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**Coordination, programme and other questions:
mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies
and programmes in the United Nations system**

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution [2018/7](#), assesses progress in the implementation of accountability frameworks for gender mainstreaming of the United Nations system at the global and country levels and in the operational activities of the United Nations development system.

It draws on United Nations entities' reports under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard, the strategic summary of coordination results, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system, and on secondary sources.

Recommendations are offered for consideration by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2019, to support accelerated gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of the United Nations system.



I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution [2018/7](#), requested that I submit a report to the Council at its 2019 session on the implementation of the resolution, including on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The present report responds to that request.

2. Section II of the present report focuses on system-wide advances on gender equality and the empowerment of women in 2018; section III reports on the accountability of the United Nations system in gender mainstreaming at the overall entity and country levels; section IV focuses on gender mainstreaming in operational activities; section V highlights gaps and challenges; and section VI concludes with recommendations for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council.

3. The present report analyses information from 66 United Nations entities reporting under the System-wide Action Plan and 24 United Nations country teams that completed the System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard by 2018, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's strategic summaries of coordination results for 2018 for 131 United Nations country teams through the Group's information management system.

II. Advancing the gender equality agenda

4. Since I took office as Secretary-General, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls has been a top priority. I am therefore committed to strengthening the gender architecture in the United Nations system by, inter alia, achieving gender parity, encouraging dedicated gender expertise and strengthening systematic gender mainstreaming, including in the context of the United Nations reform. Achieving gender equality requires adequate financing. Notably, only 2.03 per cent¹ of United Nations development system expenditures are allocated to gender equality and women's empowerment, while only 2.6 per cent of personnel work on this important issue.² In response to this, in 2018 I established a high-level task force on financing for gender equality to review and track United Nations budgets and expenditures across the system.

5. The task force is internal to the United Nations and will review current budgets/expenditures on gender equality system-wide, recommend targets, establish baselines and assess how resources may be meaningfully increased without leveraging additional external resources, to ensure all entities and agencies are adequately investing in gender equality by July 2019. It is co-chaired by my Senior Adviser on Policy and the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

6. By galvanizing action for increased and targeted investments for gender equality and women's empowerment and the accurate tracking of resources in this area, the task force will mobilize the United Nations system to increase allocated financing for gender equality.

7. I continue to encourage the inclusion of gender analyses in all my statements and reports to intergovernmental bodies and encourage senior leadership to do

¹ Based on development funding committed to gender equality and only where entity data are available.

² Report of the Secretary-General on "Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all", [A/72/124-E/2018/3](#).

likewise. I have also stressed the need for greater gender balance in United Nations delegations and meetings, and in participation on panels.

8. Gender parity across the system remains a core commitment and priority. While parity should not be conflated with mainstreaming, greater diversity and representation leads to strengthened operational outcomes for all institutions. A focus on the implementation of my system-wide strategy on gender parity has led to the achievement of key milestones. Today, the United Nations has almost reached gender parity in its senior leadership for the first time in history, and we are well placed to be ahead of the goal of 2021, demonstrating what can be achieved with unwavering political will. We also reached parity among resident coordinators and a historically high number of women heads and deputy heads of peacekeeping missions, including an all-female leadership team in Iraq and heads of civilian, military and police in Cyprus.

9. In the past year, enhanced measures to address sexual harassment have also been put in place, including a helpline, dedicated investigators and protocols for the investigation of sexual harassment complaints in the United Nations system.

III. Promoting system-wide accountability for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system

10. Accountability for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system at the overall entity and country-team levels is key to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.

11. In 2018, the accountability frameworks for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, consisting of the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 and the scorecard, were updated to include new indicators³ on normative and development results in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and strengthen alignment at the overall entity and country levels.

12. In addition, the updated frameworks include a stand-alone performance indicator on leadership. This corresponds to one of the key findings from the first phase of System-wide Action Plan implementation: specific, mandatory and frequently monitored internal and external commitment from senior management constitutes a key driver of progress on accountability for gender mainstreaming.

13. The year 2018 constituted the first year of reporting on the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 (2018–2022). Its development was facilitated by UN-Women, with extensive system-wide participation over an 18-month period. Consultations included the administration of a system-wide survey, six inter-agency workshops, 21 individual agency consultations and a virtual consultation with 63 participants. An inter-agency working group on results, chaired by UN-Women, supported the finalization of three new performance indicators on results and the development of the methodology to implement these. The System-wide Action Plan 2.0 underwent two rounds of piloting with representative sets of entities in 2016 and 2018.

14. The year 2018 also constituted the first year of reporting on the updated scorecard, which was made available to United Nations country teams to enhance gender mainstreaming within their operations. The scorecard is a globally

³ System-wide Action Plan 2.0 results indicators: 1, Strategic Planning gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results; 2, Reporting on gender-related results; and 3, Programmatic gender-related results not directly captured in the Strategic Plan. System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard result indicator: 7.1, United Nations programmes make a significant contribution to gender equality in the country.

standardized assessment designed to foster adherence to minimum standards for gender equality, focusing on performance and results at the country level, rather than the achievements of single entities. It measures gender mainstreaming in United Nations common programming processes across seven clusters that contain 15 indicators. The participatory methodology relies on an inter-agency consultation and collective analysis to assess each indicator against minimum requirements, relying on quality assurance to improve the reliability of assessment results. Its design, pilot testing and finalization was co-led by UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme in the context of the Gender Equality Task Team of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

A. Accountability at the entity level: System-wide Action Plan 2.0

15. Consistent with the figures for 2017, 66 entities, or 93 per cent of United Nations entities, including the Secretariat and its departments and offices, reported under the System-wide Action Plan in 2018, up from 55 entities in 2012.⁴ This increase reflects continued and growing acceptance of the System-wide Action Plan as an effective system-wide accountability mechanism.

