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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 resolutions [2019/2](#) and [2020/9](#), assesses progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives in the operational activities of the United Nations development system, including in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and in the achievement of performance requirements set forward by accountability frameworks for gender mainstreaming of the United Nations system at the global and country levels.

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 United Nations Sustainable Development Group information management system and on secondary sources.

Recommendations are offered to United Nations entities to accelerate gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of the United Nations system, including in the context of COVID-19.



## I. Introduction

1. In 2020, the Economic and Social Council requested a report on the implementation of resolutions 2019/2 and 2020/9 on mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. This implementation occurs in the context of unprecedented economic, social and health challenges and uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Gender inequalities have been severely exacerbated, with impacts seen in increased maternal mortality, gender-based violence, the burdens of the unpaid care work and unemployment of women, in a context in which many women lack social protection or recourse to support. School closures and the gender digital divide have reduced access to learning for many women and girls, who are less likely to return than men and boys. A 2020 report by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) also shows that the pandemic will push 96 million people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 million of whom are women and girls.<sup>1</sup> All of these factors reverse hard-earned educational, economic and health gains for women and girls.<sup>2</sup> The needs and priorities of women and girls should be prominent in the recovery. However, recent data indicate that only 19 per cent of countries have gender-sensitive response measures to COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> The mainstreaming of gender considerations into the development of all government policies and programmes and their implementation is therefore critical and will benefit from a concerted and sustained effort by a United Nations system focused on this objective.

3. The present report focuses on efforts being made in the United Nations to strengthen gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the highest levels of the Organization, in operational activities and through implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and its United Nations country team equivalent, including in the context of COVID-19.

## II. Integrating gender considerations in the United Nations response to COVID-19

### A. Analysis and advocacy

4. In 2020, given the disproportionate challenges posed to women and girls because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council urged the United Nations system to accelerate gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes, including in support of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global, regional and country levels.<sup>4</sup>

5. Accordingly, the United Nations system focused its attention on analysis, policy articulation and advocacy relevant to crisis recovery from a gender perspective. A series of policy briefs was issued to provide guidance to the United Nations system and Member States and to raise awareness on the impact of the pandemic. Among the

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<sup>1</sup> UN-Women, “From insight to action: gender equality in the wake of COVID-19”, 2020, available at <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5142>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations and UN-Women, “The impact of COVID-19 on women”, policy brief, available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women>.

<sup>3</sup> COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker, available at <https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>.

<sup>4</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 2020/5.

first thematic policy briefs was a focus on the impact of the crisis on women. In March 2020, the Secretary-General issued a call for a global ceasefire to strengthen solidarity in the face of the pandemic. This was followed one week later by a call for peace in the home, raising alarm at what turned out to be the beginning of a sharp increase in gender-based violence. To inform the continued efforts to finance sustainable development and the economic recovery, the Secretary-General held a series of round-table discussions with eminent economists, the first two of which featured women economists. This shaped discussions and positions on the key elements of pandemic response and recovery towards more sustainable, green and inclusive economies.

6. While the worst impacts of this crisis have been borne by women, the effectiveness of women's leadership has also been highlighted. Over the past year, women leaders have been among those who have kept transmission rates low and put countries on track for recovery. Women's organizations have filled crucial gaps in the provision of services and information, especially at the community level, and greater gender balance has led to better responses. To give visibility to the strengths of women's leadership for all and advocate for concrete measures to recover with equal participation in all sectors, the Deputy Secretary-General, along with women leaders, initiated the campaign entitled "Women Rise for All".

7. Placing those who have been excluded at the centre of the response to the crisis will accelerate the transformative changes that are needed politically, economically and socially, through a focus on cooperation, diversity and sustainability. In line with this, in the past year, the United Nations system organized two strategic gender interventions within the context of the "Call to action for human rights":<sup>5</sup> on dismantling discriminatory laws which are a barrier to gender equality and women's rights; and on the promotion of the use of temporary special measures and quotas to support women's equal representation and participation in all aspects of public life, including the private sector. Decades of evidence show that women's participation enhances economic results, prompts greater investment in social protection, leads to more sustainable peace and advances climate action and must be part of the COVID-19 recovery and rebuilding for a more just, sustainable and inclusive future.

8. In the "United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: saving lives, protecting societies, recovering better", the Secretary-General also makes a strong call to address the needs of women and girls, including those in situations of armed conflict or affected by humanitarian crises.<sup>6</sup> In response, United Nations country teams developed United Nations socioeconomic response plans to support countries in: health services; social protection; jobs; fiscal and financial stimulus; and social cohesion and community resilience. The needs and rights of women and girls are specifically targeted for support and remedy. Gender equality interventions incorporated in the majority of country-level response plans include support to preventing and responding to gender-based violence (98 per cent); maintaining access to sexual and reproductive health services (85 per cent); and targeted measures to address the disproportionate economic effects of COVID-19 on women (92 per cent).

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations, "The highest aspiration: a call to action for human rights", 2020, available at: [https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The\\_Highest\\_Aspiration\\_A\\_Call\\_To\\_Action\\_For\\_Human\\_Right\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Aspiration_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> "United Nations comprehensive response to COVID-19: saving lives, protecting societies, recovering better", September 2020, available at <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-to-covid-19.pdf>.

## B. United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and inter-agency initiatives

9. At the height of the pandemic, the multi-donor trust fund supported countries in their response to the crisis. Following the recommendations of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality adopted in 2019, in the second call for proposals issued by the Fund, and recognizing that only programmes with a strong gender lens will be effective in addressing COVID-19-related socioeconomic needs, 30 per cent of funding was allocated to programmes that had gender equality as a principal objective. Proposals without adequate gender equality consideration were considered ineligible. Programming criteria included the requirement to use gender equality markers, a financial tool to signal the extent to which proposals support results or changes relating to gender equality. This combined focus on gender equality and a financial target led to 65 per cent of the funding being directed to proposals with gender equality as their primary goal.

10. To support the above, UN-Women coordinated an inter-agency team<sup>7</sup> to offer a support package including a gender equality marker guidance note and training to 120 United Nations country teams, help desk service and quality assurance. In addition, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, led by UN-Women, developed the COVID-19 gender equality checklist to support United Nations country teams and members of gender theme groups to integrate gender equality considerations in socioeconomic response plans. UN-Women, in cooperation with 10 United Nations agencies, built a common United Nations system COVID-19 and gender monitoring dashboard comprising gender indicators to drive better responses to the COVID-19 crisis. In September 2020, UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker to spur action and monitor national responses to protect women and girls from the negative impacts of the pandemic.

11. In addition, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality developed a compendium bringing together the collective gender expertise of 29 entities. It contains coordinated, action-oriented key messages to governments on incorporating gender considerations at all stages of the COVID-19 response, followed by detailed entity-specific messages and actions across a range of thematic areas. In addition, the United Nations Chief Executives Board High-level Committee on Programmes produced a policy brief entitled “COVID-19, inequalities and building back better”, which recognizes the gendered social and economic impacts of the pandemic and offers recommendations for a more gender equal world.<sup>8</sup>

12. To support disability-inclusive response and recovery measures for more inclusive and accessible societies, particularly for women and girls, 10 United Nations entities<sup>9</sup> and two global disability inclusion networks administer a programme, supported by a multi-donor trust fund, which produces evidence-based knowledge products on gender and disability inclusion in cross-cutting areas such as gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health rights, human rights and social protection.

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<sup>7</sup> “Global interim report of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund for the period May to September 2020”, available at <http://mptf.undp.org/document/download/25496>.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, “COVID-19, inequalities and building back better”, policy brief, 27 October 2020, available at <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2020/10/covid-19-inequalities-and-building-back-better>.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities multi-donor trust fund tools, available at <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/RPD00>.

### **III. Advancing the gender equality agenda**

13. Commitment to gender equality remains a priority at the highest level of the Organization. At the global level, gender equality considerations are regularly mainstreamed into all key decision-making bodies, from the Senior Management Group to the Executive Committee convened on a weekly basis, as well as into flagship initiatives such as the “Call to action for human rights” and the common agenda. Moreover, ensuring adequate funding for gender-related programming is the key objective of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality.

