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Annual Report of the Executive Director

Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2018–2021

Summary

This is the final report to the UN-Women Executive Board on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The report presents highlights of key results achieved by the Entity and its partners across the period covered by the Strategic Plan, as well as in 2021, and signals the transition to the Strategic Plan 2022–2025. Under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UN-Women will focus efforts on advancing the systemic outcomes that enable the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women's and girls and the full enjoyment of their rights, a prerequisite for realizing the broader vision and ambition of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A draft decision is included in section VI.



I. Introduction

1. The period 2018–2021 saw increased socio-political and humanitarian instability and complex, protracted global crises. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep structural inequalities; reversed decades of progress on women’s labour force participation; raised the numbers of women living in extreme poverty; and significantly increased women’s and girls’ vulnerability to violence in private, public and online settings. UN-Women learned important lessons about its added value, and shaped and refined interventions accordingly, designing the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 to intentionally address structural barriers and tackle the root causes of gender inequality and exclusion so as to leave no one behind. Unprecedented awareness and commitment among partners and strong global frameworks such as *Our Common Agenda* centred gender equality in the work of the UN system and underlined the urgency of UN Women’s mandate as well as its unique contributions in the face of concern about stalled progress in achieving Agenda 2030.

2. UN-Women’s growing organizational maturity enabled it to respond with agility to develop evidence-based, results-oriented knowledge products and policy guidance. These demonstrated value growth and progress since 2017, such as working with government partners and other stakeholders to promote women’s rights and make institutions and laws deliver better for women and girls, including the most vulnerable. Legislative reform continued to be a major area of focus – and success. More than half of the legislative reform initiatives supported during the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 period addressed discriminatory laws, including laws and regulations on the care economy that strengthen women’s ability to engage in the labour force.

3. Further work is needed to accelerate progress on women’s leadership and participation in governance and decision-making and prioritize action that includes women’s and girls’ voices, such as through continued gender mainstreaming into National Development Strategies.

4. As the climate and environment crises strain land usage and exacerbate the frequency and intensity of disasters, ensuring women’s employment in green and blue jobs and decision-making in disaster risk reduction and on land access, use and benefits will become ever more significant. UN-Women is empowering women as leaders and actors in disaster risk reduction efforts and building their disaster and climate resilience, including through access to gender-responsive early warning systems, finance and services, as well as resilient infrastructure, livelihoods and businesses.

5. Over the past four years UN-Women strengthened its thought leadership through innovative products like the UN-Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) COVID-19 Policy Tracker and rapid gender assessments. These demonstrated the gaps in countries’ COVID-19 recovery efforts, supporting effective advocacy for women and girls to be at the centre of economic and inclusive growth. Policy response analysis found that over 150 million women and girls could emerge from poverty if governments improved access to education and family planning, ensured fair and equal wages, and expanded social transfers by 2030.

6. Following the escalation in violence against many women and girls during the pandemic, UN-Women mobilized and coordinated action across the United Nations system on prevention and response to survivors, enhancing investments in gender-responsive social protection systems with advocacy on the “shadow pandemic”. This showcased the Entity’s unique place in the United Nations system to provide guidance and technical support related to ongoing crises and further highlighted the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment in sustainable development, including in Cooperation Frameworks.

7. In the area of women, peace and security, UN-Women increased joint action to realize commitments, enhance coordination and expand operational work, including a key role in the growth of impact-driven national action plans. This yielded positive results, including the doubling in the share of peace agreements with gender provisions.
8. By extending gender expertise to humanitarian decision-making and coordination bodies, developing timely gender analyses in crisis settings, monitoring existing gender commitments and amplifying the voices of women’s civil society, UN-Women has ensured that more women play a greater role in and are better served by humanitarian response efforts globally as needs continue to escalate.
9. The Entity continues to drive the development of joint accountability mechanisms for results at all levels, with tools such as the UN-SWAP, UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard and gender markers.
10. UN-Women continued to demonstrate strong management and internal controls, receiving its tenth consecutive unqualified audit opinion on its financial statements from the United Nations Board of Auditors and implementing all prior years’ external audit recommendations. The Entity developed country, regional and headquarters typologies to better ensure appropriate presence, configured to best support Member States and is deploying the personnel, corporate tools and capacities needed to deliver at scale and with appropriate risk management.
11. Partnerships remain key to amplify and accelerate impact. In 2021, the Generation Equality Forum demonstrated the vital potential of multistakeholder partnerships to advance collective results for gender equality. UN-Women will continue to convene partners to deliver jointly in support of its mandate, structuring those alliances with rigour and accountability to deliver for women and girls at unprecedented scale. By strengthening partnerships across and beyond the United Nations, including with local women’s and youth organizations, UN-Women aims to drive improved outcomes for at-risk and crisis-affected women and girls under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and achieve accelerated progress for all.

II. Key results of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021

12. During the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UN-Women worked with a breadth of partners to support the translation of global norms and standards into real changes in the lives of women and girls, and enhance the coherence and impact of the work of the United Nations system on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. With its partners, UN-Women directly contributed to the following results to create a more enabling environment for the realization of women’s rights:

Global Norms and Standards

Four successful outcomes of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (three agreed conclusions and one political declaration); participation of 9,692 civil society representatives (2018–2019) and 20,732 registrants (2020–2021)

Leadership and Governance

The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments increased from 23 to 26 percent [(Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 5.5.1(a)]

The proportion of gender-specific SDG indicators with available data rose from 26 to 40 percent

More than 35,500 aspiring women leaders and political candidates enhanced campaigning and other skills

41 countries developed and implemented national action plans on gender equality and gender-responsive budgets

39 additional national development strategies integrated a gender equality focus

Economic Empowerment

44 countries, home to 1.6 billion women and girls, have a stronger legal, regulatory and policy environment on women's economic empowerment

1,008 governments, companies and international organizations significantly opened markets for women by developing and implementing policies to prioritize purchasing from women-owned businesses

4,357 private sector companies signed the Women's Empowerment Principles

Ending Violence Against Women

43 additional cities supported by UN-Women have data on the prevalence of sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces.

22 additional countries have adopted or strengthened legislation addressing violence against women and girls in private and public spaces that (1) is in line with best practices (2) has allocated a budget and (3) has an oversight mechanism for monitoring

12 additional countries have legislation (in line with best practices) to prevent, investigate, sanction and redress femicide/feminicide/gender-related killings of women

57 countries, home to 2.5 billion women and girls, have strengthened national action plans (NAPs) and strategies to end violence against women with a component that addresses social norms, attitudes and behaviour transformation

69 countries, home to 2.7 billion women and girls, have improved access to quality support services for survivors of violence

83.7 million people (including over 22.5 million women and girls in 2021 alone) reached through grants from the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (UN Trust Fund)

Women, Peace and Security, Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction

The share of peace agreements with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls increased from 25 percent (2015–2017) to 29 percent (2020)

A 12 percentage-point increase (2017–2021) in Peacebuilding Fund resources allocated for peacebuilding projects that address women’s specific needs, advance gender equality and/or empower women as their principal objective

A 25 percentage-point increase (2017–2021) in the proportion of UN-led (or co-led) peace processes in which women were included in the mediation team, negotiating parties had senior women in their delegations, consultations with women’s civil society organizations were held and technical gender expertise was provided

A 31 percentage-point increase (2017–2021) in gender analysis informing Humanitarian Needs Overviews (country-level, evidence-based assessments of humanitarian needs)

99 United Nations Member States and territories with national action plans on women, peace and security in 2021 (79 in 2018)

1,876,220 crisis-affected women and girls benefitted from UN-Women-supported humanitarian services

Gender-responsive disaster risk reduction legislation, policies, strategies, plans and assessments in 34 additional countries, covering 778 million people, achieved in close cooperation with national governments and 1,407 women’s organizations

UN Coordination

Consolidation of gender mainstreaming standards across key functions of the United Nations system through the UN-SWAP 2.0 accountability framework with 71 United Nations entities on board

The percentage of United Nations country teams completing the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard (UNCT-SWAP) report annually rose from 7 percent in 2018 to 47 percent in 2021

Joint efforts to strengthen the gender lens in the second call of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund in the response to COVID-19, via the gender equality marker, resulted in allocations reaching 64 percent of total funding (5 percent in the first call)

First United Nations System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity launched in 2021 by UN-Women and UNDP, consolidating the latest available data of 38 United Nations entities on gender parity

Over 30 humanitarian country teams engaged annually with Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Accountability Framework reporting

Partnerships and Communications

More than 2.4 million individual HeForShe commitments by men and boys

Members of the Unstereotype Alliance now represent 217 companies worldwide with half a trillion dollars in global advertising yearly

