**Executive Board of the
United Nations Entity for Gender
Equality and the Empowerment
of Women**

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Evaluation

Thematic Evaluation on the Contribution of UN-Women to Increasing Women's

Leadership and Participation in Peace and Security and in Humanitarian Response

Summary

In 2013, the UN-Women Evaluation Office undertook a corporate thematic evaluation of UN-Women contribution to increasing women's leadership and participation in peace and security and in humanitarian response. The evaluation objectives were to capture key contributions to results and lessons learned of UN-Women and its four predecessor entities that could inform UN-Women's current and future work. The evaluation analyzed UN-Women contribution to policy and normative work in the area of peace and security, as well as programming processes and results, and organizational strengths and constraints of UN-Women in fulfilling its mandate.

The scope of this evaluation covered all dimensions of UN-Women and predecessor entities' work addressing women, peace and security from 2008 to 2012. The evaluation makes five

action-oriented recommendations to UN-Women aimed at strengthening its work in this thematic area. The intended primary users of the evaluation findings are the UN-Women Executive Board and management, as well as staff at headquarters and, regional and country levels. The intended uses of the evaluation are to inform future programming and management decisions.

Evaluation background and purpose

1.   The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was created in July 2010 and became operational in January 2011. The new entity consolidates the mandates of the four United Nations entities which previously focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment, namely: the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). In addition to its normative support and operational functions, UN-Women is also responsible for leading, coordinating and promoting accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment.

2.   The purpose of the evaluation was to: (i) document and assess the contribution of UN-Women and its predecessor entities to women's leadership and participation in peace and security between 2008 and 2012; and (ii) identify lessons learnt and present forward-looking recommendations. The evaluation was led by an external independent team and took place between September 2012 and September 2013, during which there were two main phases of data collection and analysis.

Methodology

3.   To address the evaluation's objectives and questions, an analytical framework was developed and was structured around three dimensions, namely: normative/policy influence; operational impact; and organizational capacity. These three dimensions were used to structure and guide the primary and secondary data collection and analysis in all

phases of the evaluation. The analytical framework of this theory-based evaluation assessed whether UN-Women and predecessor entities achieved planned policy and programme results, as well as the robustness of explicit or implicit assumptions about how change is meant to happen as a result of UN-Women's activities or inputs. The framework integrated key evaluation criteria of effectiveness and coverage, partnership and coordination, relevance, coherence, impact and sustainability.

4.   A mixed methods approach was used with an emphasis on qualitative methods. Information from different sources was compared and reconciled to ensure the triangulation of findings. The team consulted over 250 documents and held 218 interviews (39 with UN-Women staff and 178 with other stakeholders).

5.   During the desk phase, the team mapped, coded and quantitatively analysed UN-Women and predecessor entities's peace and security and humanitarian response portfolio between 2008 and 2012. It undertook an in-depth analysis of the results logic and achievements of 12 UN-Women and UNIFEM programmes, and reviewed relevant strategy documents.

6.   During the fieldwork phase, six case studies were completed including five country studies (Afghanistan, Colombia, Haiti, Kosovo and Liberia) and a headquarters/global policy study. During field visits, data was collected using primary documents, focus groups and semi-structured key informant interviews among a wide range of stakeholders.

Limitations

7.   A number of limitations were identified during both the inception and fieldwork phases. Those identified during the inception phase were addressed in the methodology. For example, the period of the evaluation coincided with the creation of UN-Women and

while the transition to UN-Women had been completed, the consolidation of new organizational processes was still underway. The evaluation thus took note of the organizational challenges associated with the early days of this consolidation process. Furthermore, the evaluation period straddled two strategic planning periods. UN-Women's predecessor entities could only be assessed against their relevant strategic plans (and not against the 2011-2013 UN-Women Strategic Plan). The evaluation was therefore used to draw lessons from the experience of predecessor entities on relevant peace and security work to inform current and future practice. Also, a full assessment of UN-Women's humanitarian response (HR) capacity was not possible as it is a new work area for UN-Women, as noted in the inception phase. It was also considered important to ensure an appropriate balance in the assessment of operations and programming vis-à-vis global policy work. Therefore, a case study of activities at headquarters was undertaken, alongside the desk studies and fieldwork of country-level programming and operations. Although primary documents (those created by UN-Women and predecessor entities) were an important source of data for the evaluation, the availability and quality of documents at headquarters and country level varied. Finally, the complex and sensitive nature of the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda means that much of the critical work is not documented through conventional results-based frameworks. The qualitative methods used in fieldwork were therefore appropriate for capturing achievements and lessons from these environments.