14. In addition, preventing sexual harassment and abuse of authority continues to be prioritized. In 2020, an additional three positions were approved to strengthen the team that currently includes experienced female investigators. To date, 124 investigations into allegations of sexual harassment have been completed within seven months. In 2020, there was a dip in allegations, possibly due to the COVID-19 related lockdown, with the Office of Internal Oversight Services receiving 81 allegations compared to 98 in 2019; and in the first quarter of 2021, 16 new allegations were received.

15. The Office has also fortified its victim-centred response to complaints with a gender component and has strengthened its hotline reporting tool, which is available publicly on the Internet, to ensure gender-sensitive handling of complaints. Trainings focused on the sensitivities with respect to investigating gender discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority.

16. Advances were also made towards enhanced accountability for sexual exploitation and abuse. There was progress in the system-wide engagement with the number of entities implementing specific action plans to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse, which increased from 35 to 207 between 2017 and 2020. This was met with a similar uptick in the level of staff engagement with the issue. For example, in 2017, 5,934 personnel completed the annual survey on sexual exploitation and abuse administered by the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, compared to 19,421 in 2020. For 2020, the gender breakdown showed that 56 per cent of respondents were male and 44 per cent female, which represents an increase in female respondents of 9 per cent since 2018. The level of knowledge among the workforce is also high, with 95 per cent of survey respondents confirming they were aware of policy in this area. There was also engagement with Member States on pending cases.

17. The Victims’ Rights Advocate continued to develop policy guidance for United Nations system entities, as well as advocacy tools, such as a victims’ rights statement, to inform beneficiaries of their rights. She supported the four Field Victims’ Rights Advocates who provide front-line assistance to victims, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, through mobile technology and engagement with local implementing partners.

### **IV. Gender mainstreaming in operational activities**

#### **A. Gender mainstreaming in country-level planning and United Nations programming**

18. There is continuing recognition that gender equality and the full implementation of the human rights of women and girls will be crucial contributions to progress across all the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in common country programming therefore

remains critical. The proportion of cooperation frameworks featuring gender-specific results at the outcome level decreased from 72 per cent to 66 per cent in 2020. Nonetheless, gender equality remains the most common focus of United Nations joint programmes, in part influenced by combined efforts in the context of inter-agency funding mechanisms to advance the application of gender equality markers and the establishment of financial targets for gender equality programmes. UN-Info<sup>10</sup> was introduced in 2018, and the number of United Nations country teams applying gender equality markers to joint work plans stood at 47 in 2020.

## **B. Mainstreaming gender equality in humanitarian, peace and security, and human rights pillars**

19. Conflict and humanitarian crises impede progress for women and girls on a range of economic and social indicators, including the right to food, education and health. Gender equality considerations are therefore key to addressing the issues arising in the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. As of December 2020, 94 countries and territories had adopted dedicated action plans on women and peace and security, and 12 regional organizations had regional strategies or plans in place. Moreover, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund demonstrated that dedicated funding catalyses gender equality results. In 2020, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund launched two new rapid funding mechanisms for local women's organizations, one focused on COVID-19 emergency response and one seeking to accelerate women's influence and participation in peace processes globally. In addition, UN-Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), following a strategic dialogue, are working together to strengthen support for the needs and concerns of refugee, internally displaced and stateless women and girls.<sup>11</sup>

20. Women have an important role to play in preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism. Consequently, mainstreaming gender equality perspectives across the work of the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture is being prioritized with support of the gender working group of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. The working group undertook consultations with women-led civil society organizations from the global South, resulting in outcome reports with actionable recommendations for substantive gender considerations within programming and policy. Moreover, the UN-Women global programme on gender-sensitive approaches to preventing violent extremism<sup>12</sup> is being implemented at the policy and country levels until 2022.

21. Modern constitutional frameworks undergird successful conflict prevention and peacebuilding, safeguarding of human rights, promotion of the rule of law, strengthening gender equality and fostering sustainable development. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Department of Peace Operations, UNDP, UN-Women and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) updated the 's Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on United Nations Constitutional Support<sup>13</sup> and launched it in 2021. The Note illustrates the centrality of inclusion and gender equality in constitution-making and how these

<sup>10</sup> <https://uninfo.org/en/login>.

<sup>11</sup> Joint letter from the UNHCR Commissioner and the Executive Director of UN-Women.

<sup>12</sup> UN-Women, "Preventing violent extremism focus areas", available at <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2021/brief-preventing-violent-extremism-focus-areas-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1348>.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations, "Guidance note of the Secretary-General on United Nations constitutional assistance", September 2020, available at <https://peacemaker.un.org/node/3553>.

principles can strengthen the ability of a constitution to serve as a social compact and a framework for successful conflict-to-peace transitions.

22. With regard to gender equality and human rights, in 2020 the inter-agency group on United Nations country team reporting on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, composed of UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNDP provided support for 83 per cent of United Nations country teams reports to the CEDAW Committee.

### **C. Gender mainstreaming in health issues**

23. Addressing the gendered nature of the HIV epidemic remains a priority. In 2020, joint United Nations plans on HIV/AIDS in 36 countries integrated gender equality and women's empowerment issues. Moreover, according to jointly agreed country planning guidance, up to 50 per cent of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) 2020 resources can be used for COVID-19 and HIV interventions that address gender inequality issues.

24. Healthy lives and well-being for women and men are important in all societies. In this respect, the World Health Organization coordinates the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being with 13<sup>14</sup> multilateral health and development agencies<sup>15</sup> committed to reviewing and assessing their policies, programmes and results to ensure that they are gender-transformative, equity-oriented, rights-based and people-centred. The Global Action Plan's dedicated gender equality working group is chaired by UN-Women, which supports implementation of the commitments on gender equality across the Global Action Plan.

### **D. Violence against women**

25. Ending violence against women and girls remains a priority. With the increase in such violence alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary-General issued a global appeal for "peace in the home". More than 145 countries responded to this call, committing to making combatting violence against women and girls an integral part of national response plans for COVID-19. Building on this, a political engagement strategy was established for senior United Nations leaders and the entire United Nations system to mobilize commitments and action to end gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19.

26. The United Nations-European Union Spotlight Initiative has now fully programmed the initial 500 million euro investment in five regions and 25 countries, showing concrete impacts in the lives of women and girls in prevention and response to violence, and in the past year pivoted funding flexibly to respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 context. Going forward, it will be critical that additional partners and donors join this global effort, build on the impacts and continue to scale up efforts.

27. In addition, following an Executive Committee decision, resident coordinators are building on efforts of United Nations entities<sup>16</sup> in responding to violence against women in politics, a growing issue of concern.

<sup>14</sup> The Global Action Plan has 13 signatories as of January 2021, when the International Labour Organization became a signatory.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.who.int/initiatives/sdg3-global-action-plan/about>.

<sup>16</sup> Development Coordination Office, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, OHCHR, UNDP and UN-Women.

## **E. Gender data and statistics**

28. Data and statistics disaggregated by sex and other factors are needed to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and an equitable response to COVID-19. In 2020, the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators continued in support of the production and use of gender statistics, particularly in relation to sex-disaggregated and gender-specific Sustainable Development Goal indicators. In addition, the Statistics Division has worked with UN-Women to produce an annual report, this year entitled “Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: the gender snapshot 2020”. The report brings together the latest available evidence on gender equality across all 17 Goals, underscoring the progress made, but also taking stock of areas in which progress has been disrupted as a result of COVID-19.

## **V. Accountability for gender mainstreaming/gender equality issues at the global and country levels**

29. Accountability for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system at the entity and country team levels remains key to advancing gender equality.

30. In 2020, the United Nations system registered progress against indicators embodied in the accountability frameworks applicable to both the United Nations entities (United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2.0) and the country teams (United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard).

31. Significantly, the number of entities participating in the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 increased to 70. For the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan, participation increased by 14 country teams, reflecting further validation of the acceptance and usefulness of the standardized system-wide accountability mechanisms.