12.5 million social media followers, up from 8.2 million

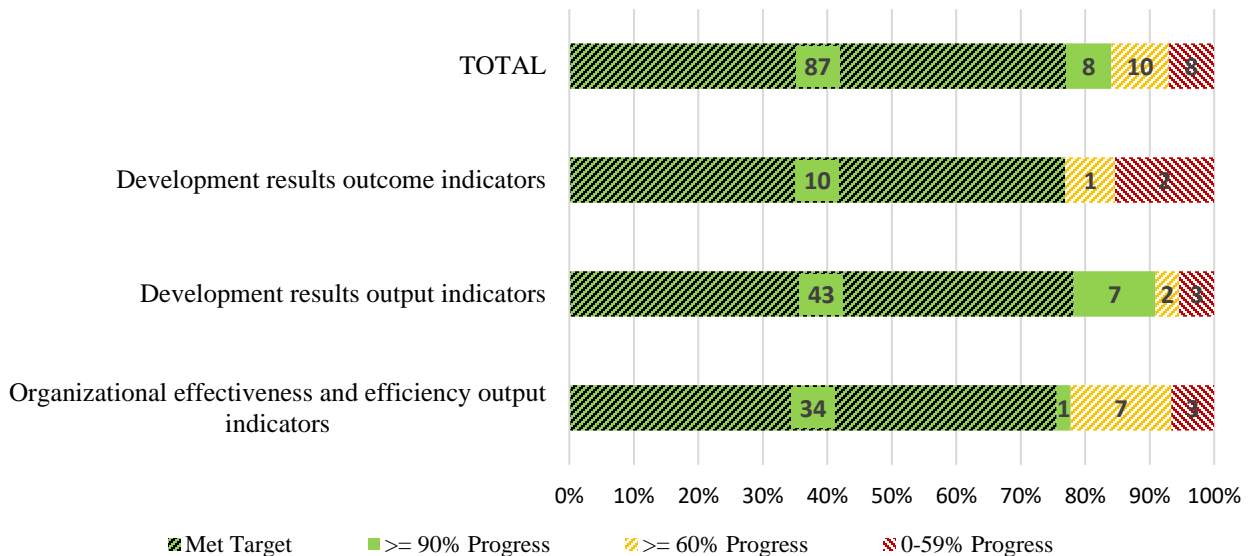
30 billion impressions via earned media outreach, 1.2 billion in social media reach and over 4 million campaign video views around the Generation Equality Forum

More than 1000 policy, programmatic, advocacy or financial commitments to the six Action Coalitions at the Generation Equality Forum

III. Assessment of development results, including programme expenditures and types of contribution

13. In the final year of its Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UN-Women supported 98 countries and territories, including high-income countries, to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. 77 percent of targets set at the outcome level were met. Good performance (within 10 percent of the targets) was achieved for 91 percent of indicators at the development results output level (78 percent of the targets were met) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Progress against 2021 Targets



These figures exclude indicators that are only monitored at component or disaggregated levels and SDG indicators, which are not assigned annual milestones.

A. Outcome 1: A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is strengthened and implemented

Number of countries and territories
2021: 42

Total expenditure:
2021: 33.74 million

Contributes to achieving all the SDGs



Figure 2: Outcome 1
Progress against 2021 targets

Output		Indicator	
1	115%	1.1.1	83%
		1.1.2	97%
		1.1.3	131%
		1.1.4	150%
2	98%	1.2.1	100%
		1.2.2	95%
3	147%	1.3.1	147%

■ ≥ 90% progress ■ ≥ 60% progress ■ 0–59% progress

14. During the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UN-Women consistently sustained high-level support to Member States in strengthening and translating global norms on gender equality into national laws and policies. The Entity supported capacity building, facilitated dialogue among stakeholders and provided substantive policy advice targeted to intergovernmental processes. The average output attainment rate from 2018–2021 was 91 percent (115 percent in 2021).

15. The Beijing+25 review and appraisal process illustrated the continued relevance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the commitment by Member States and other stakeholders to translate it into national-level laws, policies and programmes across the 12 critical areas of concern. For the review and appraisal, UN-Women convened national and regional consultations and youth fora and supported the development of 118 national reports on the review and appraisal of the Platform, on the basis of which the Entity produced a synthesis report of the Secretary-General that identified 8 cross-cutting priorities for the accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform. UN-Women also collaborated with United Nations partners and all regional commissions, and supported events such as the multistakeholder hearing of the President of the General Assembly.

16. In 2021, outcome-level performance, which depends on the political climate at the global level, was uneven. Eighty-seven percent of recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on the priority theme, which is produced by UN-Women and

provides strong knowledge and evidence, were reflected in the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) (100 percent in 2018). Forty-five percent of all General Assembly resolutions integrated a gender perspective (same as in 2018). At the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 75 percent of Voluntary National Reviews integrated gender perspectives (81 percent in 2018).

17. Among Member States, the level of satisfaction with the support provided by UN-Women, including for sessions of the CSW during COVID-19, remained steady (77 percent in 2018, and 76 percent in 2021). Registrations for the Commission by representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) accredited by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) grew by 25 percent from 2018 to 2021. In 2021, more than 10,000 NGO representatives from ECOSOC-accredited organisations registered for the Commission's official session, which took place mostly online. Largely in support of the Generation Equality Forum, 292 dialogues were convened and platforms created by UN-Women across the world for NGOs to contribute to global policy discussions (45 in 2018).

18. UN-Women held four thematic briefings in 2021 (six in 2018) with a range of intergovernmental bodies, and provided substantive inputs to their outcomes, including on financing for development and the next programme of action for least developed countries.

19. UN-Women strengthened the reflection of gender perspectives in the work of the Human Rights Council, including in relation to the Universal Periodic Review and in support of the work of Special Procedures mandate holders. The Entity continued to bolster implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in all regions. This included support to countries in reporting to and preparing for dialogue with the CEDAW Committee, following up on concluding observations and to civil society and United Nations country teams to prepare reports to the CEDAW Committee. In 2021, the Entity supported 100 percent of country team reports to the Committee (83 percent in 2018), including in coordinating and leading the process of preparing the reports.

20. UN-Women continued to advocate for the reflection of stronger gender perspectives in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In partnership with United Nations Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Entity convened dialogues among Parties and other stakeholders on key gender equality considerations. Recommendations from these dialogues, including for a gender-specific target in the framework, were shared with Parties to inform their engagements in the formal sessions of CBD bodies.

21. Continuing its engagement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26), UN-Women provided technical support, in particular for the decision on gender and climate change. Building on substantive contributions in past years, UN-Women actively supported the development of the 2020–2024 Gender Action Plan of the UNFCCC and the post-2020 Gender Plan of Action of the CBD through written inputs, collaboration with the secretariats of the Conventions, as well as providing technical assistance to Parties.

22. Over the duration of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UN-Women provided technical expertise to intergovernmental and expert bodies and built partnerships with Member States and civil society to strengthen the global normative framework for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. COVID-19-related postponements or cancellations of intergovernmental and expert body meetings posed constraints, particularly as virtual meetings reduced opportunities for meaningful participation by government and other representatives. The results under this outcome

depend on the level of support to multilateralism and the political will to strengthen global norms on gender equality across a range of themes. As a priority in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UN-Women will reinforce its efforts to support Member States in translating global norms and standards into national laws and policies.

B. Outcome 2: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems

Number of countries and territories
2021: 81

Total expenditure:
2021: 81.01 million

Contributes to achieving the following SDGs



Figure 3: Outcome 2
Progress against 2021 targets

Output		Indicator	
4	125%	2.4.1	140%
		2.4.2	96%
		2.4.3	114%
		2.4.4	150%
5	126%	2.5.1	124%
		2.5.2	105%
		2.5.3	150%
		2.5.4	113%
		2.5.4	150%
6	150%	2.6.1	150%
		2.6.2	150%
		2.6.3	150%
		2.6.4	150%
7	150%	2.7.1	150%
		2.7.2	150%
		2.7.3	150%

■ >= 90% progress ■ >=60% progress ■ 0–59% progress

23. Despite some progress, few countries have achieved 50 percent parity of women in elected office, and lack of gender-responsiveness in laws, policies and budgets continues to hamper women and girls from the full realisation of their rights. While COVID-19 presented significant challenges, UN-Women worked with partners to integrate gender equality priorities into response and recovery plans and budgets. The Entity drove progress under this outcome by supporting Governments and other stakeholders to make institutions and laws deliver better for women and girls, and contributing to quality gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data, including for SDG reporting.