8.   The recently approved Strategic Plan 2014-2017 addresses some of the issues identified in this evaluation, such as medium-term programme planning and annual work planning processes.

Strategic objectives of UN-Women and its predecessor entities relating to women, peace and security

9.   The United Nations mandate for gender equality and women's empowerment is guided by several international agreements and commitments, including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and Agreed Conclusions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (1997/2). United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 calls for women's 'equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.' This and subsequent Security Council resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960) provide the normative mandate for the United Nations' activities relating to women, peace and security.

10.   Between 2008 and 2012, women, peace and security became more prominent in the strategic objectives of UN-Women and its predecessor entities. Reference to peace, security and resolution 1325 appeared in the work plan of OSAGI and DAW in 2010-2011, and in UNIFEM's Strategic Plan 2008-2011. In UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2011-2013, 'women's leadership in peace, security and humanitarian response' is a strategic goal and thematic/priority area of work in its own right.

Peace and security activities of UN-Women and its predecessor entities

11.   An analysis was conducted of former UNIFEM and UN-Women programme documents related to peace and security activities between 2008 and 2012. It highlighted a focus on the following areas (in order of prominence): violence against women and girls (particularly conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence [SGBV]), (18.8 per cent);

access to justice (16.2 per cent); security sector reform (12 per cent); development of national action plans (monitoring, implementation and development) under resolution 1325 (10.3 per cent); transitional justice (8.5 per cent); community-level conflict mediation and prevention (7.7 per cent); and general post-conflict democratic governance (6.8 per cent). In the same period, there were few programming activities that related to peace negotiations, post-conflict constitution-making, transitional elections, post-conflict recovery, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration or human trafficking.

12.   OSAGI and DAW led intergovernmental support and coordination on gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming within the United Nations, although DAW did not focus on women, peace and security. At the global level, the UN-Women Intergovernmental Support Division and the UN-Women United Nations System Coordination Division now lead work on intergovernmental support and coordination activities, respectively. On women, peace and security, the Peace and Security Section within the UN-Women Policy Division is actively involved in both the normative support function and inter-agency coordination.

13.   Peace and security is a growing area of work for UN-Women. Although expenditure on peace and security programmes has ranked fourth out of five priority areas in each of the past three years, it also steadily grew from $15 million in 2010 to $25 million in 2012.[1]

Findings

UN-Women's contribution to women's leadership and participation in peace and security

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated, refers to United States dollars.

14.   The activities and programmes of UN-Women and its predecessor entities between 2008 and 2012 contributed to the advancement of women's leadership and participation in peace and security – both in terms of supporting the development of global and national norms and policy, and their implementation by Member States.

15.   Between 2008 and 2012, UN-Women and its predecessor entities contributed significantly to shaping global policy and norms that advance women's leadership and participation in peace and security. The evaluation period was one of intense intergovernmental activity to advance the women, peace and security agenda. In particular, between 2008-2010, OSAGI, DAW and UNIFEM supported the adoption of three resolutions on women, peace and security (1820, 1888, 1889); and since the creation of UN-Women, two additional ones have been agreed (1960, 2106).

16.   UN-Women and its predecessor entities have also supported the establishment of United Nations-wide frameworks to monitor and support implementation of Member State and United Nations commitments on resolution 1325. These include the system-wide action plan (SWAP) (2008-2009) but, more significantly given its limitations, the Strategic Results Framework (2010-2020). A set of 26 globally-relevant indicators were developed in 2010 at the request of the Security Council to monitor the United Nations's implementation of the women peace and security resolutions and for voluntary reporting by

17.   Member States. Tailored frameworks addressing specific peace and security activities by sub-sets of United Nations entities were developed and integrated into the overall Strategic Results Framework – for instance, the Secretary General's Seven-Point Action Plan on gender-responsive Peacebuilding and the Strategic Framework for United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. In addition, UN-Women and its predecessor entities provided support to intergovernmental bodies in the implementation of

resolutions on women, peace and security through analytical and knowledge-building work.