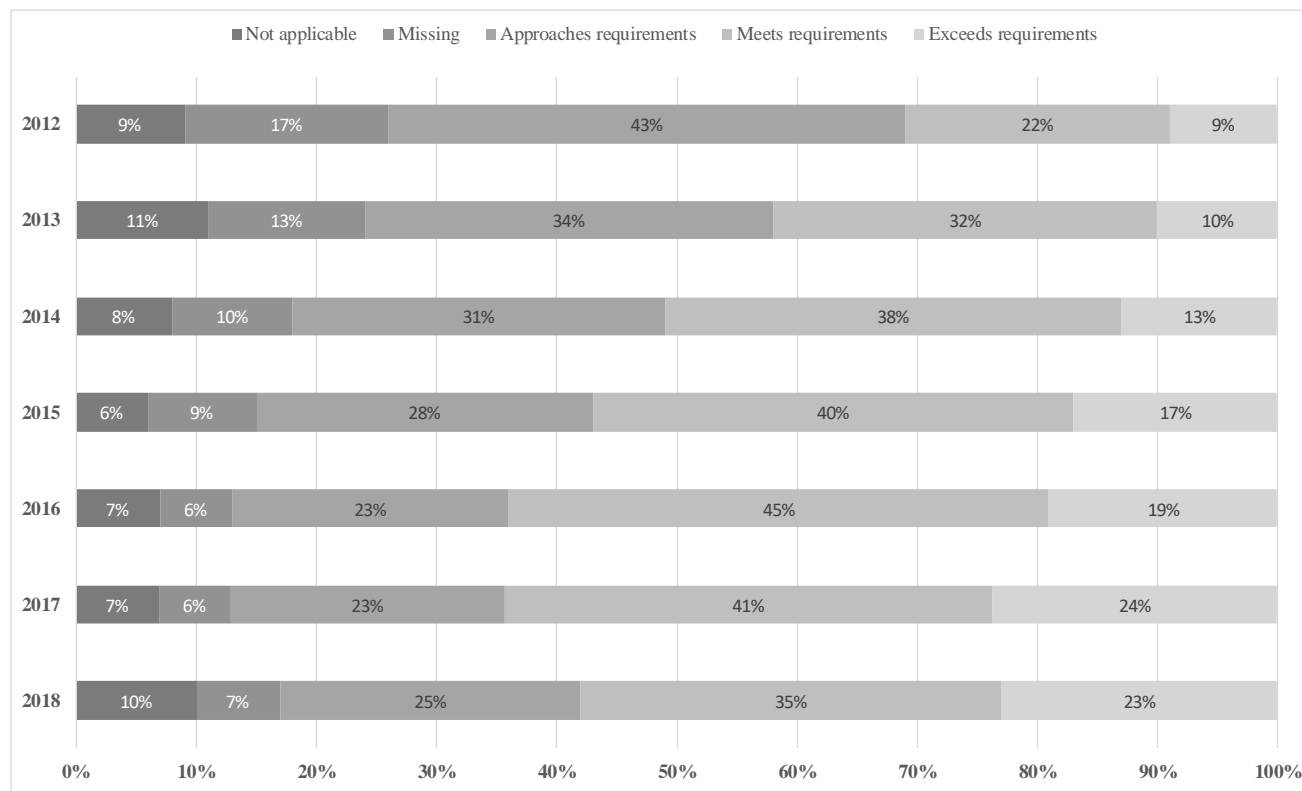
16. For the first year of reporting on System-wide Action Plan 2.0, 58 per cent of all ratings fell into the “meets” or “exceeds” category (see fig. I below), representing a 7 per cent decline relative to 2017, the final year of System-wide Action Plan 1.0 reporting. Given both the addition of new indicators and enhanced requirements for four existing indicators (Gender-responsive auditing, Organizational culture, Evaluation and Coherence), the decline was anticipated. Notwithstanding, the United Nations system has advanced since the first year of System-wide Action Plan reporting in 2012, when 31 per cent of all ratings fell into the “meets” or “exceeds” category (see fig. I).

17. Differentiating between the “meets” and “exceeds” categories softens the above-mentioned decline. A total of 23 per cent of all indicators rated as “exceeding” requirements, a decline of only 1 percentage point from 2017, demonstrating that gender mainstreaming continues to progress and should be recognized as doing so.

18. The results of the first year of System-wide Action Plan 2.0 reporting establish the baseline against which performance for the next four years will be measured (2019–2022), particularly for the four new performance indicators. Propelling further progress under System-wide Action Plan 2.0 will require sustained attention and capacity and enhanced resources.

⁴ Non-reporting entities included the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Figure I
Overall System-wide Action Plan ratings for the United Nations system, 2012–2018⁵



Analysis of System-wide Action Plan 2.0 new indicators on entity gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results (performance indicators 1–3)

19. The present section analyses the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 indicators on entity strategic plan results, which cover most of the United Nations system's normative and development results. It responds to the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (resolution 71/243, para. 12), by which the Assembly requested “the United Nations development system and its individual entities to continue to strengthen results-based management, focusing on long-term development outcomes, developing common methodologies for planning and reporting on results”.

20. In the context of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the General Assembly also requested “the Secretary-General, in consultation with the entities of the United Nations development system, to carry out by June 2017 a system-wide outline of present functions, as defined in their strategic plans and similar planning documents, and existing capacities of all United Nations entities carrying out operational activities for development in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a view to identifying gaps and overlaps in coverage and providing recommendations for addressing them, identifying comparative advantages and improving the inter-agency approach, in accordance with their respective mandates” (ibid., para. 19). The System-wide Action Plan reporting was oriented to respond to this request.

⁵ Calculations for the United Nations system are based on 990 individual ratings, derived from 66 entities reporting on 17 performance indicators.

21. An aggregated system-wide analysis of performance indicator 1 of System-wide Action Plan 2.0 (Strategic planning gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results) allows for the first time an overview of the United Nations system's performance on supporting Member States to achieve the goals related to gender equality and the empowerment of women of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5.

22. Such an analysis also helps to strengthen results-based management and develops a common methodology for planning and reporting on results, which facilitates strengthened systematic and joint planning on gender equality and the empowerment of women, producing the effective coordination envisaged when the System-wide Action Plan was endorsed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2012.

23. *Strategic planning gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results.* To meet requirements for the Strategic planning indicator under System-wide Action Plan 1.0, entities needed to include a high-level result (at the outcome/expected accomplishment level) in their main strategic planning document. Under System-wide Action Plan 2.0, entities must both include a high-level result, linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and referencing Sustainable Development Goal 5, and demonstrate that they have achieved or are on track to achieve that result, with supporting evidence. To exceed requirements, entities must demonstrate that they have achieved or are on track to achieve a high-level transformative result included in their main strategic planning document.

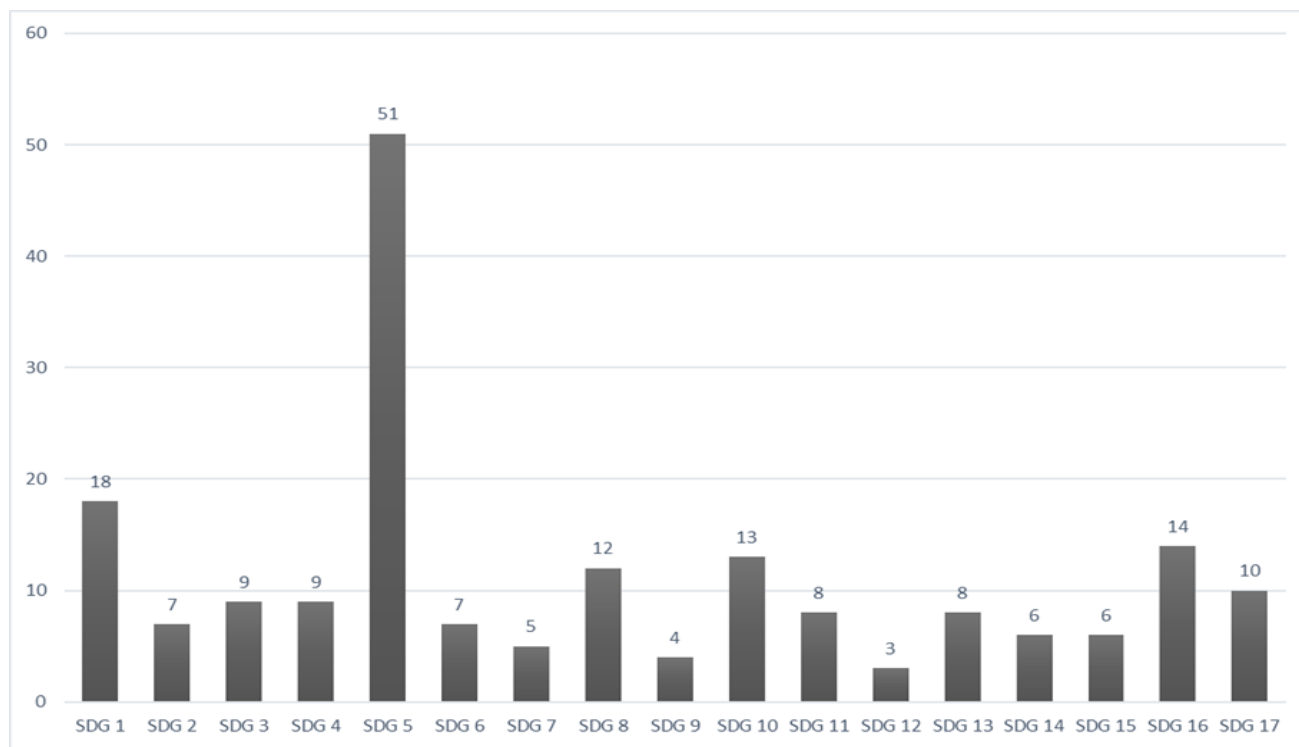
24. In addition, entities are required to identify the specific Sustainable Development Goals that the high-level results outlined in their strategic plan will contribute to and prioritize up to three of eight thematic areas. The thematic areas typology was developed as part of a theory of change formulated to provide an overall framework for the United Nations system's work in terms of contribution to gender-related results. Entities are also required to provide a narrative of results achieved. Reporting against this performance indicator informs an initial analysis of results at both the individual entity and system-wide levels and sets a baseline against which future progress may be measured.