24. The average output attainment rate over the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 was 138 percent (138 percent in 2021). High achievement was enabled by political will in some countries to fast-track legal and policy reforms.

25. From 2018–2021, women’s representation in parliaments globally increased from 23.4 to 26.2 percent, with a tripling of countries with gender-balanced Parliaments. As of 2021, 135 countries and areas reported data on women’s representation in elected local deliberative bodies, showing great progress in terms of data availability. However progress in women’s representation in local bodies has been uneven, with only 22 countries reaching 40 percent and over, while 14 countries remain under 10 percent. UN-Women contributed to 24 laws between 2018–2021 (3 in 2021) that promote gender balance in elections and decision-making bodies. Slowing progress in 2019–2020 was due to competing priorities in parliaments focused on COVID-19. The agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth CSW, which called for 50/50 gender parity in elected positions, coupled with the call for action in this area by the Secretary-General in *Our Common Agenda*, provide strong impetus for future progress on women’s full and effective participation in decision-making.

26. The Entity surpassed the target on gender-responsive national development strategies; since 2018, gender equality has been mainstreamed into 39 strategies (8 in 2021); consistent progress was maintained, with UN-Women strengthening gender analysis to respond to COVID-19.

27. UN-Women, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNDP expanded comparable data on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) through monitoring SDG indicator 5.c.1. Data from 105 countries and areas show that 26 percent have systems to track gender budget allocations and 59 percent have some system features. The data identify moderate progress in integrating GRB into fiscal standards/guidelines and show areas requiring intensified support, including evaluations and audits of gender budget allocations, work that UN-Women will build on under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

28. From 2018–2021, as part of the H6 Partnership together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS on promoting women’s health, UN-Women supported women and girls in 39 countries to access sexual and reproductive health services. Globally, 56.7 percent of women aged 15–49 years (married or in union) make their own decisions on sexual relations, use of contraceptives and health care (51.8 percent in 2017). Achievement of the SDG target by 2030 will require increased efforts to eliminate gender-related barriers to accessing services, including regressive social norms and discriminatory policies, both priorities in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

29. UN-Women, the World Bank Group and the OECD expanded comparable data on legal frameworks that advance gender equality through monitoring SDG indicator 5.1.1. Data from 95 countries show moderate progress. From 2018–2021, UN-Women supported over 760 legislative reform initiatives (232 in 2021); over 50 percent addressed discriminatory laws and 60 percent were adopted. UN-Women will contribute to the implementation of the Secretary-General’s *Call to Action for Human Rights* and *Our Common Agenda* by continuing this work in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

30. Results at the impact and outcome levels were bolstered by strong performance across all outputs. From 2018–2021, more than 35,500 women (11,500 in 2021) benefitted from skills-building on political leadership and electoral campaign management and 131 policies and innovative tools were developed to address violence against women in politics (40 in 2021). Legislation criminalizing violence against women in politics in Brazil and El Salvador was informed by multistakeholder

awareness raising, and in Guatemala the Electoral Tribunal issued a protocol to address violence against indigenous women.

31. UN-Women contributed to the development, implementation and costing of 56 national action plans for gender equality from 2018–2021 (13 in 2021). Capacity strengthening of 65 ministries of finance (14 in 2021) supported gender mainstreaming in public finance management systems. Responding to a corporate evaluation recommendation to increase engagement with women’s organizations, UN-Women enhanced the GRB capacities of 865 women’s organizations (299 in 2021).⁵ Strengthened gender expertise and knowledge in national AIDS coordinating bodies across 54 countries (15 in 2021) resulted in more gender-responsive HIV programming.

32. Between 2018 and 2021, UN-Women developed the capacities of 103,480 formal and informal justice sector actors (68,481 in 2021), including to enhance collaboration between customary and formal justice systems in Kenya, the Philippines and Uruguay and over 292,145 women accessed gender-responsive legal aid services (46,708 in 2021).

33. Since 2017, through the Women Count programme, statistical systems have become more responsive to gender data requirements. UN-Women supported 31 surveys (9 in 2021) and strengthened national data systems to increase the availability of gender-sensitive SDG indicators from 26 to 40 percent. More data on SDG indicators 5.1.1, 5.2.12, 5.4.1, 5.5.1b and 5.c.1 are now available and routinely included in global, regional and national SDG monitoring. Thirty countries integrated a gender perspective in their statistical strategies (10 in 2021); multistakeholder coordination mechanisms were strengthened in 48 countries (13 in 2021); the capacities of 33,634 data producers and users increased (4,050 in 2021); and 56 national reports (17 in 2021) were produced on SDG implementation from a gender perspective.

34. The UN-Women and UNDP COVID-19 Policy Tracker and 78 rapid gender assessments on COVID-19 impacts on women and girls shed light on countries’ responses; as a result, over 20 countries enacted gender-sensitive policies. In Chile, subsidies to support working caregivers to young children were enacted, along with support for women entrepreneurs.

35. Further work is needed to accelerate progress on advancing women’s leadership and participation in governance and decision-making towards achievement of SDG targets. Insufficient financing for gender equality, lack of technical capacity, discriminatory laws and institutions, weak statistical systems, lack of regular production and limited use of gender statistics, and insufficient political will remain challenges. Consequently, UN-Women is ramping up its work on financing for gender equality as well as gender statistics and knowledge in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

Expanding efforts towards financing gender equality

UN-Women’s 2022–2025 Strategic Plan features financing for gender equality as a critical driver for policy implementation highlighting the need to align public and private resources with national gender priorities. Under the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UN-Women supported finance and sectoral ministries and women’s organizations in over 70 countries to introduce, monitor and scale-up GRB. Through monitoring SDG indicator 5.c.1, the entity established a globally-representative GRB database covering 105 countries.

Building on this track record, and with a new focus on gender-lens investing, UN-Women will support governments to reorient fiscal policy

and attract private capital and investment to close gender gaps. Results will be achieved by anchoring gender dimensions in fiscal laws, policies and standards; integrating gender equality in public finance management systems; strengthening capital market infrastructure for gender lens investing; and supporting gender-focused financial instruments to catalyse and increase the volume and quality of gender equality financing.

Expanding UN-Women’s work on gender statistics and knowledge

Building on the strong results of the [Women Count programme](#), gender statistics and knowledge has been elevated as a systemic outcome in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, driving UN-Women’s data, evidence and knowledge-based transformation.

Women Count is being scaled up to over 70 countries and will be key for UN-Women to deliver high-quality, evidence-based results on a much broader scale. Data production will be increased to monitor the SDGs; United Nations system coordination will be strengthened through joint data collection, analysis and research, including on those furthest behind; and country support will ensure that data and research can support policy and programme development, including during shocks and crises and emergencies.

Women Count will also promote increased data use through better engagement with users and by enhancing and leveraging the [Women Count Data Hub](#) as a one-stop resource for data, evidence and knowledge on gender equality and a key contribution to the Secretary-General’s Data Strategy.

C. Outcome 3: Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy

Number of countries and territories
2021: 64

Total expenditure:
2021: 63.30 million

Contributes to achieving the following SDGs



Figure 4: Outcome 3
Progress against 2021 targets

Output		Indicator	
8	123%	3.8.1	98%
		3.8.2	91%
		3.8.3	100%
		3.8.4	150%
		3.8.5	150%
		3.8.6	150%
9	138%	3.9.1	150%
		3.9.2	150%
		3.9.3	150%
		3.9.4	150%
		3.9.5	91%
10	99%	3.10.1	140%
		3.10.2	121%
		3.10.3	36%

■ ≥ 90% progress ■ ≥ 60% progress ■ 0–59% progress

36. Decades of progress on women’s labour force participation has been undone by the COVID-19 pandemic, which drove millions of women out of the workforce. In 2019, 398.5 million women and girls were living on less than \$1.90 a day and assessments indicated this reached 435 million in 2021. This reversal of progress to eliminate extreme poverty saw significantly increased demand for UN-Women’s support under this outcome during the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan. UN-Women and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs analysed COVID-19 policy responses and found over 150 million women and girls could emerge from poverty if governments improved access to education and family planning, ensured fair and equal wages and expanded social transfers by 2030.

37. UN-Women surpassed targets with an average output attainment rate across 2018–2021 of 123 percent (123 percent in 2021). This was achieved through the strengthened provision of technical advice and capacity-building, in coordination with the United Nations system and partners, to tackle economic inequalities faced by women and girls that were exacerbated by COVID-19.