32. A System-wide Action Plan help desk at UN-Women undertakes quality assurance of System-wide Action Plan reports. It reviews all reports, consults entities in cases of discrepancies in ratings and ensures all ratings are substantiated with appropriate evidence, as specified in the System-wide Action Plan technical notes. In 2020, the help desk recommended changes for 14 per cent of ratings and requested additional information or supporting documentation for 28 per cent. Entities accepted 73 per cent of the help desk’s suggested revisions. Also, as per the 2019 Joint Inspection Unit review recommendations, entity-specific report cards are now publicly available.<sup>17</sup>

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

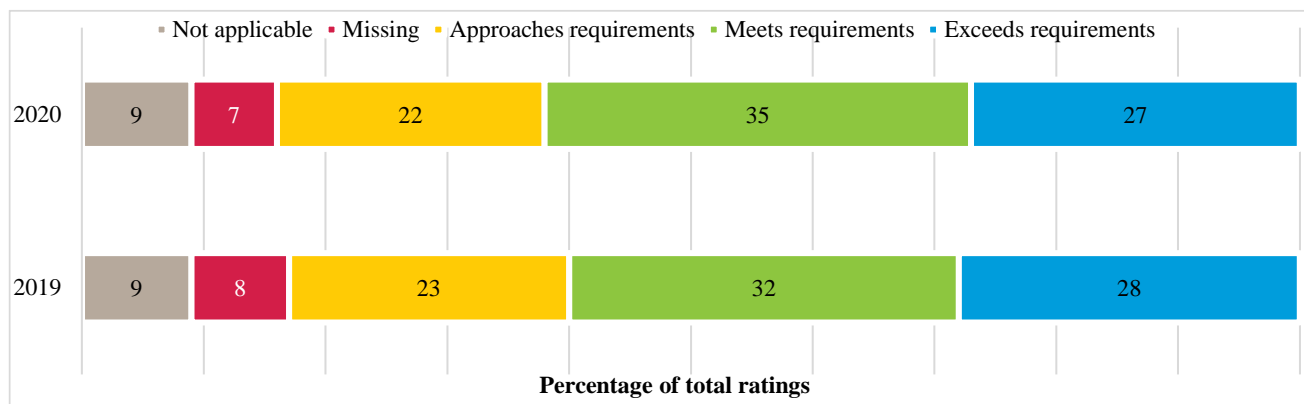
33. In 2020, the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 continued to demonstrate system-wide progress and highlight areas for improvement on gender mainstreaming for all United Nations entities. A total of 62 per cent of all ratings fell into the “meets” or “exceeds requirements” categories (see figure I) representing an increase of 2 percentage points from 2019.

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<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability/un-swap-results>.



Figure I  
Overall System-wide Action Plan 2.0 ratings for the United Nations system, 2019–2020



### 1. Analysis of System-wide Action Plan 2.0 indicators on entity gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results

34. System-wide efforts for a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that is people-centred, gender-responsive and respectful of human rights requires cross-sectoral collaboration on gender mainstreaming. The first three System-wide Action Plan performance indicators evidenced such efforts in 2020 at the levels of strategic planning, results reporting and programmatic achievements.

35. **Strategic planning gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results (performance indicator 1).** A total of 41 entities<sup>18</sup> (or 75 per cent) met or exceeded requirements for this indicator in 2020, a slight increase of 2 percentage points from 2019. This indicator attested to gains in inter-agency initiatives, as illustrated by the COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker,<sup>19</sup> a database to monitor policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Overall analysis of entities' reported results in 2020 reaffirmed the centrality of gender equality within the health, peace and security, and, to a lesser extent, climate agendas.

36. The Sustainable Development Goals on which entities focused in their work on gender equality are outlined in figure II. A total of 52 entities reported having included Goal 5 in their strategic plans, followed by 19 and 17 entities, respectively, with a focus on Goal 16 (peace and justice) and Goal 1 (no poverty). In 2020, there was also an increase in the number of entities highlighting gender-related work in Goal 3 (health), Goal 4 (education) and Goal 8 (decent work). In contrast to a heightened focus on socioeconomic and human rights areas, entities paid relatively less attention to integrating a gender lens into technical sectors, such as those covered by Goal 9 (infrastructure) and Goal 12 (consumption).

37. Similar patterns emerged in reporting on Goal 5 targets. While 38 entities highlighted women's participation in leadership (target 5.5), only 15 targeted the use of technology for women's empowerment (target 5.B) (see figure III). Much work clearly remains to be done to bridge the digital gender divide referenced in the road map for digital cooperation.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Secretariat entities with a mainly administrative function and research and training institutes reported their gender-related results under performance indicator 3.

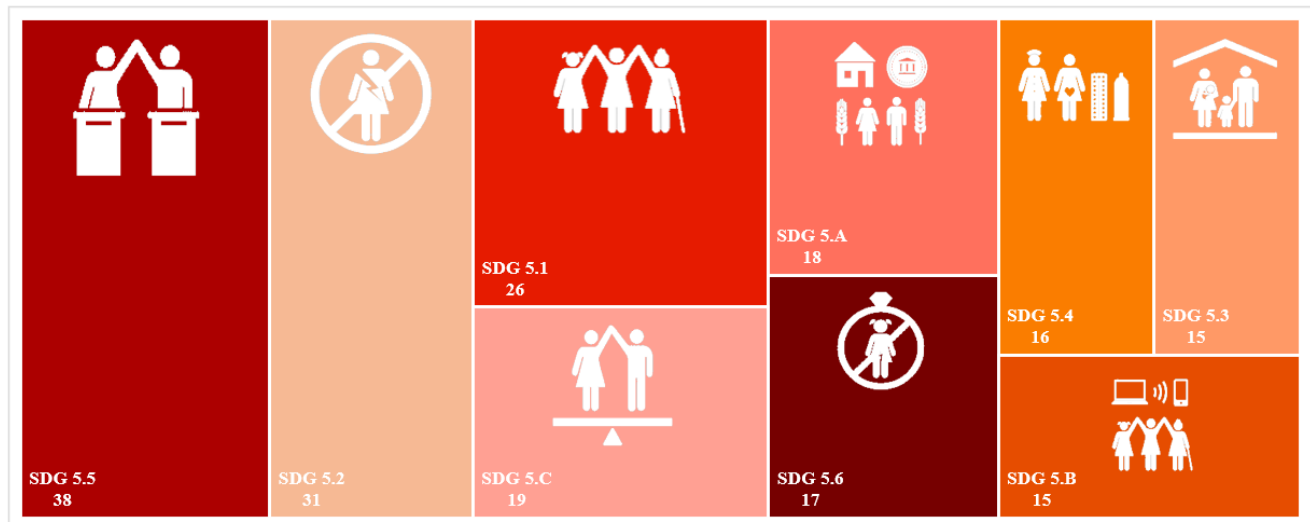
<sup>19</sup> See <https://data.undp.org/gendertacker/>.

<sup>20</sup> A/74/821.

