UN Women supported programmes/interventions. Evaluations (65 per cent) also reported satisfactory or better findings related to UN Women systems and procedures for project/programme implementation, follow-up and efficiency in managing operations, programme and investment choices. However, performance varied across countries, thematic areas and was dependent on contextual factors, particularly in humanitarian operations. While gaps were noted in evaluations being able to appropriately assess the cost-efficiency of results, to a large extent there is a high level of delivery both in substantive programmatic areas and resources. Limitations in core resources, shifting priorities of partners and the lack of predictable resources sometimes led UN Women to be infocused, inhibiting its substantive contributions and impacting the quality of outputs and progress

towards planned targets. Competent and committed UN Women staff, joint delivery/joint programming, UNCT coordination, implementation through local CSOs and NGOs, and ability to leverage resources and funds are reported to have contributed to the efficiency of UN Women supported programmes.

It is vital for UN Women to be adaptive to evolving country priorities and interventions such as the focus on youth, broader economic transformation, climate-resilient agricultural production and value chain utilization to maximize the value of its investments while addressing GEWE. In addition to gaps in staffing, inadequate data on costs linked to results and weak monitoring systems also affected efficiency and the Entity's ability to effectively measure it. Furthermore, balancing and/or creating linkages between projects of short duration (less than one year) and longer-term programmes should help to enhance operational efficiency and the long-term sustainability of results.

Integrated approaches applied to the design and implementation of a few UN Women programmes are reported to have enabled the Entity to achieve greater results with fewer resources and have helped to ensure that the interventions address multidimensional aspects of gender equality.

### **CULTURE OF RESULTS**

**While notable progressive efforts have been made to improve monitoring and the use of results-based management (RBM) systems, capacity across Country Offices varied and constraints in establishing a functional and useful RBM system at the country level still remain.**

The findings on the culture of results and the effectiveness of RBM are mixed, reflecting a work-in-progress. The qualitative analysis indicated satisfactory or better findings for the effectiveness of systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on programme results (51 per cent – 18/35). However, only 45 per cent – 15/32 of evaluations showed satisfactory or better findings for the effectiveness of RBM systems.

While the findings are reflective of UN Women's progressive efforts to strengthen the culture of results, they also highlight the challenges in establishing and implementing a functional and useful RBM system at the country level. This means that RBM systems have not been optimally used for strategic management and informed decisions, including making adjustments in strategy and to better mid and long-term course corrections in response to contextual changes.

The following were reported as hindering factors to instituting a culture of results: weak/not explicit theory of change; inadequately defined indicators (no baseline/targets); gaps in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staffing; lack of standardized means of verification of partner data and inconsistencies in tracking and reporting on the number of beneficiaries; and lack of reliable data and inability to measure progress. These factors are in part linked to partner capacities. At times, even when theories of change/results frameworks existed, their depth and quality varied and were of limited use to guide or monitor programme results.

M&E systems are also sometimes overdesigned, not fully taking into account partner capacities, implementation period and human and financial resources. Knowledge management, including capturing and reporting longer-term results and lessons learned needs further systematic/institutionalized support and efforts. It is crucial for UN Women to continue investments in strengthening the culture of measuring and reporting on results.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

**The sustainability of UN Women supported programmes and results is mixed and highly influenced by the different contexts and complex situations in which UN Women operates.**

Investments to strengthen legislative frameworks and national capacity to implement policies/plans and international normative commitments for GEWE have been enablers for sustainability. UN Women supported programmes and interventions have enhanced capacities of diverse (and relevant) individuals, institutions and communities to address GEWE aspects and

issues. Furthermore, the “safe spaces,” establishment of mechanisms/gender units and support to gender advocates/gender focal points, in addition to engendering national policies, all indicate a strengthened enabling environment for gender-responsive development (although continued support may be required).

Most evaluations (78 per cent – 28/36) reported satisfactory or higher findings in terms of the “likelihood of continued benefits for the target group after the programme/project completion”. Satisfactory or better findings were present in most evaluation reports on the “ability of UN Women supported projects and programmes to contribute to institutional and/or community capacity” (92 per cent – 36/39) and “strengthened safe and enabling environments for gender-responsive development” (92 per cent – 34/37).

Issues affecting the continuity of benefits highlighted by some evaluation reports include: insufficient resources; no exit strategy or sustainability plan; deep-rooted cultural norms; inadequate involvement of men and boys; lack of political will; and turnover of staff in participating and implementing organizations. Further, assessment and tracking of the various capacity development activities has not always been undertaken systematically, and interventions have missed out on follow-up, coaching and mentoring. Limited practices of sharing and transfer of knowledge and skills among trainees, as well as the frequent turnover of staff and officials, also pose a threat to the development of sustained institutional capacity. Another area for improvement cited in evaluations is the need to support interventions that promote and sustain social norm change at household, community and local levels. A more strategic and thoughtful focus to increase meaningful engagement of men and boys is essential to achieve sustainable outcomes on gender equality. However, this requires a long-term approach and sustained funding to facilitate long-term sustainable impacts.

## Opportunities and the way forward

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**Further strengthen the strategic positioning of UN Women and its participation in broader system-wide initiatives through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), including joint programmes.**

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This includes: strengthening implementation of UN Women’s mandate by establishing a clearer division of labour with other organizations at the country level; and by continuing to strengthen and revitalize the Gender Theme Groups. UN Women could do more through UNDS and UNSDCF to further promote the GEWE agenda by more forcefully highlighting gaps and suggesting areas of collaboration, joint advocacy, research, policy engagement and joint resource mobilization. To more strategically influence GEWE changes at the national level, evaluations call for increased coordination with line ministries beyond the gender machinery with which UN Women works in joint programmes and joint programming.

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**Boost the achievement of results through multi-pronged advocacy, capacity building, and strategic and diverse partnerships to support sustained changes in social norms.**

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This includes: promoting interventions for effective and sustainable changes in social norms at the household, community and individual levels, through engaging men and boys more meaningfully; incorporating integrated and holistic approaches; and continuing to incorporate innovative approaches and models. Establishing effective RBM systems, tracking progress on long-term changes and measuring impact in terms of attitudinal, behavioural and social norm changes on a wider scale are critical enabling factors. UN Women’s assisted programmes need to be situated in the broader institutional and policy environment and in the interventions of other actors (including United Nations organizations) for longer-term and more significant change. It is also important for UN Women to ensure that there is continued integration of a human rights-based approach to the commitment to leave no one behind.

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**Increase efforts to improve the efficiency of UN Women supported programmes and interventions.**

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This includes: strengthening programme design and monitoring systems to better track and monitor programme costs; leveraging resources through diverse partnerships to ensure a multiplier effect; and

having viable HR and resource mobilization strategies to deliver across the Entity's integrated mandate. Additionally, UN Women should consider reducing direct implementation of activities and focus more on coordination, oversight, monitoring and technical advice to implementing partners with proven track records. Optimizing staffing and financial resources by not spreading activities and resources too thinly and by narrowing the geographical focus of interventions through identifying and concentrating on activities that are most relevant and achievable and complement initiatives of other actors will also enhance efficiency.

cascading effect this is having on transferring skills and knowledge to a wider range of stakeholders and in building gender equality champions to support increased national ownership of GEWE results will enhance the likelihood of sustainability. Continuing to strengthen the enabling environment for gender-responsive development, including creating "safe and social cohesion spaces" to provide access to services, safe space for women to discuss issues concerning their rights, protection of survivors, as well as assistance to early economic recovery including in humanitarian settings will also facilitate continuity of benefits.

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### **Intensify efforts and continue investments to strengthen the culture of results.**

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This includes: improving the quality of programme/project design, specifically related to developing realistic and explicit theories of change in line with resources available (and likelihood of being mobilized); in addition to defining realistic indicators with baselines and targets and monitoring progress against targets. Enhancing capacities of UN Women staff in Country Offices and, in particular, of implementing partners to track, capture and report results (including systems for monitoring unexpected outcomes) is critical to better gather evidence on outcomes and impacts. Furthermore, systematic and institutionalized support to improve knowledge management, including capturing and reporting longer-term results, good practices and lessons learned will also improve the culture of results.

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### **Enhance the sustainability of UN Women supported programmes and interventions through exit strategies and sustainability plans.**

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This includes: ensuring linkages with other initiatives within and outside the UN system; and linking small projects with larger programmes to ensure better scaling-up and likelihood of continuity of benefits. Strategies that empower and equip national partners with expertise and tools to advance change, and the

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1

### Background

With the emphasis on promoting organizational learning and accountability through evaluative evidence, the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) conducted a series of meta-analysis and synthesis of evaluation findings. The annual meta-analysis examined insights and findings from evaluations to help inform corporate processes, policies and strategies. This is the first synthesis in the period covered by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) Strategic Plan 2018–2021.<sup>6</sup>

### UN Women's strategic direction

The Strategic Plan outlines UN Women's strategic direction, objectives and approaches to support efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. It supports implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and contributes to gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Strategic Plan prioritizes five outcomes (see Box 1) and a set of thematic outputs. Each output is designed to translate norms into results for women and girls in collaboration with the UN system and its partners.

## 1.2

### Purpose and scope

The purpose of this meta-synthesis is to contribute to learning through the identification of recurring findings, lessons learned and evidence on the key areas of UN Women's work. The synthesis is expected to inform the forthcoming Strategic Plan mid-term review and other corporate and country-level processes. The synthesis seeks to capture internal and external enablers that drive or impede progress towards the

#### BOX 1

#### Strategic Plan 2018–2021 outcomes

1. A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is strengthened and implemented
2. Women lead, participate in, and benefit equally from governance systems
3. Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
4. All women and girls live free from all forms of violence
5. Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action

achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

The scope of this synthesis includes 31 evaluation reports completed in 2018, and eight Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) completed in 2017 (see Annex 1).<sup>7</sup> The eight CPEs completed in 2017 were included to broaden the evidence base for meaningful analysis of UN Women's integrated mandate. The evaluations largely covered programming supported by UN Women between 2014 and 2018<sup>8</sup> with a value of US\$ 526.62 million (which included two global/corporate evaluations covering interventions with a value

6 UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021 (<https://undocs.org/en/UNW/2017/6/Rev.1>).

7 A large majority of the reports were written in English (25) while 7 were written in Spanish and 7 in French.

8 With two exceptions – one covering activities on FGE from 2009 (Global) and the other from 2012 (Egypt).

## BOX 2

### Meta-synthesis evaluations

#### 1. Global (2)

- Programme - 1
- Thematic - 1

#### 2. Regional (5)

- Programme - 2
- Thematic - 3

#### 3. Country Level (32)

- Programme - 16
- Thematic - 3
- Portfolio - 13

of US\$ 84 million and US\$ 203.50 million). The evaluation reports covered UN Women programming in 80 countries through two corporate and five regional evaluations, and 25 individual countries (covering all regions)<sup>9</sup> through country-specific evaluations (programme, thematic and portfolio). The range of evaluations should help to ensure that the common findings and lessons emerging from the synthesis are relevant to inform ongoing work or to inform changes in UN Women approaches and actions.

All evaluation reports included for the synthesis were rated either good (19) or very good (18), while two were rated fair by GERAAS (see Annex 1). In 2018, the GERAAS guidance and Evaluation Quality Assessment matrix were revised to further enhance the quality of evaluations taking into consideration UN Women's institutional maturity.<sup>10</sup>

Although the activities and interventions evaluated pertained to the previous Strategic Plan, the results inherently contribute to the current Strategic Plan Outcomes, and the findings are expected to inform and provide insights for future implementation.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Four countries had two evaluations and one had three evaluation reports (See Annex 1).

<sup>10</sup> 2018 UN Women GERAAS Report.

<sup>11</sup> The Strategic Plan 2014–2017 had six Impact Areas while the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 has five Outcomes.

Figure 1 presents the number of evaluations addressing the Outcomes of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

FIGURE 1

### Strategic Plan 2018–2021. Outcomes in evaluation reports 2018

#### Women lead and participate equally from governance systems

27 (66%)

#### Women have income, decent work and economic autonomy

23 (56%)

#### All women and girls live free from all forms of violence

20 (49%)

#### Global norms, policies and standards on GEWE

16 (39%)

#### Women and girls contribute to/influence building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from humanitarian action

14 (34%)

*Note: Two of the 41 evaluations were not included in the synthesis because of poor quality*

*Source: Adapted from GERAAS 2018 to Strategic Plan 2018–2021 outcomes*

The two most frequently noted outcomes in the 2018 evaluations were “women lead and participate equally from governance systems” (66 per cent), and “women have income, decent work, and economic autonomy” (56 per cent). All evaluations addressed at least one of the five Strategic Outcomes; while about half of the evaluations (21) addressed two or more Strategic Outcomes. Only 20 per cent (eight) addressed all five Strategic Outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.3

## Approach and methodology

The approach to this synthesis builds on previous

#### BOX 3

#### Distribution of Evaluations (39)

REGION	NUMBER OF EVALUATIONS
Americas and the Caribbean (AC)	7 (18%)
Asia and the Pacific (AP)	2 (5%)
Arab States/North Africa (AS)	6 (15%)
East and Southern Africa (ESA)	10 (26%)
Europe and Central Asia (ECA)	5 (13%)
West and Central Africa (WCA)	7 (18%)
Global/Corporate	2 (5%)

meta-analyses, though the analytical framework has been revised by IES. The revised framework seeks to reflect UN Women’s institutional growth and maturity and current Strategic Plan priorities. As part of the approach, all regions were represented (see Box 3) which helps to provide insights on a range of contexts and the scale of UN Women’s normative, coordination and operational responses.