38. In 2020, only 46.9 percent of the world’s population had access to at least one social protection benefit. Only 23 percent of the social protection and labour market measures introduced worldwide in response to COVID-19 were gender-sensitive. UN-Women will continue to prioritise supporting governments to take gender-responsive COVID-19 recovery measures and undertake social protection investments in women under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

39. While data paucity makes it difficult to assess progress on land rights, an assessment of 32 countries between 2014–2020 indicated that only 39.6 percent of women in agriculture have ownership and/or secure rights over land. Ensuring women’s participation in decision-making on land access, use and benefits is a crucial priority that UN-Women will continue to support.

40. As of 2020, only 34.9 percent of firms worldwide had female participation in ownership, however there is considerable regional variation. UN-Women will continue prioritising women’s entrepreneurship through context-specific transformative interventions, including gender-responsive procurement.

41. At the output level, the Entity supported 1,008 governments, companies and international organizations to develop and/or implement gender-responsive procurement policies, contributing significantly to opening markets for women (509 in 2021 alone). Advocacy, partnerships (including with the UN Global Compact) and knowledge generated by the Stimulating Equal Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs programme accelerated changes in this area of work.

42. UN-Women leveraged technology to expand women's access to markets, including through the Buy from Women programme. In Costa Rica and Côte d'Ivoire, the e-commerce platform enabled women entrepreneurs and indigenous peoples' organizations to generate income during the pandemic. Due in part to COVID-19, UN-Women delayed the programme's launch in several countries, missing its target.

43. Through concerted advocacy, new tools and local guidance, UN-Women gained a significant 4,357 new signatories (1,615 in 2021) to the Women's Empowerment Principles in 150 countries between 2018–2021.

44. As co-custodian for 3 economic empowerment-related indicators derived from the *UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19*, UN-Women's technical support and capacity building for governments to assess COVID-19 impacts and promote recovery led to the development and/or implementation of 53 gender-responsive macroeconomic policies (14 in 2021), 41 gender-responsive fiscal stimulus packages (22 in 2021) and strengthened capacities in 21 countries to implement women's empowerment policies (15 in 2021). In Morocco, a UN-Women and International Labour Organization (ILO) initiative enhanced policymakers' capacities to implement a fiscal stimulus package providing poor women with cash transfers. UN-Women backed similar initiatives in Mozambique and Nepal. In Albania, UN-Women carried out a fiscal space analysis for social protection floors, jointly with UNICEF.

45. During 2018–2021, UN-Women's policy and technical advice to governments, including on estimated costs and economic returns of public investments in the care economy (in partnership with the ILO) and on valuing the contributions of unpaid care work to the economy (in partnership with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa), led to the development and/or implementation of 114 laws and policies promoting women's access to decent employment, including grants for women-owned businesses (55 in 2021); 85 laws and regulations on the care economy (45 in 2021) and 69 laws and policies on gender-responsive social protection systems, including cash transfers to informal, migrant and domestic workers impacted by COVID-19 (19 in 2021). Policy tools developed in 2020 accelerated progress against Strategic Plan 2018–2021 targets in the final year. In Moldova, UN-Women supported amendments of labour and education codes calling for the establishment of community childcare centres.

46. UN Women's advocacy efforts and technical support to governments, development partners and national stakeholders led to the development and/or implementation of 131 new or improved gender-responsive policies on women's land rights and tenure security during the period 2018–2021 (20 in 2021). UN-Women, in partnership with the World Food Programme, Food and Agriculture Organization and International Fund for Agricultural Development, supported over 447,893 rural women to increase access to, use of and control over productive resources from 2018–2021 (62,108 rural women in 2021, of which 1,953 were migrant women and 17,438 aged 18–30). In Viet Nam and Uganda, UN Women supported rural women through greater access to markets and climate-resilient agricultural technologies, including solar-powered irrigation, resulting in diversified livelihoods and increased incomes.

47. Despite increased recognition that women's economic empowerment and sustainable development are intertwined, gaps remain, as was revealed in the paucity

of gender considerations within COVID-19 recovery efforts. The lessons learnt from UN Women's response of evidence-based advocacy and integrated policy support for women and girls to be centred in inclusive economic growth efforts will continue in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

Leaving No One Behind

Leaving no one behind was a cross-cutting principle of UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2018–2021. UN-Women generated normative guidance, policy and operational advice, knowledge-based capacity development initiatives including a [Global Toolkit and Resource Guide on Intersectionality](#) to support diverse stakeholders on how to implement an intersectional approach effectively, a [Know Your Rights Series](#) and a [COVID-19 Gender and Disability Checklist](#) for preventing and addressing gender-based violence against women, girls, and gender non-conforming people with disabilities.

In Mexico, ahead of the 2021 subnational elections, the Electoral Institute of Oaxaca and UN-Women teamed up to develop a specialized modular training for strengthening the capacities of over 180 indigenous and Afro-Mexican women political and civic leaders and local public servants on political engagement and the prevention of and response to violence against women in politics.

From 2018–2021, UN-Women supported 45,000 women living with HIV to improve their leadership capacities and access decision-making spaces (7,000 in 2021). In Ukraine, women living with HIV in four regions became members of Regional Coordinating Councils on HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis and participated in developing local plans and budgets.

Under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UN-Women is developing a comprehensive operational strategy to ensure a consistent approach to leaving no one behind.

D. Outcome 4: All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence

Number of countries and territories
2021: 67

Total expenditure:
2021: 127.04 million

Contributes to achieving the following SDGs



Figure 5: Outcome 4
Progress against 2021 targets

Output		Indicator	
11	129%	4.11.1	150%
		4.11.2	120%
		4.11.3	115%
		4.11.4	90%
		4.11.5	150%
		4.11.6	95%
		4.11.6	114%
		4.11.6	124%
		4.11.6	149%
		4.11.6	100%
12	96%	4.12.1	140%
		4.12.2	150%
		4.12.3	57%
		4.12.4	36%

■ ≥ 90% progress ■ ≥ 60% progress ■ 0–59% progress

48. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased women and girls' vulnerability to violence in private, public and online settings, revealing chronic structural weaknesses in systems to address survivors' needs and highlighting the precariousness of their economic situation. Ongoing restrictions in public spaces impacted prevention initiatives and slowed progress in some result areas relating to women's safety. In response, UN-Women scaled up efforts to address this escalation in violence, including through innovative adaptation of responses and increased flexible resourcing for civil society organizations, especially women's rights organizations as first responders

49. As a result, UN-Women reached most of, and in many cases, surpassed its targets on ending violence against women and girls during the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. Good progress at the outcome level was driven by strong performance across the majority of outputs, with an average attainment rate of 121 percent from 2018–2021 (116 percent in 2021).

50. Joint work with the WHO, United Nations Statistics Division, UNFPA, UNICEF and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) resulted in a new methodology producing comparable global, regional and country estimates of rates of physical and sexual intimate partner violence, enabling greater understanding of its prevalence, nature and impact, and how it may differ across settings and change

over time. Global data suggest reduced acceptance of wife-beating, which UN-Women has contributed to through comprehensive, evidence-based prevention programming, social norms transformation and engagement of men and boys.

51. Increased numbers of women seeking help from service providers, especially in the police and justice sectors, stemmed in part from the UN-Women, UNODC and UNDP collaborating on institution building and capacity strengthening of law enforcement, and developing new guidance addressing critical gaps. Under the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative, from 2018–2021, UN-Women’s awareness raising and enhanced technical support resulted in 43 cities (16 in 2021) producing and making available data on the prevalence of sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces.

52. From 2018–2021, with UN-Women’s continued advocacy, technical support, knowledge production and convening of policy dialogues, 22 countries (17 in 2021) adopted or strengthened legislation against violence against women and girls in private and public spaces; 12 countries (5 in 2021) adopted legislation to prevent, investigate, sanction and redress femicide.

53. This period also brought unique opportunities to propel transformative change, particularly through UN-Women’s convening of the Generation Equality Forum. More than 400 commitment makers signed up to the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence. In 2021, the UN Trust Fund supported projects reached 41,782,089 people across 68 countries and territories, with grants totalling USD 74.7 million.

54. In 2021, together with WHO and UNFPA, UN-Women provided national partners in Bangladesh, India and Nepal with a first-of-its-kind opportunity to build a common and coordinated vision of effective evidence-based prevention programming.

55. From 2018–2021, UN-Women provided technical support to 38 countries (9 in 2021) to develop and/or improve guidelines, protocols and standard operating procedures on the provision of quality services for survivors. With the International Association of Women Police and UNODC, UN-Women launched the [Handbook on Gender-Responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence](#), a key tool that addresses gaps in the investigation of violence against women and girls through survivor-centred approaches.

56. UN-Women oversaw the establishment of 56 city and safe public spaces partnerships from 2018–2021 (17 in 2021) to prevent and respond to sexual violence in public spaces. In Edmonton, Canada, a gender-based analysis tool and data generated from the UN-Women Safe Cities programme were used for the first time to renovate a transit shelter in line with women’s and girls’ safety considerations.