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



Figure III  
 Number of entities contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 5 targets, as per System-wide Action Plan 2.0 reporting

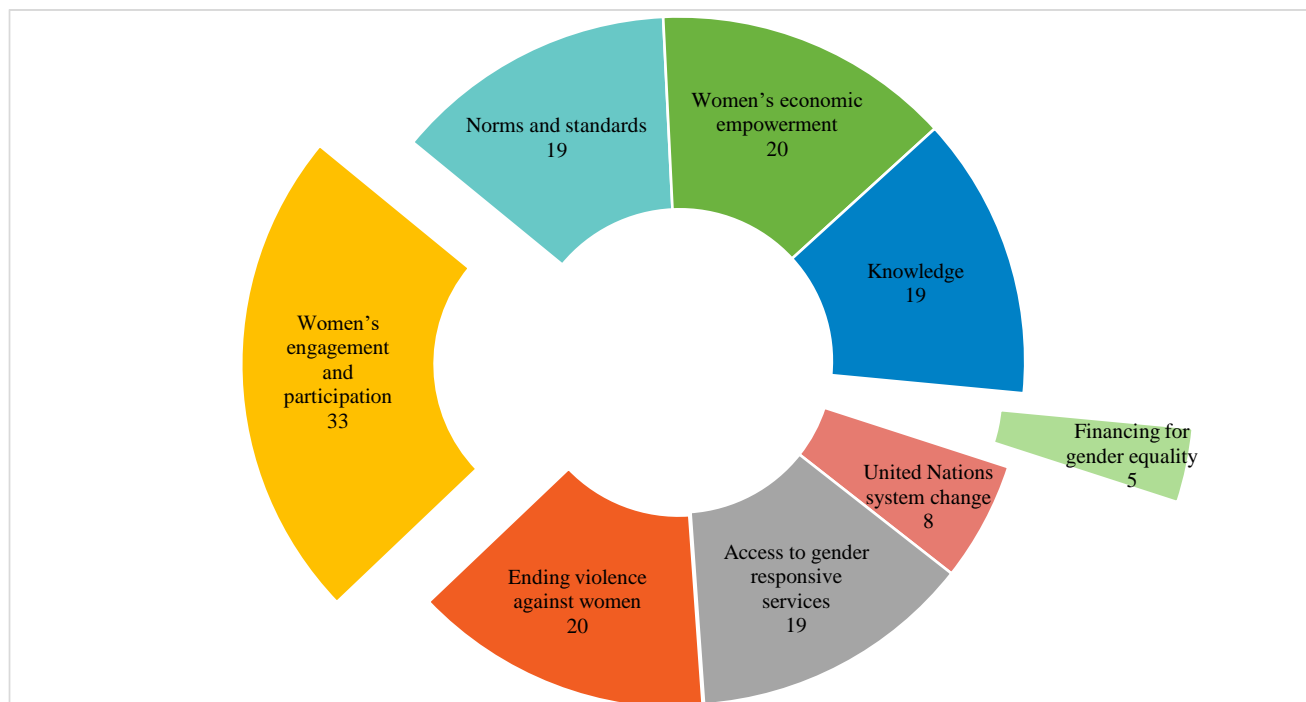


38. Further analysis on the main thematic areas on which the entities focus their gender work (see figure IV) revealed that in 2020, as in 2019, women’s engagement and participation constituted the thematic area with the highest number of contributions. A total of 20 entities reported efforts to combat gender-based violence, including during the lockdown, and pursuant to the call for action against the “shadow

pandemic”.<sup>21</sup> Women’s economic empowerment and access to gender responsive services were reflected in the prioritization of socioeconomic responses during the pandemic.

Figure IV

Number of entities contributing to each thematic area, as per System-wide Action Plan 2.0 reporting, 2020



Note: These eight thematic areas were developed by the 2018 inter-agency working group on results, chaired by UN-Women, set up to develop the three new results indicators for the System-wide Action Plan 2.0.

39. **Reporting on gender-related results (performance indicator 2).** In 2020, 39 entities (71 per cent) complied by reporting on gender equality results to their governing bodies and using sex-disaggregated data. Collecting data remains a challenge, given the absence or inadequacy of disaggregated data at the global level. Entities achieve better results with respect to human resources data than at the programmatic, budgetary and policy levels.

40. **Programmatic gender-related results not directly captured in the entity strategic plans (performance indicator 3).** In 2020, 28 entities (78 per cent) reported achieving or being on track to achieve their programmatic results for gender equality. Among these, six exceeded requirements by working towards transformative results in their programmatic activities.<sup>22</sup> Of note were the sectors in which women are traditionally underrepresented, namely, the maritime and infrastructure sectors. Other reported results included changes in social norms for adolescent girls and evidence-based research for policymakers in a variety of policy areas.

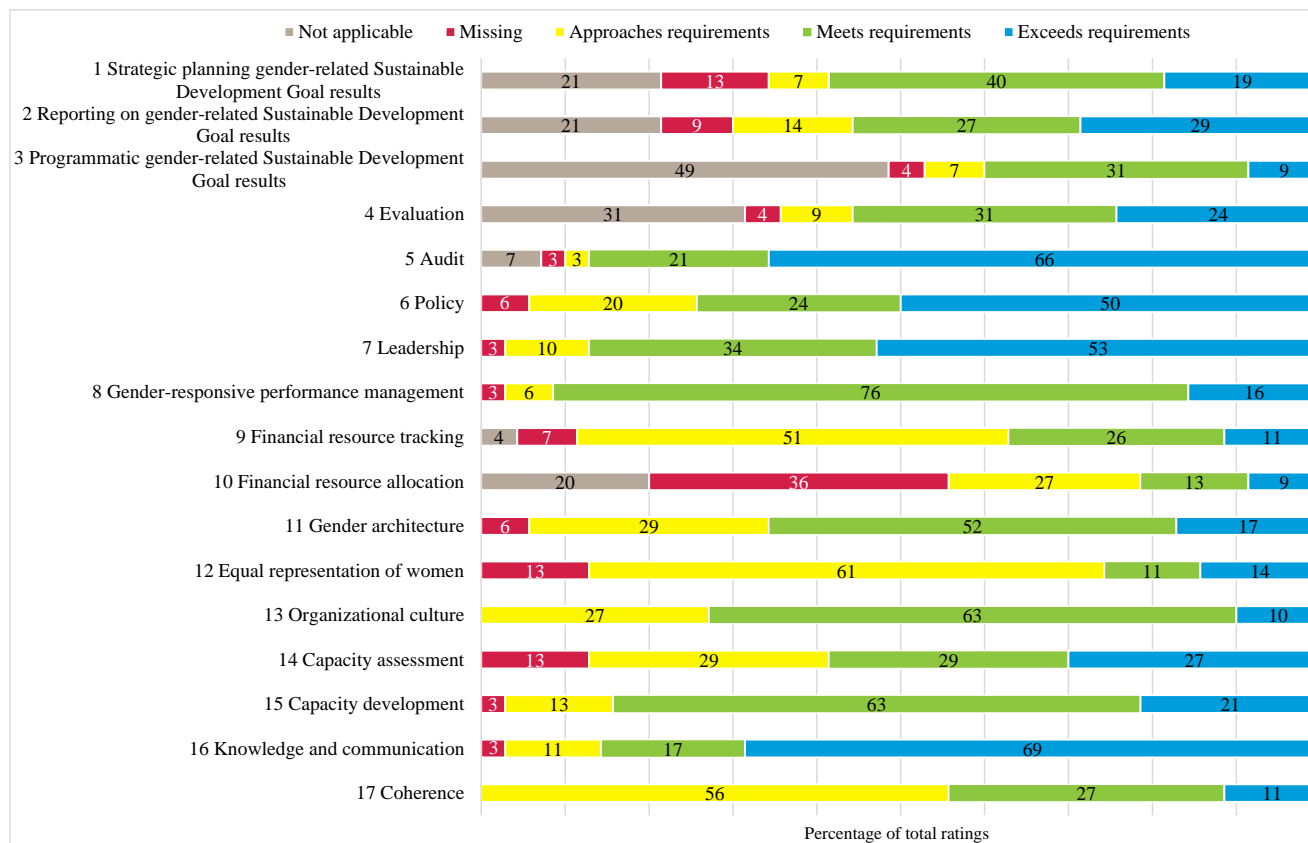
<sup>21</sup> United Nations, “The impact of COVID-19 on women”, policy brief, 9 April 2020, available at <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/report/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en-1.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Or exceeded their planned results, for entities with a mainly administrative focus.

## 2. Comparative analysis of overall United Nations system performance (2019–2020)

41. Further to the analysis of performance indicators on entity gender-related results, this section provides an analysis of gender mainstreaming performance in functional areas. Figure V breaks down overall 2020 ratings by performance indicator. The table below presents a comparison of “meets” and “exceeds” ratings, by indicator, for the period from 2019 to 2020.

Figure V  
2020 System-wide Action Plan 2.0 ratings, by performance indicator<sup>23</sup>



42. Ten indicators registered progress in 2020 (see table below): audit; leadership; knowledge and communication; evaluation; programmatic results; strategic planning results; reporting on results; capacity assessment; coherence; and equal representation of women.