<sup>12</sup> Information from GERAAS 2018 report and additional information from the eight CPEs from 2017.

The meta-synthesis was based solely on a desk review of corporate and decentralized evaluation reports. The revised analytical framework has at its heart the complementarity of UN Women’s integrated mandate spanning normative support; UN coordination and operational activities, including features related to organizational effectiveness and efficiency of results; and internal and external factors that enable or inhibit performance. However, the depth of analysis on certain themes was contingent on coverage, clarity and the strength of evidence available in the evaluation reports.

The synthesis involved both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The data for analysis was extracted from the key findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in the 31 evaluation reports from 2018 and the eight CPEs in 2017, as well as the lessons learned and good practices identified.

The quantitative analysis was undertaken in accordance with pre-established criteria in the OECD-DAC approach for conducting development effectiveness reviews. The quantitative analysis considered evaluation insights according to standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and the culture of results). The assessment of coverage (addressed in the evaluation report) was classified as strong, moderate or weak. The findings from the evaluations where subcriteria were addressed were assessed as “highly satisfactory,” “satisfactory,” “unsatisfactory” and “highly unsatisfactory.” The overall framework and measurements for the main development effectiveness criteria and associated rubrics are presented in Annex 2.

The qualitative analysis included structured synthesis of high-level drivers, both external and internal, that enable or hinder UN Women’s performance and the high-level findings on leveraging the integrated mandate and findings on innovative approaches, highlighting key examples.

The synthesis included extraction and analysis of the findings, conclusions and recommendations including lessons learned and good practices presented in all evaluation reports.

## Limitations

As with any meta-synthesis, there were some methodological challenges. Specific limitations included:

- a.** Synthesis was based solely on a desk review of evaluation reports.
- b.** Retrospective nature of the meta-synthesis and that all programmes/projects evaluated were designed and implemented before the current Strategic Plan came into effect.
- c.** Challenges of aggregating results for diverse programming and evaluations.
- d.** Greater representation of some regions due to the higher number of evaluations completed in the respective regions during the period under review.

It must be noted that the degree of independence and quality assurance varies across evaluations which has an impact on the quality of evidence available.

Nonetheless, the meta-synthesis covers a substantial number of evaluations of UN Women programming (39) and reflects the consistent application of a common set of assessment criteria/subcriteria and the judgment of the original evaluation report. None of these limitations should significantly undermine the utility of the results from this meta-synthesis process. The meta-synthesis provides UN Women with an approach to aggregate field-level proven findings on its

relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and culture of results. It allows UN Women to organize and analyse results and findings from all the evaluations in a systematic manner.

## 2. FINDINGS ON UN WOMEN PERFORMANCE

This section presents the extent to which each criterion was addressed in the 2017/2018 evaluation reports (coverage). The findings related to each subcriterion are then presented including quantitative and qualitative findings synthesized from review of the evaluation reports. This section also includes discussion of the factors (enabling and hindering) which contribute to UN Women’s performance for each criterion.

It is important to note that the ratings provided on findings – “highly satisfactory, satisfactory, unsatisfactory and highly unsatisfactory” – are only for those evaluations which addressed the subcriteria. To be consistent, the synthesis makes use of the terms “most,” “many,” “some” and “few” to describe the frequency with which an observation was noted as a percentage of the number of evaluations addressing the subcriterion (see Box 4).

The summary of the results of the synthesis as they relate to the main criteria – relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency and culture of results – is presented in Table 1 with more detailed discussion of the results presented below.

### BOX 4 Frequency of observations

<b>MOST</b>	over 75% of the evaluations for which the subcriterion was covered
<b>MANY</b>	between 51% and 75%
<b>SOME</b>	between 20% and 50%
<b>FEW</b>	fewer than 20%

**TABLE 1**  
Summary of coverage and performance on main criteria (2017/2018 evaluations)

Criteria	n*	Coverage level**	Satisfactory rating***
<b>RELEVANCE</b>	39	Strong	97%
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b> (achievement of expected results)	39	Strong	90%
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	38	Strong	70%
<b>CULTURE OF RESULTS</b>	36	Strong	48%
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	39	Strong	87%

\*n = Number of evaluations addressing the given subcriterion

\*\* Strong (n = 31 – 39); Moderate (n = 16 – 30); Weak (n = 15 or less)

\*\*\*This includes “satisfactory” and “highly satisfactory” ratings based on positive findings reported in the evaluations

## 2.1 Relevance

### Coverage

The evaluation reports of UN Women supported programmes and interventions show strong coverage of relevance and its three subcriteria (see Table 2). Overall,

all evaluations address aspects of relevance – almost all address whether programmes and interventions are suited to the needs/priorities of the target group (38/39) and whether the Entity has developed effective partnerships (39/39). Most evaluations address alignment of development interventions to national development goals (34/39). There was no significant difference among regions in addressing relevance.

**TABLE 2**  
**Performance of UN Women interventions on relevance**

Criteria and subcriteria	n*	Coverage level**	Satisfactory rating***
<b>1. RELEVANCE</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>97%</b>
1.1. UN Women supported programmes and other interventions are <b>suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group</b> .	38	Strong	97%
1.2. UN Women supported development interventions <b>are aligned with national development goals</b> and responded to the centrality of national ownership and leadership.	34	Strong	100%
1.3. UN Women has developed an <b>effective partnership</b> with governments, bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organizations and women-based NGOs for planning, coordination and implementation of support to development and/or humanitarian response.	39	Strong	95%

\*n = Number of evaluations addressing the given subcriterion

\*\* Strong (n = 31 – 39); Moderate (n = 16 – 30); Weak (n = 15 or less)

\*\*\*This includes “satisfactory” and “highly satisfactory” ratings based on positive findings reported in the evaluations

### Key Insights<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the findings from the evaluation reports indicate that UN Women supported programming is highly relevant. Most of the evaluations reported satisfactory or higher ratings for the suitability of UN Women programmes to the needs of the target group (97 per cent) and for the Entity’s ability to develop effective partnerships (95 per cent), while all evaluations that addressed alignment with national development

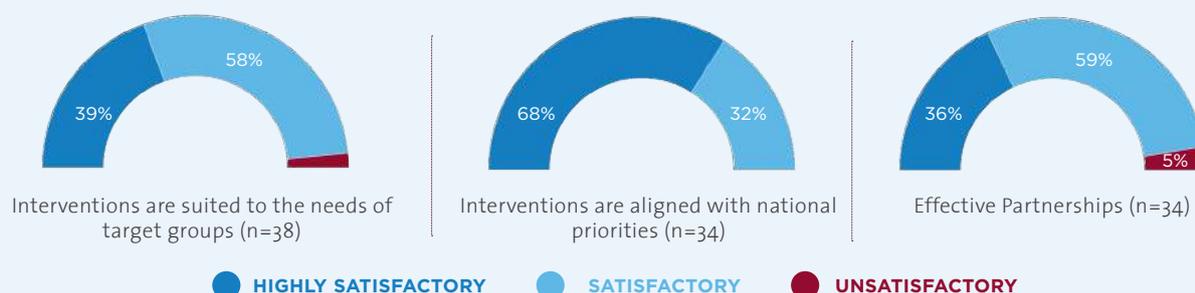
goals indicated satisfactory or better findings (see Table 2 and Figure 2). Some evaluations (more than one third) reported highly satisfactory findings on the suitability of interventions to meet the needs and priorities of the target group and to develop effective partnerships. Many evaluation reports (more than two thirds) highlighted highly satisfactory findings on interventions being aligned with national development goals. There were no highly unsatisfactory findings in any of the three subcriteria on relevance.

There was no significant difference among regions in addressing relevance.

<sup>13</sup> For brevity/clarity, only the country name is provided when examples are given, but this should in no way imply any wider assessment.

**FIGURE 2**

**Performance of UN Women interventions in terms of relevance**



## Programme design

Many evaluations highlighted the consultations with stakeholders and/or participatory/inclusive processes in the designing of programmes and interventions to address the needs and priorities of the target group and to align with national development goals.

shortfalls of up to 60 per cent. This emphasized the need for realistic project design, a theory of change and targets corresponding to UN Women’s resource mobilization capacity.

## Targeting

### BOX 5

#### Inclusive approach to needs assessment

A rights-based approach is used to include key groups of duty bearers and rights holders such as public oversight bodies, Central Election Commission, Parliament, Ombudsman and Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination, CSOs representing women and young people, media women from urban and rural areas to address their capacity gaps in upholding women’s rights and national/international commitments.

*Source: UN Women Albania Outcome Evaluation on Women’s Leadership and Political Participation (December 2018)*

Some evaluations highlighted the use of one or more of the following in designing projects and interventions to better address the needs/priorities of the target group: situation analysis, needs assessment, grounded previous experiences in the country and lessons from earlier evaluations. Most evaluations highlighted the use of human rights and gender-responsive approaches in programme design.

Many CPEs highlighted budget constraints in implementing the portfolio planned. Some CPEs highlighted

### BOX 6

#### Examples of effective targeting

- “The focus on the vulnerable or marginalized groups in the society was well targeted to the needs of those furthest behind.” (Kyrgyzstan)
- “Targeted the base of the pyramid (most vulnerable living in extreme poverty and exclusion).” (El Salvador)
- “Rightly targets women from refugee and host communities.” (Arab States)
- “Addressed needs of different subgroups of women and girls at individual and collective level.” (Albania)
- “Supporting poor and vulnerable.” (Rwanda, South Sudan, Egypt)
- “UN Women has managed to target the most vulnerable women; these include refugees and IDP women in the humanitarian areas.” (Cameroon)
- “Targeting areas or regions of need/vulnerability.” (Kenya)

*Source: Evaluation Reports - 2017/2018*

Most evaluations highlight effective targeting by UN Women in addressing needs and priorities at the country level. Effective targeting is highlighted in different ways in most evaluation reports (see Box 6 for examples of findings<sup>14</sup>). UN Women supported programmes and interventions targeted a wide range of beneficiaries, including: marginalized/vulnerable groups, rural/poor women, women living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), LGBT community, women in refugee and host communities/internally displaced person (IDP) areas, young girls, men and boys, migrant women workers and women in humanitarian contexts, in addition to national gender machinery, relevant ministries/government agencies, community groups/CSOs, universities and students, and gender and human rights advocates. However, as highlighted by some evaluations (including CPEs) there is scope for future programming to further reach out to the most excluded groups to ensure no one is left behind.

## Alignment to national development goals

Most evaluations provide clear evidence that UN Women supported interventions are aligned with national development goals, plans and policies. These included the alignment to national strategies and frameworks promoting the social, economic and political empowerment of women. Furthermore, most evaluation reports highlighted how UN Women's programming is aligned to international normative instruments which provide the foundation of GEWE.

## Partnerships

Evaluation reports identified a wide range of partners that collaborated with UN Women in its programming. These included national governments, CSOs, women-focused networks/alliances, local/municipal governments, other UN agencies and bilateral partnerships (development partners, other international organizations, universities/academic institutions, private sector, banks and media). Many evaluations highlighted UN Women's comparative advantage: its ability to play a strong coordination role at global, national and local levels where it can create platforms. Many evaluations highlighted the multi-level, inter-institutional nature of UN Women's partnerships and

coordination that ensures actions are relevant to the local context.

At the national level, in addition to UN Women's partnerships with local gender machinery, partnerships with other ministries were noted. Examples included: national police services, line ministries such as agriculture, education, finance, health, labour and social development, water and sanitation, national statistics, justice, defence and foreign affairs.

In addition to the role and mandate of UN Women in UN system coordination, many evaluation reports highlighted joint programming, joint activities and delivery with other UN agencies (see subsequent discussions). Examples included:

- Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) with WFP, FAO and IFAD in Kyrgyzstan.
- Days of activism on Violence Against Women (VAW) with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and FAO in Cote d'Ivoire.
- Partnership with UNFPA for the health component of a project in Cameroon.
- Training actors in the criminal justice system with UNFPA and UNMISMA in Mali.
- Partnership with ILO in Asia-Pacific, Morocco and Palestine.

A few evaluations highlighted partnerships with banks (e.g. El Salvador, Burundi and Kenya) which made it feasible to finance activities of women's economic groups and formed the basis for increasing private sector support to disadvantaged groups. Positive collaborations with private sector firms were also noted by a few evaluations both for economic empowerment and humanitarian issues (e.g. Egypt, Arab States and Kenya). A few evaluations highlighted the importance of and scope to improve partnerships with youth organizations and local CSOs.

A few evaluations noted the relevance of UN Women's gradual shift to supporting gender in humanitarian contexts. It was pointed out that although this is not an area of traditional core competence for UN Women, the Entity has risen to the challenge of working in humanitarian situations (e.g. in South Sudan). UN Women's focus in humanitarian contexts has been on GBV and WEE.

<sup>14</sup> This is not an exhaustive list. For brevity/clarity only the country name is provided when examples are given, but that this should in no way imply any wider assessment.