57. Throughout the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, UN-Women strengthened efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse, and supported the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination’s Taskforce on Sexual Harassment. In 2021, the Entity helped finalize guidance to advance a common understanding of a victim/survivor-centred approach to sexual harassment within United Nations organizations and organised virtual sessions on ending sexual harassment in different settings.

58. Through its knowledge and expertise on evidence-based policy and programmatic approaches to ending violence against women, innovative data collection methods and longstanding partnerships with civil society and women’s rights organizations, UN-Women continues to be uniquely placed in the United Nations system to provide guidance and technical support on how to establish links between violence against women and girls and social protection, and address challenges posed by ongoing crises, including climate change, conflicts, and online and ICT-facilitated violence.

59. Moving forward, UN-Women will continue to scale up evidence-based programmes to end violence against women, pursue innovations and mobilise new actors across diverse and non-traditional sectors to accelerate change.

Spotlight Initiative

Results from the mid-term review of the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative demonstrated that it is a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder, evidence-based model generating transformative results, with both women and girls and civil society organisations at the centre of this work. The review also noted that good progress is being made across all outcome areas and that the Initiative is producing catalytic results with regard to strengthening women's movements.

E. Outcome 5: Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action

Number of countries and territories
2021: 79

Total expenditure:
2021: 126.65 million

Contributes to achieving the following SDGs



Figure 6: Outcome 5
Progress against 2021 targets

Output		Indicator	
13	124%	5.13.1	150%
		5.13.2	150%
		5.13.3	129%
		5.13.4	65%
14	139%	5.14.1	116%
		5.14.2	150%
		5.14.3	150%
15	147%	5.15.1	150%
		5.15.2	141%
		5.15.3	150%

■ ≥ 90% progress ■ ≥ 60% progress ■ 0–59% progress

60. Amidst more complex and protracted crises, an increasing frequency and intensity of disasters and COVID-19 fallout, demand for UN-Women's support in responding to these compounding challenges grew significantly under the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The past decade has seen a maturation of UN-Women's efforts contributing to strong results at outcome and impact levels. The Entity contributed to these achievements

through increased joint action to realize commitments, enhanced coordination and expanded operational work. UN-Women reached an average output achievement rate over the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 of 135 percent (135 percent in 2021).

61. In 2021, 235 million people needed humanitarian assistance, the highest figure in decades, and disasters caused an estimated USD 343 billion in economic damage. Women and girls in conflict, crises and disaster settings were disproportionately affected, yet many were on the frontlines leading responses, even amid escalating and life-threatening risks, including gender-based violence.

62. As secretariat of the 90-member network of women, peace and security focal points representing governments and regional organizations, UN-Women has played a key role in the growth of impact-driven national action plans (NAPs) on women, peace and security. As of 2021, 86 NAPs (60 in 2018) include frameworks and indicators to monitor results, but more work is needed to ensure adequate budget allocations.

63. Among United Nations Security Council decisions, 69 percent referenced gender equality issues, up from 51 percent in 2016 when the Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security, supported by UN-Women as the Secretariat, began holding an average of eight meetings annually.

64. UN-Women's strong partnership with the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office continued yielding notable results. In 2021, the Peacebuilding Fund exceeded the minimum 15 percent target for projects with gender equality as a principal objective, reaching 21.7 percent.

65. By 2021, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund had funded over 450 local and grass-roots civil society organizations in 26 crisis-affected countries to support women civil society leaders and their organizations in preventing conflict, responding to crises, ending sexual and gender-based violence and building back better from COVID-19.

66. The share of peace agreements with gender provisions doubled from 13.8 percent in 2018 to 28.6 percent in 2020. UN-Women contributed through knowledge generation, technical expertise and convening spaces for networking and building partnerships. In 2021, the Entity continued supporting women's civil society organizations to influence formal and informal peace processes; 646 organizations benefitted from financial and technical support (417 in 2018). All United Nations-led or co-led peace processes included women in mediation teams and negotiating parties, consulted women's civil society organizations and received technical gender expertise (83.3 percent in 2018).

67. UN-Women assisted 288 justice and security institutions in 33 countries to mainstream gender perspectives and protect the rights of women and girls. A partnership with Justice Rapid Response deployed 16 investigators on sexual and gender-based violence in eight conflict and crisis situations. In Kosovo (Security Council resolution 1244 [1999]), UN-Women's support to prosecutors and investigators contributed to the first-ever conviction in a Kosovo court for conflict-related sexual violence.

68. UN-Women continued to promote women's rights in the context of terrorism and violent extremism, including through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. In 2021, UN-Women supported gender-responsive approaches in 13 policy and programme initiatives on prevention of violent extremism despite challenges presented by COVID-19.

69. Greater recognition of UN-Women's value in humanitarian action has driven strong results at the outcome and output levels, with 75 percent of all available

humanitarian needs overviews demonstrating gender analysis in 2021 (45 percent in 2018). UN-Women extended gender expertise to 87 percent of humanitarian cluster systems (84 percent in 2018). On behalf of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Reference Group, UN-Women continues leading monitoring efforts to maintain accountability for gender equality in humanitarian action across 31 crisis contexts. The Entity supported capacity building of 2,600 humanitarian actors, including civil society representatives, on gender in humanitarian action across 21 crisis-affected countries.

70. From 2018–2021, 1,876,220 crisis-affected women and girls, including refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees, accessed UN-Women’s humanitarian services (562,397 in 2021), including through 149 women’s safe spaces and empowerment hubs. Through a new global partnership with UNFPA, supported by the Central Emergency Response Fund managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN-Women responded to high rates of gender-based violence in humanitarian crises in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia, Myanmar and the State of Palestine. Over 200,000 crisis-affected women, girls, men and boys benefitted; 71 local women’s organizations and over 100 community protection networks were supported.

71. In 2021, UN-Women enabled 1,241 local women’s organizations and groups (498 in 2018) to participate meaningfully in humanitarian planning processes, improve gender-equitable outcomes and increase access to critical humanitarian services among crisis-affected women and girls.

72. UN-Women’s Second Chance Education programme, an innovative public-private partnership piloted in six countries, supported 90,000 crisis-affected women through 69 learning-hubs using a “learn-to-earn” approach. 10,000 nurses gained skills on COVID-19 prevention and treatment and are now employed. In 2021, the programme mobilized 34 percent of its financing through co-financing with the private sector, government and country-level UN organizations.

73. UN-Women seeks to prevent and mitigate disaster and climate risks by empowering women as leaders in disaster risk reduction efforts and building their resilience. The Entity provided technical support to gender-responsive disaster risk and post-disaster needs assessments to 44 countries between 2018–2021 (9 in 2021). UN-Women worked with 245 women’s organizations and disaster-resilience stakeholders in 47 countries to increase women’s access to gender-responsive early warning systems, finance, services, resilient infrastructure, livelihoods and businesses.

74. Through [the Women’s Resilience to Disasters programme](#) UN-Women increased women’s voice and agency in six disaster risk reduction and resilience processes and conferences, including the COP26, and contributed to gender mainstreaming in outcome documents, action plans and commitments of all five regional platforms and fora.

75. Despite global commitments and growing recognition of the centrality of gender equality in crisis prevention and response, gaps remain. Global funding for women and girls in crises is disproportionately low. By strengthening partnerships across and beyond the United Nations, including with local women’s organizations and through the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, launched at Generation Equality, UN-Women will further leverage its triple mandate and capacities across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to accelerate improved outcomes for at-risk and crisis-affected women and girls under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

Elevation of UN-Women’s coordination role in line with the new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)

UN-Women’s Strategic Plan 2022–2025 features a systemic outcome on United Nations system coordination that aims to drive coherent and systematic United Nations contributions to gender equality and women’s empowerment across the 2030 Agenda. In line with the 2020 QCPR, UN-Women will maximise its coordination role at all levels to drive system-wide accountability for results, support full implementation of the UN-SWAP 2.0 and UNCT-SWAP and expand application of financial tracking and allocation mechanisms combined with financial targets.

Building on its thematic expertise, UN-Women will lead and strengthen engagement in inter-agency coordination mechanisms addressing gender, governance and normative issues, such as the CEDAW Working Group and the task teams on temporary special measures and discriminatory laws. The Entity will serve as a secretariat for bodies such as the Security Council’s Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security and the Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action.