18.   Although these achievements in normative and intergovernmental support predate its creation, the establishment of a discrete Peace and Security Section within UN-Women is an important factor in continuing the momentum of work on women, peace and security.

19.   At the country level, in all five of the country case studies, UN-Women and UNIFEM made important contributions during the evaluation period to developing national laws and policies to advance work on women, peace and security. These include national action plans on resolution 1325, laws relating to transitional justice and violence against women, and gender equality action plans and policies. UN-Women and UNIFEM activities helped ensure women's views are heard in legislative processes, provided technical assistance to law-making bodies and developed the capacity of implementing state bodies.

20.   UN-Women and UNIFEM country- level activities also helped more women to exercise leadership and actively participate in processes associated with peace and security via both direct and indirect support through country and project offices. *Direct support* relates to activities leading directly to an increase in women's leadership and participation in peace and security. Such activities included: facilitating access to national political, legislative and policymaking processes, including national peace talks and international conferences; establishing forums enabling women to participate in community peacebuilding and security; and increasing the number of women leaders, civil servants and service providers.

21.   Indirect support activities help build the enabling conditions for women's leadership and participation. Activities included: technical inputs into gender-sensitive legal and policy frameworks; capacity development and institutional support for public

bodies, such as support to mainstream gender into security agencies (e.g. police force) or improve their response to SGBV, or women's organizations and networks; raising awareness of and sensitization activities towards women's rights, women's perspectives and gender-sensitive services; and (co)production of knowledge products supporting advocacy efforts and policymaking/ implementation such as databases, handbooks and toolkits.

22.   The case studies and supplementary desk study found that most programme results are reported at the output and, to a lesser degree, outcome level of the strategic and project results frameworks. There are some examples of higher-level impact (e.g. increase in successful prosecutions of SGBV crimes) but country and project offices do not systematically assess or report on their contribution to these higher levels of results frameworks or articulate how outputs and outcomes will lead to them in practice.

23.   The case studies identified organizational features limiting the normative and operational effectiveness of all five country and project offices. In particular, inadequate medium-to-long-term strategic planning; weak programme design; negligible risk management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E); and insufficient human and financial resources.

24.   Country context was also found to influence the ability of country and project offices to advance their normative and operational objectives (e.g. government ownership of resolution 1325, geopolitical significance of the country and presence of other international actors). However, staff skills, knowledge and experience were found to be equally important factors in determining the degree to which Countries/Projects can maximise the opportunities and limit the constraints presented by both organizational factors and country context. For example, the Kosovo project office benefitted from the commitment, advocacy skills and credibility of experienced staff members. Similarly, the

transitional justice expertise of the Colombia country office was instrumental in its achievements in this area. Results are particularly strengthened by the ability of country office staff to combine thematic expertise, contextual understanding and strategic advocacy and analytical skills with access to key networks, and identify key opportunities for effective engagement with stakeholders at national and sub-national levels among civil society and government/ state actors.

25.   The case studies also found that *how* UN-Women works and engages with country-level stakeholders strongly influences the effectiveness of their activities. For example, daily interactions and networking with strategic actors to build alliances and broker dialogue (e.g. in Kosovo), and the 'accompaniment' of women's organizations in their advocacy activities and engagement (e.g. in Colombia) were based on a deep and practical understanding of the political economy context.

26.   These process elements are an important part of the implicit theory of change of how some country and project offices contributed to women's leadership and participation, and improved peace and security outcomes for women more generally. In other words, some country and project offices understand *how* they work to be as important as specific types of inputs if they are to act as a catalyst for transformative and sustainable changes in policy and practice. These process achievements are not captured and reported in current planning and monitoring tools and documents.

27.   Finally, while there is demand from humanitarian actors in the United Nations and beneficiary organizations for gender-responsive approaches to humanitarian action, UN-Women's humanitarian response capacity and activities remain limited at present. However, the case study of Haiti provides some promising examples of UN-Women's potential niche in this new area of work.

