

UN Women's Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

Management Response coordinated by: PPID

Date: 11 May 2022

Overall Management Response

UN Women welcomes the findings and recommendations of the corporate evaluation of UN Women's policy advocacy work, which aimed to develop an understanding of UN-Women's policy advocacy roles, activities, structures and approaches; evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of UN-Women as a policy advocacy organization to contribute to policy change; identify examples of UN-Women's policy advocacy efforts and develop lessons learned and recommendations that could strengthen UN-Women's work on policy advocacy. The Entity notes that the evaluation's drafting overlapped with the finalization and approval of the current Strategic Plan 2022-2025, which addresses some of the recommendations.

As defined in its founding resolution A/RES/64/289, UN Women is committed to provide normative support and operational activities, guidance and technical support to all Member States on gender equality, the empowerment and rights of women and gender mainstreaming with the additional role of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

UN Women's work links the development of global policy and legal norms and standards on gender equality such as outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) with their translation into national policies, strategies and programmes across four broad areas: ending violence against women, women's economic empowerment, governance and participation and women, peace and security and humanitarian action. UN Women's work on data, evidence and knowledge is the basis for policy recommendations that guide interactions with Member States in global intergovernmental bodies, with national governments, UN system partners, civil society and other stakeholders. Policy advocacy is carried out at different functional levels of the organization at headquarters, in regional, country and liaison offices to address existing gender inequalities, strengthen institutions and propose gender-responsive policy recommendations and advice.

A challenge to effectively tracking how UN Women's policy advocacy -- through programming, data, evidence and knowledge work -- influences policy change is linked to attribution: the policy-making sphere is multilayered and complex, UN Women is not the only provider of policy advice on gender equality, multiple actors provide key messages, and therefore policy change cannot always be clearly attributed to one specific actor.

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

<p>The management responses refer to the entire evaluation and notes that some recommendations will have resource implications.</p>	
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 1:</p> <p>Leverage the Strategic Plan to enable coherent planning, implementation and monitoring and reporting of policy advocacy priorities.</p>	
<p>Management Response:</p> <p>UN Women accepts this recommendation. The Strategic Plan defines the organization’s priorities, based on intergovernmental mandates, and analysis of data and evidence on the status of women and girls across the globe. UN-Women plans, implements, monitors and reports on its functions in relation to relevant global intergovernmental processes, in line with established mandates.</p> <p>UN Women agrees that it should leverage its new Strategic Plan 2022-2025, to define its policy advocacy priorities based on the Plan’s four thematic impact areas and seven cross-cutting outcomes. Outcome 1 of the Strategic Plan aims to ensure that a comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is strengthened and translated into gender-responsive laws, policies, and institutions. Policy advocacy is also an integral part of the other outcome areas and approximately half of all indicators in the new IRRF relate to policy advocacy.</p> <p>UN Women will develop a clear definition of policy advocacy, which will identify policy advocacy priorities and responsible units at all levels for follow up. UN Women will further organize strategic discussions to elaborate policy advocacy objectives and the knowledge products needed to support policy advocacy. The Strategic Plan’s Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) provides a robust monitoring framework. The Strategic Plan and its IRRF therefore provide a strong basis to enable coherent planning, implementation and monitoring and reporting of UN Women’s contributions to policy change under all four impact areas and seven outcomes. To effectively implement the new SP, PPID is in the process of developing impact level Theories of Change (ToC)/Theories of Action and Signature Interventions through which it will furthermore develop policy advocacy strategies and measurement mechanisms.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

UN Women agrees that Strategic Notes at all levels (including at headquarters) serve as a way to identify and contextualize policy advocacy priorities.					
Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)		Tracking	Comments
		Lead	Support	Status	
Develop a clear Entity-wide definition of policy advocacy	Q3 2022	PPID, ROs	COs, CSD, SPD/Comms		
Establish global policy advocacy priorities through the operationalization of the Strategic Plan and utilize cross-cutting outcome 1 of the SP to build cohesive policy advocacy approaches, monitoring and reporting.	2022 - 2024	PPID, ROs	COs, CSD		
Develop policy advocacy strategies and measurement mechanisms through the development of thematic Theories of Action and Signature Interventions.	Q3 – Q4 2022	PPID, ROs	COs		
Contextualize UN Women’s policy advocacy priorities for Regional and Country Offices through Strategic Notes and workplans which should align with communications and knowledge, data and evidence production.	2022 - 2024	ROs, COs	PPID, SPD/Comms		
Evaluation Recommendation 2:					
Clarify and strengthen the Entity’s policy advocacy architecture, including strengthening integration of policy advocacy across the organization, ensuring the meaningful participation of all divisions working directly or indirectly on policy advocacy.					
Management Response:				Accepted	
UN Women agrees that policy advocacy is an integral part of its work in all impact areas and at all levels of the organization. It accepts the recommendation that it could further clarify its policy					