25. Figure IV illustrates 40 entities (61 per cent) are meeting or exceeding requirements, with a further 10 (15 per cent) approaching requirements. In 80 per cent of cases in which a high-level result is included, it is being achieved or is likely to be achieved. The total of 50 entities (76 per cent) with a high-level result in 2018 represents a slight increase from 2017, when that number stood at 49 entities (73 per cent).

26. Nine entities (14 per cent), mainly the funds and programmes, met or were on track to meet a high-level transformative result. This suggests considerable efforts remain to be undertaken before the United Nations system is able to fully support the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address the root causes of gender inequality and women's disempowerment. Further guidance on implementing this performance indicator will clarify, for the Secretariat and specialized and technical entities, suggested ways they can include a transformative result on gender equality and the empowerment of women in their main strategic plan.

27. The Sustainable Development Goals on which entities focused in their work on gender equality and the empowerment of women are outlined in figure II.

Figure II
Number of entities contributing to each Sustainable Development Goal, as per System-wide Action Plan 2.0 reporting

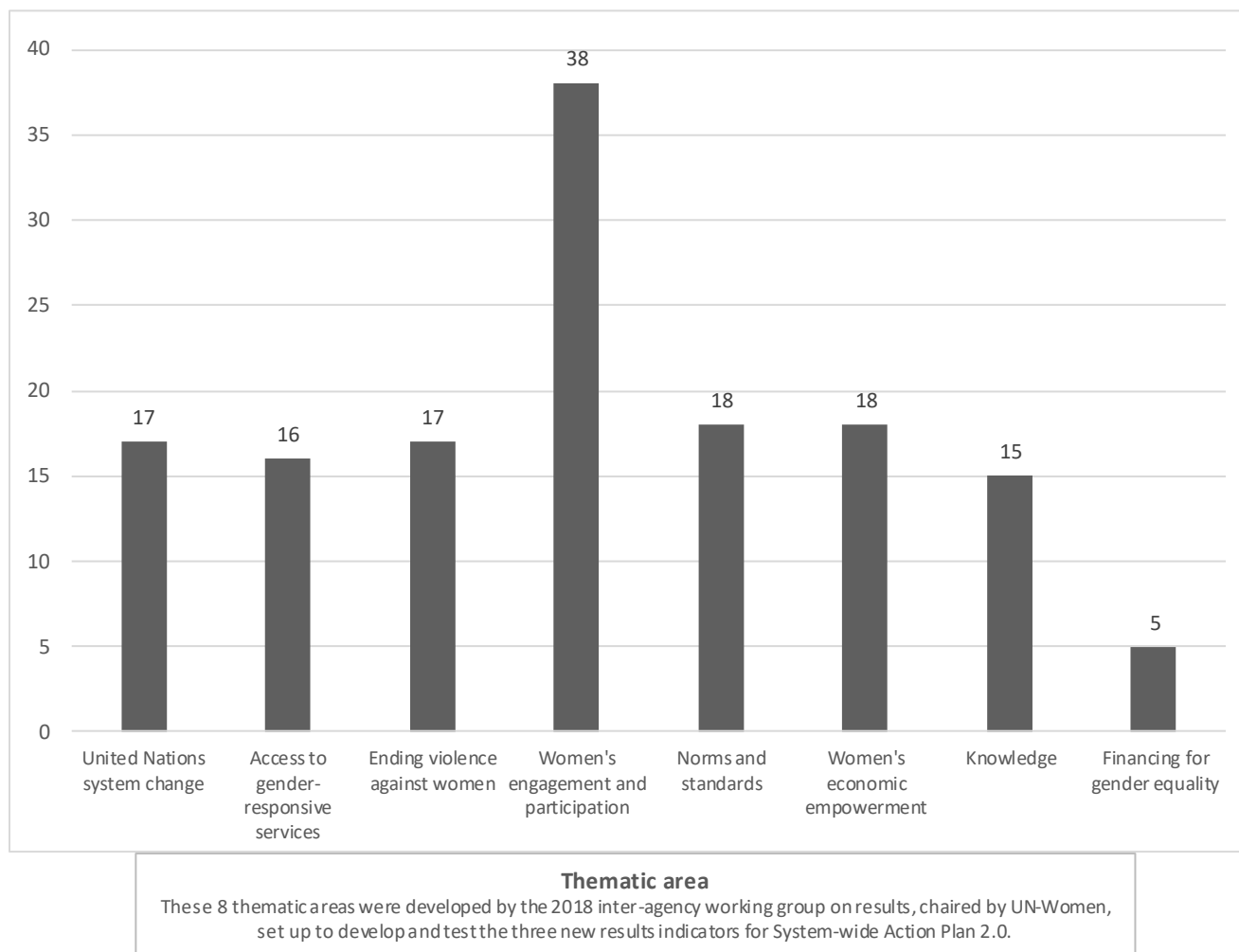


Abbreviations: SDG, Sustainable Development Goal.

28. Figure II demonstrates that 51 entities include a focus on Sustainable Development Goal 5 in their main strategic plans, 18 include a focus on Sustainable Development Goal 1 (no poverty), 13 include a focus on both Sustainable Development Goal 10 (reduced inequalities) and 12 entities include Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth). Sustainable Development Goals 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals) are also relatively well covered. The figure also illustrates some notable gaps, in particular for Sustainable Development Goals 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land). The United Nations system is therefore focusing its work in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women mainly on socioeconomic areas. More technical areas, such as those related to energy and infrastructure, in which gender equality is not traditionally considered, but which have significant potential for reducing gender inequality, are receiving relatively limited attention at the highest level of strategic plans.

29. In addition to understanding the United Nations system's focus on specific Sustainable Development Goals, further analysis was carried out on the main thematic areas on which the entities currently focus their work in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (see fig. III).

Figure III
Number of entities contributing to each thematic area, as per System-wide Action Plan 2.0 reporting



30. Overall, the United Nations system's work is spread relatively equally over the eight thematic areas, with the exception of two outliers. A total of 38 entities focused on Engagement and participation, defined as support to the engagement of both women and men in attaining gender equality and the empowerment of women. Entities' work in this area included raising gender equality issues with government counterparts during conflict; gender equality issues being more fully included in inter-governmental policy advice (multiple entities); increased participation of women and girls in multiple areas (such as Internet use and political participation); and economic participation. Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women was selected by only five entities, signalling a major gap that must be addressed.