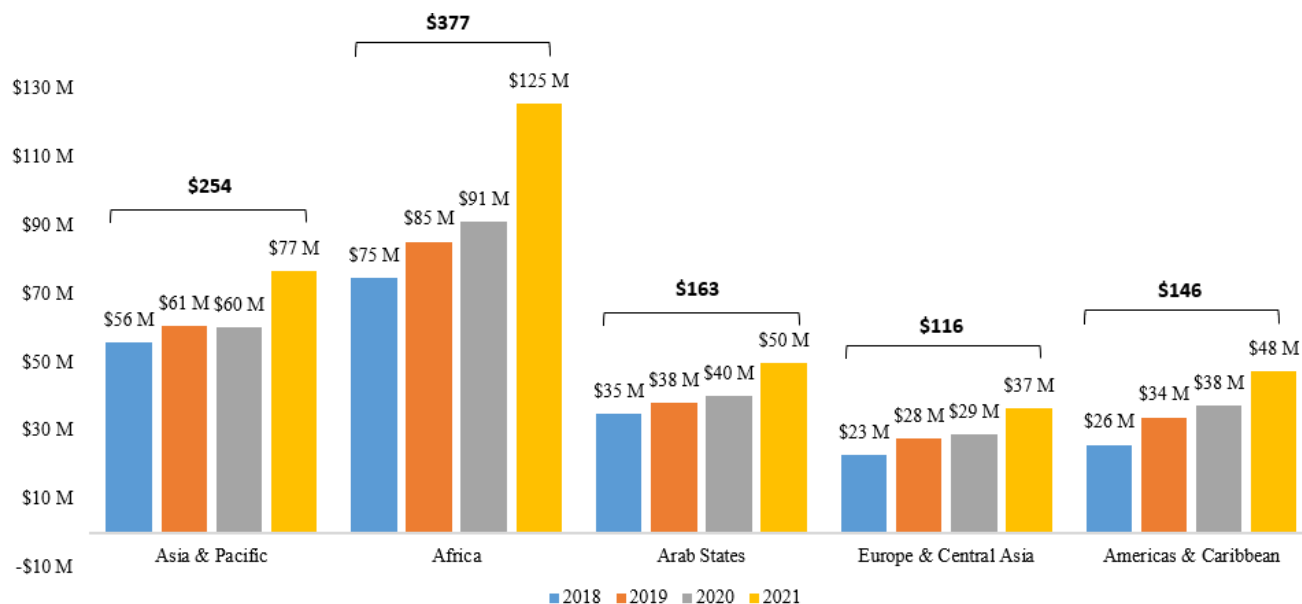
UN-Women will further strengthen coordination support to gender mainstreaming in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework processes. The Entity will extend this focus to humanitarian work and DRR and resilience to improve gender equality outcomes and advance gender equality norms and standards, leading efforts to strengthen accountability through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Accountability Framework and support to monitoring and reporting on system-wide indicators on peace and security. UN-Women will also advance harmonized and common standards on ending violence against women through support to the results framework for inter-agency work developed in 2021, spearheading joint initiatives, including through Generation Equality and the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence.

F. Programme expenditures and types of contributions

76. Total programme expenditures in 2021 reached \$431.8 million. Expenditures in field offices increased by 80 percent over the past five years. 31 percent of total programme expenditures were through joint programmes. Geographically, the highest programme expenditure was in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific (Figure 7).

77. Thematically, ending violence against women had the highest expenditure (\$127.0 million), followed by peace and security and humanitarian action (\$126.7 million)

Figure 7
Regional distribution



78. By function, capacity development and technical assistance continued to be provided in most countries, along with advocacy and social mobilization (each in 78 countries). United Nations system coordination took place in 77 countries.

IV. Assessment of organizational effectiveness and efficiency results

79. From 2018 to 2021, UN-Women invested in becoming a more efficient partner to effectively drive the agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity built on its UN coordination mandate to harness synergies and strengthen accountabilities across the United Nations system, expand partnerships, streamline and strengthen existing processes and systems, and improve governance and oversight mechanisms. In 2021, UN-Women reached a score of 87 (78 in 2018) from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), a testament to its growing maturity and commitment to transparency.

80. UN-Women continued to strengthen and standardise its country, regional and headquarters business models and programmatic interventions. This laid the groundwork for the business transformation approach in the Strategic Plan 2022–25, ensuring the Entity can adapt to rapidly changing external circumstances.

81. In 2021, UN-Women met targets for 78 percent of organizational efficiency and effectiveness indicators, and achieved good performance (within 10 percent of a target) on 76 percent of indicators.

G. Output 1: Enhanced coordination, coherence and accountability of the United Nations system for commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment

82. Since 2018, UN-Women's work in leading, coordinating and promoting accountability for work on gender equality in the United Nations system has

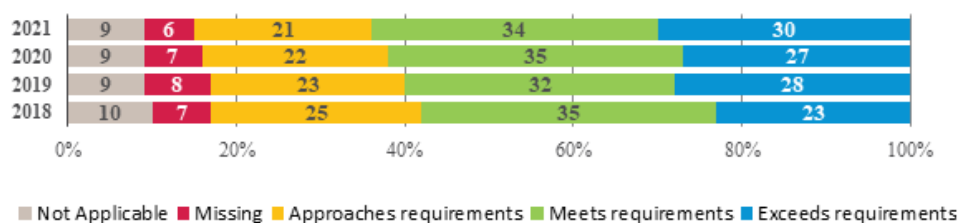
continuously strengthened. The overall average attainment rate under the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 for this output was 94 percent (88 percent in 2021).

83. UN-Women contributed to integrating gender perspectives across the three pillars of the United Nations through, inter alia, its participation in the Chief Executives Board for Coordination, the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, and as chair or co-chair of gender equality-focused coordination mechanisms at all levels. To strengthen its role at the country level, UN-Women supported the development and promulgation of Gender Theme Group Standards and Procedures and the [Guidance Note and Checklist for tackling gender-related barriers to equitable COVID-19 vaccine deployment](#) as the Chair of the Gender Working Group of the Global Action Plan on Healthy Lives and Well-being.

84. In 2021, 64 percent of all Cooperation Frameworks and remaining United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks featured gender equality results at outcome levels, rising to 70.4 percent for the 29 Cooperation Frameworks developed in 2021. Of 130 United Nations country teams, 113 implemented one or more joint programmes with a focus on SDG 5 on gender equality. By end 2021, UN-Women’s share of total expenditures from joint programmes was 31 percent, a record for the organization and a significant increase from 13 percent in 2018.

85. With UN-Women’s technical support and stewardship, the coverage and quality of UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP reporting has substantially strengthened since 2018, catalysing progress on gender mainstreaming. In 2021, a new record of 71 United Nations entities and 61 United Nations country teams reported against UN-SWAP 2.0 and UNCT-SWAP, respectively.

Figure 8
UN-SWAP 2.0 ratings for the United Nations system



86. UN-Women supported the expansion of gender equality marker in UMOJA, UN INFO and pooled funding mechanisms. The COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund drove 64 percent of funding allocations to gender equality projects by embedding the marker and a financial target for gender-related results. Even so, progress at entity level was slightly behind targets, with 39 percent of entities implementing gender equality markers and 32 percent establishing targets in 2021. UN-Women expanded support to humanitarian coordination mechanisms across crisis settings, reaching 41 countries in 2021, and continued leading efforts to strengthen accountability to gender commitments in humanitarian planning and implementation in over 30 crisis settings.

87. Aligned with the 2018 Global Strategy on Disability Inclusion, in 2021 UN-Women led inter-agency coordination and collaboration, including on joint programmes, to systematically support 45 United Nations country teams through knowledge generation and capacity development on the intersections between gender equality and disability.

88. UN-Women continued to lead and coordinate the system-wide network of Gender Focal Points for gender parity, strengthening the capacities of 120 United

Nations entities, departments and offices to implement the Secretary-General's System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, the Enabling Environment Guidelines and the Field-specific Guidelines.

89. Throughout 2018–2021, UN-Women leveraged United Nations repositioning to mainstream gender equality perspectives into system-wide processes and frameworks, providing advisory and coordination support on system-wide standards. In the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UN-Women will strengthen support to areas requiring attention, expanding efforts around United Nations system accountability, including in thematic areas.