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

<p>advocacy architecture, where the roles of different HQ divisions, regional and country offices involved in policy advocacy are clearly defined. The Entity proposes to do this through the ongoing corporate change management process.</p> <p>UN Women aims to further strengthen coherence between HQ divisions and the Regional/Country Offices around the substance of policy advocacy. HQ divisions, including the Executive Director’s Office (EDO), PPID, and Communications and Advocacy Section (SPD/Comms), provide policy guidance, developed based on the Entity’s data, evidence, knowledge, and assessment of opportunities for policy change that it identifies through its UN system coordination, inter-governmental and partnership efforts. At the CO level, policy advocacy is anchored in the Strategic Notes and biennial work plans. This helps guarantee that policy advocacy and its key messages are timely and relevant to local/regional contexts and to different thematic areas.</p> <p>Regional directors, deputy regional directors, and regional policy advisers serve as a crucial link between HQ and COs on policy advocacy and messaging. Matrix management between HQ and Regional Offices exists. However, UN Women acknowledges that more efforts could be made to ensure that ROs more systematically contribute to corporate policy messaging, especially global policies being developed at HQ.</p> <p>UN Women accepts the recommendation to strengthen linkages between its communication and advocacy efforts at all levels so that communication products and messages can support policy advocacy. PPID and the Communications and Advocacy Section are currently discussing ways to improve linkages and strategic messaging. It was agreed to develop a joint Communication and Advocacy plan which would include key strategic dates where UN Women will launch and disseminate key knowledge products with global reach and potential for impact.</p> <p>UN Women also agrees that, based on the forthcoming global communications strategy, HQ/RO/CO strategic communication plans and key messages should be developed in alignment with biennial work plans with clear policy advocacy objectives defined and monitored.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

		Lead	Support	Status	Comments
Map and clarify the key actors and roles of different divisions, Regional and Country Offices involved in policy advocacy.	2022	Change management	PPID, ROs, COs, SPD/Comms, CSD		
Strengthen linkages between UN Women’s communication and advocacy efforts at all levels of the organization so that communication products and messages directly support policy advocacy.	Q2 2022 – Q2 2023	SPD/Comms, PPID, EDO	ROs, COs		
Develop Headquarters, Regional/Country Office annual strategic communications plans and key messages to improve focus, consistency and efficiency.	2022 – 2024	SPD/Comms, ROs, COs	PPID		
Evaluation Recommendation 3:					
Strengthen data, knowledge generation and knowledge management systems as enablers for policy advocacy work and establish UN-Women as a recognized knowledge broker on gender equality in the policy advocacy sphere.					
<p>Management Response:</p> <p>UN Women accepts this recommendation as the production of knowledge, research and data analysis to support policy advocacy is a core function. As a demonstration of the importance that UN Women places in data, knowledge generation and knowledge management , it has created a whole outcome to this work in the new Strategic Plan (outcome 6). Gender statistics, sex-disaggregated data and knowledge will be produced, analyzed and used to inform policy- making, advocacy and accountability for delivering gender equality and women's empowerment results.</p> <p>Teams are in place across the organization working on the collection, analysis, production and dissemination of research, data and knowledge. To further strengthen UN Women’s role as a</p>				Accepted	

UN Women's Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

knowledge hub, a forthcoming Data, Evidence and Knowledge (DEK) strategy will bring together work on knowledge management, research and data.

UN Women concurs that with resources limited across the UN system, it is important to agree in inter-agency coordination mechanisms which knowledge products UN Women will produce alone and/or with other agencies. Furthermore, UN Women partners with UN entities, as well as researchers, data and policy experts in academia and civil society organizations, on a range of issues related to gender equality, who contribute to policy analysis and feed into UN Women and UN system publications. This collaboration supports greater outreach, dissemination and uptake of the findings.

In recent years, the Women Count programme, supported by Research and Data/PPID has created new capacity in country and regional offices to support the production, analysis and use of gender statistics. UN Women is planning to spend more time and resources to strategize on dissemination and use of its knowledge, and to ensure that UN Women expert recommendations are also utilized by partners. For example, through a new pilot project focusing on implementing key pillars of the IASC Gender Policy, at the global level, and across 9 crisis contexts, UN Women will aim to develop data, gender analysis and knowledge products to support Humanitarian Country Teams to better integrate gender priorities in humanitarian responses.

UN Women agrees with the recommendation that data, evidence and knowledge, as well as policy guidance, key messages and training need to be effectively disseminated across the organization and with partners. PPID develops a large number of policy guidance, key messages and training/capacity building tools. It also seeks to improve its planning and advocacy with the development of a division-wide Knowledge Product plan encompassing design, development and amplified advocacy, outreach and communications framed in the forthcoming corporate Data, Evidence and Knowledge (DEK) Strategy.