43. In addition to an analysis of high and low performance described below, a few critical indicators provided evidence of the delays and disruptions caused by the pandemic on functional areas and business operations.

44. **Organizational culture** (performance indicator 13) remained stagnant, with 51 entities (73 per cent) meeting or exceeding requirements. Most likely this is attributable to the significant disruption in work modalities resulting from the pandemic. Entities conducted surveys to address flexible work arrangements and personnel’s well-being and adopted teleworking policies. Effects will become more evident and measurable in future years.

<sup>23</sup> Percentages were rounded to the nearest per cent to add up to 100.

45. **Policy** (performance indicator 6) registered a concerning decrease of 7 percentage points in compliance. Several entities postponed the updating of their gender policies. Also, the reprioritization of tasks in response to the pandemic led some entities to develop new COVID-19 policy guidance, but with a focus on the organizational culture aspects of policy, such as flexible working arrangements, rather than on more substantive programmatic gender mainstreaming, including policy development.

46. **Gender architecture** (performance indicator 11) dropped to 66 per cent (46 entities). A hiring freeze in the Secretariat due to the liquidity crisis impacted the recruitment of gender advisors and the appointment of gender focal points. Twelve entities exceeded requirements by allocating resources to support gender focal point networking.

47. Despite low compliance levels, several historically weak indicators registered slight progress in 2020: capacity assessment; coherence; and equal representation of women. Performance on financial resource allocation remained unchanged. The number of entities with financial resource tracking mechanisms, however, declined slightly.

Table

**Comparative analysis of System-wide Action Plan 2.0 “meets” and “exceeds” ratings by indicator, 2019–2020<sup>24</sup>**

Performance indicator area, ranked by 2020 performance	Percentage of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements (N/A omitted) <sup>a</sup>				Percentage point difference	
	2020	2019	2018	2012	2019–2020	2012–2019
4. Audit	94	92	89	13	2	81
8. Gender-responsive performance management	91	91	88	59	0	32
7. Leadership	87	82	80	N/A	5	N/A
16. Knowledge and communication	86	85	89	34	1	52
15. Capacity development	84	87	76	23	-3	61
4. Evaluation	81	67	72	36	14	45
3. Programmatic gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results not directly captured in the strategic plan	78	69	70	N/A	9	N/A
2. Strategic planning gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results	75	73	66	N/A	2	N/A
6. Policy	74	81	82	40	-7	34
13. Organizational culture	73	75	76	48	-2	25
1. Strategic Planning gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results	71	66	67	N/A	5	N/A
11. Gender architecture	66	70	60	N/A	-4	N/A
14. Capacity assessment	59	49	45	15	10	44
17. Coherence	44	34	31	77	10	-33
9. Financial resource tracking	37	47	46	22	-10	15
10. Financial resource allocation	27	27	31	7	0	20
12. Equal representation of women	26	19	17	N/A	7	N/A

<sup>a</sup> Percentages in the table were calculated omitting “not applicable” ratings.

<sup>24</sup> Percentages in table were calculated omitting “not applicable” ratings. Percentages differ slightly from those in figure V.

*Areas of strength*

48. Areas of strength include those performance indicators in which at least 75 per cent of entities meet or exceed requirements.

49. **Audit and Evaluation (performance indicators 5 and 4).** With system-wide compliance of 92 per cent, the audit indicator has, for the third year, emerged as the top performing indicator. For the evaluation indicator, the United Nations system witnessed a significant increase of 14 percentage points in compliance, with 39 entities (81 per cent) meeting the gender-related United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards and demonstrating effective use of the Group's guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality. A total of 19 entities have completed gender mainstreaming evaluations in the last few years, three of them in 2020.<sup>25</sup>

50. **Gender-responsive performance management (performance indicator 8).** Compliance reached 91 per cent (64 entities) in 2020. A total of 11 entities exceeded requirements by implementing a system of recognition for excellent work promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

51. **Leadership (performance indicator 7).** Overall compliance increased by 5 percentage points. A total of 61 entities (87 per cent) met or exceeded requirements. The pandemic's strain on new flexible and remote work methods, work-life balance and mental health concerns increased senior management's communications on matters of direct bearing on organizational culture. Senior managers also highlighted the gendered impacts of the pandemic and the importance of integrating gender equality into COVID-19 socioeconomic impact assessments. Nine additional entities exceeded requirements, with senior managers proactively promoting improvements in System-wide Action Plan performance areas.

52. **Knowledge and communication (performance indicator 16).** In 2020, 60 entities (86 per cent) documented and shared knowledge publicly on gender equality and/or integrated it in their communication plans. A total of 48 entities exceeded requirements through active involvement in inter-agency communities of practice, including in the System-wide Action Plan community, International Gender Champions network or Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and its working group on COVID-19.

53. **Capacity development (performance indicator 15).** Despite a slight decline, performance remained strong for this indicator, with 59 compliant entities (84 per cent) reporting having mandated gender equality training for all entity staff. The e-learning "I Know Gender" course offered by the UN-Women training centre is now mandatory for 48 entities, including the Secretariat. Furthermore, 15 entities tailored gender equality training to senior managers during orientation.

*Areas for improvement*

54. Areas for improvement include performance indicators for which 50 per cent or fewer of the entities meet or exceed requirements.

55. **Coherence (performance indicator 17).** With an increase of 10 percentage points from 2019 and eight more entities completing peer reviews, this indicator registered significant progress. Owing to the disruption in working methods during the pandemic and workload increase, some entities could not pursue their plans for a peer review. In contrast, however, other entities reported that virtual arrangements allowed for enhanced participation, such as in the System-wide Action Plan annual conference and in newly established cross-entity virtual networks. Examples of

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNICEF.

activated interagency collaboration included virtual dialogues on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment during COVID-19; the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality working group on COVID-19 and the inter-agency working group on gender-based violence and COVID-19.

56. **Equal representation of women (performance indicator 12).** This indicator registered an increase of 7 percentage points, with only 18 entities (26 per cent) reporting an equal representation of women at all professional levels.

57. **Financial resource tracking and allocation (performance indicator 9 and 10).** Financial resource indicators continue to pose a concern. In 2020, 26 and 15 entities complied with the financial tracking and allocation performance indicators, respectively. Slightly more than a third of the United Nations system entities (39 per cent) implemented a tracking mechanism to quantify investments on gender equality, and more than a quarter (27 per cent) met a financial benchmark for implementation of the gender equality mandate. Furthermore, the number of entities approaching requirements for this indicator substantially increased, reflecting the recent launch of gender equality markers for Secretariat entities through their Umoja enterprise resource planning.

## **B. Accountability at the United Nations country team level: United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard**

58. The number of country teams undertaking the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard assessment increased to 38 in 2020, up from 33 in 2019, and only 9 in the period from 2016 to 2018. Of the 38 country teams that submitted a report in 2020, 17 prepared a comprehensive report<sup>26</sup> designed to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework planning stage, and 21 developed an annual progress report.<sup>27</sup>

### *Analysis of comprehensive reports 2017–2020*

59. For the period from 2017 to 2020, the analysis presented below highlights trends in performance as reported against the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan minimum requirements captured in the comprehensive Action Plan reports. Also, more detailed analysis is presented for the 2020 comprehensive reports, highlighting similarities and differences against the general trends.