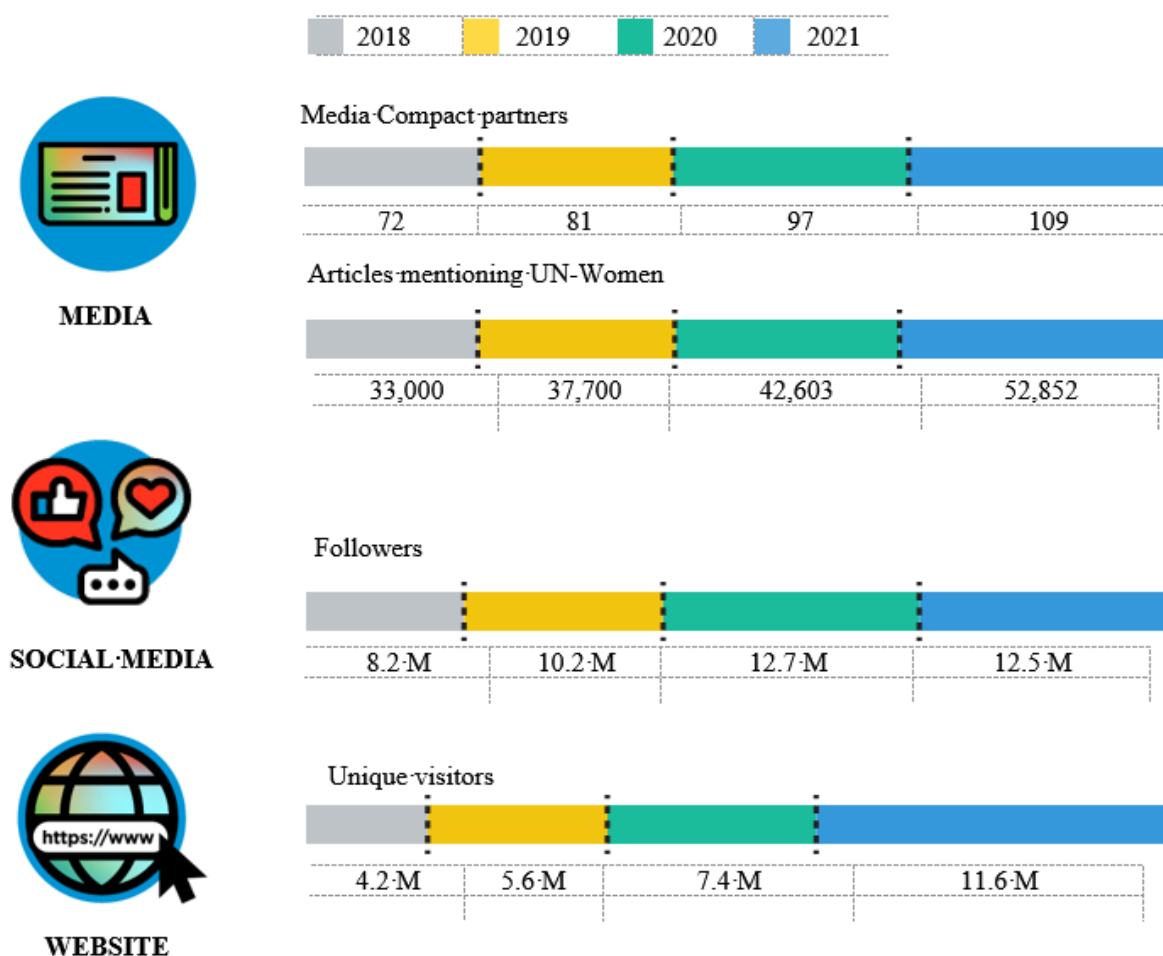
H. Output 2: Increased engagement of partners in support of UN-Women's mandate

90. In the last four years, UN-Women successfully expanded and leveraged partnerships with a wide range of actors, through advocacy, communications and resource mobilization, reaching a 131 percent overall attainment rate from 2018–2021 under this output (133 percent in 2021).

91. The Generation Equality Forum was the highest profile UN-Women initiative to mark Beijing+25. It catalysed ambitious policy, programme and advocacy commitments from governments, philanthropy, civil society, youth organizations, international organizations and the private sector, as well as USD 40 billion in financial commitments to accelerate progress in six critical action areas outlined in a Global Acceleration Plan launched at the Forum. Over 50,000 participants were engaged in the co-creation process and the Forum. By centralizing the voices of a variety of actors, including civil society and youth, in a model of shared decision-making, the Forum expanded multistakeholder support and accountability for gender equality for the next five years.

92. UN-Women continued strengthening partnerships with civil society, including women's rights organizations, civil society advisory groups, youth, faith actors and organizations working with men and boys for gender equality. Examples include the MenEngage Ubuntu Symposium, which collectively rethought "men and masculinities" work for gender justice. HeForShe reached 3,415,714 million supporters as of 2021.

Figure 9
Communications and advocacy



93. UN-Women leveraged a wide range of communications channels, exceeding its Strategic Plan targets. Building on partnerships, through the growing Media Compact, and investment in cutting-edge digital content and social media, UN-Women drove public and media awareness of diverse gender equality issues, including around COVID-19.

94. UN-Women worked with 154 corporate partners globally, demonstrating added value in engaging the private sector to positively impact the lives of women and girls. Members of the Unstereotype Alliance, representing 217 companies worldwide with half a trillion dollars in global advertising yearly, have consistently promoted progressive and gender-equal social norms.

95. UN-Women National Committees continued to grow in strength, raising USD 21.9 million from 2018–2021 (USD 4.9 million in 2021). They were supported by improved planning and reporting frameworks, dedicated emergency campaign materials and periodic UN-Women investments in fundraising growth.

96. In 2021, despite COVID-19-related challenges, UN-Women's funding partners demonstrated their confidence in the organisation as a reliable custodian of their resources. The Entity received USD 556.3 million in contributions, exceeding \$500 million for the third year in a row. Regular resources remained at approximately the same level as the record-setting level of 2020, despite a challenging resource

environment. The ratio of regular to other resources was 30 percent, meeting the Funding Compact threshold.

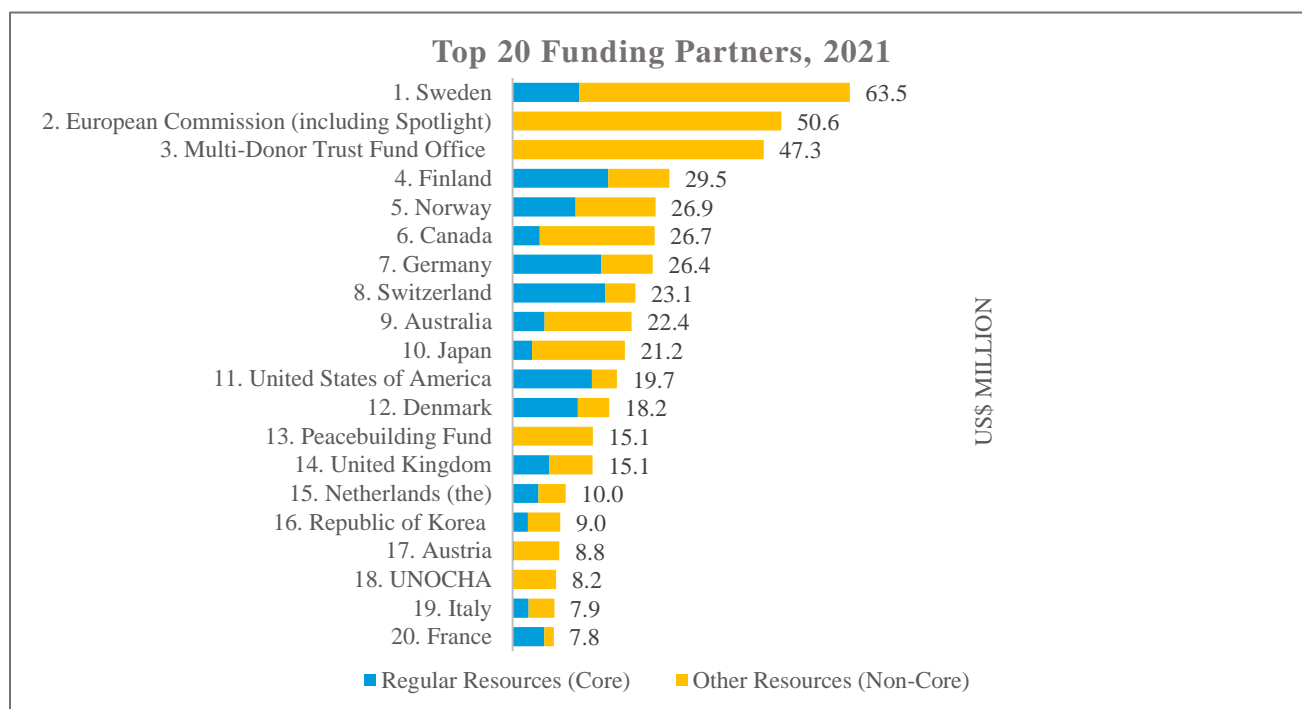
97. UN-Women continues to advance gender equality in major financing decision-making spaces, including engagement with International Financial Institutions, to integrate and implement a gender lens to finance and funding. UN-Women convened Ministers of Finance, Development and Gender Equality along with International Financial Institutions to highlight best practices and share experiences on gender-responsive stimulus packages. Additionally, the Entity finalized Memoranda of Understanding with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Asian Development Bank and highlighted gender-responsive COVID-recovery policies through high-level engagement during the Financing for Development Forum.