The use of internal UN Women broadcasts and upgrades of UN Women Sharepoint pages and website should provide clearer platforms to disseminate knowledge products to regional and country offices and partners. The high cost of translation, however, prevents a broader distribution of materials in multiple languages.

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

See also responses to recommendation 2 regarding Communication planning.					
Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)		Tracking	
		Lead	Support	Status	Comments
Develop effective data and knowledge generation systems based on UN Women’s policy advocacy priorities and evidence from gap analysis on policy development. Identify which data and knowledge will be produced by UN-Women, jointly with partners and which will be produced by partners separately.	2022 - 2024	PPID	ROs/COs		
Through the finalization and implementation of a corporate DEK strategy, strengthen knowledge management systems for policy advocacy work across global, regional and country levels to support the work of its personnel.	2022 - 2024	PPID	ROs/COs SPD/Comms		
Disseminate policy guidance, key messages and training/capacity building tools in support of policy advocacy across the organization.	2022-2024	PPID	ROs/COs SPD/Comms		
Establish a corporate communication plan to systematically disseminate knowledge products to Regional and Country Offices and partners.	Q2 2022 – Q2 2023	SPD/Comms	PPID		
Evaluation Recommendation 4: Continue to strengthen relationships with national governments, UN agencies, and feminist movements and women’s organizations to support policy change and implementation.					

UN Women's Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

<p>Management Response:</p> <p>UN Women accepts the recommendation and notes that maintaining strong cooperation and partnership with national governments, the UN system, and civil society, including women's organizations, is the bedrock of UN Women's work. Policy advocacy can only be effective in partnership with others, including through multi-stakeholder initiatives.</p> <p>UN Women works with national governments at the national level and in intergovernmental processes to promote policy recommendations for implementation. UN Women leads, coordinates and promotes the accountability of the UN system.</p> <p>Policy expertise on gender equality is larger than the capacity of any single entity. All UN entities are mandated to mainstream gender perspectives in their respective areas of work. Therefore, in terms of coordination, the role of UN Women is to pool gender expertise amongst the UN system to leverage stronger advocacy on gender equality through inter-agency mechanisms including those that are supporting the implementation of the Secretary General's Our Common Agenda. At country level, the New Standards and Procedure for Gender Theme Groups (GTG) leverage the role of GTG in order to advance strategic dialogues on gender-related policy questions with Governments and civil society, ensuring an integrated approach. The Issue Based Coalitions on Gender do the same at the regional level. The UN system Coordination Division (UNSCD) will lead and monitor the implementation of these new standards and procedures to ensure policy advocacy is coordinated.</p> <p>UN Women is currently piloting strategic dialogues between HQ/RO/CO for the development of Strategic Notes and UNSDCF to which it has invited RCs to enhance coordination for policy advocacy work.</p> <p>UN Women regularly leverages its cooperation with feminist movements and women's organizations to support policy change. As a convener of Generation Equality/Action Coalitions, UN Women is strategically placed to scale up this cooperation to accelerate change in line with the Global Acceleration Plan for GEWE by 2026. As mentioned in response to recommendation 3, UN Women teams work with research institutions and academics at national, regional and global levels to commission research or to work jointly on research and data generation and analysis. UN Women</p>	Accepted
---	----------

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

will continue to build these networks, noting the importance of making time and resources available for joint publication and dissemination of research and recommendations.					
Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)		Tracking	
		Lead	Support	Status	Comments
Collaborate with national governments to increase buy-in and ownership of policy change and implementation.	2022 - 2024	RO/CO	PPID, CSD		
Leverage UN reform, the Resident Coordinator’s Office and partnerships with other UN agencies to enhance coordination, scale policy advocacy work and to foster support for implementation.	2022 – 2024	RO/CO PPID	UNSCD		
As a convener of Generation Equality/Action Coalitions, leverage partnerships with feminist movements and women’s organizations at global, regional and country levels to support policy change and implementation. Leverage partnerships with academia, research institutions and think tanks for research-based knowledge generation and sharing.	2022 – 2024	PPID, RO/CO CSD			
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 5:</p> <p>Strategically place policy advocacy specialists across the organization and ensure that field offices have the appropriate level of social and political acumen and adequate capacity in terms of the number of staff with technical expertise and knowledge of local context on gender issues.</p>					
<p>Management Response:</p> <p>UN Women partially accepts this recommendation due to resource constraints. Its policy advisors and specialists in HQ and in ROs/COs are thought leaders on policies and laws to advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in four thematic impact areas. As such UN</p>				Partially accepted	

