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Gender equality at UNDP

**Annual report of the Administrator on the implementation of the
UNDP gender equality strategy in 2022**

Summary

This report highlights the first year of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2022-2025, which saw rapid progress despite a moment of crisis and backlash. The strategy is shaping an organization that is prepared to drive results on gender equality globally. The first steps have triggered new ways of working through more aware and committed leadership and concrete action plans in 85 country offices. Engagement with diverse partners is flourishing, including feminist and women's movements in 108 country offices.

In line with the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, the strategy has begun ushering in structural shifts in development that are fundamental to achieving gender equality at scale. UNDP has put gender equality at the heart of 100 climate action plans and 15 integrated national financing frameworks. It is guiding expanded efforts to close gaps in social protection and care systems, including through the innovative use of digital technology. More than 88,000 civil servants learned to develop gender-responsive public policies during the year. Programmes also continued to respond to pressing immediate needs, delivering essential services to nearly 72 million women and bolstering life-saving responses to gender-based violence in more than 90 countries.

The Executive Board may wish to take note of this report.



I. Introduction

A. A year of lost ground but restorative ambition

1. Women's rights are losing ground everywhere. The current moment is one of violent conflict, mounting military expenditures and coups, mass displacement and hunger. Polarization has spurred a strong backlash against the past advances women have made. Overlapping crises, including climate change and deepening inequalities, have put all socioeconomic and planetary systems on alert. Such times have tested UNDP but also reinforced its commitment to meet immediate human development and human rights concerns and trigger structural shifts that lead to inclusive and sustainable development, as encapsulated in the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. In 2022, UNDP transitioned to a new Strategic Plan and a new gender equality strategy, both spanning the period 2022 to 2025. They set high levels of ambition in meeting escalating demands, towards unwinding complex crises and restoring the path to the Goals. The gender equality strategy builds on the understanding that gender equality is among the most important contributions to human and sustainable development that UNDP as an organization can make.

3. The strategy maps directions under each of the six UNDP signature solutions. It aims for structural changes while acknowledging that these do not happen overnight or through UNDP efforts alone. It also presents new ways of working, such as integrated approaches, enhanced investments in data and analysis, solutions to transform social norms and re-envisioned partnerships.

4. Even as it transitioned into its new gender equality strategy in 2022, UNDP did not wait to help countries begin making the systemic shifts that equality requires. It remained committed to gender-responsive social protection but also took steps towards more gender-equal economies through the provision of care systems. It put gender equality at the heart of 100 national climate action plans while embarking on an ambitious strategy to elevate gender equality in its energy portfolio.

5. UNDP boosted support for expanding space for women's civil society organizations and scaled-up actions to build capacities among public institutions to advance gender equality through policies, laws and measures to reverse negative social norms. Notable strides to harness technology comprised using artificial intelligence to monitor disinformation and hate speech and combat online misogyny.

B. Highlights of 2022: rapid implementation begins

6. **The year 2022 was one of transition.** It marked the debut of the first UNDP gender equality strategy to be based on a widely consultative, co-creative process involving 122 country offices and more than 1,000 people within UNDP and beyond. As a result, ownership of the strategy is unprecedented; 99 country offices have already developed or aligned their own gender equality strategies or action plans with the corporate strategy. New elements, such as care work, are more prominent in country office plans, alongside more traditional priorities such as women's political participation and ending gender-based violence.

7. **UNDP is engaging more proactively with civil society and women's organizations.** It tracked this dimension for the first time in 2022, with 108 country offices reporting that they are partnering with women's or feminist organizations, mainly to advocate for women's rights and address gender-based violence. This is an important step that needs to be followed by deeper analysis of the quality of relationships and the modes of engagement. The joint European Union/United Nations Spotlight initiative has proved a remarkable accelerator of civil society engagement and offers important lessons, such as the value of integrating civil society partners in reference groups and setting a funding quota for them.

8. UNDP offers unique capacities to draw on experiences across countries to inform evidence-based policymaking. The gender equality strategy calls for elaborating this role. In 2022, UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) are preparing to launch *Promising Practices for Gender Equality: A catalogue of practical solutions learned from the COVID-19 global response*. It offers a useful compilation of policy options for Governments to increase gender-responsiveness during crises. Greater integration of gender analysis in rapid assessments during the pandemic improved knowledge and capacities to respond quickly to other crises, including the war in Ukraine and devastating floods in Pakistan.

9. UNDP has moved from recovery responses to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to more structural work aimed at gender-equal economies. It has expanded investment in supporting extended social protection, including care systems. A transition to comprehensive care systems is gaining steam in Latin America through a UNDP partnership with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), International Labour Organization (ILO), UN-Women and others. In Colombia and Uruguay, an innovative georeferencing tool has identified care deficits to steer public policy solutions. In 2022, amid global fiscal constraints, UNDP continued working in 36 countries to mobilize finance for gender equality and in 15 countries on mainstreaming gender in integrated national financing frameworks. These exercises are helping to make public spending a lever in shifting economic structures towards full alignment with gender equality.

10. The UNDP Climate Promise met its goal of 100 countries integrating gender equality considerations in climate action plans. Further, with UNDP accelerating support for just, green energy transitions, aiming at universal access, 2022 has been a foundational year to create institutional capacities to integrate gender equality across its energy portfolio. The Sustainable Energy Hub will promote innovative policy dialogues on gender equality and energy, build capacities and develop gender-responsive energy policy guidance.