UN-Women's strategic coherence

28.   The objectives of resolution 1325 are clearly reflected in Goal 4 of UN-Women's Strategic Plan which provides coherence for the entity's work on women's leadership and participation in peace and security. While there is variation in how clearly country objectives are nested in global objectives, all five country case studies demonstrated sustained efforts to advance the goals of resolution 1325 and other peace and security objectives predating the creation of UN-Women.

29.   The country cases studies also demonstrated that UN-Women country and project offices are, in most cases, adept at translating corporate strategic objectives into country-level objectives and programmes. However, the ability of country staff to adapt their activities to changing country conditions so as to improve the chances that higher-level objectives are met, vary. Weak strategic planning and continuing reliance on ad hoc financing for specific projects rather than longer-term programming were found to undermine programmatic coherence at country-level.

30.   Knowledge production is rich and authoritative, particularly at the global level where the Peace and Security Section is viewed as a globally recognised source of information on women, peace and security. However, inadequate corporate knowledge management systems and communication between headquarters and country offices is currently an obstacle to improving coherence between policy and programmes.

UN-Women's strategic positioning

31.   At the **global level**, UN-Women is seen as a lead actor on women, peace and security within the United Nations system. There was a clear change in the visibility and reputation of

UN-Women and its predecessor entities on such issues during the evaluation period. Such changes predate the creation of UN-Women but the entity's new status, whereby the Executive Director serves as Under-Secretary-General, its inclusion in the Resident Coordinator system at country-level and the creation of a dedicated Peace and Security Section, has increased its capacity for leadership and influence within the United Nations system on these issues.

32.   At the **country level**, UN-Women's strategic presence and position varies from country to country as a result of organizational and country-specific factors. These constraints and opportunities are mediated by the skills, experience and instincts of the staff in position.

33.   In principle, UN-Women's new status in the United Nations system provides opportunities to engage with and influence high-level stakeholders (e.g. government, United Nations entities and international organizations). However, there is limited evidence of an increase in the visibility and influence of country offices since the creation of UN-Women. Many respondents believed this would happen once the Country Directors took up their positions but the case studies highlighted a lack of clarity, including among some UN-Women staff, of how UN-Women's operational role would differ from the project-based work of its predecessor, UNIFEM.

UN-Women's strategic partnerships and inter-agency coordination

34.   At the **global level**, UN-Women and its predecessor entities demonstrated an increased ability to build strategic relationships within the United Nations system and to broker dialogue between stakeholders in women, peace and security. The Peace and Security Section demonstrated its ability to engage and collaborate with, as well as influence, important actors in peacebuilding and peacekeeping in particular through its relationships

with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). There are also examples of proactive and strategic engagement with Member States who champion women, peace and security issues.

35.   Interviewees also reported an improvement in inter-agency coordination at the global level. For example, the UN-Women Executive Director now chairs inter-agency fora, such as the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANGWE). The new status of UN-Women within the UN system and the creation of a dedicated Peace and Security Section with thematic expertise, supported by the Intergovernmental Support Division and the UN System Coordination Division, among others, with their complementary expertise, are important factors in consolidating UN-Women's role and influence in UN-wide developments that are relevant to women, peace and security. This builds on the work and achievements of its predecessor entities.

36.   At the **country level**, evidence from all five case studies showed that UN-Women and UNIFEM have built and leveraged relationships with other stakeholders to advance women, peace and security norms and their implementation. However, the types of partnerships and with whom they were built, varied, as did their relevance, quality and effectiveness in terms of supporting women's leadership and participation.

37.   Support to women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations were the foundations of UNIFEM's operational work which was apparent throughout the evaluation period. All five country and project offices worked with women's organizations and community groups, providing forums for participation in peace and security and facilitating access to decision-making processes. However, there were differences between countries in the level at which offices leveraged partnerships (e.g. at national, sub-national and/or community levels), the range of stakeholders they engaged with,

and the degree to which offices worked through organizations, facilitated networks between them and/or brokered relationships between women's organizations and other stakeholders (in particular, government).

38.   These variations can, in part, be explained by the political and social differences between countries. However, the ability of UN-Women staff to read and respond to local political economy conditions and the needs and expectations of stakeholders also plays a role. For example, whereas women's organizations in Afghanistan reported needing UN-Women to be more vocal publically on women's rights, those in Colombia said that they needed UN-Women to facilitate their voice rather than speak for them.