31. *Reporting on gender-related results.* To meet requirements for this indicator, entities must report to their governing body or equivalent on the high-level result on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which will contribute to meeting Sustainable Development Goal targets, including Sustainable Development Goal 5, and systematically use sex-disaggregated data in strategic plan reporting. In 2018, 40 entities (68 per cent) met or exceeded the requirements for this indicator. Results closely mirror the performance results for performance indicator 1 (2 percentage point

difference), indicating that those entities with high-level results on gender equality and the empowerment of women are being held accountable for performance against these results at the highest levels of governance.

32. *Programmatic gender-related results not directly captured in the strategic plan.* This performance indicator covers any programmatic work not included in the main strategic planning document, for example technical cooperation funded from extrabudgetary resources. Results followed similar trends to those for performance indicator 1 (see fig. IV).⁶ Incidences of alignment to specific Sustainable Development Goals and thematic areas were also similar to such incidences for indicator 1, suggesting that there are patterns and gaps in entities' programming funded from non-core resources that are comparable to programming included under the main strategic plans.

Narrative on results performance indicators for System-wide Action Plan 2.0

33. Entities are required to complement their ratings for performance indicators 1 and 3 with a narrative illustrating the high-level result achieved. Analysis of these narratives shows that the United Nations system is achieving gender-related results in all thematic areas covered by the System-wide Action Plan, although aggregating results in individual areas remains challenging. A total of 20 entities reported promoting norms and standards, constituting a large portion of the United Nations system's work, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Entities directly support Member States in policy development and implementation in at least 100 countries, signalling potential for significant cross-learning.

34. Some of the key areas on which entities reported included:

- Mainstreaming gender into a wide range of sectoral policies, in particular education, health, peace and security, and labour. However, there is less attention to influencing infrastructure, finance and environmental policy.
- Development of gender equality policies through support to national machineries for the advancement of women.
- Supporting policies to end violence against women is a major focus for at least 11 entities.
- Four entities included transformative change and addressing the root causes of gender inequality in their normative support to member States.

35. Through its normative interventions on gender equality and the empowerment of women, the United Nations system is likely improving the lives and well-being of a significant number of women, men, girls and boys in multiple countries and sectors; yet, in order to determine the most effective means to support Member States, the evidence base must be improved further (see section VI on recommendations).

Next steps on results reporting for System-wide Action Plan 2.0

36. Given the extensive support to member States for policy development, entities must next track policy results in terms of their impact on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the lives of those left furthest behind. Currently, the United Nations system is mainly tracking the mainstreaming of gender into policies. This tracking of results should take place in the context of the United Nations system being one contributor to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The

⁶ This factors out the 50 per cent of entities that did not report on this indicator, as all of their work on gender equality and the empowerment of women is included in their strategic plan.

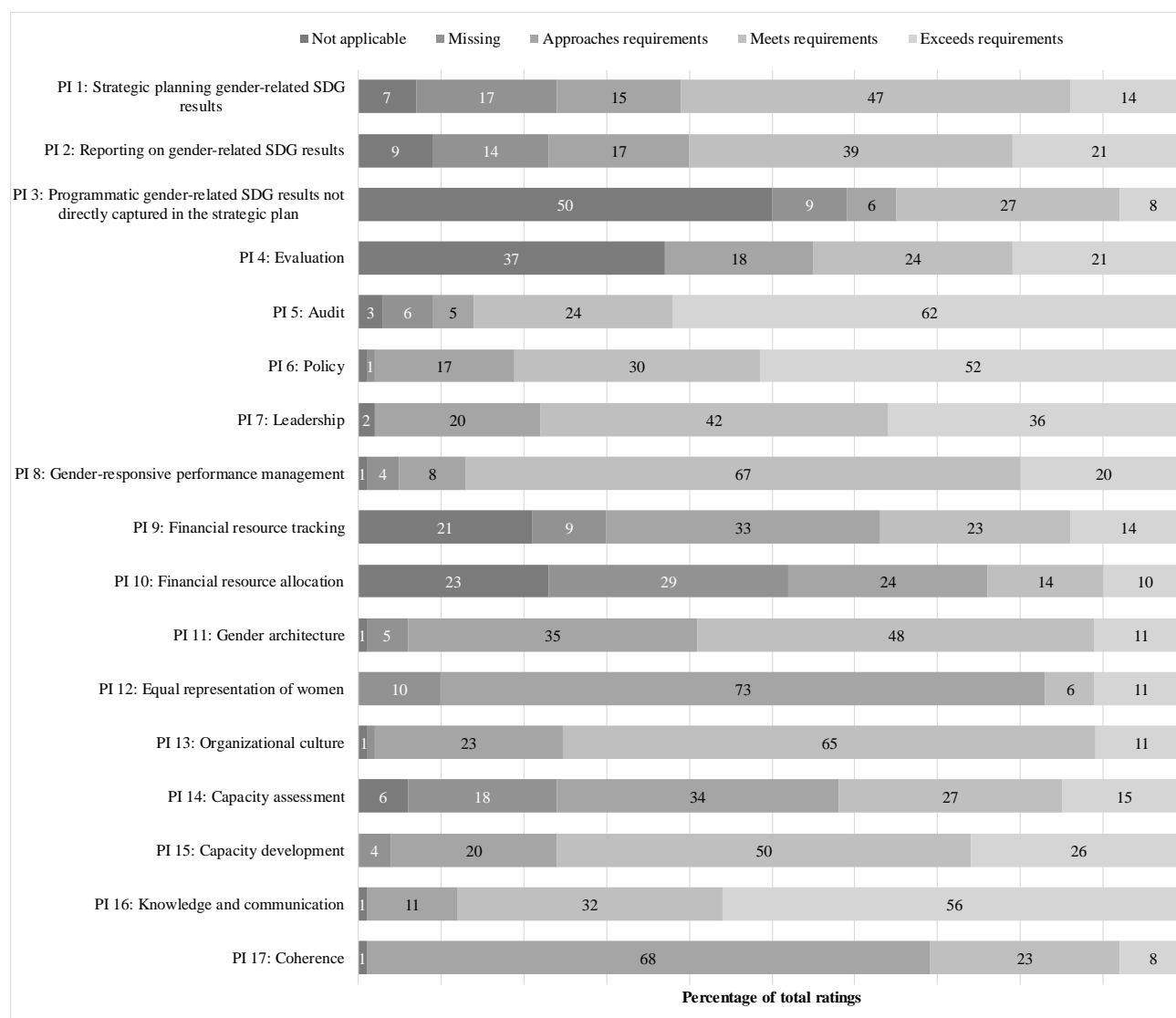
findings from system-wide tracking will help to ensure that the United Nations is investing its resources in the most effective manner.

37. Entities are currently at different stages in terms of methodologies for results reporting, and many will require support to report on results in a way that will contribute to system-wide reporting. Given the high level of capacity required, a five-year process for capacity development is envisaged for all entities. Effective reporting requires the strengthening of systems that facilitate reporting on results related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Improved reporting will also require strengthening system-wide common methodologies for reporting on contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, including through system-wide reporting on key areas of focus on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women from central strategic planning documents; and system-wide evaluations of the United Nations normative work in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Comparative analysis of overall United Nations system performance for indicators carried over from System-wide Action Plan 1.0 (2012–2018)

38. Figure IV breaks down the 2018 ratings for all entities by each performance indicator. Table 1 presents a comparison of “meets” and “exceeds” ratings, by indicator, for the 2012–2018 period.