11. UNDP sustained a global drive to address and respond to gender-based violence. Deepening support reached women in more than 90 countries, including through the joint European Union/United Nations Spotlight initiative. In 28 countries, UNDP implemented 271 prevention initiatives tackling harmful social norms and gender-discriminatory roles and practices.

12. Investment in equipping UNDP leaders to drive deep-seated changes is paying off. In 2022, a group of resident representatives earned the Leadership Course for Gender Equality Certificate. It exposed them to cutting-edge thinking on gender equality and promoted peer learning. Concrete follow-up actions included increased resource allocations for gender equality, expanded partnerships with women's organizations and the opening of internal safe spaces for staff to question and shift values and beliefs reinforcing discriminatory norms.

II. UNDP priorities

13. In 2022, guided by the gender equality strategy, UNDP pursued gender mainstreaming across the first five signature solutions of its Strategic Plan and stand-alone interventions under the sixth signature solution. This section reports progress on each signature solution, highlighting key accelerators and priorities.

Signature solution 1: Poverty and inequality

14. With a global trend towards capital accumulation and concentration, ending poverty requires reconfiguring economic power relations. Through its gender equality strategy, UNDP has expanded its focus on structural reforms that can accelerate progress on gender equality, particularly through fiscal policies, and on universal and gender-responsive social protection and

care services. It continued to improve women's access to basic services and financial and non-financial assets.

15. Universal and gender-responsive social protection and care services. An unprecedented cost-of-living crisis and worsening poverty and vulnerability propelled new urgency around investing in extended social protection. UNDP backed evidence-based pilots, legal revisions, governance mechanisms and capacity development for public officials in 49 countries. In Cambodia, UNDP tested a graduation-based social protection model involving cash, productive assets and training for national expansion.

16. UNDP helped 19 countries to begin developing comprehensive care systems, including Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Peru. In the Dominican Republic, UNDP, ILO, UN-Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported a national care policy that has become a role model for the Caribbean. With the Secretary-General defining the care economy as a core priority for the United Nations, UNDP will continue expanding support for Governments to assess capacities and infrastructure and identify finance for comprehensive systems, in line with a recent evaluation. A multidimensional poverty index, expected to launch in 2023 in Latin America and the Caribbean, will include a focus on women. It will support more targeted social protection to reach the most vulnerable.

Box 1. A georeferencing tool matches care demand and supply in Latin America

The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean developed the Care Georeferencing Tool and implemented it in Colombia and Uruguay in 2022. It is currently being applied in the Dominican Republic and Peru. In Colombia, UNDP collaboration with ECLAC supported the municipality of Bogota to build a district care system.

The tool combines traditional gender and urban analysis with data mining to generate real-time information about care supply and needs in a given area, including for children, persons with disabilities and the elderly. With care mapping a fundamental step in designing comprehensive care systems, ECLAC, ILO, UNDP and UN-Women have collaborated to build capacities among 120 government officials to deploy the tool.

Source: UNDP. 2022. Mapping Care: Innovative tools for georeferencing care supply and demand in Latin America and the Caribbean. <https://www.undp.org/latin-america/publications/mapping-care-innovative-tools-georeferencing-care-supply-and-demand-latin-america-and-caribbean#>

17. Fiscal policies that work for gender equality. Gender-equal economies cannot be achieved if tax systems and budgets reinforce social biases, gender roles and intrahousehold power relations. In 2022, UNDP worked with 36 countries on financing gender equality through gender-responsive budgeting, blended finance, investor maps and integrated national financing frameworks. Among 15 new financing frameworks in 2022, 86 per cent prioritized gender equality through a range of strategies, such as measures to unlock gender-responsive private capital, gender-responsive budgeting, public and private partnerships and investments, climate budgeting, taxation and debt instruments. The process of developing gender-responsive financing frameworks opened new discussions with ministries of finance and economy, heightening awareness of the imperative of financing gender equality.

18. In 2022, UNDP initiated work on gender equality and taxation with finance ministries in 10 countries, working towards developing methodologies, establishing partnerships and deepening technical expertise. Support for gender-responsive budgets in 18 countries drew on partnerships with UN-Women in many of them. In Mozambique, UNDP assisted the parliament to improve legislative oversight of public expenditures and gender-sensitive policies, leading the Ministry of Finance to develop guidelines for gender-responsive budgeting in 2023.

19. Expanded access to essential services, digital and other assets and finance. With UNDP support, 71.5 million women accessed essential services in 2022, up from 69 million in 2021. Fourteen million women obtained financial services, up from 9.5 million in 2021. Through the Rising Djibouti initiative, UNDP supported a national strategy for financial inclusion and developed a local programme for women to access finance while learning to read and write.

Signature solution 2: Governance

20. In 2022, mistrust and a sense of injustice grew as the quality of democracy eroded. Pushback against gender equality became pronounced, adding to existing legal and social gender discrimination, with increased attacks against women human rights defenders. Under its gender equality strategy, UNDP intensified efforts to make governance more responsive, inclusive and accountable in the face of rapidly changing risks, working closely with national and local institutions and civil society.

21. **Women's collective mobilization, voice and influence.** Its initial tracking of its engagement with women's and feminist organizations in 2022 established an important baseline for UNDP to expand and deepen these relationships. Eighty-three per cent of country offices partnered with women's or feminist organizations, mainly to advocate for women's rights and address gender-based violence. Forty country offices engaged with women's organizations in movement-building and the expansion of civic space, primarily on political participation and leadership in social dialogues and conflict resolution.