39.   Women's civil society organizations (CSOs), at both the global and country level, expressed concern that UN-Women would be working more intensively with intergovernmental bodies and national governments than its predecessor entities, because they interpreted this to mean that UN-Women would engage less with women's organizations.

40.   The five country and project offices also engaged with government through their peace and security programming between 2008 and 2011, although some offices demonstrated a greater ability to spot and nurture strategic partnerships with influential reform champions within government in order to promote ownership and sustainable changes in policy and practice.

41.   There are examples of UN-Women working collaboratively with other United Nations entities at country-level, such as working groups, information-sharing and joint programming. However, there is limited evidence that UN-Women has begun to play a more proactive or substantial inter-agency coordination role. Again, there is an expectation that Country Directors will lead changes in practice but many country stakeholders, including

UN-Women staff, remain unclear as to what the new coordination mandate of UN-Women entails.

Conclusions

42.   The findings provide lessons about innovative practices and successful strategies of UN-Women and its predecessor entities, as well as insights into actions UN-Women needs to take to move forward and achieve strategic objectives in this thematic area. Taken together, and placed in the context of UN-Women's comparative advantage, and internal and external constraints, they provide the basis for overall conclusions and actionable recommendations to support UN-Women to deliver its mandate, and its peace and security and humanitarian response strategic objectives, with specific reference to women's leadership and participation.

A. Policy and normative support function on women, peace and security

43.   Conclusion 1: Building on the achievements of its predecessor entities, UN-Women is in a strategic position to influence global policy and debates on women's leadership and participation in peace and security.

Since 2008, UN-Women and its predecessor entities made strategic use of opportunities such as the lead up to the ten-year anniversary of resolution 1325 and the establishment of UN-Women itself, to step up their commitment to and the weight of the women, peace and security agenda in global policy and debates on peace and security. In particular, this included contributing to the establishment of a thicker web of normative commitments, including Security Council resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960 and their corresponding monitoring and accountability frameworks.

44.   Conclusion 2: UN-Women has a clear normative support mandate under resolution 1325 to implement the peace and security and humanitarian response agenda.

Security Council resolution 1325 and Goal 4 of UN-Women's Strategic Plan 2011-2013, provide an overarching theory of change for the work of UN-Women, where the focus on women's leadership and participation is considered central to advancing peace and security and gender equality goals. There are, however, different views on how proactive UN-Women could be in driving efforts to step up the pace of implementation of internationally agreed norms and standards on women, peace and security, or whether it should be more reactive to and in step with the needs of Member States. Achievements in the period under evaluation appear to have benefitted from more proactive approaches, but sustainable efforts require buy-in from Member States.

45.   Conclusion 3: The transition to UN-Women has increased the strategic presence, leadership and influence of the entity at the global level but not necessarily yet (or always) at country level.

The creation of UN-Women, and its new thematic set up, created the space to scale up intergovernmental engagement and coordination activities to support and monitor United Nations-wide and global implementation of women, peace and security commitments on women's leadership and participation. The entity is now better equipped to engage with United Nations-wide processes in support of peace and security at the global level. However, in-country influence to take the lead on women, peace and security is less developed.

46.   Conclusion 4: Lessons from country-level programmatic experiences and policy engagement at both national and regional levels do not sufficiently inform UN-Women policy work and engagement at the global level.

Opportunities for cross fertilisation between country programmes and global policy work are limited, constraining UN-Women's capacity to harness the more creative and innovative practices emerging from its country-level work. In practice, this also limits UN-Women's capacity to support domestic and regional policy processes in a timely way.

B. Programming at country and regional levels

47.   Conclusion 5: In some countries and across some thematic areas, UN-Women is making an effective contribution to enhancing women's leadership and participation in peace and security.

UN-Women's contribution to women's leadership and participation in peace and security includes: enabling women to participate in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction through increased access to mechanisms or institutions; facilitating access of women and women's organizations to political, legislative, policy and planning processes; improving women's access to basic services in conflict-affected contexts, including justice and security; increasing the number of women leaders, civil servants and service providers; and including women's voice in transitional-justice processes.

48.   Conclusion 6: Processes and ways of working are as important for achieving change as programme outputs, if not more so, yet this is often unrecognised and undocumented in current reporting frameworks. Lessons on how to achieve change are, therefore, missed.

