

IN BRIEF

# UN WOMEN ETHIOPIA COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION REPORT 2017-2020

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

The UN Women Ethiopia Country Office (ECO) has been in operation since 2012 and is responsible for delivering normative, operational and coordination work in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. The 2017-2020 Strategic Note outlines ECO aims and approaches in supporting Ethiopia's efforts to fulfill its commitments to advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls, including their enjoyment of human rights. The 2017-2020 Strategic Note focused primarily on:

1. women's leadership and political participation;
2. women's economic empowerment;
3. the elimination of violence against women and girls; and
4. accountability to gender commitments.

The Country Program Evaluation (CPE) assessed UN Women's contributions to development results with respect to gender equality. The objectives of the CPE were to:

1. Assess the relevance and coherence of UN Women's contributions
2. Assess ECO's effectiveness and efficiency
3. Assess the sustainability of the results
4. Analyse integration of human rights and gender equality principles
5. Assess the extent to which there have been synergies between UN Women's three mandates
6. Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the development of the next UN Women CO Strategic Note

The evaluation used a desk-based document review and in-depth interviews that were conducted virtually (due to the global pandemic) with 38 stakeholders, including government officials at national and regional levels, CSOs and INGOs, representatives of program participants, UN Women staff, UN agency staff, and development partners.

## CONCLUSIONS

### CONCLUSION 1

UN Women's exclusive focus on GEWE and role in amplifying women's voices and priorities, and its flexibility in responding to shifting circumstances, operational contexts, and capacities is highly valued by Government, civil society and donor partners in Ethiopia. While the SN tackled many of the root causes of gender inequality, some highly sensitive GEWE issues and challenging human rights violations, including related to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups of women and girls, require greater attention and investment.

### CONCLUSION 2

The SN's mix of programming, coordination, and normative work strengthened UN Women's visibility and credibility in Ethiopia, and enabled enhanced positioning and integration of GEWE in UN Country Team processes, platforms, and analyses. The fragmentation of different activities, some gaps in human resources, and limitations in the M&E system reduced opportunities to leverage synergies across the three mandate and thematic areas. Increased technical competency and institutional capacity could expand coordination and enable ECO to better influence and inform on GEWE issues, on a wider range of dimensions.

### CONCLUSION 3

There is consensus on ECO's comparative advantage and a clear mandate for engagement with established and emerging feminist movements.. A better understanding of how to partner with emerging feminist movements and women's groups to advance and link to UN Women's efforts and networks is needed.

### CONCLUSION 4

A transition to a more strategic orientation in the SN is needed, and consolidation of ECO's disparate activities, partners, and geographies, which exact a high cost on ECO staff and represent barriers to the achievement of SN outcomes. Despite committed and dedicated staff with considerable expertise,

synergies were not well or consistently leveraged. Building human resource and technical capacities; focusing on contextualizing global normative standards and linking with programming and coordination efforts; documenting and communicating evidence from practice; and investing in more robust monitoring and evaluation is needed to strengthen ECO's ability to build on gains. This could be facilitated through the continued support of longer term donor partners, which had an overall positive impact on the development of ECO's positioning and results.

### CONCLUSION 5

ECO's M&E system and reporting processes require significant improvement and a shift in approach, including more realistic data collection for indicators, more robust reflection and analysis of how activities and inputs contribute to outputs and outcomes, and more attention and analysis of the cumulative changes over the SN cycle.

### CONCLUSION 6

There is a need for data and critical reflection on the role, resourcing, institutional structure, strategies and results of the African Union Regional Liaison Unit, to assess its contributions to the SN's development results and organizational effectiveness and efficiency in the Ethiopia Country Office context.

### CONCLUSION 7

A focus on more systemic and higher level strategies to GEWE, including normative support and policy advocacy, and building longer term relationships with partners, is needed. UN Women's stretched presence on the ground and weaknesses among local partners resulted in high transaction costs when engaging in capacity building, which had a bearing on the sustainability of UN Women-supported interventions and ECO's convening role within coordination mechanisms.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, eight recommendations for enhancing UN Women's contributions to GEWE results, with a focus on the development of the next Strategic Note, have been identified. These recommendations are based on insights and evidence gathered throughout the CPE:

### 1.RECOMMENDATION

Based on the development of clear theories of change for the overall portfolio and each thematic area, consolidate program outputs and streamline activities. The new Strategic Note should focus on integrated, higher level, strategic interventions and partnerships based on coherent pathways for achieving sustainable GEWE results.

### 2.RECOMMENDATION

As part of the new Strategic Note, sharpen analysis of intersecting forms of inequality, incorporate a conflict sensitivity lens, and strengthen systems to track progress, including vulnerable and marginalized women and girls.

### 3.RECOMMENDATION

Develop strategies to address highly sensitive GEWE and human rights issues in programming and normative work, including through coordination with UN sister agencies.

### 4.RECOMMENDATION

Consider including Women, Peace and Security as a thematic area in the new Strategic Note. Undertake a detailed analysis using the SN development tools to determine the best way to ensure relevant WPS outcomes are incorporated in the ECO portfolio.

**5.RECOMMENDATION**

Explore mechanisms and develop a strategy on ECO's support to emerging women's movements, networks and feminist organizations. Help broker and institutionalize a more consistent, sustained role for women's rights organizations to engage in normative dialogue and decision making at all levels.

**6.RECOMMENDATION**

Strengthen the quality and usability of ECO's results-based management and reporting systems to enable clearer tracking of progress towards results.

**7.RECOMMENDATION**

Undertake an assessment of the role, resourcing, institutional structure, strategies and results of the AU Liaison Unit and its relationship within the Ethiopia Country Office.

**8.RECOMMENDATION**

Assess ECO's interventions and results related to transformative gender approaches and shifting gender norms, in different thematic areas and programming contexts. Determine how to best advance this work from a more strategic level, including partnering with women's organizations at the community level.

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