Figure IV
2018 System-wide Action Plan 2.0 ratings, by performance indicator



Abbreviations: SDG, Sustainable Development Goal.

39. A total of 11 performance indicators were carried over from System-wide Action Plan 1.0 to the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 framework.⁷ Of these, the requirements for eight indicators remained the same, and it was recognized that additional efforts and time were required to achieve progress.⁸ Requirements for 4 indicators were strengthened.⁹ In addition, the former Gender architecture and parity indicator was split into two separate indicators to better capture progress (or lack thereof) and provide information on the successes and challenges of both areas separately.

⁷ Knowledge generation and communication, Gender-responsive auditing, Gender-responsive performance management, Policy and plan, Capacity development, Organizational culture, Evaluation, Resource tracking, Capacity assessment, Coherence and Resource allocation.

⁸ Knowledge generation and communication, Performance management, Resource tracking, Resource allocation, Evaluation, Policy and plan, Capacity development and Capacity assessment.

⁹ Audit, Organizational culture, Evaluation and Coherence.

Table 1
Comparative analysis of System-wide Action plan “meets” and “exceeds” ratings by indicator, 2012–2018¹⁰

Performance indicator area, ranked by 2018 performance <i>*New indicator for UN-SWAP 2.0</i>	Percentage of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements (N/A omitted)								Percentage difference, 2018–2017	Percentage difference, 2018–2012
	2018 (System-wide Action Plan 2.0)	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012			
Knowledge generation and communication	89	82	86	72	66	52	34	7	55	
Gender responsive auditing	89	92	90	83	78	69	13	(3)	76	
Gender responsive performance management	88	85	85	83	81	75	59	3	29	
Policy and plan	82	82	78	73	61	50	40	0	42	
Leadership*	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Capacity development	76	74	74	53	40	25	23	2	53	
Organizational culture	76	76	75	69	63	59	48	0	28	
Evaluation	72	72	58	55	50	44	36	(1)	36	
Programmatic gender-related SDG results*	70	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Reporting on gender-related SDG results*	67	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Strategic planning gender-related SDG results*	66	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Gender architecture*	60	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Resource tracking	46	54	50	39	30	25	22	(8)	24	
Capacity assessment	45	51	49	33	28	23	15	(6)	30	
Coherence	31	86	88	89	87	89	77	(55)	(46)	
Resource allocation	31	24	22	22	18	13	7	7	24	
Equal representation of women*	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

Areas of strength: 2018 System-wide Action Plan 2.0 results

40. Table 1 indicates that progress was registered for 4 of the 11 performance indicators carried over from System-wide Action Plan 1.0 in 2018: Knowledge generation and communication, Resource allocation, Capacity development and Gender-responsive performance management.

41. *Knowledge generation and communication and Gender-responsive auditing.* These constituted the highest performing indicators in 2018. A total of 58 and 57 entities respectively (or 89 per cent)¹¹ met or exceeded requirements. Despite a slight decline of 3 percentage points from 2017 in the combined “meets” and “exceeds” category for the Gender responsive auditing indicator, 41 entities (64 per cent) exceed requirements, an increase of 34 percentage points since 2017. The considerable advance can be attributed to gains achieved by the Office of Internal Oversight

¹⁰ In order to present strengths and areas for improvement more accurately, percentages in figure IV were calculated omitting “not applicable” ratings. Therefore, percentages for “meets” and “exceeds” ratings will slightly differ from those presented in figure III, which shows percentages based on all ratings, “not applicable” included.

¹¹ “Not applicable” ratings are removed to allow for an analysis of areas of weakness and improvements. As such, totals and percentages for “meets” and “exceeds” ratings may differ.

Services, which is responsible for reporting for all Secretariat departments and offices for this indicator.

42. *Policy and plan, Organizational culture and Evaluation.* Performance remained consistent between 2017 and 2018. 54 (82 per cent) and 50 entities (76 per cent) met or exceeded the requirements for the Policy and plan and Organizational culture indicators. This sustained achievement is particularly noteworthy, given that these two indicators catalytically drive progress for gender mainstreaming overall. Continued progress for the Evaluation indicator is also significant. Until 2016, it constituted one of the areas of weakest performance. Thereafter, there was a significant 14 percentage point gain in the number of entities meeting or exceeding requirements for this indicator (25 to 31 entities).

43. *Leadership.* This new indicator requires entities to demonstrate how senior management actively champions gender equality and the empowerment of women through both internal and external platforms. In 2018, 52 entities (80 per cent) met or exceeded the requirements for this indicator, a relatively high figure. Separating the joint category reveals that only 24 entities (36 per cent) exceeded requirements, demonstrating that more is needed to ensure that results of System-wide Action Plan reporting and accompanying remedial action plans are more widely shared from the highest levels of an organization, which constitutes the requirement to move from a “meets” to an “exceeds” rating.

Progress between the previous and current reporting period

44. Between 2017 and 2018, the Resource allocation and Knowledge generation and communication indicators each registered gains of 7 percentage points or higher in the “meets” and “exceeds” categories.

45. *Capacity development.* This indicator demonstrated slight progress between 2017 and 2018, with 50 entities (76 per cent) meeting or exceeding requirements in 2018, up 3 percentage points from 2017 and 51 percentage points from 2012. The uptake and continued implementation of the UN-Women “I Know Gender” e-course for non-gender specialists explains this progress. In 2018, 38,470 staff of reporting entities had completed the course, an increase of 19 percentage points from 2017. Approximately 50 per cent of United Nations system staff have now taken this course, an example of how effective coordination can lay the foundations for improved performance on gender mainstreaming.

Areas for improvement: 2018 System-wide Action Plan 2.0 results

46. As in previous reporting years, Equal representation of women remains the weakest performing indicator (only 11 entities, or 17 per cent, meet or exceed requirements), followed by Resource allocation, another historically weak area of performance, and Coherence, a typically strong area of performance. These last two indicators registered only 31 per cent of ratings in the “meets” and “exceeds” categories (16 and 20 entities respectively).

47. *Equal representation of women.* Although it represents the weakest area of performance, a total of 48 entities (or 73 per cent of entities) approached requirements for this indicator. This amounts to the largest number of “approaching” requirements ratings for any of the 17 indicators, signalling that with increased efforts, including through the full implementation of the system-wide strategy on gender parity, gains can be made towards meeting system-wide mandates for the advancement of women.

48. *Resource tracking and allocation.* Resource tracking declined slightly, by 8 percentage points in the “meeting” or “exceeding” requirements categories (from 54 to 46 per cent, or 28 to 24 entities). A closer analysis reveals that three more and

three less entities are “exceeding” and “missing” requirements, respectively, compared to 2017. The larger share of entities approach requirements. Encouragingly, while Resource allocation remains one of the poorest performing indicators, with only 16 entities (31 per cent) meeting or exceeding requirements, a 7 percentage point increase in entities meeting or exceeding requirements for this indicator was achieved between 2017 and 2018.

49. *Coherence*. Performance declined dramatically between 2017 and 2018 for this indicator, dropping from 57 entities (86 per cent) meeting or exceeding requirements in 2017 to 20 (31 per cent) in 2018. The requirement of participating in a System-wide Action Plan peer review moved from the “exceeds” to “meets” category from System-wide Action Plan 1.0 to System-wide Action Plan 2.0, a main factor contributing to this decline. Other contributing factors cited by entities included a lack of capacity and/or funding for staff to participate in inter-agency mechanisms on gender equality. Positively, with 26 entities identifying action points to undertake to improve performance in this area, performance between 2018 and 2019 is expected to improve relatively quickly.