Factors contributing to more effective normative and operational work include: a strategic engagement with relevant intergovernmental and United Nations-system actors and women's CSOs at global, regional, national and grassroots levels; catalytic work based on facilitating policy and reform space and brokering relations between different stakeholders at all levels; and flexibility to maximise windows of opportunity, noting the volatility of fragile and conflict-affected situations. Such experiences and modes of work are not documented sufficiently, and the situation is not helped by current reporting and results frameworks.

49.   Conclusion 7: UN-Women has built meaningful and strategic partnerships across a range of national actors in some countries, especially with women's organizations and, increasingly, with government and state actors.

UN-Women's success in building effective partnerships varies from country to country. It depends, in part, on the degree to which there is an enabling environment for productive partnerships to evolve, as well as the degree to which country staff have the necessary advocacy skills, access to relevant networks and the strategic vision to identify key partners. There is concern that UN-Women's greater scope for engagement with government under its new mandate, will draw it away from UNIFEM's focus on engagement with women's organizations.

50.   Conclusion 8: Progress towards increased and more effective inter-agency coordination within the United Nations system at country level is slow.

Working collaboratively in-country with and through other United Nations entities was found to be essential, since UN-Women's operational presence is likely to remain limited in the current funding climate. Therefore, coverage at country level and the scope for

influence rely on identifying and using strategic opportunities to support or work with (and through) other United Nations entities. Overall, however, UN-Women's inter-agency coordination role remains underdeveloped at country level and poorly understood by both UN-Women staff and those from other United Nations entities.

C. Organizational structure and capacity

51.   Conclusion 9: United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 reflects a high-level theory of change about the importance of women's participation in peace and security. The results chains and theories of change underpinning UN-Women's activities are, for the most part, implicit and rarely documented.

UN-Women's programme and project results chains are rarely underpinned by clear causal relationships between activities and expected results. There is much stronger evidence on 'low-level' results and outputs than on higher-level outcomes due to weak programme design and a lack of theories of change which are based on realistic objectives, appropriate activities and plausible linkages. Inadequate strategic planning at country level also limits the possibility for joined programming (within and beyond the peace and security section within a country) and for UN- Women to concentrate resources on its areas of comparative advantage. Weak strategic prioritisation of programme design constrained UN-Women's ability to contribute significantly to higher-level objectives.

52.   Conclusion 10: UN-Women has yet to institutionalize an evaluation culture and M&E systems and processes remain underdeveloped.

While there are processes currently underway to build up evaluation systems, the evaluation found that a strong culture of evaluation within UN-Women remains underdeveloped. For the period under evaluation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation

focused mostly on compliance and accountability, in particular to donors, rather than learning within and between programme cycles and across areas of work. Combined with its underdeveloped knowledge management systems, UN-Women's evidence base and learning on what works well (or does not), under what conditions and why, will remain limited. A knowledge base is essential to improving programming, including the development and testing of sound theories of change. The emphasis on bureaucratic accountability rather than learning from evaluation also limits the entity's ability to assess the continuing relevance of programmes and adapt them as conditions change – an almost certain requirement in volatile fragile and conflict-affected settings – to enable strategic objectives (rather than defunct outputs) to be achieved.

53. Conclusion 11: There is a disconnect between global policy and normative engagement/priorities, and country programmes and operations. The communication gaps between different parts of the entity and the lack of knowledge management systems and processes are major obstacles in this respect.

The development of an evidence-based research and knowledge base has been considered a central asset of the thematic section. It is an important resource to support country policy and programming needs, and to inform global-level intergovernmental work and coordination efforts. It is also a mandated feature of UN-Women's technical expertise and catalytic potential. However, weak knowledge management inhibits the best use of this resource. Underdeveloped planning and documentation of country-level lessons and experiences do not support this.

54.   Conclusion 12: Resources (human and financial) are inadequate to fulfil the increased expectations on UN-Women, but existing resources could also be used more strategically and effectively.