60. Between 2017–2020, 60 United Nations country teams completed a comprehensive United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan report, including 17 in 2020. A total of 34 country teams met or exceeded at least half of the gender mainstreaming performance requirements. The strongest performance, measured as meeting or exceeding performance indicators, was registered in collaboration and engagement with the government on gender equality (performance indicator 3.1); collaboration and engagement with civil society organizations dedicated to gender equality (performance indicator 3.2); and organizational culture fully supportive of gender equality (performance indicator 4.2). The weakest

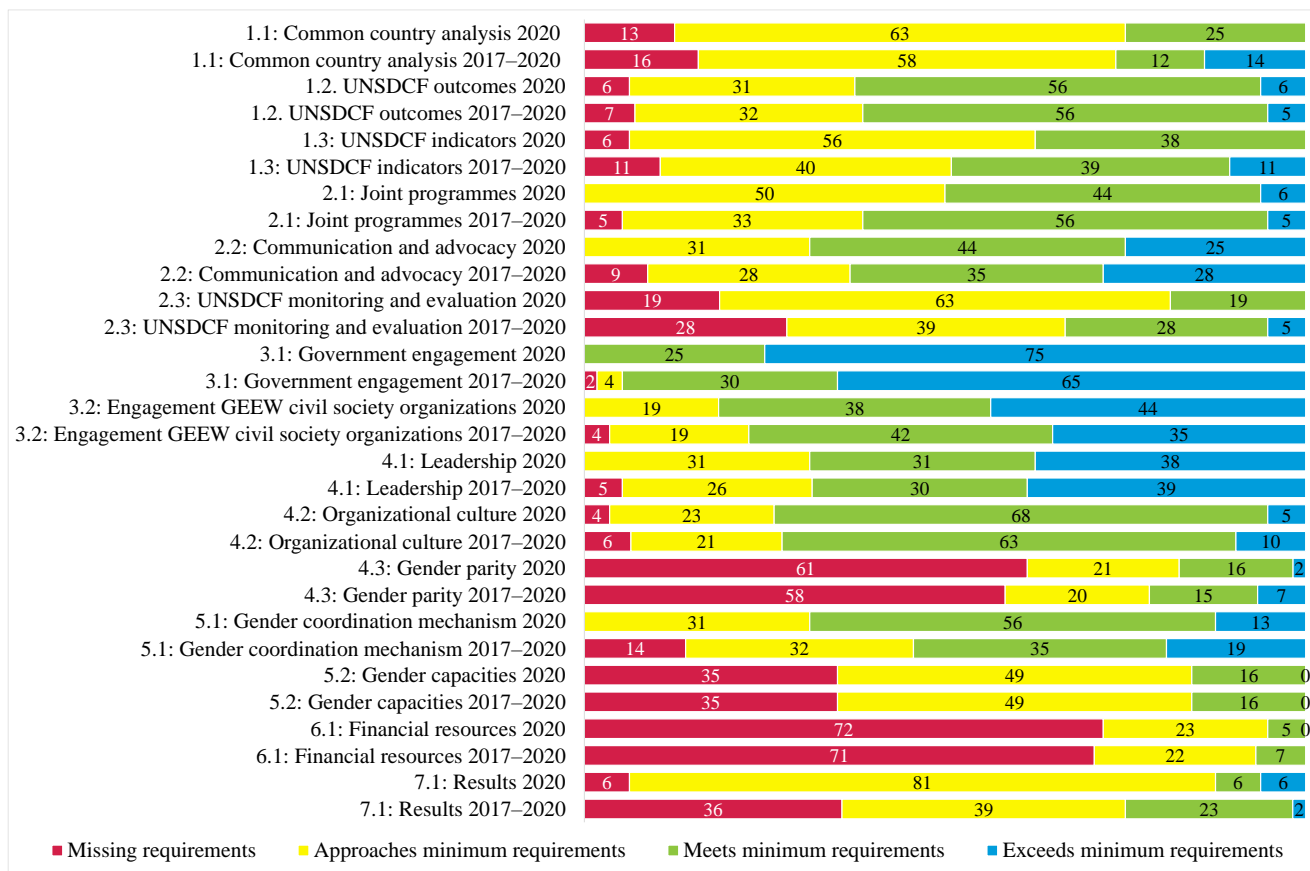
<sup>26</sup> Comprehensive United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan assessments are intended to occur at the Cooperation Framework planning stage and entail a joint assessment of all performance indicators and the development of an action plan to improve gender mainstreaming performance.

<sup>27</sup> Annual progress reports aim to maintain momentum in making progress towards gender mainstreaming requirements and entail the reassessment of a minimum of five performance indicators and a report back on the implementation of the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan developed as part of the comprehensive assessment.

performance was registered in ensuring financial resource allocation and tracking (performance indicator 6.1), advancing measures to achieve gender parity (performance indicator 4.3) and capacity development for gender mainstreaming (performance indicator 5.2).

Figure VI

### United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan comprehensive report ratings in 2020 and 2017–2020, by performance indicator



*Abbreviations:* GEEW, gender equality and empowerment of women; UNSDCF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

61. Of the 17 United Nations country teams which developed comprehensive reports in 2020, United Nations country team performance ranged from meeting or exceeding requirements for only 4 performance indicators to doing so for 12 out of the total of 15 indicators. Clearly, accelerated progress is required to ensure coherent gender mainstreaming across all performance indicators.

62. With respect to the highest performing indicators, the performance of the 17 United Nations country teams submitting comprehensive reports in 2020 aligns with the general trend of performance during the period from 2017 to 2020. The three highest performing indicators include: collaboration and engagement with the government (performance indicator 3.1), collaboration and engagement with civil society organizations dedicated to gender equality (performance indicator 3.2), and organizational culture fully supportive of gender equality (performance indicator 4.2).

63. **Collaboration with the government on gender equality and women's empowerment (performance indicator 3.1).** All 17 United Nations country teams



submitting comprehensive reports in 2020 either met (25 per cent) or exceeded (75 per cent) performance requirements, engaging with the host government and the national machinery throughout the Cooperation Framework cycle. As in previous reporting years, strong performance in this performance indicator was not affected by missing requirements in others.

**64. Collaboration with gender equality civil society organizations (performance indicator 3.2).** A total of 82 per cent of United Nations country teams met (38 per cent) or exceeded (44 per cent) requirements. Strong performance was registered in collaborating with civil society organizations on joint initiatives in the context of Cooperation Framework implementation. However, compared to engagement with government, country teams were less likely to ensure participation of the organizations at the Cooperation Framework planning stage and in Cooperation Framework monitoring and evaluation processes.

**65. Organizational culture fully supportive of gender equality (performance indicator 4.2).** A total of 73 per cent of country teams met (68 per cent) or exceeded (5 per cent) performance requirements. Consistently, across all reports, heads of agencies were assessed in staff surveys to be strongly committed to gender equality in the workplace.<sup>28</sup> While registering strong performance, the proportion of United Nations country teams exceeding requirements was 5 per cent less than the average in the four-year period. This may be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has severely challenged work-life balance for female personnel.<sup>29</sup> Notably, across reporting years, female personnel rated questions on equal treatment of staff, work-life balance and flexible working arrangements less positively than male personnel in the organizational culture survey – up to 32 per cent less favourably in 2020.

66. The achievement of gender mainstreaming performance requirements by United Nations country teams shows significant variation. Of concern, the three lowest performing indicators remain the same as in prior years: financial resources, gender parity and gender mainstreaming capacity development.

**67. Adequate resources for gender mainstreaming (performance indicator 6.1).** A total of 72 per cent of the United Nations country teams reporting comprehensively in 2020 missed requirements for this performance indicator, indicating, inter alia, a lack of capacity development for establishing and meeting financial allocation targets.

**68. Gender parity in staffing is achieved (performance indicator 4.3).** Of all performance indicators, this indicator registered the second largest proportion of United Nations country teams missing minimum requirements, at 61 per cent. The majority of country teams continue to lack a joint mechanism for monitoring parity.

**69. Adequate capacities for gender mainstreaming (performance indicator 5.2).** United Nations country teams reported implementing a range of capacity development initiatives to improve capacities for gender mainstreaming. However, capacity assessments and related planning, as well as the inclusion of gender equality content in country team induction materials for new personnel remained a rarity. Only 16 per cent of country teams met the performance requirements for this indicator, with none exceeding them.

70. Notably, while only 25 per cent of country teams submitting comprehensive reports in 2020 met the requirements for the performance indicator requiring the incorporation of gender analysis in the common country assessment (performance indicator 1.1), performance against the requirement to mainstream gender into

<sup>28</sup> Measured through a survey covering United Nations staff perceptions of organizational culture within three categories: gender equality, discrimination and work-life balance.

<sup>29</sup> UN-Women, “Survey for the gender focal points on the impact of Covid-19: results”, September 2020.