22. In Benin, UNDP supported networks of women leaders and civil society to lobby for revisions in the national Constitution to improve the representation of women in politics. As a result, women's share of seats on electoral lists rose to 28 per cent from 10 per cent in 2019. In Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger, UNDP partnered with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding and the Economic Community of West African States to support cross-generational coalitions of women community leaders who are emerging as powerful advocates for peace and responsive governance.

23. **Towards gender-responsive States.** Through the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions, UNDP plays an influential role in promoting gender-responsive public policies and services. In 2022, the programme built a strong base of 63 public institutions implementing the seal, up from 27 in 2021, and by strategically prioritizing ministries of economy and environment as they are traditionally male dominated. The seal helps policymakers craft a new generation of policies and services with in-built capacities to diminish discriminatory norms (see box 2).

Box 2. Public servants prepare to deliver more gender-responsive policies

By December 2022, through the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions, more than 88,000 public servants (43,000 female and 45,000 male) had learned to design and many of them have delivered gender-responsive public policies. They represented 63 public institutions and 18 countries in four regions.

After the Ministry of Transport in Colombia engaged with women's civil society organizations to formulate its transport policy, which established quotas for women to access income opportunities, over 650 women gained jobs in public transport as well as 4G infrastructure contracts. The Ministry has also implemented codes of conduct for the eradication of sexual harassment in all municipal and regional transport systems.

The Development Bank of Rwanda has developed affordable credit services for women. Financed projects are expected to create 7,476 permanent and 11,128 temporary jobs for women.

Sources: UNDP 2022, Gender Seal for Public Institutions internal tracking.

24. **Achieving gender justice to realize rights.** In 2022, UNDP supported almost 32 million women in 52 countries to access justice. Women gained greater inclusion in the judiciary in Algeria, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. With gender justice at the core of its efforts to achieve peace, UNDP collaborated with UN-Women to launch the Gender Justice Platform, which links 20 partners, including the International Development Law Organization, [Pathfinders](#) and the International Center for Transitional Justice. Pooling diverse expertise, they issued a policy report on women's meaningful participation in transitional justice and collaborated to support the Governments of the Central African Republic, Mali and South Sudan to address discrimination in legal frameworks and promote gender-sensitive transitional justice.

25. As a co-lead of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, UNDP worked with its partners in Ukraine to closely coordinate with the newly established Conflict-related Sexual Violence Unit within the Office of the Prosecutor General. Together, they identified the specialized skills and resources required to investigate and prosecute sexual crimes, which resulted in tailored capacity-building for investigators and prosecutors.

Signature solution 3: Resilience

26. Crises and shocks are never gender neutral. Through its new gender equality strategy, UNDP continued to ensure that disaster risk reduction and management are gender-responsive. It improved employment and livelihood opportunities for women to build resilience and collaborated with women's rights organizations to increase women's leadership and participation in peace and recovery.

27. **Fully gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and management.** UNDP helped 17 countries to use sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis to inform recovery plans attuned to women's needs. Thirteen countries, including Guyana and Viet Nam, developed gender-responsive early warning systems. As an example of integrating disaster risk reduction and the prevention of gender-based violence, UNDP worked with the International Red Cross to build housing for women that lowered risks of violence after devastating floods in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa.

28. **Resilient economic recovery to advance gender equality.** Recovery and stabilization offer scope to reset structures that perpetuate discrimination and reduce negative social norms. The UNDP gender and crisis facility is supporting eight countries to develop economic recovery programmes based on gender analyses and structural and social norms transformation. Direct support to women caught in economic crises in Afghanistan, Haiti, Myanmar, Republic of Moldova, Somalia, South Sudan and Ukraine, extended life-saving jobs and services. Altogether, through UNDP support, 5.4 million women gained jobs and improved livelihoods in 39 countries in crisis or post-crisis settings in 2022, an increase from 4.8 million women in 2021.

Signature solution 4: Environment

29. The gender equality strategy aims to bring gender equality to the heart of environmental and climate action, since gender gaps in these areas remain among the most stubborn obstacles to sustainable development. In 2022, national consultations for Stockholm+50¹ took up this emphasis. UNDP supported dialogues in 56 countries convening over 50,000 people. The process ignited a push for integrating inclusive gender policies in environmental governance and ensuring women's meaningful participation across environmental decision-making.

30. **Gender-responsive management of natural resources.** To protect and better manage ecosystems and biodiversity, UNDP supported women's leadership in 96 countries, including

¹ International event marking the fiftieth anniversary of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm on 2 and 3 June 2022.

through quotas for women in local land and water management committees. It helped 104 countries close gender gaps in accessing and controlling natural resources. In Cambodia, the Ministry of Environment took an innovative approach by establishing 223 women's savings groups that provide seed capital for small businesses to manage natural resources.

31. Collaborations with women's organizations in 22 countries boosted awareness and advocacy for nature-based solutions that rural and indigenous women value and use every day. These solutions reached the global stage when the annual Equator Prize was awarded to the Organización de Mujeres Indígenas Unidas por la Biodiversidad de Panamá. An indigenous, women-led organization, it builds capacity in biodiversity and traditional conservation techniques to protect jaguars and preserve indigenous territory and culture.