There is an imbalance between resources and expectations concerning what UN-Women can and should deliver. The situation is compounded by the constraints of relying mainly on project rather than core funding. The Peace and Security Section has, for good reason, focused on intergovernmental and coordination work at the headquarters/global level. However, country offices now need greater support if they are also to deliver on UN-Women's operational mandate which includes building country-level capacity in terms of advocacy, analytical skills and thematic expertise, as well as building systems to make more effective use of UN-Women's coordination role and catalytic potential.

55.   Conclusion 13: Limited institutionalisation of capacity and knowledge and, in some cases, an over-reliance on individual motivation, skills and tacit knowledge undermine UN-Women's capacity to fulfil its mandate.

UN-Women has good skills and capacities at all levels in key areas. It has the capacity to analyse the political-economy conditions of conflict and fragility; the advocacy skills to both engage strategically and build long-term relationships, partnerships and networks with all relevant actors; and relevant thematic expertise and technical skills. However, these tend not to be institutionalized or embedded in organizational processes but too often rely on individual capacities. As a result essential skills are not found consistently within teams.

Recommendations

56. **Recommendation 1**: Continue to scale up proactive intergovernmental engagement and inter-agency coordination through a twin-track approach to: (i) pursue women, peace and security implementation proactively and (ii) encourage buy-in from key (and sometimes reluctant) stakeholders, including selected Member States and key United Nations entities.

At the global level, UN-Women should:

- Ensure the presence of senior staff in inter-agency forums and coordination activities including, but not limited to, those chaired by UN-Women at global, regional and national levels.

- Develop new strategic relationships at the global level, including partnerships and alliances with key international stakeholders and groups that are leading peace and security and related debates beyond the United Nations system. Specifically, UN-Women needs to build stronger links with the World Bank (especially the Nairobi-based Fragility Hub), and groups such as the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, and intergovernmental humanitarian entities, among others.

- Support the creation of thematic groups and communities of practice in key policy areas relating to women, peace and security, that are comprised of key staff from country and project offices, and headquarters to improve mutual learning and cross fertilisation between global policy engagement and country experience.

At the regional and country level, UN-Women should:

- Increase staff capacity in regional offices so they can play a more proactive and strategic intergovernmental and coordination role with regional actors and regional policy/political processes relevant for peacebuilding and statebuilding agendas. These include the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UMOEA), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American system of human rights.

- Increase the opportunities for staff at headquarters and in the country offices to engage with each other, to support policy engagement at country-level and to learn lessons from programme work, in particular through reciprocal secondments.

57.   **Recommendation 2:** UN-Women should strengthen programming capabilities to remain flexible and adaptive, while improving strategic planning, strategic prioritisation of interventions and catalytic engagement in women, peace and security programming.

At the global level, UN-Women should:

- Develop new knowledge products to document innovation and achievements on ways of working and political engagement in the different thematic areas of women, peace and security programming. Such investment should result in the provision of practical guidance for programming design, including on theories of change.

- Develop clear practical guidance for all levels of its inter-agency engagement, as the Inter-Agency coordination strategy is finalised, to clarify the entity's

catalytic role and operational presence for United Nations entities, other partners and stakeholders.

At the country level, UN-Women should:

- Improve long-term strategic planning and prioritisation capacity based on enhanced context and conflict analysis, and political economy analysis which informs the selection of interventions and where efforts are best targeted.

- Increase joint programming and collaboration with other United Nations entities on peace and security and humanitarian response. In some cases, this may require the development of memorandums of understanding on ways to work together, to facilitate country-level inter-agency relations. This seems particularly appropriate to facilitating in-country relations between UN-Women and DPKO.

58.   **Recommendation 3:** UN-Women should better document implicit theories of change which feature in practice in much of its work at headquarters and in the country office.

At the global level, UN-Women should:

- Encourage the development of explicit hypotheses of *how* UN-Women's support will lead to desired outcomes for all peace and security programmes.

- Develop and implement an organization-wide M&E strategy and systems to better capture and feed lessons into strategy and programme cycles, taking into account the challenges of capturing process results related to policy influence, especially in politically sensitive contexts.

- Invest human and financial resources to encourage strategic monitoring, and knowledge production and management, to enable feedback and documentation on lessons learned.

59.   Recommendation 4: UN-Women should invest in organizational capacities, and financial and human resources specifically on women, peace and security.