2. Quality assurance and remedial action plans

50. The UN-Women System-wide Action Plan help desk reviewed all reports for quality control and accuracy. The quality of reporting increased by 12 percentage points from 2017 levels. Remedial action plans for 56 entities (85 per cent) qualified as adequate, good/satisfactory or better in 2018. This represents a significant improvement, which can be attributed to the new System-wide Action Plan online reporting platform, which requires more mandatory inputs to substantiate remedial plans to improve progress.

51. In 2018, reporting entities identified 203 actions to improve performance, twice as many as in 2017. The areas most targeted for enhanced activity were Capacity assessment, Capacity development and Coherence.

B. Accountability at the United Nations Country Team Level: gender equality scorecard

52. The updated gender equality scorecard was introduced to all United Nations country teams by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in mid-2018. A total of 24 United Nations country teams implemented and reported on it in the first year,¹² adopting a variety of technical support mechanisms ranging from international and national consultants to regional United Nations development groups for quality assurance and the scorecard help desk managed by UN-Women.¹³ All scorecard exercises systematically employed a fully participatory and consensus-building process that enabled evidence-based discussions that enhanced gender mainstreaming across the work of United Nations country teams.

¹² The analysis covers the 24 countries that undertook the scorecard exercise between November 2016 and December 2018. This includes nine countries that used the pilot methodology (Cameroon, Egypt, India, Iraq, Panama, Tajikistan, Uganda, Ukraine and Viet Nam), plus 15 United Nations country teams that used the final endorsed methodology (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mali, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe).

¹³ See section C below on gender capacities of United Nations country teams for more information on the global help desk.

1. Analysis of System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard performance indicators

53. The present section analyses the indicator ratings for 24 United Nations country teams. Ratings vary significantly between the different indicators and between country teams, demonstrating a range of strengths and weaknesses, as illustrated in figure V below. The country teams in Nepal and Uzbekistan scored highest, with 73 and 67 per cent of indicators falling in the “meets” and “exceeds” categories, respectively. Another seven United Nations country teams met or exceeded minimum requirements for over 50 per cent of the indicators. The remaining 15 met or exceeded the minimum requirements for less than half of the indicators. Six United Nations country teams missed the minimum requirements for three indicators, 13 country teams missed such requirements for two or fewer indicators, and 5 country teams missed such requirements for between five to eight indicators.

54. For the first year of reporting on the scorecard, 46 per cent of all ratings fell into the “meets” or “exceeds” categories. Figure V breaks down the 2018 ratings for all entities by each performance cluster and indicator. Table 2 presents a comparison of “meets” and “exceeds” ratings by indicator for the 2018 period.

Figure V
Country team/System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard ratings, by performance indicator (per cent)

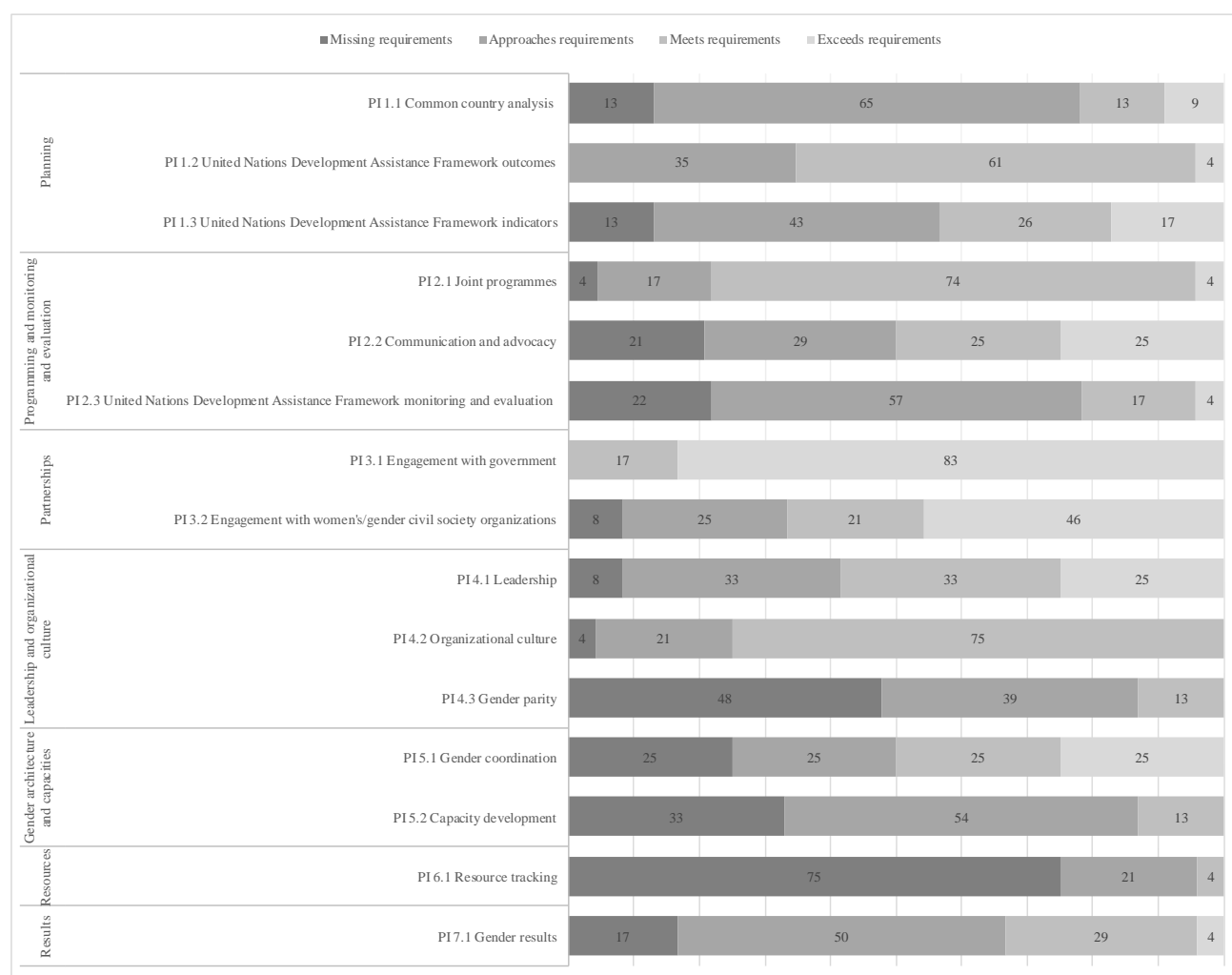


Table 2
Country team/System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard “meets” and “exceeds” ratings by indicator

<i>Performance indicator area, ranked by 2018 performance</i>	<i>Percentage of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements</i>
PI 3.1 Engagement with government	100
PI 2.1 Joint programmes	78
PI 4.2 Organizational culture	75
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Areas of strength

55. Engagement with government and Joint programmes contributing to reducing inequalities. These two indicators ranked highest, with 100 per cent and 78 per cent, respectively, of the 24 assessed country teams meeting or exceeding requirements. The Joint programmes indicator requires that gender equality is visibly mainstreamed into all joint programmes operational at the time of the assessment and bolstered at least by a gender-targeted joint programme.

56. *Organizational culture.* The organizational culture surveys conducted as part of the assessment indicated that this indicator ranked second highest, with 75 per cent of country teams meeting or exceeding its requirements. Results of the surveys provided valuable information for follow-up on staff perceptions of gender equality in workplace culture.