32. **Implementing gender equality commitments in climate action plans.** In 2022, the UNDP Climate Promise met its goal of 100 countries integrating gender equality considerations in nationally determined contributions. Seventy per cent of the latest nationally determined contributions refer to women or gender in sectoral sections like energy and agriculture, a jump from 15 per cent in the first round of the plans. Thirty-one recognize women's equal participation in decision-making. The Albanian nationally determined contributions promote gender equality in climate adaptation decision-making while the Guatemalan targets have at least 30 per cent of forests managed by women.

Box 3. Women are building ecosystem resilience and adapting to climate change

Partnering with the Government and with financing from the Global Environment Facility, UNDP is helping the Government of Ethiopia to build resilience by putting women at the centre of crop management and food security choices. Gender analyses in 12 districts identified gender gaps in natural resources management. Follow-on support assisted 176 self-help groups, with women making up 76 per cent of them, to form cooperatives, create small businesses and secure financial support.

Source: Nature, climate and environment portfolio-level gender results 2022.

33. **Climate finance for gender equality.** While UNDP helped 140 countries in 2022 to invest and align finance with environmental and climate goals, leveraging climate financing for gender equality remains an emerging area of work. In Asia and the Pacific, UNDP began developing it by identifying ways to make climate finance more socially inclusive and gender-responsive. In Thailand, UNDP and the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning are developing mechanisms to systematically integrate gender and social analysis in the climate change budget formulation, at the national and local levels.

Signature solution 5: Energy

34. UNDP has over two decades of experience in bringing sustainable energy solutions to unconnected communities around the world. Under its gender equality strategy, it is developing new expertise and capacities to integrate gender in work on energy infrastructure and policy, at a moment of massive new investment and potential for making energy both universally accessible and green.

35. **Energy access to unleash women's economic empowerment.** UNDP supported energy access for 1.6 million women in 37 countries in 2022, up from 27 countries in 2021, opening options for jobs and livelihoods. New work began on integrating gender equality into national energy plans and policies, and UNDP identified 13 countries with significant opportunities to scale up off-grid electrification and deliver immediate benefits to women through clean cooking and productive uses of energy for female-led enterprises.

36. **Energy investments to reduce time poverty.** In 2022, UNDP supported the Governments of Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Rwanda to provide energy-efficient cooking stoves that reduce deforestation, pollution and women’s time poverty. Based on a recent evaluation, UNDP will advance efforts to assess how gender norms influence decision-making around the use of and access to energy technologies.

37. **A global energy hub that galvanizes new knowledge.** With the launch of its Sustainable Energy Hub in 2022, UNDP ramped up knowledge and capacities to close gender gaps, working across its energy portfolio.

Signature solution 6: Gender equality

38. The gender equality strategy elaborates the implementation of signature solution 6. It targets key accelerators for gender equality, namely the elimination of market segregation, women’s political representation, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, responding to the backlash against gender equality and generating data to inform policy change. While signature solution 6 calls for stand-alone interventions on gender equality and women’s empowerment at each level of the organization, it is designed for implementation across all of the other five signature solutions.

39. **Inclusive economies and the economic empowerment of women.** The uneven losses in women’s employment during the COVID-19 pandemic have not yet been reversed, with improvements mostly in informal jobs. To open more opportunities for women in labour markets, UNDP assisted 25 countries to reduce gender-based discrimination and segregation, such as by implementing measures to boost entrepreneurship and employment in non-traditional sectors. In Armenia, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economy to cofinance a national platform for the economic empowerment of women. Some challenges to programming on women’s economic empowerment arose in four country offices, including in Afghanistan, which faced a combination of political instability and the reassignment of funds to emergency responses.

40. UNDP supported 16 countries to expand women’s access to and control over ownership of land and other property in 2022. In Sri Lanka, this resulted in the passage of a bill mandating gender equality in land inheritance.

41. The gender equality strategy for the first time prioritizes closing the gender digital divide to achieve inclusive economies. For example, in 2022, UNDP mentored women leading digital social enterprises through [Four Years From Now, the start-up platform of the global mobile operators’ association GSMA](#), and continued promoting access to technology skills and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education through [the STEM4All digital platform](#) in Europe and Central Asia. UNDP helped expand access to digital technologies, digital finance and digital value chains for women entrepreneurs and women-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in 22 countries. The Government of Belize, for example, piloted digital connect centres to reach young, rural women.

42. **Equal power and representation.** Amid multiple threats to governance systems, UNDP continued to advance inclusive political processes, helping 38 countries to implement 234 measures to increase women’s leadership and equal participation in public and private institutions in 2022. Since 2017, women’s share of registered voters has risen to 50 per cent in 40 countries with UNDP electoral assistance. Women in public offices have gained capacities through women’s networks, caucuses and parliamentary committees. Temporary special measures, including quotas, levelled the playing field in 2022 in Armenia, Georgia, Côte d’Ivoire, Lesotho, Mongolia, Somalia and Zimbabwe. In Armenia, a 30 per cent quota was applied for the second time, resulting in women gaining 35.5 per cent of seats in the National Assembly and 30 per cent of those on local councils.

43. Recognizing the growing threat to women's political participation posed by cyberviolence, UNDP worked with parliaments to ensure that regulatory frameworks adequately address hateful, violent, misogynist speech. In Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and six Pacific Island developing States, UNDP helped to open dialogues among parliamentarians, civil society and media to galvanize broader awareness and action to counter hate speech and disinformation against women leaders.