## Contributing factors

### Enabling factors

The evaluations identified several key contributing factors to the relevance of UN Women supported interventions. Most evaluations highlighted the alignment with national strategies, programmes, policies, frameworks and action plans, and the alignment to international normative frameworks and/or regional priorities as strong positive factors in achieving relevant development effectiveness.

A key positive factor contributing to relevance noted by most evaluations is the competence of UN Women in identifying and establishing effective/strategic partnerships with responsible partners, (government ministries and agencies, CSOs, NGOs, other UN agencies, donors, universities, media and private groups) with a focus on GEWE for implementation.

Many evaluations highlighted UN Women's comparative advantage in its coordination role/mandate on GEWE; use of its participatory and inclusive process for programme design and implementation; and the effective targeting of a diverse range of marginalized and vulnerable target groups as positive factors contributing to relevance.

Other enabling factors noted by some evaluations include: the use of needs and capacity assessments; situation analysis and recommendations from earlier evaluations and/or lessons from past programming experience in designing programmes and identifying needs and priorities; and UN Women's specialized knowledge and capacity.

### Hindering factors

In general, the inhibiting factors for relevance stem from weaknesses in the same areas as the positive factors, in that they often represent the absence of essential practices. As noted by a few evaluations, these hindering factors include: limited engagement/involvement of local CSOs/CBOs; absence of systematic needs assessment/situational analysis; limited participation of stakeholders affecting targeting and thereby meeting the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable/marginalized and addressing leave no one behind; absence of clarity in the roles and responsibility of partners, including lack of operationalizing

partnerships, high transaction costs of partnerships, and "narrow" selection of partners; and lack of political support and/or weak engagement of governments.

## 2.2

### Effectiveness (achievement of objectives and expected results)

#### Coverage

Overall, there is strong coverage of the criteria "achievement of objectives and expected results" (effectiveness) in the evaluation reports covered for this meta-synthesis (see Table 3). This is true for the subcriteria of the achievement of objectives by programmes and interventions (36/39), positive benefits for target group members (39/39), and significant changes in national development policies and programmes (33/39). However, coverage was moderate for the subcriteria related to the differences made to a substantial number of beneficiaries and/or contribution to national development goals with only 27 of 39 evaluations reporting relevant findings.

The relatively lower coverage for subcriterion 2.3 (differences to a substantial number of beneficiaries) is explained by the fact that some evaluations did not provide a quantitative or qualitative estimate of the beneficiaries reached and/or when quantitative evidence was provided it did not compare against any target of achievement.

### Key Insights<sup>15</sup>

In general, the findings on evaluations of UN Women supported programmes and interventions achieving objectives and expected results were positive (see Figure 3). Many evaluations (69 per cent – 25/36) reported findings of satisfactory or higher in terms of programmes and interventions achieving their stated objectives. Satisfactory or better findings means that UN Women supported programmes and interventions either achieved at least a majority of stated outputs and contributed to outcome results (more than 75 per

<sup>15</sup> For brevity/clarity, only the country name is provided when examples are given, but this should in no way imply any wider assessment.

cent if stated) or that the most important outputs and expected outcomes were achieved.

**TABLE 3**  
Performance of UN Women on achievement of objectives/expected results (effectiveness)

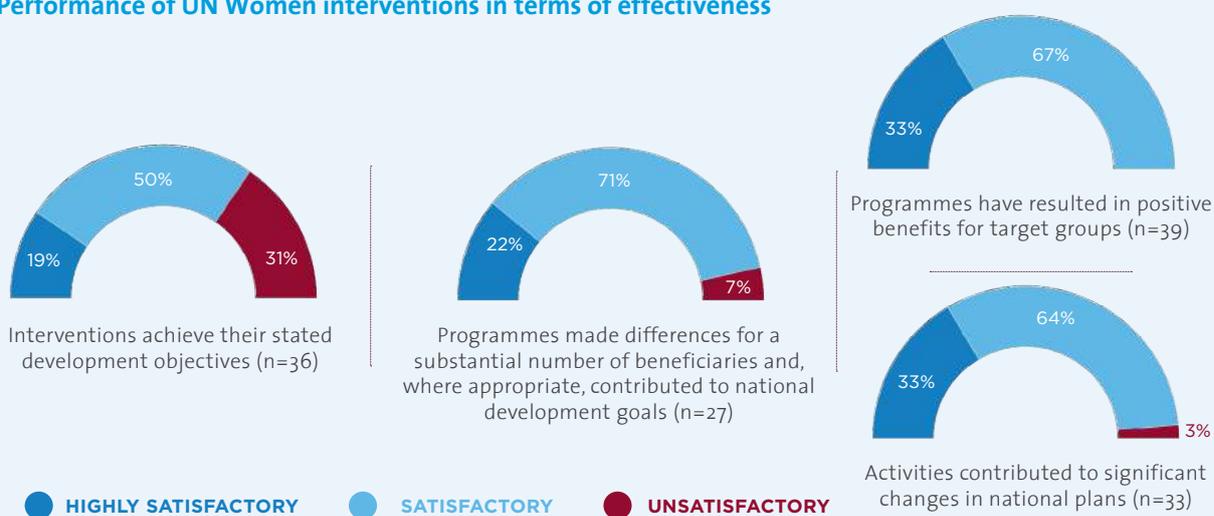
Criteria and subcriteria	n*	Coverage level**	Satisfactory rating***
<b>2.Achievement of objectives and expected results</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>90%</b>
2.1. UN Women supported programmes and interventions <b>achieve their stated development objectives</b> and contributed to normative, coordination and operational results	36	Strong	69%
2.2. UN Women supported programmes and projects have resulted in <b>positive benefits for target group members</b>	39	Strong	100%
2.3. UN Women programmes and projects made differences for a <b>substantial number of beneficiaries</b> and where appropriate contributed to national development goals	27	Moderate	93%
2.4. UN Women activities <b>contributed to significant changes in national development policies and programmes</b> with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls (including for disaster risk reduction, recovery, preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation) and/or to needed system reforms	33	Strong	97%

\*n = Number of evaluations addressing the given subcriterion

\*\* Strong (n = 31 – 39); Moderate (n = 16 – 30); Weak (n = 15 or less)

\*\*\*This includes “satisfactory” and “highly satisfactory” ratings based on positive findings reported in the evaluations

**FIGURE 3**  
Performance of UN Women interventions in terms of effectiveness



Very strong satisfactory or higher findings were reported on the ability of UN Women supported projects and interventions to result in positive benefits for target group members (100 per cent – 39/39), and changes made to national policies and programmes (97 per cent – 32/33). Despite moderate coverage, most evaluations addressing “positive differences made for a substantial number of beneficiaries and where appropriate contributed to national development goals” reported satisfactory or better findings (93 per cent – 25/27) see Table 3 and Figure 3.<sup>16</sup> Some evaluations reported highly satisfactory findings, while no evaluation reported highly unsatisfactory findings.

The results achieved contribute to the five Strategic Plan Outcomes 2018–2021 (see Figure 1 presented in the Scope section). The objectives achieved by each UN Women supported programme/intervention focus on and contribute to one or more of the Strategic Plan Outcomes. The achievement of objectives and expected results have been achieved in partnership with a diverse range of partners (discussed in the Relevance section). Key findings are synthesized and discussed in this section, but should not be considered an exhaustive list of achievements.

UN Women has contributed to the strengthening of normative frameworks at the country level. Many evaluation reports (including CPEs) highlighted UN Women’s influence and notable contributions in engendering national and legal frameworks, policies and strategies (see Box 7). Some evaluations also highlighted that gender mainstreaming in programmes and plans were enhanced through UN Women’s support to establishing gender units/gender teams in ministries (e.g. in Palestine) or its support to providing Gender Focal Points (e.g. in Cameroon) or secondment of a Senior Gender Adviser to a ministry (e.g. in Kenya).

Some evaluations also highlighted UN Women’s support contributing to progress in the development of gender-sensitive policies and practices at subnational/local levels where the increased capacity of public officials contributed to gender-responsive development plans, inclusive decision-making and gender-responsive development planning (e.g. Morocco – gender-sensitive municipal action plans).

<sup>16</sup> It must be noted that beneficiaries ranged from a few hundreds to more than a million depending on whether it was a project or a campaign. Even within a project sometimes budget is spread to address more than one thematic area. Substantive also includes numbers when compared to project/programme targets and/or significant percentage increase from the baseline.

#### BOX 7

#### Examples of UN Women’s influence and contributions to national gender policies/frameworks

- The enactment of key legal reforms such as the land law and inheritance system (Rwanda).
- Amendments to the Law on Protection and Prevention from Domestic Violence in Palestine.
- Revision of the Penal Code and National Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Female Genital Mutilation (Cameroon).
- The Domestic Violence Act, which codifies rights for the protection of spouses, children and dependant persons in cases of domestic violence; the Marriage Act; and the Matrimonial Properties Act (Kenya).
- The Law on Criminalization of Religious Marriage with Minors (Kyrgyzstan).
- Formal and systemic change in the Electoral Code through the introduction of a gender quota (Albania).
- Integration of MHM into sectoral documents – The National Strategy for the Promotion of Drinking Water Supply, Hygiene and Sanitation in Schools and the National Strategy for Community-led Total Sanitation (Cameroon).
- Development of a gender-responsive Mining Act (Kenya).
- New National Gender Policy (Malawi).
- New Law against GBV (Burundi).
- Development of National Police Action Plan to Combat GBV 2018–2020 (Mali).
- Finalized the National Strategy for Violence Against Women 2015–2031 (Sudan).
- A draft legal initiative to ratify CHAVIO initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Family was endorsed by the Office of the President (Moldova).
- Development of NAP 1325 (Tunisia, Jordan and Lebanon).

Source: Evaluation Reports - 2017/2018

Many evaluations highlighted the notable contributions made by UN Women to enhancing **women's leadership** through a combination of mainstreaming gender in laws and frameworks and by supporting women in **political participation** and leadership (see Box 8 for examples). Lack of empowerment and exposure to decision-making, frequent and long-term exposure to gender unfriendly/traditional patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes in the structure of political parties, domestic tasks and responsibilities were reported as factors inhibiting leadership, management capacity and skills building among women. A few evaluations highlighted the need to step up the support to and focus on subnational levels (instead of mainly the national level), to enhance women's leadership and political participation (WLPP). This was also highlighted by the corporate evaluation on WLPP which noted that while UN Women has contributed to strengthening normative frameworks at the country level, further monitoring for signs of regression and extending implementation to the subnational level would support the sustainability and effectiveness of these gains. The same evaluation also reported that the inclusion of women's political participation is a priority in more countries where UN Women is present (91 of 93 countries in 2016) than any other thematic area.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to engendering national policies and frameworks, a few evaluations highlighted UN Women's support to gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) and planning (e.g. Kyrgyzstan and Palestine). However, further work needs to be done to show that this support leads to change. Advancing the integration of GRB into the full budget cycle (including gender analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring of expenditure) has been hindered by a number of structural and capacity constraints. A few evaluation reports also highlighted UN Women's support to more and better disaggregated data and statistics to track progress on GEWE. Examples include: better gender-balanced electoral participation (Albania); information on VAW (Ethiopia); understanding social exclusion (Rwanda); fresh perspectives on agriculture and analysis of the SDG indicators (Kyrgyzstan); Dashboard Portal with linkages to other national databases for better programming (Egypt); and integration of gender into national statistics (Moldova).

<sup>17</sup> Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Women's Political Participation and Leadership – Synthesis Report (April 2018).

#### BOX 8

### Women's leadership and political participation

- Election of Roma women to local offices (Moldova).
- Increased number of female representation in Parliamentary Committees including: Defence and Security, Legal Affairs, Public Appointments and Budget Committees; and a gender-balanced Electoral Commission (Malawi).
- Female representation in leadership and decision-making at the national level has been surpassed with the legislature comprising 64 per cent, cabinet 41 per cent and the judiciary 50 per cent women (Rwanda).

*Source: Evaluation Reports - 2017/2018*

Some evaluations, including CPEs, highlighted positive outcomes through **women's economic interventions**. In particular, the social cohesion spaces and women's economic centres that were evaluated were noted to be effective mechanisms for providing access to services, safe space for women to discuss issues concerning their rights, protection of survivors, as well as assistance to early economic recovery, particularly in humanitarian settings. A few evaluations highlighted positive benefits to the target group due to:

- The linkages created between women-owned businesses/women groups and micro-finance institutions/banks which facilitated access to finance for women.
- Institutionalization of gender-responsive policies and practices, and gender (equality) seal by private sector firms were positive factors for GEWE in the respective countries.
- Ensuring that women obtained national ID cards/social passports opened doors for access to various public services.

Nevertheless, most WEE projects appeared to be small in scale and some effects were confined to specific localities without a clear strategy for scale-up. CPEs also indicated that some UN Women supported interventions tended to place more emphasis on individual economic gain rather than other mechanisms with a potential larger (and national) reach. CPEs recommend

a holistic approach focusing on support to policy and regulatory frameworks, corporate social responsibility and the expansion of successful projects as incubation models to influence UN Women's programme design and leverage the involvement of others in WEE.