Areas of average performance: gender equality scorecard results

57. *Engagement with women’s/gender equality civil society organizations.* In stark contrast to the Engagement with government indicator, only 66 per cent of country teams met or exceeded the requirements for this indicator, suggesting greater focused attention is needed in this area.

58. *United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes and indicators.* A total of 65 per cent of United Nations country teams met or exceeded requirements for gender mainstreaming in all United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes. However, only 44 per cent translated commitments for gender equality into indicators to measure change.

59. *Leadership, Communication and advocacy and Gender coordination.* A total of 58 per cent of United Nations country teams met or exceeded the requirements for the Leadership indicator and 42 per cent (10 out of 24) did not, indicating a need for improvement in this area. A total of 50 per cent of assessed country teams met or

exceeded performance requirements for Communications and advocacy and the Gender coordination indicators. No clear patterns between country teams emerged in terms of compliance with the Communication and advocacy indicator. United Nations country teams ratings were distributed evenly between the four rating categories. Performance on the Gender coordination indicator varied considerably, with half of United Nations country teams reporting strong coordination mechanisms and others reporting few or none.

Areas for improvement: gender equality scorecard results

60. *Gender equality results, Monitoring and evaluation and Common country analysis.* These three indicators constituted areas of weakness, highlighting the need for significantly accelerated progress in these areas. While 33 per cent of United Nations country teams met or exceeded the requirements for gender equality results, others struggled to demonstrate results owing to, inter alia, a lack of gender-sensitive monitoring systems and the fact that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework was in the early stages of its implementation. In addition, only five United Nations country teams met the requirements for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework monitoring and evaluation indicator to measure progress against gender equality results. The results reported illustrate a need to better support and improve both the design of gender-sensitive monitoring frameworks and the actionable mechanisms for tracking changes in the relevant indicators.

61. *Common country analysis.* Only 22 per cent of United Nations country teams met the minimum requirement to integrate gender analysis into the common country analysis, suggesting a need for significantly greater focus on this area, particularly given the foundational nature of the common country analysis, which is all the more relevant in the context of the United Nations development system reform.

62. *Gender parity and Capacity development.* These indicators are particularly challenging, with less than 15 per cent of the assessed country teams meeting or exceeding performance requirements. Only 3 of the 24 United Nations country teams met the requirements for the Gender parity indicator, which is aligned with the system-wide strategy on gender parity. This indicator offers baseline information that may serve to foster accelerated action for gender parity at the country level. Similarly, only 3 of the 24 country teams met the minimum requirements for the Capacity development indicator.

63. *Financial resource allocation and tracking.* This indicator was by far the performance indicator with the lowest ratings, with only one United Nations country team setting a financial target for programme allocation for gender equality. Against this backdrop, 32 United Nations country teams, including some who reported on the scorecard, piloted UN-Info, an online planning, monitoring and reporting platform for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. UN-Info includes the mandatory application of a gender equality marker to United Nations joint workplans, providing information on the integration of gender equality across United Nations interventions and related investments for key activities.

2. Quality assurance and action plans

64. Quality assurance for the scorecard involves a three-tiered process. Each indicator is first scored collaboratively by a subset of the inter-agency assessment team for the evidence base and then by the entire inter-agency team to approve the assessment by consensus, and finally, either external experts or the UN-Women help desk provide guidance and expertise to ensure a degree of standardization in assessment and ratings. Accompanying action plans, which are required for each scorecard and for each performance indicator, must include information on: realistic

timelines for improvement; resources required for improvement; and responsibility for follow-up. For example, all United Nations country teams incorporated targeted activities into their action plans to strengthen system-wide capacities for gender mainstreaming. These included gender capacity assessments, training for key inter-agency groups, gender briefs in staff induction packages, monitoring of staff compliance with mandatory trainings and more systematic efforts to draw upon expertise available in academia and civil society. The new online reporting platform, which will facilitate regular and systematic system-wide reporting for both the scorecard and System-wide Action Plan 2.0, will enhance the UN-Women help desk's ability to more methodically review scorecards and accompanying action plans.

IV. Gender mainstreaming in operational activities

65. In 2018, the United Nations development system continued to address gender inequality by helping governments to integrate gender equality in national development and common country programming processes through dedicated gender equality outcomes as well as gender mainstreaming across priority areas.

66. United Nations country teams supported the integration of a gender perspective in national development processes and the implementation of normative standards and international human rights commitments. A total of 42 United Nations country teams reported joint work in support of the implementation of countries' commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This included supporting state reporting, facilitating national dialogues with civil society and follow up on observations and the implementation of agreed recommendations.

67. In Costa Rica, for example, the "Women's agenda for the follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women" was established with the active engagement of the United Nations country team, the Ombudsperson, and women's organizations. The agenda is aimed at providing a multi-stakeholder platform for collaboration and joint action. In Kyrgyzstan, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommendations to the country informed the National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2018–2020, which was developed with the substantive support of the United Nations Theme Group on Gender.

68. The summary of coordination results of the information management system administered by the Development Coordination Office reveals that the majority of United Nations country teams addressed the issue of gender-based violence, using different entry points and approaches such as joint programmes, advocacy through the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, or strengthening capacities on gender statistics.

69. In particular, United Nations country teams in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe started work on the Spotlight Initiative, a global European Union and the United Nations partnership to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. The Spotlight Initiative supports the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate that significant investment in gender equality can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls.

70. To provide greater attention to intersecting forms of inequality and discrimination, several United Nations country teams, including those in Burundi,

Nepal and Sri Lanka, integrated gender equality perspectives into key areas such as poverty eradication, food security, resilience, migration, disability and HIV/AIDS.

A. Embedding integrated policy support in common country programming processes to promote gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

71. In 2018, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group initiated a review of the guidance for the next generation of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. Gender equality and the empowerment of women remains a guiding principle of the guidance.

72. As at 2018, 68 per cent of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks featured specific gender results at the outcome level. In Cambodia, for example, the United Nations Country Team integrated gender equality in the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework as a follow-up to the findings of the scorecard. A total of 60 per cent of indicators are now gender disaggregated, compared to 44 per cent in the previous cycle. In North Macedonia, the Joint Steering Committee reviewed the main results of the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which included applying gender-responsive budgeting in line ministries, state institutions and municipalities.

73. The mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support approach to the Sustainable Development Goals has provided important entry points for gender mainstreaming by United Nations country teams. The Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group and its working groups provided gender expertise to United Nations country teams to help them effectively implement this approach.

B. Mainstreaming gender equality in humanitarian, peace and security pillars

74. The United Nations system is required to incorporate gender perspectives into humanitarian, crisis response and recovery plans as one of its key responsibilities. The initiative to address the gender inequality of risk, for example, integrates gender considerations into coordinated disaster risk reduction efforts across the humanitarian development nexus. Internal and external partners also issued a joint guidance note on gender equality and women's empowerment in disaster recovery. An updated version of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action was also released and offers practical guidance on integrating a gender perspective into the humanitarian programme cycle.

75. A joint initiative of the Department of Peace Operations and UN-Women on gender-responsive conflict analysis in transitioning contexts was piloted in Haiti, Liberia and Darfur. Lessons learned included the need to ensure that priorities related to gender equality and women and peace and security are built into conflict analysis processes and that the engagement of various partners and beneficiaries, including women's organizations and representatives, is critical.