44. **Women's leadership and full participation in peace and recovery.** With attacks against women human rights defenders rising in crisis and conflict settings in 2022, UNDP responded to the call of the Secretary-General in his annual report on women, peace and security (S/2022/740) to provide consistent, visible and explicit political support for activists as a key factor in preventing attacks. UNDP exceeded its target to advance women's leadership and equal participation in decision-making in mediation, reconciliation and peacebuilding mechanisms, establishing 34 measures in 22 countries, up from 16 countries in 2021. In the United Republic of Tanzania, together with the Global Peace Foundation, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Center for Youth Dialogue, a local youth organization, UNDP engaged more than 1,100 women to promote community cohesion through localized peacebuilding activities, neighbourhood watch groups and training on preventing violent extremism. In Burundi, women led 37 dialogues and mediation platforms towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

45. In crisis contexts, UNDP helps countries to maintain development gains, including in the world's most acute crises. In Afghanistan, UNDP, through the ABADEI programme, has sustained the economic security of 34,000 entrepreneurs, 80 per cent of whom are women. While much more must be done, they have gained grants and skills to start and sustain small businesses essential to their survival. In Ukraine, amid a terrorizing wave of conflict-related sexual violence, UNDP acted quickly together with partners to help the Government aid survivors and bolster rights-based legal protections.

Box 4. Promotion of tolerance and dialogue by expanding women's networks

Through UNDP support for expanding women's religious networks in Somalia, women's voices are heard on peace and security and in dialogues to debunk violent religious narratives. A network of 198 mostly female religious leaders in 16 locations promotes a peaceful message of Islam, building on their traditional role as trusted faith-based peacebuilders within their communities. In 2022, the network identified 145 grievance cases resulting from extremism and successfully addressed 115 of them.

Source: Arab States Regional Gender Adviser and Somalia country office.

46. **Preventing and responding to gender-based violence.** UNDP has deepened its support to end gender-based violence in more than 90 countries, including through the Spotlight initiative. In Uganda, UNDP and its Spotlight partners strengthened the capacities of 80 government and civil society organizations to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and supported about 5,000 gender-based violence survivors in accessing legal aid and livelihoods. In the Central African Republic, as an integral part of scaled-up efforts to promote peace and reconciliation, UNDP increased the number of people receiving direct legal and judicial assistance from over 23,000 in 2021 to nearly 26,000 in 2022, 87 per cent of whom were women survivors of gender-based violence.

47. An innovative four-year global project funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea gathered evidence on the positive effects of addressing gender-based violence on livelihoods, the environment and local governance. Through seven pilots in Bhutan, Indonesia, Iraq, Lebanon, Peru, Republic of Moldova and Uganda, UNDP and its partners demonstrated that integrating dedicated activities around gender-based violence into other programmes improved the retention rates of female participants by 40 per cent; contributed to social norms change with up to 90 per cent of participants reporting more gender-equitable attitudes; and strengthened community

resilience by ensuring that ending gender-based violence is prioritized and resourced by local governments. UNDP will use this evidence to integrate gender-based violence to other programmes on a larger scale. Understanding and shifting social norms, power relations and behaviours that fuel violence is decisive in preventing and reducing gender-based violence. In Samoa, UNDP partnered with the National Human Rights Institution in supporting traditional leaders and village women to shift their perspectives and become champions of ending gender-based violence.

48. Since gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence raise the risk of acquiring HIV, UNDP supports rights-based solutions aimed at ending violence and improving access to HIV and other health services. HIV behaviour change communication reached 7.2 million women in 2022, up from 4.4 million in 2021. In Kazakhstan, UNDP supported the establishment of 30 platforms to engage civil society organizations providing services to people living with HIV, and trained professionals on HIV prevention and addressing gender-based violence.

49. **Reversing the backlash against gender equality.** The current gender equality strategy for the first time seeks to understand and respond to the backlash through research, new tools and sharper measurements. Using artificial intelligence, UNDP piloted social media monitoring tools to track hate speech in Colombia, Libya, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Uruguay, and to develop prevention and response programmes around hate speech, gender-based violence and conflict prevention. In Montenegro, 50,000 public servants are slated for training on gender-based hate speech, sexism and misogyny that was shaped by the growing body of UNDP knowledge on the issue.

50. **Changing negative social norms.** Since social norms influence all political, social and economic structures, UNDP aims to develop better understanding of gender norms and power relations to inform policymaking. The Human Development Report Office prepared the second edition of the Gender Social Norms Index for launching in 2023. In the Arab States region, UNDP developed the “systems, power and gender” framework to better analyse gender social norms and power relations. Initiatives to prevent gender-based violence by addressing harmful social norms and gender-discriminatory roles and practices included work in Tajikistan to strengthen journalists’ capacities to report on sexual and gender-based violence.

51. **Better data and analysis for policymaking.** To capitalize on learning from the COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker, UNDP and UN-Women issued *Government responses to COVID-19: Lessons on gender equality for a world in turmoil*. As part of the Observatory for Gender Equality initiative, in partnership with the Government of the Republic of Korea, a second report, *Promising Practices for Gender Equality: A catalogue of practical solutions learned from the COVID-19 response*, is scheduled for launch in 2023. It provides a suite of policy options for Governments to increase the gender-responsiveness of policies and build resilience to future shocks. In 2022, 38 countries worked on data and research to inform policymaking by developing socioeconomic assessments, strengthening national statistical systems and monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP, partnering with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, UNFPA and UN-Women, worked with 17 countries in the Arab States region to assess gender equality and discrimination in the law across six areas and 74 indicators derived from Goal 5.