In the area of **Women, Peace and Security (WPS)**, many evaluations (including CPEs) reported success due to the contribution of UN Women supported programmes and interventions (see Box 9 for examples). UN Women's efforts have contributed to building women's capacities in mediation and negotiation. The results achieved under this area have contributed to positioning women with the knowledge and skills to advance conflict resolution at the community level. However, it is crucial to deepen and sustain engagement and to link this to other advocacy and campaign efforts supported by UN Women.

Some evaluations (including CPEs) highlighted positive outcomes of UN Women's effort in ensuring that all **women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence**. UN Women's efforts in terms of combating VAW have been tailored to country situations and needs and are multi-pronged, as highlighted by some evaluation reports, including: training of judicial system officials, judges, faith and religious leaders and police/law enforcement officials, supporting development of national policies and strategies, and establishing /ensuring support systems (see Box 10 for examples).

Even though the impact on the prevalence of GBV was reported as small, UN Women, with its holistic approach combining prevention, protection and access to justice, was able to approach GBV thematically and successfully. Many CPEs demonstrated UN Women's paramount role in prioritizing and advancing GBV issues to national agenda and debates. Similarly, results from CPEs show positive outcomes when integrated with WEE interventions. In particular, social cohesion spaces and women's economic centres have proven to be effective mechanisms in providing access to services, safe spaces for women (e.g. One-Stop Centre in Palestine) to discuss issues concerning their rights, protection of survivors, as well as assistance to early economic recovery, particularly in humanitarian settings.

Overall, a holistic approach that was both multi-pronged (focusing on knowledge, attitudes, practices and policies) and multi-level (legislative, institutional, community and individual) has been reported to contribute effectively in addressing the multidimensional aspects of gender equality. However, this was

## BOX 9

### Examples on Women Peace and Security

- The support to NAP<sub>1325</sub> based on UNSCR 1325 has contributed to an enabling environment for women's leadership and participation in conflict resolution, state building and peace processes (Palestine).
- UN Women played a pivotal role in supporting women's genuine participation in the peace negotiations and laying the foundations for more gender-equal peace building and eventual reconciliation efforts (South Sudan).
- Establishment of linkages between the National Action Plan on 1325 with security sector reforms and community-level activities such as the peace huts and rural women's groups provided space for women to engage on conflict resolution and economic empowerment (Liberia).
- The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca and the incorporation of gender justice in peace agreements helped enforce women's rights (Colombia).
- Creation and implementation of the Inter-Institutional WPS Roundtable (MIMPAZ) to coordinate and facilitate the application of UNSC resolutions (Guatemala).
- Enhanced involvement of women in peace and security matters. Not only have synergies been built between the rival national and county governments, but women have also been integrated into community policing structures, chief's forums (barazas) and district peace committees. The involvement of women in these structures has various benefits, among them the diversity of ideas that such a gendered approach to security incorporates (Kenya).
- Multi-sectoral response (addressing peace, security, humanitarian response and VAW) to assist refugees and internally displaced women ensured improved results (DRC).
- Establishment of networks of more than 15,000 Women Mediators of Peace and Security covering the country's 18 provinces and resolving nearly 900 conflicts at the grassroots level (Burundi).

Source: Evaluation Reports - 2017/2018

not always translated and implemented across all thematic areas. As pointed out earlier, only some evaluations addressed two or more outcomes, and only a few addressed all outcome areas. CPEs also highlighted gaps in fully exploring potential synergies between different thematic areas (partially due to limited resources). Efforts to further reflect this approach in design results frameworks, RBM and structures are needed to fully systematize and ensure better linkages across UN Women's integrated mandate.

The effectiveness of UN Women programmes and interventions have also been facilitated by one or more of the key drivers/strategies of change, as highlighted in most evaluation reports. These drivers are not mutually exclusive, but synergistic.

#### BOX 10

### Examples of elimination of violence against women and girls

- Increased knowledge and awareness of the High Court directive to prevent sexual harassment and violence on campus and supported the establishment of anti-sexual harassment committees (Bangladesh).
- Investments in the criminal justice system have generated rapid results, including short processing times and increased judgments (Kenya).
- Important contributions to the creation of access to justice for women who become victims of violence (Guatemala).
- Important contribution to the production of VAW data and institutionalization of VAW data collection (Ethiopia).
- Significant improvement in the use of health centres by survivors and the involvement of the community and families in their care-seeking support (Mali).
- Support for the finalization of the National Strategy for Violence against Women 2015–2031 (Sudan).
- UN Women, along with the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF), establishing call centres, as part of the national approach to combatting GBV (Cameroon).

Source: Evaluation Reports - 2017/2018

## UN system coordination

UN Women has been pivotal in seeking to mainstream gender in UNCT actions and joint programming, the UNCT Interim Cooperation Framework and UNDAF. Leading a UN Gender Theme Group (GTG) appears to be a very valuable process for UN Women in many countries, proving effective in achieving coordination and consensus on GEWE issues. However, GTGs have been reported as less active in some countries and it is sometimes difficult to have a strategic level of engagement or participation. CPEs acknowledged the need to revitalize such platforms as a means to mobilize actions and resources for GEWE.

#### BOX 11

### Gender Scorecard (GSC) examples

- The GSC has made it possible to produce CPU document 2017–2020 which takes into account gender dimensions in the description of outcomes and performance indicators in the application of the reference manual for gender mainstreaming in joint programming (Cote d'Ivoire).
- An extensive review of UN agency annual reports indicates that all programmatic result areas reported on under the UNDAF elaborate how gender has been mainstreamed in UNCT programming. Nonetheless, as identified by the 2017 GSC of the UNCT-SWAP, none of the One UN's five Business Operations Strategy (BOS) pillars (human resources, ICT, procurement, finance and common premises), of which UN Women is a member, mainstreams gender equality (Rwanda).
- UN Women's participation in the formulation of the 2018–2021 UNDAF contributed to a better integration of GEWE than the previous edition of UNDAF; and UN Women's successful promotion of GSC exercise for UNCT (Kenya).

Source: Evaluation Reports - 2017/2018

To improve efficiency, there is also an acknowledged need to consider the amalgamation of multiple gender groups (including GTGs, donors and clusters) into

a single Extended Gender Theme Group, especially in countries where there are relatively small communities of actors. In order to remain relevant and maintain its position in coordination, some evaluation reports also highlighted the need for UN Women to be represented in those platforms at the most senior level possible.

Positive findings were reported in CPEs, including UN Women's leadership role in the promotion of the gender scorecard (e.g. Rwanda, Liberia, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and South Sudan). Although the full benefit is not fully captured, the gender scorecard is used by UN Women as a viable strategy to put gender equality at the heart of the UN system's programmatic and operational approaches (see Box 11).

## Advocacy

Advocacy is integral to UN Women programming at various levels and is multi-pronged, i.e. through policy advocacy, campaigns and/or supporting advocates and networks to achieve GEWE. Many evaluations highlight UN Women's various advocacy efforts, including driving public and/or political support for GEWE or specific aspects thereof by raising awareness, building alliances, mobilizing supportive constituencies and engaging with less committed actors. A few evaluations highlighted social media activism as a powerful tool for social change.

In addition to the HeForShe campaign, other campaigns highlighted in a few evaluations include: "Knocking Doors" campaign (Egypt); "Buy from Women" campaign (Rwanda); and "Seven on Tour" campaign (Bangladesh). Furthermore, the campaign of #NoEsDeHombres in Mexico was considered innovative and received a Sol De Bronco Award at the Ibero-American Festival of Advertising Communication. Additionally, UN Women has been instrumental in supporting and/or developing Gender Equality Advocates/Gender Focal Points/GEWE champions and Gender Cafes as highlighted in some evaluations. A few evaluations pointed out that investment in advocacy and communication has to be timely.

## Innovation

Many evaluation reports highlighted some form of innovative/unique approach integrated into UN Women programmes and interventions to maximize

### BOX 12

#### Examples of UN Women's advocacy efforts

- Gender awareness raising cultural events, e.g. Play Seven, movie shows, dramas, SIREN, 16-day activism (Egypt).
- A Platform of 7 NGOs in the Election Situation Room (Albania).
- Awareness raising of parliamentarians in Senegal, Niger and Cameroon.
- Involving spouses of chiefs on EAW (Malawi).
- Working with faith leaders (Ethiopia).

*Source: Evaluation Reports - 2017/2018*

results within the limited resources available. These included: web-based grant-making system (in the Fund for Gender Equality); inclusion of young people in the Festival of Heroes (El Salvador); innovative funding models (Jordan); e-governance system and social passports (Kyrgyzstan); gender (equality) seal (Jordan, Rwanda, Palestine); new ways of working – data gathering, analysis communication and use (Moldova); and easily replicable climate adaptive techniques (Mozambique). Gender Cafes were also reported to be innovative (e.g. Cameroon).

## Male engagement in social norm change

Various initiatives in different countries laid the foundations to deepen and sustain the engagement of men and boys towards changing unfavourable norms for women. For example, in Palestine, through its regional "Men and women for gender equality" project, UN Women successfully engaged youth groups and Sharia judges on a new interpretation of women rights. Several examples of success were also captured in relation to involving young men in the fight against GBV, early marriage and FGM in Kyrgyzstan, Cameroon, South Sudan, Kenya and Rwanda. The HeForShe campaign was highlighted by several CPEs as a promising strategy with early successes in mobilizing a critical mass to challenge deeply rooted "traditional" attitudes and practices.

Equally, many CPEs highlighted gaps in systematically mapping the specific needs of young boys and men and meaningfully engaging them beyond their usual involvement in general awareness. Some evaluations recommended that UN Women and its partners capitalize on the HeForShe campaign momentum and devise strategies for men and boys not only as champions, but also beneficiaries of different interventions to enhance the speed of social norm change. This requires movement to transformational action and long-term engagement to realize the potential for change. Attention to interventions (coordination and programmatic) that actively promote and support social norm change for GEWE and EAW were stressed as central to the design of Strategic Notes and needed to be explicitly articulated in the accompanying theory of change. The meta-analysis of the Fund for Gender Equality evaluations highlighted that while changes to constitutions and laws are critical in removing formal barriers to women's political and economic participation, implementation is frequently hindered by regressive social norms.

## Knowledge hub/management

As highlighted by many evaluations (including CPEs), UN Women is strategically positioned among UN agencies and is recognized as the main international partner for GEWE by governments. Many evaluation reports highlighted UN Women's positive reputation in relation to its knowledge and expertise, role and strong narrative on gender issues.

In Sudan, donors appreciated UN Women's work and messaging on human and women's rights; they found that with other agencies, this message was often diluted and crowded by other priorities. In Cameroon, many stakeholders stated that while UN Women's work is well regarded, the Country Office should focus more towards ensuring gender is mainstreamed in the larger programmes and interventions of other agencies and less on implementing on its own relatively small-scale projects. However, the evaluation in South Sudan noted that because UN Women places gender equality and human rights in front and centre of all its work, and because such emphasis has not been integral to all humanitarian interventions, UN Women's experiences, lessons learned and any good practices (from experiences in the South Sudan context) might serve as model/pilot approaches to be scaled up.

Some evaluation reports highlighted the knowledge products produced by UN Women programmes and projects. A few evaluations also highlighted that UN Women produce knowledge products with UNDP and/or test IFAD methodologies after adapting them. A few evaluations noted the scope to improve the dissemination of knowledge products at the country level.

In addition to the above drivers, **capacity building** and **strategic partnerships** are at the core of UN Women programming, which has been discussed in many sections of this report including in the Relevance and Sustainability sections. Capacity building and partnerships are also inherent in the drivers discussed above. Partnerships have enabled UN Women to achieve greater results through the Entity's engagement with a diverse range of partners. As many evaluations reported, capacity building and strategic partnerships have been effective; however, as reported by some evaluation reports, there is scope to improve in both areas. For example, the partnerships with local CSOs is an area to improve.

## Contributing factors

### Enabling factors

The following section discusses the factors that are enabling the achievement of objectives and expected results. All evaluations highlighted the recognition, ability and technical expertise of UN Women to address various GEWE issues including: WEE, WLPP, WPS and VAW. The evaluations addressed one or more of these issues.

Many evaluation reports pointed to positive factors, including UN Women's:

- Unique strengths as a GEWE knowledge hub.
- Good working relationships with national governments which have contributed to changes in government policies and effective implementation to achieve results.
- Ability to strategically identify and bring diverse partners (from various levels and sectors) together to address GEWE issues, including UN Women's ability to play a coordination role.
- Diverse multi-pronged advocacy efforts in raising awareness on GEWE through driving public/private support, building alliances and mobilizing

supportive constituencies and engaging with less committed actors.

- Integration of human rights and gender quality approach.

Some evaluations also highlighted the support to establishment of Gender Units, Gender Focal Points, Gender Advisers and Gender Cafes, in addition to the creation of safe spaces for women (e.g. Women's Development Group, Women's Empowerment Centre and One-Stop-Centre) and the ability to support programmes/interventions in humanitarian contexts (and be recognized) as enabling factors. A few evaluations pointed to the use of multi-sectoral, holistic, integrated approaches and innovative models to programming as positive factors.

## Hindering factors

With overall positive findings in the achievement of objectives and expected results, hindering factors were cited less frequently in evaluation reports. However, some evaluations pointed to general weaknesses in programme/project design including: weak theories of change; poorly defined indicators (with the absence of baselines and/or targets); and inadequate/weak monitoring systems and/or lack of staff to conduct monitoring and report progress on results.