Cooperation Framework outcomes (performance indicator 1.2) remained high. A total of 61 per cent of country teams reported meeting it. This may in part be attributable to the historically strong engagement of the national women's machinery (performance indicator 3.1) and gender equality civil society organizations (performance indicator 3.2) in Cooperation Framework consultations, and a strong commitment to gender equality within country teams, as evidenced by the strong performance on the leadership indicator (4.2). Nonetheless, only 12 per cent of country teams reported being on track to achieve all gender equality results planned in the Cooperation Framework, pointing to the need for greater attention to areas of weakness.

*Analysis of annual progress reports 2020*

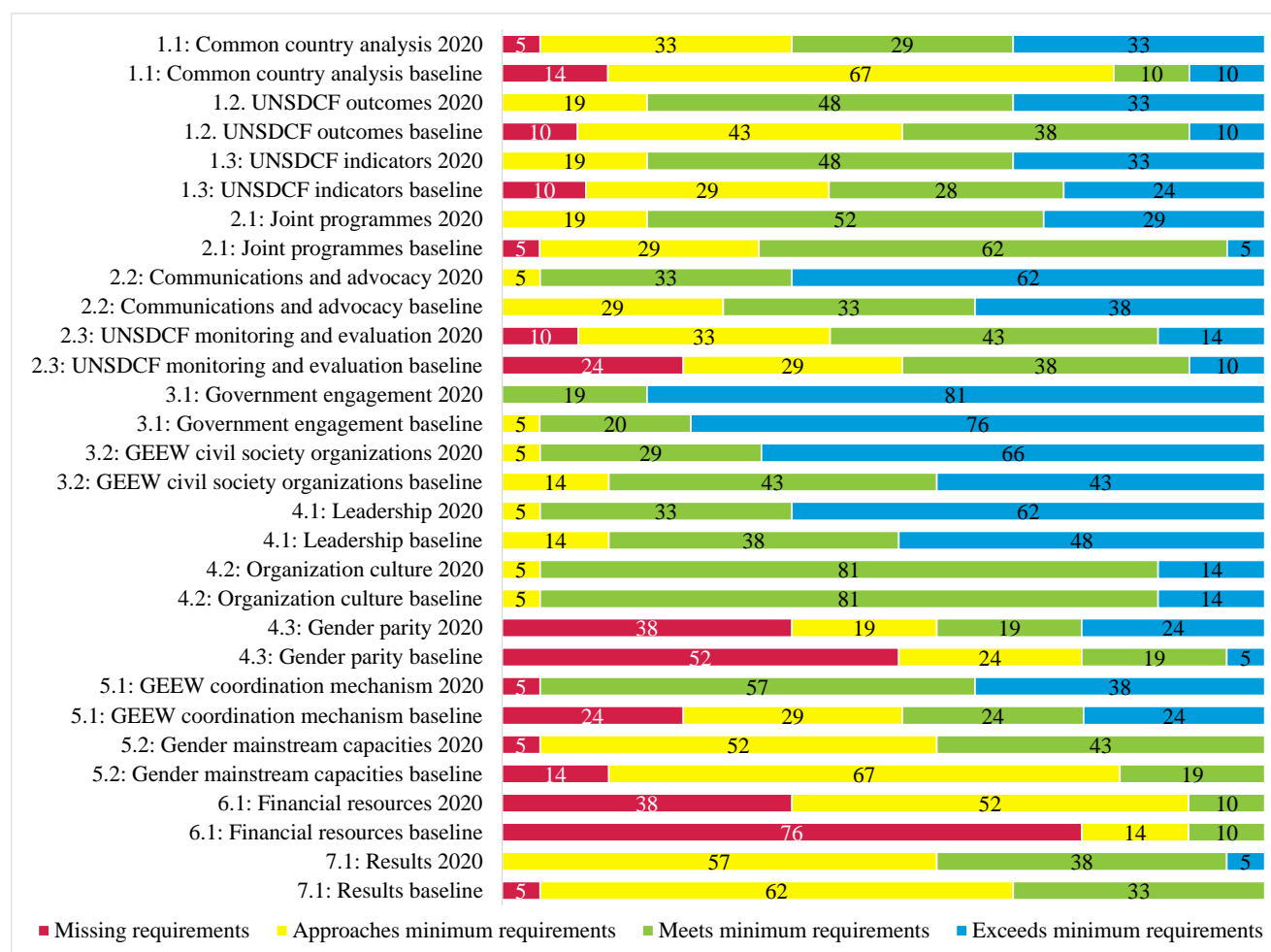
71. Annual progress reporting was piloted for the first time in 2019, following the launch in 2018 of the updated United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan. In 2020, the pilot annual progress reporting methodology was revised based on lessons learned,<sup>30</sup> and 21 United Nations country teams subsequently prepared an annual progress report, 10 of which did so for the second time. Relative to the baselines established by their comprehensive assessments,<sup>31</sup> progress was registered on 13 out of all 15 performance indicators, with marked gains averaging roughly 18 per cent per indicator. Progress against individual performance indicators is further detailed below.

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<sup>30</sup> Analysis included in [E/2020/50](#).

<sup>31</sup> All 2020 annual report ratings submitted by country teams were compared against the baselines established by their comprehensive reports for the period from 2017 to 2019.

Figure VII  
**Comparison of United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan 2020 annual report ratings with baselines established by comprehensive reports**



*Abbreviations:* GEEW, gender equality and empowerment of women; UNSDCF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

72. The strongest performance continued to be found for three performance indicators: collaboration and engagement with the government on gender equality (performance indicator 3.1); collaboration and engagement with civil society organizations dedicated to gender equality (performance indicator 3.2); and country team leadership on gender equality (performance indicator 4.1). Most progress was found for the performance indicators pertaining to gender equality coordination mechanisms (performance indicator 5.1), incorporation of gender analysis in the common country analysis (performance indicator 1.1), gender mainstreaming in Cooperation Framework outcomes (performance indicator 1.2), and communication and advocacy on gender equality (performance indicator 2.2). Further details on these is provided below.

73. **Empowered gender coordination mechanism (performance indicator 5.1).** An increased proportion of United Nations country teams reported having developed agreed terms of reference and workplans for these Coordination Mechanisms, with members participating in Cooperation Framework processes. A total of 95 per cent of

country teams reported meeting or exceeding performance requirements, compared to 48 per cent in the past.

74. **Common country analysis integrates gender analysis (performance indicator 1.1).** A total of 62 per cent of United Nations country teams registered progress in incorporating gender analysis across all sections of the common country analysis, compared to 20 per cent in the past. Specifically, 33 per cent of country teams reported the inclusion of targeted gender analysis of groups furthest behind in the common country analysis, an increase of 23 per cent. Specific groups analysed include female migrants, ethnic minority women, women and girls with disabilities, stateless women and girls, elderly women and adolescent girls. This progress was complemented by efforts to generate gender analysis, such as rapid gender assessments undertaken jointly with humanitarian personnel in the context of country teams' analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic.

75. **Communication and advocacy on gender inequality (performance indicator 2.2).** An increased proportion of United Nations country teams reported joint communication and advocacy on gender equality issues, with 95 per cent of country teams now including gender equality and empowerment of women and girls issues in their communication plans, up from 61 per cent in the past, and 24 per cent of country teams reporting more diverse communication and advocacy during the past year on gender equality, such as on women's role in the COVID-19 response, women in science and pride week.

76. United Nations country team performance in terms of financial resource allocation and tracking (performance indicator 6.1), advancing measures to achieve gender parity (performance indicator 4.3), capacity development for gender mainstreaming (performance indicator 5.2) and achievement of gender equality results (performance indicator 7.1) remained below the threshold of over half of country teams meeting or exceeding requirements. Nonetheless, the proportion of country teams missing requirements for these indicators significantly decreased, with country teams reporting on the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan indicating that they had taken steps to address areas of weaknesses.

77. The weakest performance was registered for the following three performance indicators:

(a) **Adequate resources for gender mainstreaming (performance indicator 6.1).** This performance indicator continued to register the weakest performance overall and no progress was reported by United Nations country teams in establishing and meeting financial targets for gender equality. However, 34 per cent of country teams reported implementing capacity development initiatives for personnel on gender equality markers, up from 14 per cent previously, signalling that country teams are taking steps to address the issue.