UN-Women should:

- Conduct an assessment of country office staff capacities on peace and security to identify gaps and priorities. On this basis, develop a capacity-building strategy that encompasses training and on-the-job learning.

- Conduct a United Nations-wide consultation and UN-Women capacity and needs assessment regarding UN-Women's future work on humanitarian action.

- Use regional offices more strategically as resource-effective capacity development spaces, using thematic experts to run workshops for a number of country office staff members in countries where particular women, peace and security themes are seen to be especially relevant.

60.   Recommendation 5: Introduce and support more systematic risk assessments to be embedded in planning and M&E at country level.

UN-Women should:

- Develop, test and deploy tools to monitor and manage political risks within existing M&E processes.

- Implement and monitor closely the 'do no harm' principle across the peace and security portfolio to mitigate any unintended consequences for beneficiary groups, taking into consideration the increased vulnerability of women and children in conflict-affected and fragile situations.

List of Findings

Finding 1:   UN-Women and its predecessor entities have contributed to shaping global policy and norms to advance women's leadership and participation in peace and security

Finding 2:   UN-Women and UNIFEM programmes have contributed to changes in some laws and policies of Member States which advance women's leadership and participation in peace and security.

Finding 3:   The activities of UN-Women and UNIFEM country/project offices have led directly to an increase in women's leadership and participation in different thematic areas of peace and security.

Finding 4:   UN-Women and UNIFEM's global and country level activities in conflict-affected countries contributed to the enabling conditions for women's leadership and participation in peace and security.

Finding 5:   There is insufficient strategic planning within UN-Women's country and project offices.

Finding 6:   Most UN-Women programmes on peace and security lack an explicit theory of change or programme logic.

Finding 7:   How UN-Women engages with stakeholders at country level significantly influences the effectiveness of its activities in practice.

Finding 8:   Financial resources for peace and security are insufficient to meet the expectations generated with the creation of UN-Women, particularly at country level.

Finding 9:   The skills and expertise of UN-Women staff groups on peace and security and humanitarian response vary, both within and across teams and offices.

Finding 10:   There are weaknesses in the M&E systems of UN-Women country programmes, which limit their ability to demonstrate results and learn lessons from experience.

Finding 11:   There is demand from both humanitarian actors within the United Nations and beneficiary organizations for gender-sensitive approaches to humanitarian action, but UN-Women's humanitarian response capacity and activities remain limited at present.

Finding 12:   The objectives of resolution 1325 are clearly reflected in Goal 4 of UN-Women's strategic plan which provides overall strategic coherence its work on women's leadership and participation in peace and security and humanitarian response.

Finding 13:   At the global level, UN-Women is seen as a lead actor within the United Nations system on women, peace and security.

Finding 14:   There is a lack of clarity and consensus on the scope of UN-Women's normative support function and on how proactive UN-Women should be in supporting the implementation of objectives relating to women, peace and security.

Finding 15:   At country level, UN-Women's operational and strategic objectives are consistent with global objectives and priorities as set out in resolution 1325 and Goal 4 of UN-Women's Strategic Plan.

Finding 16:   UN-Women's strategic presence and positioning on peace and security varies from country to country. The capacity of UN-Women to influence stakeholders, policy and processes at country level has, to date, remained limited.

Finding 17:   The new thematic organization of UN-Women enables a more focused approach on peace and security and humanitarian response work at global and country level.

Finding 18:   Knowledge production on peace and security issues is rich and authoritative, particularly at the global level.

Finding 19:   Knowledge management and communication between headquarters and country offices are weak, and a major obstacle to improving coherence between policy and programmes.

Finding 20:   Both country context, and the skills and experience of the UN-Women country teams help to explain variations in strategic coherence and positioning.

Finding 21: At the global level, UN-Women has demonstrated an improved ability to forge strategic relationships with key stakeholders, particularly within the United Nations system.

Finding 22: There has been a marked improvement in interagency coordination on peace and security work since the creation of UN-Women.

Finding 23: The type and quality of UN-Women partnerships with women's organizations and government vary from country to country in peace and security work.

Finding 24: At the country level, UN-Women does not appear to be playing a proactive or substantial coordination role.

Finding 25: Both country context and the skills and experience of the UN-Women country teams help to explain variations between countries in terms of the type and quality of UN-Women's strategic partnerships.