A few evaluations noted hindering factors such as limited funding affecting the scale of programmes and limiting support to selective partners/departments which could affect the time frame and fragmentation of the support; and humanitarian contexts and challenging political environments.

## 2.3 Efficiency

### Coverage

Overall, coverage on efficiency has been strong; however, for two of the subcriteria – “programmes are cost/resource-efficient (30/39)” and “implementation and objectives achieved on time” (29/39) the coverage was only moderate (see Table 4). It should be noted that the level of coverage for these two subcriteria is at the top of the moderate range – almost strong. In terms of the subcriteria “UN Women systems and procedures for project implementation are efficient”, the coverage was very strong, as highlighted in the evaluation reports (37/39).

In the evaluations which did not address cost/resource efficiency, this was due to non-availability of appropriate cost information or only disbursement/utilization rates were provided.<sup>18</sup> On the timely achievement of objectives and implementation, the evaluations that did not address this issue did not report on completion time, delays and/or no-cost extensions. Additional guidance may be required for evaluators in covering these two subcriteria in future evaluations.

## Key Insights<sup>19</sup>

Despite moderate coverage, most evaluations (80 per cent – 24/30) reported satisfactory or better findings on cost/resource efficiency of UN Women supported programmes/interventions. As noted in the evaluations, this was largely because of UN Women's ability to achieve or exceed targets with limited budget/resources and, at times, that the Entity was able to leverage resources through partnerships. Many evaluations pointed out that cost-efficiency was not always systematically tracked by programmes/projects.

Notwithstanding varying coverage, for the subcriteria “implementation and objectives achieved on time” (moderate) and UN Women systems and procedures for project/programme implementation and follow-up (including systems for engaging staff, necessary skills, knowledge and capacities needed to deliver the portfolio, fund disbursement and stewardship of resources) are efficient (strong). Many evaluations (65 per cent) reported satisfactory or better for both subcriteria (see Table 4 and Figure 4).<sup>20</sup> All three subcriteria

<sup>18</sup> It is also important to note that coverage of (or addressed) cost/resource efficiency does not mean that the evaluation assessed cost-efficiency. The fact it is addressed only indicates that the evaluation made an assessment (quantitative or qualitative) positively/negatively on the costs of the programme in relation to the scale of its contribution to results.

<sup>19</sup> For brevity/clarity, only the country name is provided when examples are given, but this should in no way imply any wider assessment.

<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that there may be a negative bias in the findings reported for subcriteria 4.2 (on timeliness) and 4.3 (on the efficiency of administrative systems and procedures). These subcriteria may not often be formally/explicitly included in evaluation terms of reference. As a result, they may be much more likely to be addressed in evaluations where the findings are negative than would occur with a positive result. This perception is supported somewhat by the significant number of evaluations which do not address subcriterion 4.2 and higher unsatisfactory findings than relevance, effectiveness and sustainability criteria/subcriteria.

for efficiency also indicated some highly satisfactory findings and no highly unsatisfactory findings.

The evaluation reports which indicated that UN Women supported programmes and interventions showed indications of efficiency highlighted different aspects. These included, but were not limited to: the ability to exceed planned targets/outputs within the allocated programme budget (Egypt, Kyrgyzstan and Kenya); maximizing the use of resources through

building partnerships and interaction which helped leverage capacities and resources or produced multiplier effects (Albania and Regional Programme of WCA), or linkages of WPS activities with other activities (Jordan); and having mechanisms to reduce implementation costs by contracting NGOs (Mali).

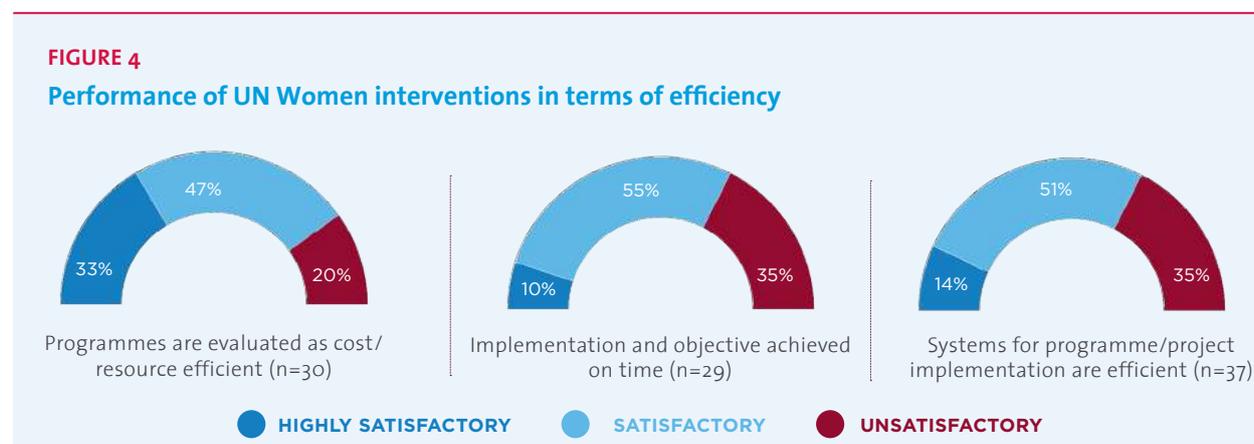
**TABLE 4**  
**Performance of UN Women on efficiency**

Criteria and subcriteria	n*	Coverage level**	Satisfactory rating***
<b>3. Efficiency</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>70%</b>
3.1. UN Women programmes are evaluated as <b>cost/resource efficient</b>	30	Moderate	80%
3.2. Evaluation indicates <b>implementation and objectives achieved on time</b> (given the context in the case of humanitarian response) utilizing the most cost-effective intervention	29	Moderate	65%
3.3. Evaluation indicates that UN Women systems and procedures for project/programme implementation and follow up are efficient and demonstrate <b>efficiency in managing its operations and programme and investment choices</b> (including systems for engaging staff, necessary skills, knowledge and capacities needed to deliver the portfolio, funds disbursement and stewardship of resources, etc.)	37	Strong	65%

\*n = Number of evaluations addressing the given subcriterion

\*\* Strong (n = 31 – 39); Moderate (n = 16 – 30); Weak (n = 15 or less)

\*\*\*This includes “satisfactory” and “highly satisfactory” ratings based on positive findings reported in the evaluations



Furthermore, efficiency was also highlighted by:

- Long-term partnerships for funding (Moldova).
- Strategic allocation of funds to achieve tangible results with small investments (Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Cameroon and Ethiopia) and consistently delivering good value for money (Global Evaluation on Fund for Gender Equality).
- Joint delivery and joint programmes helped to avoid duplication and led to increased efficiency including centralization of recruitment, village-level coordination and monitoring processes (Kyrgyzstan, Mali and Rwanda).
- Tripartite consultation framework and use of the multi-phased process for coordination and synchronizing efforts of all partners to ensure smooth implementation (Mali and Egypt).
- Overcoming time-related obstacles and operational delays (including long rainy seasons, elections, political situations, start-up delays and travel restrictions) to ensure achievement of outputs and contributing to outcomes (Kenya, Rwanda, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine and Bangladesh).
- Highly skilled/knowledgeable and competent UN Women staff and programme implementation teams, even when covering staffing shortages (some evaluations).

Areas of improvement noted by some evaluation to enhance efficiency included:

- Synchronizing initiatives that are implemented simultaneously in each of the mandate and thematic areas.
- Having a holistic approach to programming to ensure UN Women offices make better use of staff skills and knowledge in a sustainable manner.
- Better staff resourcing to ensure that staff have the time and space for information sharing, advice and effective monitoring and reporting.
- Appropriate management structure/authorities and staffing to avoid delays in implementation, procurement, disbursement of funds and monitoring processes.
- Realistic resource mobilization targets (a few countries achieved less than 50 per cent of the

target)<sup>21</sup> adequately backed with human capital for fundraising.

- Retention of staff who are currently on service contracts linked to donor funding.

Additionally, avoiding spreading limited resources too thinly is a key area of focus to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Linked to the areas of improvement some evaluations noted delays in start-up (Colombia, Bangladesh), delays in implementation (Mali) and reduction or lack of funding leading to cancelling of activities (Sudan and South Sudan) which affected efficiency. Furthermore, a few evaluations noted a high percentage of activities executed through direct implementation leading to organizational inefficiencies (Kenya). Other issues included: financial management and reporting systems not tracking spending on specific activities (Ethiopia); centralized financial management causing delays in approvals and procurement (Mozambique); financial forecasts not in line with actual expenditure (Cote d'Ivoire); isolated implementation of several initiatives (Malawi); insufficient staff capacity (Liberia and South Sudan); and incompatible management procedures (Mali).

Joint programming/joint delivery increases efficiency of some aspects (discussed earlier); however, a few evaluation reports highlighted that they increased management and coordination costs. A few evaluations pointed to the importance of having clarity on management arrangements by all partners involved in joint delivery/joint programming to improve efficiency.

As per information from the evaluation reports, it was noted that many UN Women supported project/programmes had a budget of US\$ 5 million or below: US\$ 1 million or below (eight); US\$ 1–2 million (six); and US\$ 2–5 million (six). This does not include the 13 CPEs and 2 global evaluations reviewed. This means that most projects/programmes other than country portfolio and global programmes operate with less than or equal to a US\$ 5 million budget.<sup>22</sup>

Specific analysis of CPEs indicated that:

<sup>21</sup> Factors such as donor moves to direct budget support, achievement by some countries as LMIC status, the changes to donor division of labour within countries and the absence of some of the key gender donor partners have all had an impact on resource mobilization.

<sup>22</sup> There were a few project/programmes above US\$ 5 million which were not global or country portfolios.

- UN Women organizational efficiency is reported to be hindered by the high percentage of activities executed through direct implementation. Results from CPEs highlighted that such modalities undermined UN Women’s ability to be more effective and weakened the sustainability of interventions. CPEs emphasized that programmes implemented through strong partners are a prudent approach which facilitate freeing up UN Women’s constrained staff structure to concentrate on higher-level outcomes such as legislative reform, gender mainstreaming and coordination.
- Results from CPEs positively acknowledged the strong leadership in Country Office management and the technically competent staff to deliver across the Entity’s integrated mandate. CPEs also acknowledged the improvement in time lags in the recruitment of senior personnel. Nonetheless, most UN Women offices were understaffed and therefore highly stretched in executing their functions. Offices sometimes lacked the necessary seniority and visibility, which in turn undermined strategic engagement.
- Some CPEs highlighted cases where UN Women appeared to be driven by resource mobilization opportunities rather than consideration of the areas where it had comparative strength.
- Problematic areas bearing on UN Women’s efficiency at the country level included: deficiencies in programme design such as articulation of the theory of change; delays in the release of resources; weak partner capacity; weak monitoring systems; and slow responses to issues emerging during implementation. Some CPEs also highlighted challenges in operational processes in the form of weak linkages between expenditure and results, and delays in the transfer of funds to partners.<sup>23</sup>
- In some countries, UN Women had to take on roles that required substantive expertise that exceeds current UN Women Country Office staff capacity. For example, humanitarian, climate-resilient agricultural production, agri-business and value chain utilization.
- Most CPEs questioned the suitability of the short duration of programmes (mostly 6–12 months)

<sup>23</sup> For example, one factor reported as affecting efficiency, especially in crisis situations, is the continuous need for travel authorizations, which resulted in high and unavoidable costs for transport and security (e.g. South Sudan, Palestine and Cameroon).

to effect long-term change and the measurement of any real impact in terms of attitudinal, behavioural and social norm change on a wider scale.

The corporate evaluation on women’s political participation and leadership pointed out that at the country level the efficiency of partnerships has often been dependent on the national context and the ability to navigate political leadership. In some instances, the efficiency of UN Women’s partnerships has been hindered by its own planning and implementation delays and the level of responsiveness or communication with partners. This has led to some donors and partners selecting other organizations for collaboration.<sup>24</sup>

## Contributing factors

### Enabling factors

The range of factors making a positive contribution to efficiency was diverse. Factors contributing positively to efficiency as noted in some evaluations included:

- Lean management structures and committed staff willing to over-stretch.
- Ability to operate with limited resources and leverage funds.
- Implementing programmes/projects through local CSOs, community organizations, NGOs and women’s groups/networks.
- Use of social media and radio for wider reach of GEWE advocacy.
- Avoiding duplication and overlap, especially among different agencies (including through joint delivery, joint programming and UNCT coordination).

A few evaluation reports highlighted the use of integrated, synergistic and/or holistic approaches to programming which have enhanced efficiency and sustainability.

### Hindering factors

The range of factors negatively affecting efficiency, covered by some evaluations included:

- Issues and delays related to disbursement of funds to implementing partners.

<sup>24</sup> Corporate Evaluation of UN Women’s Contribution to Women’s Political Participation and Leadership – Synthesis Report (April 2018).

- Challenges in human resources including processes/delays in hiring staff, under-staffing, turnover of staff and staff contracts linked to specific donor funding.
- Inadequate data on costs and outcomes to allow effective management or monitoring of programme efficiency.
- Direct implementation of some activities by UN Women.
- Over-ambitious resource mobilization and project objectives for delivery of outputs within limited time frames (without adequate human resources).