Box 5. Africa Care Index: better data to reverse unequal distribution of care work in Africa

In 2022, UNDP and the African Women's Development and Communication Network, known as FEMNET, developed the first regional Africa Care Index to monitor the evolution of care systems. The index evaluates countries' performances in recognizing, supporting and redistributing care work, based on 10 metrics. These include maternity and parental leave, childcare, care for the elderly, care for people living with disabilities, food production and domestic worker protection.

Extremely low scores on the index underline that political commitment to the care economy is long overdue. Only six countries attained more than 5 points out of 30: Burkina Faso (7.25); Ethiopia (6.3); Zimbabwe (5.95); South Africa (5.7); Kenya (5.65); and Ghana (5.5). The results underline how social recognition and state support for care work will be central to reversing its normalized, unequal distribution.

UNDP plans to develop a global tool for monitoring care systems by refining and expanding the Africa Care Economy Index. It is also exploring options to incorporate unpaid care in national accounting systems.

Source: UNDP. 2022. The Africa Care Economy Index. <https://www.undp.org/africa/publications/africa-care-economy-index>

III. Partnerships

52. In line with the gender equality strategy, UNDP in 2022 started to pursue new partnerships for gender equality and deepen existing ones to advance longer-term advocacy and policy goals.

53. **Coordination with the United Nations system.** UNDP continues to expand the use of the Gender Equality Score Card of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; 75 country offices implemented it in 2022. Forty-four UNDP country offices co-chaired an inter-agency gender theme group. UN-Women remains a steady partner of UNDP in 100 countries; 77 per cent of these collaborations involved at least one substantive joint project. The largest areas of collaboration remain advancing legal and policy reforms, women's political participation and economic empowerment.

54. Globally, UNDP continued to actively engage in the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Gender Equality Network, including by providing technical and financial support for drafting a United Nations-wide guidance note on intersectionality and the global roll-out of the Standards and Procedures for Gender Theme Groups.

55. **Expanded links with civil society.** Country offices are already pursuing more strategic partnerships with civil society. This is in line with the gender equality strategy's central emphasis on reaching people left behind and engaging with diverse feminist groups and movements, including grass-roots groups experiencing racial discrimination, and with a strong focus on young women. In Colombia, UNDP partnered with UNFPA and young peacebuilders to ensure the meaningful participation of young women and men in local decision-making to develop territorial peacebuilding platforms.

56. Partnerships with organizations working with people with disabilities and on intersectional discrimination have become more prominent. In Egypt, UNDP partnered with the Government, UN-Women and UNFPA to publish a study on violence against women focusing on intersections between gender, disability and poverty. Based on a community survey, the study provides evidence-based strategies to inform the work of policymakers and civil society organizations. In

Côte d'Ivoire, UNDP efforts to increase the participation of women and people with disabilities resulted in their greater inclusion in revised electoral lists in 2022.

57. **A broader spectrum of partners.** UNDP has begun diversifying its work with partners who can help to shift norms to support gender equality, placing special emphasis on faith-based organizations and networks of young women innovators and influencers. In Somalia, UNDP supported networks of women religious leaders in countering violent extremism (see box 4). In Lesotho, UNDP worked with the National Women's Parliamentary Caucus, women-led organizations and policy influencers to increase women's political representation by addressing barriers and building skills. The 2022 elections saw an increase in the percentage of women elected by direct vote from 22 to 25 per cent.

58. UNDP has deepened engagement with key donor partners at the global level, including the Governments of Luxembourg and the Republic of Korea. Both have been instrumental in supporting the gender equality funding windows and encouraging flexible and strategic approaches. Innovative projects supported in 2022 included the scale up of the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions and creating the "public mood thermometer" on hate speech (see box 6). UNDP has also welcomed fruitful engagements with the Governments of Germany, the Netherlands and Qatar, among others.

Box 6. Reversing the backlash against gender equality: the gender social media monitoring tool

As part of the Observatory for Gender Equality, with funding window support from the Republic of Korea, UNDP has developed a [gender social media monitoring tool](#) that uses artificial intelligence to scan for hate speech. Piloted in Colombia, the Philippines and Uganda, the tool equips policymakers, civil society and practitioners with data to confront a wave of new-tech gender-based violence, especially online hate speech, including by triggering shifts in social norms.

For example, the tool can generate alerts to quickly respond to and prevent misogynistic campaigns. It also guides explorations of legal and digital actions to prevent online hate speech. UNDP is using it in Uruguay to monitor hateful tweets directed at women politicians and journalists, with the Ministry of Women applying the findings in defining the most appropriate legal means to combat hate speech.

Source: UNDP. 2022. <https://data.undp.org/gender-social-media-monitoring/>

59. UNDP worked with academia and think tanks to advocate for evidence-based research on gender equality. It joined the University of Pittsburgh to release a thematic brief, *Gender Equality in Public Administration: Where Are the Women in Environmental and Climate Change Ministries?* In partnership with the Arup Group and the University of Liverpool, UNDP produced *Cities Alive: Designing Cities That Work for Women*. A new partnership links Gender at Work and the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. Twenty-three country offices partnered with universities and think tanks to work on gender equality, such as in Uruguay, where UNDP developed an artificial intelligence tracker for gender-based violence with the University of Chile.