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

<p>Women is recognized within the UN system, with member states and civil society organizations as a thought leader on gender-responsive laws, policies, and institutions.</p> <p>UN Women agrees that policy advocacy specialists should be placed across the organization, including at Regional and Country Offices however does not have sufficient funding to ensure this. In some policy areas, there are non-core funded regional policy specialists (P4 and P5), who have significant policy making and advocacy expertise as well as knowledge of regional/local challenges and opportunities. However, such non-core funding is not available for all policy sectors, few non-core donors have showed interest to fund this capacity, and there is insufficient core to fill the gaps. This is especially a challenge at the CO level.</p> <p>UN Women also concurs that, as noted in the evaluation, even when there are regional policy specialists, they often have to take on additional programming, resource mobilization and coordination roles because of insufficient human and financial resources. This is also the case within PPID at HQ level where the ToRs of most global policy advisors/specialists includes a range of coordination, partnership building, knowledge management, program development, resource mobilization, support to the field, and normative work that goes beyond policy advocacy work. Job description can be reviewed, at all levels, to include policy advocacy as an essential competency amongst others.</p> <p>Communities of practice (COPs) can be a strategy for leveraging in-house expertise and they will be strengthened during 2022 and 2023 (webinars, updated guidance).</p> <p>UN Women recognizes that additional dedicated funding is necessary to further develop capacity and expertise for policy advocacy work in ROs/COs and ensure retention of staff and personnel with policy expertise. Providing policy advocacy training as recommended by the evaluation is one possible tool to deploy in addition to the existing and planned knowledge guidance.</p> <p>See also responses to recommendation 2 regarding mapping of staff (action point 1).</p>					
Key Action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible Unit(s)		Tracking	
		Lead	Support	Status	Comments

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

<p>Locate thought leaders and policy experts throughout the organization, including at the regional and country level, to better support policy advocacy priorities. Recruit world-class talent on gender policy to bolster UN-Women’s role as a “thought leader” and develop capacity and expertise for policy advocacy work in field offices.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>PPID, RO/COs, Change Management</p>			
<p>Develop capacity and expertise for policy advocacy work in ROs/COs. Provide policy advocacy training to country and regional representatives and programme managers (if funding is available).</p>	<p>2022 - 2024</p>	<p>PPID</p>	<p>SPD</p>		
<p>Review Country Office job descriptions and titles to ensure that policy advocacy work is adequately reflected to aid the recruitment of staff with the required policy experience.</p>	<p>Q2 2022 – Q2 2023</p>	<p>RO/CO, HR</p>			
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 6: Strengthen and improve mechanisms and processes within UN-Women by developing guidance tools and best practices to effectively engage groups being left behind through policy advocacy work.</p>					
<p>Management Response: UN Women agrees that it can strengthen the integration of the “leave no one behind” principle in its policy advocacy efforts. However, there are clear instances where UN Women has improved its attention to LNOB, for example through its data and coordination work which addresses women and girls furthest left behind. UN Women concurs that it should continue to develop guidance tools and best practices to effectively engage groups most often left behind in policy advocacy. For example, UN Women has supported young women, indigenous women and women living with HIV in their policy advocacy by</p>				<p>Accepted</p>	

UN Women’s Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

<p>developing guidance tools built on best practices. With focus on developing minimum standards for integrating “leave no one behind” in policy advocacy, UN Women will roll out a guidance note on intersectionality in humanitarian settings that will inform UN Women’s coordination role, policy engagement and relevant advocacy in partnership with and targeting UNCT/HCT members depending on the country context.</p> <p>UN Women regularly leverages partnerships with grassroots organizations, women’s organizations and networks to identify priorities of groups being left behind to support legal, policy and institutional level change. The Entity uses its convening role to create safe spaces for LNOB groups to be included in policy advocacy efforts and provides capacity development to support this engagement. This is also the aim of the Generation Equality/Action Coalitions, multi-stakeholder platforms with link to groups most often left behind and in underserved regions of the global south which seek to reach the policy, legal and institutional goals of the Global Acceleration Plan for GEWE by 2026.</p>							
Key Action(s)		Timeframe		Responsible Unit(s)		Tracking	
				Lead	Support	Status	Comments
Identify or develop approaches for integrating “leave no one behind” principles in policy advocacy work, including approaches for integrating the needs of “leave no one behind” within legislation, policies and standards, and identify when and how to share policy advocacy products with those at risk of being left behind and monitor and evaluate “leave no one behind” in policy advocacy work.		2022-2024		PPID, RO/CO	CSD		
Use its convening role to create safe spaces for LNOB groups to be included in policy advocacy efforts and provide capacity development to support this engagement.		2022-2024		PPID			

UN Women's Policy Advocacy Work - Management Response

Leverage its many partnerships with grassroots organizations, women's organizations and networks to identify and ensure sustained reach to groups being left behind, particularly to support the implementation of legislation, policies and standards.	2022 - 2024	PPID, CSD, RO/CO			
---	-------------	------------------	--	--	--