A few evaluations also highlighted the capacity of partners as a factor negatively affecting efficiency. This

is double-edged as the capacity of partners has also contributed positively in several ways as pointed out in many evaluation reports (see earlier discussions).

## 2.4 Culture of results

### Coverage

Overall, coverage of the culture of results is strong. Both subcriteria (5.1 and 5.2) monitoring and reporting systems (35/36) and RBM systems (36/39) also have strong coverage in the evaluation reports (see Table 5). This reflects UN Women’s emphasis in evaluation terms of reference to understand the culture of results at various levels.

**TABLE 5**  
Performance of UN Women on the culture of results

Criteria and subcriteria	n*	Coverage level**	Satisfactory rating***
<b>4. Culture of Results to Improve Development Effectiveness</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>48%</b>
4.1. Systems and processes for <b>monitoring and reporting</b> on programme results are effective	35	Strong	51%
4.2. Results Based Management ( <b>RBM</b> ) systems are effective	32	Strong	45%

\*n = Number of evaluations addressing the given subcriterion

\*\* Strong (n = 31 – 39); Moderate (n = 16 – 30); Weak (n = 15 or less)

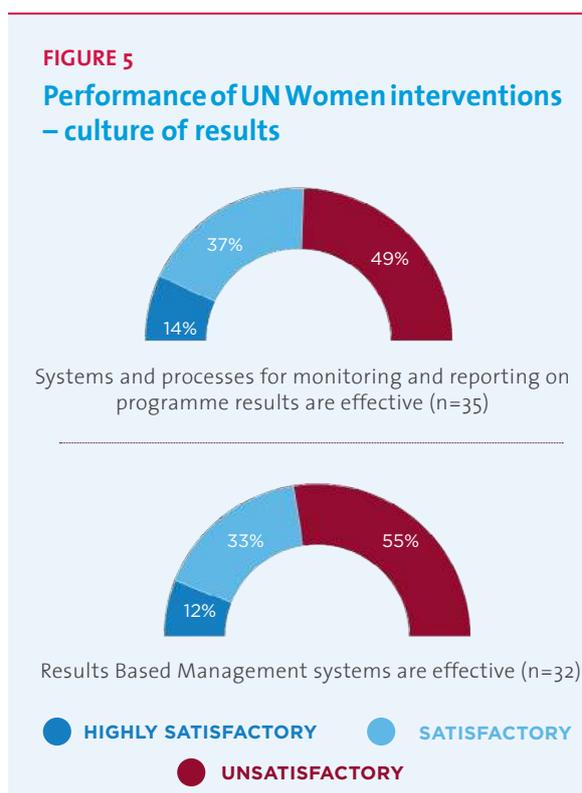
\*\*\*This includes “satisfactory” and “highly satisfactory” ratings based on positive findings reported in the evaluations

## Key Insights<sup>25</sup>

The findings on the culture of results are mixed, reflecting a work-in-progress.<sup>26</sup> Almost an equal number of evaluations report satisfactory or unsatisfactory findings (see Table 5 and Figure 5). Many evaluations indicated satisfactory or better findings for effective systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on programme results (51 per cent – 18/35). However, only some evaluations showed satisfactory or better findings for effective RBM systems (45 per cent – 15/32). A few evaluations reported highly satisfactory findings on both subcriteria (effective monitoring systems and effective RBM systems), and there were no highly unsatisfactory findings (see Figure 5).

<sup>25</sup> For brevity/clarity, only the country name is provided when examples are given, but this should in no way imply any wider assessment.

<sup>26</sup> These mirrored findings in MOPAN 2017–2018 Assessments (February 2019).



While the findings are reflective of the positive direction and work-in-progress of UN Women's efforts to strengthen the culture of results, the findings also highlight the challenges in establishing systems at the country level for monitoring and RBM. Some evaluations highlighted that increasing capacities on gender-responsive RBM systems have been and continue to be a priority for UN Women. Recently, UN Women launched the first gender-responsive RBM e-course for staff and partners to strengthen programming and national efforts to achieve development results.<sup>27</sup>

Specific positive examples from evaluation reports of monitoring, reporting and RBM systems which reflect elements of the culture of results, included:

- The project's monitoring and evaluation system is sufficiently developed to provide an adequate perspective on results and to significantly support decision-making (Morocco).
- The Country Office's results culture is embedded in staff responsibilities and involves compliance with UN Women's global standards. The Country Office's planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes are based on prescribed guidelines, which are evident through individual project progress and annual reports. Annual reporting is based on Strategic Note indicators (in addition to global indicators) which are SMART (Kyrgyzstan).
- In line with corporate developments, UN Women Moldova has established a functional and useful RBM and monitoring system. Annual reports are detailed, covering all of the Country Office's performance indicators. UN Moldova is using RBM systems to pose questions for innovative approaches (why certain changes are harder to achieve).
- The planning of the programme was structured through a logical framework matrix, a tool that allowed relating resources and activities to intended results. The M&E plan included a baseline study, monitoring the progress of results and a final evaluation. Baselines were established for all outcome and output indicators and indicators were well defined. Adherence to logical framework and programmes' adaptability to respond strategically enabled achievement of results (Colombia).
- The Country Office developed and implemented its programme guided by RBM principles, effective reporting, knowledge management and use of M&E tools. The OEEF outlines strengthening a culture of RBM at all stages of programming as well as evidence generation (Palestine).

Specific findings from the synthesis of CPEs specifically highlighted that most Strategic Notes articulated a theory of change as a core part of planning and programming at the country level. However, the depth and quality of the theories of change varied and theories of change often remained implicit. CPEs pointed to gaps in evidence-based feedback mechanisms or knowledge management systems to allow UN Women to learn and adapt interventions. For example, the inconsistencies among CPEs in reporting the number of beneficiaries reached, points to the need to have effective, coordinated data collection mechanisms during programme implementation. Reporting of outcomes and impact has remained weak, in part linked to partner capacities.

At the same time, evaluations equally pointed to the lack of standardized means of verification (Ecuador); lack of logical framework and/or (explicit) theory of change (Albania and South Sudan); logical framework was not conducive/results framework was of limited use to guide or monitor project activities (Kyrgyzstan); lack of data and inability to measure progress (Kenya); uneven/weak monitoring (Ethiopia, Mozambique and Liberia); responsibilities related to monitoring not clearly laid down/insufficient human resources (Sudan, Cameroon and Malawi); and lack of guidance on monitoring (DRC).

Specific results framework/chain issues highlighted by evaluations included: problems with indicator design and data availability (Kyrgyzstan); indicators and targets were not SMART (Rwanda, Mozambique and South Sudan); inadequate linkages to specific indicators and results to which partners contribute (Liberia); indicators were too optimistic (Ecuador); and indicators did not have targets (Liberia).

Specifically, a few evaluations indicated that the culture of results/RBM was noted as weak/not effective and or not implemented (Sudan, WCA Regional Office, DRC and Cote d'Ivoire). At times, even when RBM existed, there were reporting and measurement issues (Kenya).

Additionally, the corporate evaluation of women's political participation and leadership pointed out that there was no measure or internal assessment of how UN Women contributes to or fulfils its universal

<sup>27</sup> Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 (May 17, 2019).

mandate distinguishing between countries where UN Women has presence and where it only has a Liaison Office or no presence at all.

## Contributing factors

### Enabling factors

Some evaluation reports noted that establishing and operationalizing a systematic approach and having a clear framework, right from the inception of the programme, is essential for effective results monitoring and RBM. Some evaluations also highlighted well defined and documented theories of change which support the definition of indicators and targets for monitoring progress and informing decisions, leading to the robust use of result frameworks.

A few evaluations pointed to factors which contributed positively to effective monitoring and RBM systems, including: well defined SMART indicators for outputs and outcomes; ensuring indicators have baseline and targets; periodic collection of data and reporting; and the use of regular planning and follow-up/review meetings to monitor progress. A few evaluations also noted the existence of an M&E officer and that training of UN Women staff and partners on M&E and RBM enhanced the culture of results.

### Hindering factors

Some evaluation reports highlighted a key factor contributing negatively to the effectiveness of monitoring and RBM systems as the inadequate/lack of monitoring of RBM systems (described as “weak,” “uneven,” “no procedures” and/or “no system”), which means that there is a general absence of a systematic approach to programme monitoring or a lack of emphasis on monitoring. Some evaluations noted that indicators were not adequately SMART, while other indicators were defined but either had no baseline or targets, or the indicators were too ambitious. Some evaluations also noted that the focus of monitoring systems, when present, was on output reporting.

A few evaluations indicated that one or more of the following factors inhibited the culture of results, including: absent, relatively weak or not explicit theories of change or logical programme frameworks; lack of field or monitoring visits and/or lack of standardized means of verification of partner data; and limited tracking of data and/or lack of monitoring (performance) data hindering reporting performance management decisions and learning. A few evaluation

reports pointed to staffing issues, including no staff/non-recruitment of staff with responsibility for monitoring or the excessive workload of staff devoted to monitoring as a hindering factor.

## 2.5 Sustainability

### Coverage

Overall, the coverage of sustainability was very strong in the evaluation reports reviewed for this synthesis. The three subcriteria relating to the sustainability of benefits continuing or their likelihood of continuing after programme completion, and their sustainability in terms of institutional and/or community capacity and a strengthened safe and enabling environment for gender-responsive development were addressed by 36, 39 and 37 evaluations respectively (see Table 6).

### Key Insights<sup>28</sup>

In general, the results concerning sustainability are positive (see Figure 6); however, this does not mean all three subcriteria are positive in each project/programme. For example, a project lacking funding or an exit strategy may hinder sustainability; on the other hand, the capacities of partners and target groups and UN Women’s policy engagement and advocacy may create an enabling environment for sustainability. Therefore, sustainability should be considered as a work-in-progress, moving in a positive direction for the long term, given the nature of UN Women’s work in addressing cultural/social norms, humanitarian situations and political will, among others. Many projects are of short duration and/or have limited resources (as mentioned repeatedly in this report).

Most evaluations (78 per cent – 28/36) reported findings of satisfactory or better in terms of the likelihood of continued benefits for the target group after programme/project completion.

<sup>28</sup> For brevity/clarity, only the country name is provided when examples are given, but this should in no way imply any wider assessment.

**TABLE 6**  
**Performance of UN Women on sustainability**

Criteria and subcriteria	n*	Coverage level**	Satisfactory rating***
<b>5. Sustainability</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>87%</b>
5.1 Benefits continuing or likely to continue after project or programme completion or there are effective measures to link humanitarian to longer-term developmental results	36	Strong	78%
5.2. Extent UN Women supported projects and programmes are reported as sustainable in terms of institutional and/or community capacity or having been absorbed by government	39	Strong	92%
5.3. Interventions assessed as having a strengthened safe and enabling environment for gender-responsive development	37	Strong	92%

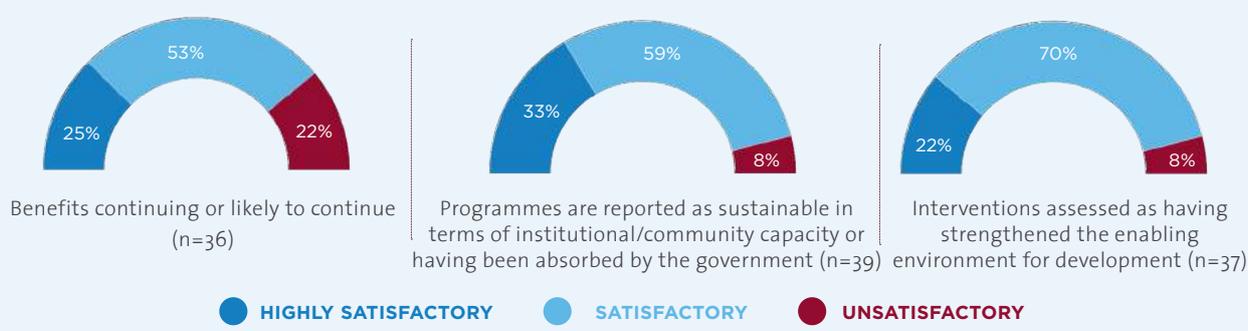
\*n = Number of evaluations addressing the given subcriterion

\*\* Strong (n = 31 – 39); Moderate (n = 16 – 30); Weak (n = 15 or less)

\*\*\*This includes “satisfactory” and “highly satisfactory” ratings based on positive findings reported in the evaluations

**FIGURE 6**

**Performance of UN Women interventions in terms of sustainability**



Very strong positive satisfactory or better findings were reported on the ability of UN Women supported projects and programmes to contribute to institutional and/or community capacity (92 per cent– 36/39)<sup>29</sup> and a strengthened safe and enabling environment for gender-responsive development (92 per cent

– 34/37)<sup>30</sup> (see Table 6 and Figure 6). Some evaluations also indicated highly satisfactory findings for all three subcriteria. Issues affecting the continuity of benefits as highlighted by some evaluation reports included:

<sup>29</sup> A “satisfactory” rating is provided when the evaluation finding indicates, as per pre-defined rubric “UN Women programme and projects may have contributed to strengthening institutional and/or community capacity but limited success” – See Annex 2 for complete rubrics.