60. **Private sector.** Through the Gender Equality Seal, UNDP expanded collaboration with the private sector to promote women's leadership and participation, develop inclusive workplaces and ensure equal pay for equal work. In 2022, 143 private sector companies were awarded the seal, including in the energy, telecommunications and finance sectors. This benefited more than 240,000 workers; 49 per cent of them women. The many positive spillover effects generated by participating companies include a \$50 million gender equality bond issued by Banistmo in Panama to fund women-owned enterprises.

IV. Institutional transformation

61. UNDP has made progress in strengthening its institutional framework as integral to achieving its gender equality strategy. Seven interconnected building blocks help scale up impact and achieve transformative results: leadership; integration; learning and innovation; culture; funding; accountability; and communication.

62. UNDP moved quickly to operationalize the strategy, applying its Gender Equality Seal and working with 85 country offices on translating global policy into concrete country-level strategies and plans. Regional bureaux have also developed their action plans. Indicating a broad shift in culture and thinking that is now under way, these bureaux and country offices now put a demonstrably stronger emphasis on topics prioritized in the global strategy, including gender-responsive social protection, care work, the environment and engaging with civil society. Targeted assistance to a cohort of crisis countries through programme portfolio reviews, individualized coaching and cross-country learning sessions led them to boost the proportion of programme expenditures that directly contribute to gender equality as a primary objective from 5.05 per cent in 2020 to 8.73 per cent in 2022.

63. UNDP regional bureaux increased staff capacities to support country offices by posting eight additional gender specialists in regional offices. Tailored recommendations and learning plans reached over 1,700 colleagues during the year. The Gender Seal knowledge repository, viewed more than 55,000 times, further supports UNDP personnel.

Box 7. Icelandic Directorate for International Affairs and Development Cooperation awarded the Gold Gender Equality Seal

In 2022, UNDP awarded the Icelandic Government's Directorate for International Affairs and Development Cooperation with the Gold Gender Equality Seal, the first such certification for a donor entity. The directorate has demonstrated outstanding commitment to advancing gender equality within its own organization and in the Government's development cooperation policies. It has achieved strong leadership, a capable gender architecture and effective gender mainstreaming in development policies and programmes, including a 70 per cent budget allocation for gender equality. Several examples of innovative work practices include the Equal Pay Certification and the Better Working Hours policy, and programmes such as the Men Engaging Men and Boys initiative.

64. **Performance against the System-wide Action Plan 2.0.** UNDP increased its already high score by exceeding or meeting targets on 15 of 16 relevant indicators, a rise from 14 out of 16 in 2021.

65. **Leadership.** In 2022, UNDP delivered a world-class Leadership for Gender Equality Certificate for 30 resident representatives. The School of African and Oriental Studies at the University of London and Gender at Work facilitated the course, towards opening spaces for leaders to reflect on the profound changes needed for gender equality. In line with the Secretary-General's commitment to advocate for gender equality, in 2022, 65 per cent of the UNDP Administrator's public speeches and statements explicitly referred to gender inequality, promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and/or related topics.

66. **Integration and specialization.** UNDP is building a gender architecture to support a move away from mechanical approaches to gender equality. In 2022, UNDP engaged with the International Association for Feminist Economics, to prepare the conditions and in 2023 bring together economists from UNDP country offices and leading global academics to co-think national economic challenges and solutions to achieve gender equality. To connect diverse interventions and understand gender equality from a systems perspective, more than 20 country offices, with

partners, carried out participatory portfolio reviews led by the Gender Equality Seal programme, an exercise that helped to identify long-term goals and break silos.

67. The global gender team remains the anchor of the global gender architecture and oversees the gender equality strategy. It has 24 full-time International Professional staff, the same number as in 2021.

Number and duty stations of full-time International Professional staff in the gender team of the Global Policy Network

Addis Ababa	3
Amman	2
Bangkok	1
Istanbul	2
New York	13
Panama	3
Total	24

Source: UNDP Atlas 2022.

68. Multidisciplinary gender focal teams continue to be effective in improving vertical and horizontal coordination. In 2022, 60 per cent of country offices allocated specific resources to support these teams.

69. **Continuous learning and innovation.** To deepen staff skills around achieving structural transformation, UNDP in 2022 designed the pillars of two global learning labs offering frontier knowledge on inclusive economies and energy. The labs will share country experiences and connect UNDP and its partners to the best external experts in each field. The UNDP SDG Finance Academy deepened gender-related capacities, supporting more than 100 country offices in five regions with resources, 11 global case studies and in-depth trainings on gender-responsive private capital.

70. **An equal and inclusive culture.** To inform the new gender equality strategy, UNDP convened a representative group of male staff to nurture a more inclusive and affirming “gender culture” within UNDP. Although the awareness of male staff has increased around gender equality’s centrality to programming work and workplace culture, more can be done to reflect on everyday practices and informal culture. For example, an informal all-male group has been meeting biweekly in the Costa Rica country office as part of the Gender Equality Seal certification. The group discusses the role of male colleagues in promoting gender equality and the ways in which masculinities play out vis-à-vis gender equality goals.

71. To strengthen internal capacities to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse, UNDP continued to focus on four priority areas: prevention; reporting and response; support to survivors; and accountability. All bureaux and offices submitted sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse action plans and annual certifications of implementation to the Administrator. Furthermore, the International Organization for Migration, UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Office for Project Services, UN-Women, the World Food Programme and World Health Organization jointly conducted the online training for focal points on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. An additional virtual training webinar for focal points on the same subject took place in June 2022 with 75 UNDP focal points participating.