(b) **Gender parity in staffing is achieved (performance indicator 4.3).** The proportion of United Nations country teams that missed requirements decreased from 52 per cent to 38 per cent, with 62 per cent reporting the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring gender parity in staffing and 43 per cent able to demonstrate progress toward achievement of gender parity. A total of 23 per cent of country teams exceeded requirements, having included gender specific actions and indicators in their business operations strategy, up from 5 per cent before.

(c) **Adequate capacities for gender mainstreaming (performance indicator 5.2).** The proportion of United Nations country teams meeting or exceeding this indicator more than doubled to 43 per cent through increased inter-agency gender capacity development activities, such as trainings on gender-responsive results-based management and Cooperation Framework capacity development trainings delivered

on gender equality and human rights, as well as the development of inter-agency capacity assessments and plans.

## VI. Gaps and challenges

78. While pivoting quickly to address the pandemic challenges, the United Nations system continued to mainstream gender perspectives in policies, programmes and thematic issues at all levels. Strikingly, however, the pandemic effect of severely exacerbating gender inequalities has raised the profile and understanding of gender equality issues, possibly propelling a renewed focus on gender equality issues, resulting in a more gender-responsive recovery and accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

79. The United Nations system continues to focus its efforts on violence against women and socioeconomic issues in its work on gender equality. In addition, however, the United Nations system will have to further prioritize the sectors of energy, infrastructure and digital and financial inclusion, all of which witnessed low levels of United Nations system engagement as per both System-wide Action Plan reporting and the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.<sup>32</sup>

80. In the humanitarian area, major challenges persist. The availability of humanitarian funding for programmes dedicated to gender equality remains limited, and gender analysis and sex- and age-disaggregated data are frequently unavailable or are inconsistently applied. Gaps in gender mainstreaming capacity are apparent at every level.

81. With respect to accountability for gender mainstreaming, both the coverage and the quality of reporting on the System-wide Action Plan and United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan were strengthened during the reporting period. Country teams participating in United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan annual progress reporting registered significant improvements in the achievement of gender mainstreaming requirements, demonstrating the utility of annual reporting first piloted in 2019. However, more concerted efforts are required to ensure universal coverage across all country teams. Only 60 out of a total of 131 country teams reported at least once during the period from 2017 to 2020.

82. Results from 2020 reporting demonstrate that there are similarities in strengths and weaknesses, both at the global level and in United Nations country teams, and therefore generic opportunities and challenges. United Nations entities and country teams have achieved good progress in mainstreaming gender equality into their planning documents. However, progress on tracking financial resources and establishing and meeting financial targets related to gender equality still lags. Without increased attention to adequate financing, the United Nations system is unlikely to make its full contribution to the 2030 Agenda. A strong focus on building capacity in the area of gender equality markers, combined with the establishment of financial targets for gender equality, are expected to provide some redress.

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<sup>32</sup> UN-Women, “25 years after Beijing: A review of the UN system’s support for the implementation of the Platform for Action, 2014–2019”, 2020, available at <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/ianwge-review-of-un-system-support-for-implementation-of-platform-for-action>.

## VII. Conclusions and recommendations

83. The United Nations system continues to strengthen its efforts to accelerate gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system, including through the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 and the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan gender equality scorecard, to advance a common objective of supporting the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global and country levels, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

84. The United Nations system's response to the pandemic consistently mainstreamed gender perspectives into all policies and programmes, both at the individual entity level and in its inter-agency work. Collectively, United Nations entities responded to the call for an "all of United Nations" approach to the recovery and response, and endeavoured to take a unified approach.

85. However, much more needs to be done. The pandemic has reversed hard-earned gains, requiring equally more intensive focus and effort. There is also a great need to include women in decision-making related to the pandemic response. Women made up just 24 per cent of representatives on task forces set up to manage the recovery in 137 countries, according to the COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker. Of the 225 task forces, 26 had no women at all.<sup>33</sup>

86. Strengthening and accelerating gender mainstreaming policies and programmes in the United Nations system therefore warrants strong system-wide support and action to improve performance at all levels, in alignment with the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and taking into consideration the COVID-19 recovery. Based on the findings in the present report, it is recommended that the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and funds and programmes, consider the following recommendations:

### **Gender mainstreaming in the COVID-19 response and recovery**

(a) Continue to accelerate gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes, including in support of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global, regional and country levels, taking into consideration the extraordinary circumstances due to COVID-19. Ensure that all United Nations entities include gender equality as a specific outcome in their strategic plans and Cooperation Frameworks, update and strengthen their gender equality policies, and institute financial resource tracking mechanisms and dedicated financial allocations, to effectively strengthen system-wide commitment to and implementation of gender equality perspectives in all aspects of the work of the Organization;

(b) Provide gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data to inform national policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including those related to COVID-19 recovery programmes and policies;

(c) Adopt strong system-wide standards and more harmonized and coordinated approaches to gender mainstreaming at all levels of the United Nations system;

### **Gender mainstreaming and accountability frameworks**

(d) Continue to promote gender equality and the human rights of women and girls by enhancing gender mainstreaming through the full implementation of the System-wide Action Plan and the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan, in particular with regard to gender-responsive performance management and

<sup>33</sup> See <https://data.undp.org/gendertracker/>.

strategic planning, and enhance the collection, availability and use of sex-disaggregated data;

(e) Enhance leadership and commitment at the highest levels, including through resident coordinators, to accelerate gender mainstreaming across the Cooperation Framework cycle by supporting the full implementation of the United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan framework;

(f) Intensify efforts to increase United Nations country team System-wide Action Plan comprehensive and annual reporting, undertaking, funds permitting, an evaluation of the effectiveness, value added and impact of the Action Plan as a tool for gender mainstreaming performance monitoring and accountability;

### **Gender equality in strategic plans/cooperation frameworks**

(g) Ensure that all United Nations entities include gender equality as a specific outcome in their strategic plans and update and strengthen their gender equality policies;

### **Financing gender equality**

(h) Strengthen harmonized implementation of gender equality markers and capacity development at the overall entity and United Nations country team levels to link gender equality markers with the establishment of financial targets for gender equality, including in the context of the entity level strategic plans and the Cooperation Frameworks at the country level and inter-agency pooled funding mechanisms and trust funds at the global level;

### **Capacity-building on gender mainstreaming**

(i) Draw on available gender expertise in the system at all levels, including UN-Women, to assist in mainstreaming gender equality in the preparation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, through a gender equality outcome relevant to the country context;

(j) Strengthen the capacity of gender equality coordination mechanisms at all levels, ensuring that these are fully resourced, supported by heads of agencies and positioned to provide substantively input to the development of strategic plans and Cooperation Frameworks and to support related monitoring and evaluation efforts;

(k) Increase investment in joint capacity development for gender mainstreaming at all levels, with particular attention to the gender analytical skills required to fully integrate gender equality considerations in emerging areas of development and growing global risks and across the common country analysis, joint risk analyses and needs assessments, including in the context of recovery plans from COVID-19, with specific attention to strengthening targeted gender analysis of those furthest behind;

### **Gender equality and humanitarian action**

(l) Continue to strengthen collaboration and coordination among United Nations staff working on gender equality and gender focal points to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming across the work of the United Nations in development, peace and security, and human rights, as well as in humanitarian action;

(m) Enhance coordination and accountability for action on gender equality in the humanitarian, peace and security, and development space to operationalize commitments, clarify roles and responsibilities and coordinate work on gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process at corporate and country levels;

**Gender equality considerations in key emerging issues**

(n) Promote the integration of gender considerations in key emerging issues such as energy, infrastructure, financial and digital inclusion, which have the potential to reduce gender inequalities;

**Gender parity**

(o) Fully implement the system-wide strategy on gender parity;

**Sexual exploitation and abuse**

(p) Make concerted efforts to implement the Secretary-General's strategy on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel in order, inter alia, to support mainstreaming of a gender perspective.

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