<sup>30</sup> A “satisfactory” rating is provided when the evaluation finding indicates, as per pre-defined rubric “UN Women interventions have made more notable contributions to strengthen the enabling environment and safe civic space for gender-responsive national development planning, policies, systems, strategies and other interventions related to gender equality and women’s rights” – See Annex 2 for complete rubrics.

lack of further assistance/finance; no exit strategy or sustainability plan; cultural norms; and lack of political will (see also Factors in this section).

There are many aspects/dimensions of sustainability addressed across all three subcriteria which were enhanced through UN Women supported programmes/projects covered by this synthesis (see Box 14 for a detailed example of a project that was evaluated in Kyrgyzstan). Other examples highlighting sustainability dimensions included, but were not limited to:

- Enhanced capacities of universities to continue activities to address/prevent sexual harassment (Bangladesh); trained actors driving sustainable change to consolidate gains in victim assistance and protection (Mali); target communities to continue agricultural practices introduced by the project (Ecuador); water user association/committees continue to collect user fees according to plans (Kyrgyzstan); CSOs demonstrating the ability to build on IWLPP<sup>31</sup> results and replicate best practices (Albania); judges and judicial officials (Burundi) and trainers on MHM<sup>32</sup> (West/Central African countries); in addition to the various efforts/investments to strengthen national capacity especially national gender mechanisms/machinery in the implementation of policies and international normative commitments for GEWE.
- Assured support/funding after project completion through strategic alliances with development partners (El Salvador); having a second/follow-up phase (Ecuador, Morocco); and sustained funding over several years (Malawi).
- UN Women's diverse project implementation approaches/models, such as partnerships between UN Women, relevant government counterparts, the private sector and NGO implementing partners (Arab States – LEAP); establishing mechanisms and processes to support and promote gender equality at national and local levels (Albania); creating linkages with different institutions (Kyrgyzstan); linking UN Women CSOs to other CSOs and government (Cameroon); inter-institutional coordination (El Salvador); allowing communities to own the process of project implementation (Kenya); integrating easily replicable climate adaptation techniques

<sup>31</sup> Intervention on Women Leadership and Political Participation.

<sup>32</sup> Menstrual Hygiene Management.

#### BOX 14

#### Securing livelihoods for vulnerable women, men and children, through their participation in community governance of water resources and enhanced ability to use water efficiently (2015–2018), Kyrgyzstan

There is a very good likelihood that project benefits will continue for a reasonably long period of time after project closure. Identified changes in behaviours at the personal and institutional level should continue to impact positively on target municipalities well into the future. The evaluation concluded that sustainability likelihood was strong to moderate for project benefits to continue for a reasonably long period of time due to enabling factors such as: user-friendly e-governance system; low cost to sustain; high return on time investment; critical mass of female change agents; motivated by efficient operations; low cost to sustain database; high degrees of ownership; self-replicating models; and motivated by successes.

*Source: Evaluation Reports -June 2018*

(Mozambique); implementation model including men (Liberia); and bridging between humanitarian into development to continue to build on resilience and sustainability (Cameroon).

- Contribution to enabling environment, including establishing gender (equality) units (Morocco and others); gender focal point (Cote d'Ivoire); emergence of critical mass of GEWE champions including boys (Kyrgyzstan); the opening of the Humura Centre for the holistic care of GBV victims (Burundi); integrating VAW module as part of regular data collection of the EDHS ensuring a sustainable mechanism for generating VAW data (Ethiopia); creation of National Transformational Leadership Institute for the next generation of potential leaders in University of Juba (South Sudan); high-profile government and business leaders including the President and 20 prominent CEOs signing up to the HeforShe Campaign (Kenya); and establishing a cross-border trade women's association (Liberia). This is in addition to UN Women's contribution/provision of technical support to engendering national policies,

plans, strategies and frameworks including facilitating GRB and the establishment of and reporting against accountability frameworks, which creates an enabling environment (see also Effectiveness section on UN Women's contribution).

The analysis of CPEs highlighted approaches to enhance sustainability across thematic areas through a synergetic approach, combining support to economic empowerment with social empowerment and prevention of and protection against GBV, as well as community mobilization in both development and humanitarian contexts. The holistic approach used by UN Women in a humanitarian context involving the host community and existing structures was found to be a positive example of laying the foundation for sustainability. Thematically, most CPEs commented positively on the approach to GBV with the perspective of achieving sustainable results. Under WEE, sustainable impacts were reported to have been achieved at the individual and group level, but the approach has not sufficiently facilitated sustainability for a critical mass of women. This is even more so in humanitarian contexts due to the short duration of projects and some protracted emergency situations.

CPEs also indicated that UN Women contributed to developing the capacity of many individuals and partners across the thematic areas. However, assessment of these activities has not always been undertaken systematically, and interventions have missed out on follow-up, coaching and mentoring. Limited practices of sharing and transfer of knowledge and skills among trainees, as well as the frequent turnover of staff and officials, also pose a threat to the development of sustained institutional capacity.

Furthermore, despite dedicated funding and support from UN Women and other actors more broadly, the weak gender machinery in several countries adversely impacted line ministries efforts to mainstream gender. Without discounting continued engagement with the gender machinery, observations across CPEs call for UN Women offices to identify other entry points to strategically influence GEWE change at the national level to enhance sustainability.

## Contributing factors

The evaluation reports identified several factors which, when incorporated into UN Women supported

programmes, tended to strengthen sustainability across one or more of the subcriteria.

## Enabling factors

Strong positive factors for the sustainability of results highlighted by many evaluations included: the importance of active involvement of community/local organizations and CSOs and engaging existing/newly created management structures (such as water user committees) for better institutionalization; the capacity of national and local implementing partners/institutions which is often linked to effective capacity building efforts; and the engagement of UN Women in efforts to strengthen national policy frameworks on GEWE, including work on developing national strategies, policies and plans.

Enabling factors pointed to by some evaluation reports included: national ownership and commitment including allocation of budgets and implementation of policies; the availability of funding to continue after project closure either through donors (including a second phase), government, and/or community organizations/beneficiaries; and the involvement of men/boys and religious leaders. The involvement of religious leaders, especially in communities with social, cultural and religious norms that may hinder GEWE facilitated better continuity of benefits and overall community buy-in. However, this is also an area of improvement for UN Women in terms of facilitating sustainable social norm change at the household, community and national level as pointed out in some CPEs.

A few evaluations also highlighted project design and approach (including incorporating a sustainability plan and/or exit strategies) as enabling factors for ensuring sustained results.

## Hindering factors

Factors hindering sustainability, as highlighted by a few evaluations included: the absence of political will/ownership, or the challenging political environment; deep-rooted cultural/social norms; inadequate involvement of men/boys; the short duration of projects with limited resources that are spread too thinly; the lack of a sustainability plan or exit strategy; turnover of staff in participating/implementing organizations/institutions; and limited or no follow-up on capacity development efforts and contexts (especially in humanitarian/complex situations).

# 3. OPPORTUNITIES AND THE WAY FORWARD

The following broad opportunities have been compiled by bringing together and synthesizing the recommendations included in the evaluation reports.

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## **Further strengthen the strategic positioning of UN Women and its participation in broader system-wide initiatives through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), including joint programmes.**

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This includes: strengthening implementation of UN Women's mandate by establishing a clearer division of labour with other organizations at the country level; and by continuing to strengthen and revitalize the Gender Theme Groups. UN Women could do more through UNDS and UNSDCF to further promote the GEWE agenda by more forcefully highlighting gaps and suggesting areas of collaboration, joint advocacy, research, policy engagement and joint resource mobilization. To more strategically influence GEWE changes at the national level, evaluations call for increased coordination with line ministries beyond the gender machinery with which UN Women works in joint programmes and joint programming.

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## **Boost the achievement of results through multi-pronged advocacy, capacity building, and strategic and diverse partnerships to support sustained changes in social norms.**

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This includes<sup>33</sup>: promoting interventions for effective and sustainable changes in social norms at the household, community and individual levels, through engaging men and boys more meaningfully;

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<sup>33</sup> These also contribute to enhanced sustainability and efficiency of UN Women supported programmes and interventions

incorporating integrated and holistic approaches; and continuing to incorporate innovative approaches and models. Establishing effective RBM systems, tracking progress on long-term changes and measuring impact in terms of attitudinal, behavioural and social norm changes on a wider scale are critical enabling factors. UN Women's assisted programmes need to be situated in the broader institutional and policy environment and in the interventions of other actors (including United Nations organizations) for longer-term and more significant change. It is also important for UN Women to ensure that there is continued integration of a human rights-based approach to the commitment to leave no one behind.

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## **Increase efforts to improve the efficiency of UN Women supported programmes and interventions.**

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This includes: strengthening programme design and monitoring systems to better track and monitor programme costs; leveraging resources through diverse partnerships to ensure a multiplier effect; and having viable HR and resource mobilization strategies to deliver across the Entity's integrated mandate. Additionally, UN Women should consider reducing direct implementation of activities and focus more on coordination, oversight, monitoring and technical advice to implementing partners with proven track records. Optimizing staffing and financial resources by not spreading activities and resources too thinly and by narrowing the geographical focus of interventions through identifying and concentrating on activities that are most relevant and achievable and complement initiatives of other actors will also enhance efficiency.

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## **Intensify efforts and continue investments to strengthen the culture of results.**

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This includes: improving the quality of programme/project design, specifically related to developing realistic and explicit theories of change in line with resources available (and likelihood of being mobilized); in addition to defining realistic indicators with baselines and targets and monitoring progress against targets. Enhancing capacities of UN Women staff in Country Offices and, in particular, of implementing partners to track, capture and report results (including systems for monitoring unexpected outcomes) is critical to better gather evidence on outcomes and impacts. Furthermore, systematic and institutionalized support to improve knowledge management, including capturing and reporting longer-term results, good practices and lessons learned will also improve the culture of results.

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## **Enhance the sustainability of UN Women supported programmes and interventions through exit strategies and sustainability plans.**

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This includes<sup>34</sup>:ensuring linkages with other initiatives within and outside the UN system; and linking small projects with larger programmes to ensure better scaling-up and likelihood of continuity of benefits. Strategies that empower and equip national partners with expertise and tools to advance change, and the cascading effect this is having on transferring skills and knowledge to a wider range of stakeholders and in building gender equality champions to support increased national ownership of GEWE results will enhance the likelihood of sustainability. Continuing to strengthen the enabling environment for gender-responsive development, including creating “safe and social cohesion spaces” to provide access to services, safe space for women to discuss issues concerning their rights, protection of survivors, as well as assistance to early economic recovery including in humanitarian settings will also facilitate continuity of benefits.

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<sup>34</sup> These also enhance effectiveness of UN Women supported programmes and interventions.

# ANNEXES

**Annex 1: List of 2017/2018 Evaluations covered by the meta-synthesis**

**Annex 2: Guide to classifying evaluation findings**

# ANNEX 1:

## List of 2017/2018 Evaluations covered by the meta-synthesis

Region		Office/division	Title of evaluation	Report quality rating
<b>West and Central Africa</b>	1.	Mali	L'évaluation Finale Du Projet « Projet D'amélioration De L'accès Des Femmes Victimes De Violences Sexuelles Et Basées À La Justice Et À La Sécurité Dans Le Processus De Consolidation De La Paix Au Mali »	Fair
	2.	Regional Office for West and Central Africa (Senegal)	End-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Gender, Menstrual Hygiene and Sanitation	Very Good
	3.	Cameroon	Prise En Charge Adéquate Des Femmes Victimes De Violences Dans La Région De L'extrême Nord	Good
	4.	Liberia	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
<b>East and Southern Africa</b>	5.	Burundi	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
	6.	Kenya	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
	7.		Evaluation of "Countering Violent Extremism" Project in Kenya	Good
	8.	Rwanda	Final Evaluation of the Joint Programme "Advancing and Sustaining Gender Equality Gains in Rwanda"	Very Good
	9.		Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
	10.	South Sudan	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
	11.	Ethiopia	Evaluation of "Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls in Ethiopia" Programme	Good
	12.	Mozambique	Mid-term Evaluation of WEE project in Gaza, Mozambique	Good
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>	13.	Bangladesh	Evaluation of "Building Capacity to Prevent Violence Against Women (BCPVAW)"	Good
	14.	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Final Evaluation of Regional Project "Preventing Exploitation of Women Migrant Workers"	Good
	15.	Regional Office for Arab States (Egypt)	Evaluation of "UN Women's Economic Interventions under LEAP/HA programming in the Arab States region"	Good
	16.	Jordan	Evaluation of UN Women's "Peace and Security in the Arab States" Regional Project	Good
	17.	Egypt	Evaluation of "Securing Rights and Improving Livelihoods of Women (SRILW)" Action	Good