76. Notably, the Peacebuilding Support Office continued to strengthen gender mainstreaming in projects of the Peacebuilding Fund, which distinguished itself in 2015 as the only part of the United Nations system that allocated 15 per cent of its budget to gender-related work. In 2018, this target was exceeded, with 38 per cent of total allocations addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women.

C. Gender capacities of United Nations country teams

77. In 2018, 74 United Nations country teams undertook at least one capacity-building activity for United Nations staff, ranging from basic training to focused capacity-building on gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals, gender in joint analysis and joint programming.

78. Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Groups continued to support capacity-building efforts through their dedicated gender groups. Webinars and workshops on gender mainstreaming were organized for all United Nations Theme Groups on Gender in Europe and Central Asia, and Asia and the Pacific. Focal points from 23 United Nations country teams were trained on all aspects of the scorecard. The global scorecard helpdesk also provided support to 19 United Nations country teams¹⁴ for various aspects of the assessment.

D. Data for evidence-informed, gender-responsive policies and programmes

79. United Nations country teams continue to support national capacities to monitor progress of the Sustainable Development Goals. In Kenya, the United Nations Country Team supported country reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals through the “Making every woman and girl count” programme, which is aimed at strengthening national capacity for the production and use of gender statistics. In Cameroon, the United Nations supported the development of the national strategy on gender-sensitive planning and budgeting.

V. Gaps and challenges

80. Notwithstanding the System-wide Action Plan, which has significantly accelerated progress in gender mainstreaming, improvements in the equal representation of women and resource allocation remain unacceptably slow. My high-level commitment to advancing gender parity and enhanced implementation of both the system-wide strategy on gender parity and the recommendations of the high-level task force on financing for gender equality will, over time and with resources, strengthen progress in these areas.

81. Notably, almost no United Nations country teams are setting and meeting a financial target for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, as opposed to almost 31 per cent at the overall entity level. This shows the relative effectiveness of work undertaken at the entity level since the introduction of the System-wide Action Plan, which must now to be mirrored at the United Nations country team level. In contrast, at the overall entity level, poor performance on the Coherence indicator remains a concern: a notable decline in performance on this indicator was witnessed between 2017 and 2018 and is mostly attributable to the strengthening of this indicator under the updated System-wide Action Plan 2.0 framework. As it is linked to a lack of capacity and funding for staff to participate in inter-agency mechanisms, United Nations entities must identify actions to reverse the trend of poor performance in this area.

82. An analysis of strategic plans at the entity level, and as noted in paragraphs 26 and 32 above, reveals that the incorporation of gender perspectives in more technical

¹⁴ These include Albania, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Maldives, Mali, the Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Pakistan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

thematic areas, such as infrastructure, energy and new technologies, remains weak relative to other areas of work. It is unlikely that this situation will improve without conscious efforts to integrate a critical mass of women into these traditionally male-dominated sectors.

83. While most United Nations country teams approached the requirements for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes, very few met requirements in the Common country analysis and United Nations Development Assistance Framework monitoring and evaluation indicators. Without supportive surge capacity, particularly during the critical design and evaluation stages, progress will remain stalled.

84. Also, owing to the limited number of country teams reporting on the scorecard, carrying out a robust comparative analysis remains difficult. Such analysis may be expected to improve over time with enhanced coordination efforts and the accompanying necessary resource allocation.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

85. In line with my initiatives, the United Nations system continues to work towards accelerating gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes, including through accountability frameworks such as the new System-wide Action Plan 2.0 and the scorecard. These common frameworks aim to enhance accountability by systematically propelling, monitoring and recording progress on gender equality results in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is anticipated that over time, there will be a more reliable complementary analysis of the two accountability frameworks, particularly on results. At the country level, United Nations country teams continue to promote and support gender mainstreaming, which is critical for effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

86. To continue to enhance gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system, including in the context of the United Nations reform, all United Nations entities must continue to take concrete actions. Based on the findings in the present report, I recommend that the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and funds and programmes, consider the following recommendations:

(a) Exercise continued leadership and support at the highest levels, including through Resident Coordinators, for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes; and promote greater accountability for gender equality at all levels by supporting the full implementation of accountability frameworks, including the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 and the updated scorecard;

(b) Enhance accountability for progress towards the implementation of the system-wide accountability frameworks for gender mainstreaming, including through regular reporting to legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations on results and on strategies and measures to be undertaken to improve compliance with the indicators;

(c) Enhance gender mainstreaming and gender equality results across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by strengthening system-wide common methodologies for reporting on contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals, aligned with other United Nations system-wide initiatives such as the system-wide strategic document and system-wide evaluations;

(d) Enhance integrated support for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the next generation of United Nations Development Assistance

Frameworks by strengthening normative and operational coherence, including the “leave no one behind” principle; also ensure a dedicated gender equality outcome and gender mainstreaming across all Sustainable Development Goal-related outcomes, indicator/targets and budgets. UN-Women can guide and support the United Nations development system in this respect, especially where it has a presence, and by providing support as a non-resident agency where it does not;

(e) Bolster regional and country-level quality assurance processes to ensure that common country analyses and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks are informed by robust gender analyses and reinforce the cross-cutting linkages of Sustainable Development Goal 5 with the gender-related targets of other Sustainable Development Goals;

(f) As key drivers of progress, ensure the updated gender equality policies of United Nations entities are anchored in organizational strategic, programmatic and results-based frameworks, including planning and budget documents, evaluation and entity reporting systems, as well as aligned with the performance indicators of the System-wide Action Plan 2.0;

(g) Invest adequate financial and human resources for gender mainstreaming commensurate with targeted entity commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and with the gender equality ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Increase transparency and proper monitoring of progress in this regard with mapping and costing exercises and the implementation of comparable and consistently implemented financial tracking mechanisms, including in the Secretariat;

(h) Enhance financing for gender equality in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through thematic, coordination and pooled funding for collective, integrated action at the country level to support impact at scale. Continue mandatory monitoring of financial allocations to gender equality through the implementation of gender markers within the UN-Info digital reporting platform;

(i) Accelerate the development of a harmonized gender marker across the United Nations system to track and monitor gender-related resource allocation and expenditures across all policies and programmes as well as to better measure and respond to resource deficits, including in the context of United Nations Development Assistance Framework common budgetary frameworks and reported through the scorecard and UN-Info;

(j) Assess and address persistent capacity gaps in gender mainstreaming through a range of different measures, including regularly assessing staff knowledge and skills, mandatory training for all staff, including senior managers; linking performance objectives on gender equality and the empowerment of women to capacity-building, including for senior managers; strengthening collaboration and coordination among staff working on gender equality and gender focal points across the development, peace and security, human rights and humanitarian pillars; and reinforcing dedicated expertise on gender equality at the regional and country levels, including gender theme or results groups;

(k) Intensify robust implementation of the Secretary-General’s system-wide strategy on gender parity;

(l) Increase efforts to integrate a gender perspective in non-traditional technical areas of work such as infrastructure and energy to ensure that related policies and programmes address the needs and priorities of women and girls;

(m) Implement normative commitments on gender equality in humanitarian action and in women and peace and security contexts, including through implementing existing gender policies; increasing the deployment of gender experts; enhancing the collection and use of disaggregated data; and strengthening reporting systems for gender equality results in these pillars;

(n) Prioritize the production of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors in national statistical systems through increased technical, capacity-building and financial support and through greater intersectoral collaboration for the high-quality production, analysis and use of gender statistics;

(o) Support, at the request of Member States, the adaptation of the system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women to promote gender mainstreaming and accountability for it in national institutions, including national machineries for the advancement of women and those corresponding to sectors linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.