98. Collaborations such as the Generation Equality Forum demonstrated the untapped potential of multistakeholder partnerships to leverage political commitment and resources in support of greater focus and collective results for gender equality. UN-Women will proactively identify more and bigger opportunities for collective action, including under the Generation Equality banner. Going forward, the Entity will also ensure that partnership initiatives are reviewed and developed with a focus on solid design and evaluability.

Figure 10
UN-Women Revenue, 2018–2021



2021 compared to 2020 | +1% Voluntary contributions | -0.4% Regular resources | +2% Other resources



* Revenue recognition per Management Accounts Reporting (as per Revenue Management Policy)

179

Total funding partners

81

Member States contributed to
UN-Women

74

Member States contributed to regular
resources

I. Output 3: High-quality programmes through knowledge, innovation, results-based management and evaluation

99. In 2018–2021, UN-Women pursued better results through designing high-quality interventions, embedding innovation and results-based management, and drawing on systematic generation and use of data, evidence and knowledge. The average attainment rate for this output across the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 was 128 percent (128 percent in 2021).

100. UN-Women supported gender equality advances through cutting-edge, evidence-based knowledge products and policy guidance at the global, regional and country levels. Fifteen new Country Gender Equality Profiles were developed by country offices in 2021 (37 since 2018) to inform Common Country Analyses and Cooperation Frameworks.

101. Continued implementation of UN-Women's first corporate Knowledge Management Strategy strengthened knowledge sharing across the organization, with a significant increase in active communities of practice from 14 in 2017 to 132 by 2021.

102. From 2018–2021, the UN-Women Training Centre increased the knowledge and capacities of 354,868 participants globally (106,762 in 2021 alone) through its eLearning Campus and associated platforms.

103. UN-Women continued to strengthen its capacity in results-based management, reaching 83 percent of programme staff through its dedicated e-learning course. Among annual reports, 71 percent met quality standards, slightly below the target of

74 percent by 2021., The introduction of biennial workplans in December 2021 initiated a comprehensive overhaul of planning processes and instruments, expected to further strengthen the results culture across the organisation.

104. Evaluation key performance indicators show consistent progress. The implementation rate of planned evaluations reached 97 percent in 2021. Evaluation quality assessments gave 98 percent of UN-Women's 2021 evaluation reports an overall rating of "very good" or "good", exceeding the 2021 target.

105. Over the last four years, UN-Women has played an important role as a thought leader on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity intends to further strengthen its work on data and knowledge as part of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, based on a comprehensive evidence and knowledge strategy. Lessons learned during the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 showed the need for increased standardization, and improved and streamlined policies, procedures and guidance across the Strategic Plan programmes and project life cycles. These and other gaps will be addressed under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 through revised internal policies, procedures and integrated systems.

J. Output 4: Improved management of financial and human resources in pursuit of results

106. Through 2018–2021, UN-Women strengthened its business processes, corporate systems, risk management practices and personnel capacity, leveraging partnerships within the United Nations system for better efficiency and effectiveness. The average attainment rate for this output from 2018–2021 was 98 percent (98 percent in 2021).

107. In 2021, the Entity continued implementation of the new enterprise resource management system, Quantum, as part of a consortium with UNDP. UN-Women continued demonstrating increased absorptive capacities for programme and project implementation, exceeding its 2021 target for other resources.

108. From 2018–2021, UN-Women prioritized the streamlining of human resources processes by developing a new performance management system, linking individual goals to Strategic Plan results and developing a new e-recruitment solution. Key initiatives included leadership dialogue sessions, virtual deployments, and the Peg Snyder and Team Excellence Awards to recognize high performance. Conditions of service were enhanced, including by extending parental leave and introducing stipends for interns.

109. To guarantee effective prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, UN-Women implemented all recommendations of the independent, survivor-centred review of its policies and procedures to tackle sexual misconduct and put in place a strong protection framework operationalized across all levels of the organization.

110. UN-Women reinforced partnerships with other United Nations entities on human resources management, inter alia, by launching the Young Women Leaders Programme in collaboration with United Nations Volunteers in 2021, using the UNICEF learning management system and providing online United Nations System Staff College leadership courses for all personnel.

111. UN-Women responded swiftly to the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting rapid response procurement and fast-track recruitment procedures, bolstering mental health and well-being support for all personnel and providing guidance on navigating the "new normal" and the future of work.

112. UN-Women received its tenth consecutive unqualified audit opinion on its financial statements from the United Nations Board of Auditors and implemented all prior years' external audit recommendations, a significant achievement. Management also made progress in implementing internal audit recommendations, although several corporate recommendations remain long outstanding and are being pursued.

113. From 2018 to 2021, UN-Women's Global Financial Management Network expanded, ensuring cohesive delivery and oversight of financial services and accounting through knowledge sharing, co-created solutions, cross-regional collaboration, field office capacity building, service delivery and streamlining and efficiency initiatives. Among other achievements, 85 percent of donor reports were submitted on time in 2021, a significant increase from 68 percent in 2018.

114. The Entity continued to strengthen risk management using bottom-up operational risk assessments led by risk owners and top-down assessments led by the Risk Management Committee. Consequently, the organization maintained a compliance rate of 97 percent of risk units meeting enterprise risk management requirements. While certain indicators continue to be affected by COVID-19, overall performance remains strong due to robust business continuity plans and risk mitigation actions.

V. Looking forward to the new Strategic Plan 2022–2025

115. Amid multiple and intensifying development challenges, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic that disproportionately affected women and girls, UN-Women developed a Strategic Plan 2022–2025 that lays out an urgent, evidence-based and ambitious vision to accelerate progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and the full enjoyment of their rights.

116. Under the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UN-Women will optimise contributions to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contribute results to an increased number of SDG indicators than under the Strategic Plan 2018–2021).

117. Building on lessons from the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 elevates UN-Women's four thematic focus areas to the impact level: governance and participation in public life; economic empowerment; ending violence against women and girls; and women, peace and security, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction. In recognition of the interconnected nature of the Entity's development results, seven systemic, cross-thematic outcomes will galvanise progress towards realising higher-level results and seek to secure lasting and sustainable change by tackling the root causes of gender inequality.

118. Through these systemic outcomes, the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 places increased emphasis on promoting positive social norms and women's voice, leadership and agency, and aims to better link the Entity's global normative and intergovernmental work with support to countries to translate these norms and standards into legislative and implementation frameworks. Work on financing for gender equality and gender statistics and knowledge will be ramped up. In line with recommendations from a corporate evaluation on UN-Women's Flagship Programme Initiatives, evidence-based Theories of Change and Action will be used to develop Signature Interventions and drive results at scale. Further, in line with the 2020 QCPR, the plan elevates efforts to lead, coordinate and promote the accountability of the UN system for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

119. Importantly, building on the success of the Generation Equality Forum, UN-Women is ensuring the integration of Action Coalition commitments with the Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

120. To support United Nations development system reforms, the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 includes an unprecedented number of common and complementary indicators, designed in close collaboration with other United Nations partners, that will drive system-wide coherence and joint work towards the achievement of global goals.

121. The organizational effectiveness and efficiency framework has been revisited and strengthened to drive a UN-Women 2.0 through business transformation, a culture of accountability and stronger performance management. A balanced scorecard methodology ensures alignment as well as the cascading of results from external reporting to organizational performance management.

VI. Elements for a draft decision

The Executive Board may wish to:

(a) Take note of the report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and commend UN-Women on its strong performance to date;

(b) Recognize UN-Women’s contribution and its focused engagement within the United Nations development system to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment feature centrally in the sustainable development agenda, including in Cooperation Frameworks;

(c) Take note with concern of the funding gap in regular resources, and encourage all countries in a position to do so to increase voluntary contributions for the full and effective implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025, and encourage strengthened partnerships in this regard;

(d) Encourage UN-Women to continue its strong performance in meeting its targets in line with the results framework of the Strategic Plan 2022–2025 and applicable guidance of the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, and request UN-Women, while taking into account its own priorities, to harmonize, where appropriate, its indicators with other United Nations entities, with a focus on all results levels, and maximize the use of common results indicators;

(e) Decide to transmit the report to the Economic and Social Council.