	18.		Final Evaluation of UN Women’s “Promoting Women’s Employment by Creating Safe and Women-Friendly Workplaces” Programme (WEPP)	Good
	19.	Morocco MCO	L’évaluation Finale du Projet de l’opérationnalisation de l’entente de partenariat pour la promotion de la participation des Femmes à la gestion des affaires locales et le renforcement de la gouvernance territoriale sensible au genre (2014–2017)	Very Good
<b>Europe and Central Asia</b>	20.	Albania	UN Women Albania Outcome Evaluation on “Women’s Leadership and Political Participation”	Good
	21.	Kyrgyzstan	Joint Programme on: “Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women”	Very Good
	22.		Livelihoods Through Participation and Equal Access to Water	Good
<b>Americas and the Caribbean</b>	23.	El Salvador	Evaluación Final Del Proyecto: “Ciudad Mujer/Onu Mujeres”	Good
	24.	Mexico	Evaluation of “The Safe Cities Campaign #Noesdehombres”	Very Good
	25.	Ecuador	Evaluación Del Proyecto “Mujeres Liderando El Desarrollo Inclusivo Sostenible De La Provincia De Loja”	Good
	26.	Colombia	Final Evaluation of the “Women’s Citizenship for Peace, Justice and Development”	Good
	27.	Colombia	Mid-term Evaluation of the Programme: “Overcoming Gender-Based Violence to Ensure Women’s Full Enjoyment of Rights”	Very Good
	28.	Regional Office for Americas and the Caribbean (Panama)	Regional Evaluation on Normative Frameworks	Very Good
	29.	Ecuador	Mid-term Evaluation of “Sustainability of the wasteland from a gender perspective”	Fair
<b>Corporate</b>	30.	Independent Evaluation Service (IES)	UN Women's Contribution to Women's Political Participation and Leadership	Very Good
<b>Headquarters</b>	31.	Fund for Gender Equality	Independent Evaluation of “UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality” (2009–2017)	Very Good

## 2017 Country Portfolio Evaluations

Region		Office/division	Title of evaluation	Report quality rating
West and Central Africa	1.	Cameroon	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
	2.	Cote d'Ivoire	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
	3.	Democratic Republic of Congo	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
East and Southern Africa	4.	Malawi	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
	5.	Sudan	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
Europe and Central Asia	6.	Kyrgyzstan	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
	7.	Moldova	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
Arab States	8.	Palestine	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good

# Annex 2:

## Guide to classifying evaluation findings

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
<b>1. Relevance</b>				
1.1 UN Women supported programmes and other interventions are suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group.	Substantial elements of programme or project activities and outputs are unsuited to the needs and priorities of the target group, especially vulnerable girls and women.	No systematic gender analysis of the needs and priorities of women and girls took place during the design phase of developmental or humanitarian response programming, or there is an evident mismatch between programme or project activities and outputs and the needs and priorities of the target group.	UN Women supported interventions are designed taking into account the needs of the target group as identified through a process of gender-focused situation analysis (including a needs assessment for humanitarian operations) and the resulting activities are designed to meet the needs of the target group especially women, girls and other vulnerable groups.	UN Women supported interventions are suited and responded well to the needs and/or priorities of women and girls, focusing, where appropriate, on the poorest and most excluded in line with the leave no one behind principle.
1.2 UN Women supported development interventions are aligned with national development goals and responded to the centrality of national ownership and leadership.	Significant elements of UN Women supported development programme and project activities run counter to national development priorities with a resulting loss of effectiveness.	A significant portion (25 per cent or more) of UN Women programmes and projects are not aligned with national plans and priorities, but there is no evidence that they run counter to those priorities.	Most UN Women supported development programmes and projects are aligned with national plans and priorities as expressed in national development and sector plans and priorities.	UN Women supported development projects and programmes are fully aligned with national development goals and responded well to the centrality of national ownership and leadership and to the situation of women and marginalized groups.
1.3 UN Women has developed effective partnerships with governments, bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organizations and women-based NGOs for planning, coordination and implementation of support to development and/or humanitarian responses.	UN Women experiences significant divergence in priorities from those of its government, United Nations organization, non-governmental organization (NGO) and donor partners and lacks a strategy or plan that will credibly address the divergence and that should strengthen partnerships over time.	UN Women experiences significant difficulties in developing effective relationships with partners and there is significant divergence in the priorities of UN Women and its partners.	UN Women has improved the effectiveness of its partnerships over time, which were effective at the time of the evaluation or were demonstrably improved.	UN Women has developed effective partnerships with relevant stakeholders (governments, United Nations organizations, bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organizations and women-based NGOs) for planning, coordination and

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
				implementation of support to development and/or humanitarian responses.
<b>2. Effectiveness</b>				
2.1 UN Women supported programmes and interventions achieved their stated development objectives and contributed to normative, coordination and operational results towards the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment.	Less than half of stated output and outcome objectives have been achieved, including one or more very important output and/or outcome level objectives.	Between 51 per cent and 75 per cent of stated output and outcome level objectives have been achieved.	UN Women supported programmes and projects have achieved at least a majority of stated outputs and have contributed to outcome objectives (more than 75 per cent if stated) or have achieved the most important stated outputs and expected outcomes.	UN Women supported programmes and projects have achieved all or almost all significant development and/or humanitarian objectives at the output level and have contributed to expected outcomes.
2.2 UN Women supported programmes and projects have resulted in positive benefits for target group members.	Problems in the design or delivery of UN Women supported activities mean that expected positive benefits for target group members have not occurred or are unlikely to occur.	UN Women supported projects and programmes have resulted in no or very few positive changes for target group members. These benefits may include the avoidance or reduction of negative effects of a sudden onset or protracted emergency.	UN Women supported projects and programmes have resulted in positive changes for target group members (at the individual, household or community levels). These benefits may include the avoidance or reduction of negative effects of a sudden onset or protracted emergency.	UN Women supported projects and programmes have resulted in widespread and significant positive changes for target group members as measured using quantitative or qualitative methods. These benefits may include the avoidance or reduction of negative effects of a sudden onset or protracted emergency.
2.3 UN Women programmes and projects made differences for a substantial number of beneficiaries and, where appropriate, contributed to national development goals.	UN Women supported projects and programmes have not contributed to positive changes in the lives of beneficiaries as measured quantitatively or qualitatively.	UN Women supported projects and programmes have contributed to positive changes in the lives of only a small number of beneficiaries (when compared against project or programme targets and local or national goals if established).	UN Women supported projects and programmes have contributed to positive changes in the lives of substantial numbers of beneficiaries as measured quantitatively or qualitatively.	UN Women supported projects and programmes have contributed to positive changes in the lives of substantial numbers of beneficiaries. Furthermore, they have contributed to the achievement of specific national development goals or have contributed to meeting development and humanitarian response objectives agreed with the national government and/or national and international

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
				development and relief organizations.
2.4 UN Women activities contributed to significant changes in national development policies and programmes with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls (including for disaster risk reduction, recovery, preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation) and/or to needed system reforms.	National policies and programmes in a given sector or area of development (including disaster risk reduction, recovery, emergency and response) are deficient and require strengthening, but UN Women activities did not address these deficiencies.	UN Women activities did not make a significant contribution to the development of national policies and programmes in a given sector or area of development, disaster preparedness, emergency response or rehabilitation.	UN Women activities made a substantial contribution to re-orienting or sustaining effective national policies or programmes in a given sector or area of development disaster preparedness, emergency response or rehabilitation.	UN Women activities made a substantial contribution to re-orienting or sustaining effective gender-responsive national policies or programmes in a given sector or area of development, disaster preparedness, emergency response or rehabilitation. Furthermore, the supported policies and programme implementation modalities are expected to result in (and already started showing) improved positive impacts for target group members.
<b>3. Efficiency</b>				
3.1 Programmes are evaluated as cost/resource efficient.	Credible evidence indicates that UN Women supported programmes and projects are not cost/resource efficient.	UN Women supported programmes and projects under evaluation either do not have credible, reliable information on the costs of activities and inputs, meaning the evaluation is not able to report on cost/resource efficiency, or present mixed findings on the cost/resource efficiency of the inputs.	Level of programme outputs achieved when compared with the cost of programme activities and inputs are appropriate even when the programme design process did not directly consider alternative programme delivery methods and their associated costs.	UN Women supported programmes and projects are designed to include activities and inputs that produce outputs in the most cost/resource efficient manner and resources are used in an efficient way.

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
3.2 Evaluation indicates implementation and objectives achieved on time (given the context in the case of humanitarian responses), utilizing the most cost-effective intervention.	Less than half of stated output and outcome level objectives of UN Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time. There is no credible plan or legitimate explanation found by the evaluation which would suggest significant improvement in on-time objectives achievement in the future.	Less than half of stated output and outcome level objectives of UN Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time, but the programme or project design was adjusted to take account of difficulties encountered and can be expected to improve the pace of objectives achievement in the future. In the case of humanitarian programming, there was a legitimate explanation for the delays.	More than half of stated output and outcome level results of UN Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time. This level is appropriate to the context faced by the programme during implementation, particularly for humanitarian programming.	Nearly all stated output and outcome level results of UN Women supported programmes and projects are achieved on time or a legitimate explanation for delays in the achievement of some outputs/outcomes is provided in the case of humanitarian programming.
3.3 Evaluation indicates that UN Women systems and procedures for project and programme implementation and follow-up are efficient and demonstrate efficiency in managing its operations and programme and investment choices (including systems for engaging staff, necessary skills, knowledge and capacities needed to deliver the portfolio, funds disbursement and stewardship of resources, etc.).	There are serious deficiencies in UN Women systems and procedures for project and programme implementation that result in significant delays in project start-up, implementation or completion and/or significant cost increases.	There are some deficiencies in UN Women systems and procedures for project and programme implementation, though there is no indication that these cause delays in achieving project and programme objectives.	UN Women systems and procedures for project implementation are reasonably efficient and do not cause significant delays or increased costs.	The efficiency of UN Women systems and procedures for project implementation represents an important organizational strength in the implementation of the programme under evaluation. Systems efficiency manage operations, risks and programme and investment choices.
<b>4. Culture of results to improve development effectiveness</b>				
4.1 Systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on programme results are effective.	There is a lack of monitoring and reporting systems for programmes. This includes the absence of adequate monitoring of outputs during the implementation of programmes, including in a humanitarian setting.	While monitoring and reporting systems for programmes exist, they either do not report on a regular basis or are inadequate in frequency, coverage or reliability.	Appropriate monitoring and reporting systems for programmes are well established to measure results and report regularly to support better targeted interventions and learning. Corrective actions are carried out when differences are spotted.	Monitoring and reporting systems for programmes are well established, enable systematic capture of results beyond outputs and generate high quality and useful performance data.

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
4.2 Results-based management systems are effective.	No evidence that a results-based management system for programmes exists and no system is being developed.	While a results-based management system is in place or being developed, it is unreliable and does not produce regular reports on programme performance.	A results-based management system is in place and produces regular reports on programme performance beyond administration and financial compliance.	A results-based management system is in place and there is evidence noted in the evaluation that the system is used for strategic management and informed decision-making, including making adjustments in strategies and providing support to mid- and long-term course corrections in response to contextual changes.
<b>5. Sustainability</b>				
5.1 Benefits are continuing or are likely to continue after project or programme completion or there are effective measures to link the humanitarian response to longer-term developmental results.	There is a very low probability that the programme or project will result in continued intended benefits for the target group after project completion.	There is a low probability that the programme or project will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion.	It is likely that the programme or project will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion.	It is highly likely that the programme or project will result in continued benefits for the target group after completion. Furthermore, they are likely to succeed in securing continuing benefits for target group members, especially vulnerable women and girls.
5.2 The extent to which UN Women supported projects and programmes are reported as sustainable in terms of institutional and/or community capacity or having been absorbed by the government.	The design of UN Women supported programmes and projects failed to address the need to strengthen institutional and/or community capacity as required. In the case of humanitarian responses, the design of programmes and projects failed to take into account identified needs to strengthen local capacities for delivering relief operations and/or for managing the transition to rehabilitation and/or development.	UN Women programmes and projects may have failed to contribute to strengthening institutional and/or community capacity or, where appropriate, to strengthening local capacities for delivering relief operations and/or for managing the transition to rehabilitation and/or development.	UN Women programmes and projects may have contributed to strengthening institutional and/or community capacity but with limited success.	UN Women programmes or projects contributed to significantly strengthen institutional and/or community capacity as required or institutional partners and communities already had the required capacity to sustain programme results.
5.3 Interventions assessed as having strengthened a safe and enabling environment for gender-responsive development.	For UN Women initiatives, there were important weaknesses in the enabling environment for development (including the overall framework and process for national development planning; systems and processes for public consultations and participation of civil society for development planning; governance structure and rule of law; national and local	UN Women interventions have not made a notable contribution to strengthen the enabling environment for gender-responsive development.	UN Women interventions have made a notable contribution to strengthening the enabling environment and safe civic space for gender-responsive national development planning, policies, systems, strategies and other interventions related to gender equality and women's rights.	UN Women interventions have made a significant contribution to strengthening a safe and enabling environment for development including more than one of the following: overall framework and process for gender-responsive national

Criteria	(1) Highly Unsatisfactory	(2) Unsatisfactory	(3) Satisfactory	(4) Highly Satisfactory
	<p>mechanisms for public expenditure accountability; service delivery and quality; and necessary improvements for supporting structures such as capital and labour markets). Furthermore, UN Women initiatives failed to address the identified weakness successfully, thereby limiting programme results.</p>			<p>development planning; systems and processes for public consultations and participation of civil society with a component addressing social norms, attitudes and behaviour transformation, including of men and boys; governance structure and rule of law related to women's human rights and gender equality; national and local mechanisms for gender-responsive public expenditure accountability; service delivery and quality; and necessary improvements to supporting structures such as capital and labour markets. Furthermore, these improvements in the enabling environment are leading to improved gender equality outcomes.</p>

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The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit Service under the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

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MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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