72. Gender parity remains a top priority at UNDP, in line with the United Nations System-wide Gender Parity Strategy. By December 2022, UNDP had achieved full gender parity among all staff, including Assistant Secretaries-General, resident representatives and deputy resident representatives. Challenges persist at the P4, P5 and D2 levels, where women held 45 per cent

of P4 posts, 41 per cent of P5 posts and 36 per cent of D2 posts. To address these gaps, UNDP is building a pipeline of strong women candidates for future leadership roles. This builds on steps such as the Women Mentoring Programme by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the second cohort of the African Young Women Leaders Fellowship Programme implemented with the African Union Commission. In 2022, the Executive Group approved the new UNDP gender parity strategy, 2022-2025. It will steer UNDP towards becoming a fully gender-balanced workplace, especially in crisis contexts, as well as a more family-friendly, flexible organization. UNDP developed a new diversity, equity and inclusion strategy that more systematically includes persons with disabilities, among others, in all aspects of its work.

73. Matching ambition with financial resources. With development finance now stretched to a breaking point, and with increasing humanitarian expenditure accompanied by less investment in long-term development, UNDP continues to protect and increase investment in gender equality. It is committed to progressively achieving a stage where 70 per cent of allocations go towards advancing gender equality and empowering women. In 2022, investments in programming where gender equality was a principal or significant objective increased to 66 per cent, up from 60 per cent in 2021. (GEN3: 7.6 per cent; GEN2: 58.2 per cent in 2022). In 2022, UNDP applied the gender marker at the activity level that showed the GEN 3 expenditures increased from 7.6 per cent to 13.5 per cent. In 2023, UNDP will refine this methodology following other United Nations entities such as the United Nations Children's Fund or UNFPA.

74. Accountability. The Gender Steering and Implementation Committee, chaired by the Administrator, met twice in 2022. It discussed backlash against gender equality and challenges shared by country offices. This informed a road map to address backlash. Further, performance assessment criteria for all senior and middle managers now include implementation of the new gender strategy and gender-related technical competencies are integrated into the UNDP technical competency framework.

75. Communications for advocacy. In 2022, UNDP successfully launched its gender equality strategy, 2022-2025. It defined key messages and branding, and issued a press release and [social media package](#). For UNDP, communication is a powerful advocacy tool (see box 6). Internally, the global community of practice on gender equality and the empowerment of women increased its strong community of gender advocates from 2,569 members in 2021 to 2,700 in 2022; they continuously share best practices and technical knowledge. At the end of 2022, UNDP had over 7.7 million followers on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram and 31,600 mentions on Twitter from 9,570 accounts mentioning UNDP and gender-related hashtags. During a special three-week global advocacy campaign, [From the Frontlines](#), UNDP spotlighted the key contributions of women in crises.

Box 8. The Women Win 2022 Campaign: Advocacy for gender quotas.

Ahead of the 2022 parliamentary elections in Lebanon, UNDP partnered with the women's rights organization Fifty-Fifty to launch a broad advocacy campaign for a gender quota to raise women's representation in elected positions. The campaign, Women Win 2022, ensured a broad consultative process and lobbied different stakeholders to adopt the quotas.

Although the law has not yet been passed, the campaign increased support for gender quotas among political groups and ultimately contributed to 157 women running for office. They comprised 15 per cent of 1,043 candidates, compared to 11 per cent in the 2018 cycle. They secured eight seats, two more than in the previous round.

Source: UNDP Gender Equality Seal, internal database.

V. Lessons learned and the way forward

76. The year 2022 was one of transition when UNDP set its new gender equality strategy in motion. UNDP learned and built on past accomplishments, including towards further shifting power relations, conducting more sophisticated analysis to address the complexities of gender inequalities, and better integrating gender-responsive approaches in work on crises, the environment and energy. Through the integrated national financing frameworks, UNDP has begun mobilizing broader resources to scale up impact. Deepening partnerships with grass-roots organizations are sharpening the organization's responsiveness and reaching more people who are left behind.

77. Several recent evaluations informed the first year of the gender equality strategy. An evaluation of the UNDP energy portfolio stressed moving past the assumption that women will automatically benefit from inclusion in energy initiatives. More advanced programming is needed to address social norms and reduce gender-discriminatory barriers that limit access and use, even when energy systems are in place. UNDP is promoting greater integration of gender considerations through expertise and guidance under its Sustainable Energy Hub.

78. The evaluation of the integration by UNDP of the principles of leaving no one behind recommended a specific focus on intersectionality in working with groups left behind as well as a deeper integration of gender equality as a catalyst for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Moving forward, UNDP will better use its corporate systems to measure intersectionality and changes in the lives of people left behind. It will capture lessons from existing advances in gender mainstreaming, including through the Gender Seal as a catalyst of progress in country offices.

79. A key lesson from UNDP male peer groups is to do more to mobilize men for gender equality and recognize male allies and champions of equality. The gender equality strategy commits to enabling all-male peer groups to reflect on everyday practices and informal culture towards defining collective action for organizational change.

80. Overall, the new gender equality strategy, 2022-2025 has elevated the ambitions of UNDP to help overcome the structural causes of gender inequalities through new ways of working. These aim at shifting social norms and power dynamics and mobilizing a broader spectrum of partners and civil society organizations to advocate for gender equality.