



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

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## Decisions adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at its 2019 Annual Session

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## Decisions

2019/4

### Annual Report of the Under Secretary-General / Executive Director on the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Takes note of* the 2018 Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021;
2. *Notes with appreciation* the progress achieved as described in the report, including that 75 percent of all indicators in the Strategic Plan have reached their expected milestone;
3. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to improve its organizational effectiveness, sustainability of results and accountability and to address the challenges weakening its results-based management, and to continue improving its policies and practices in support of an enabling environment;
4. *Encourages* UN-Women to take into account lessons learned from the first year of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, as well as from previous strategic plans;
5. *Recognizes* the inter-agency efforts to make progress against the common chapter of the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women and urges UN-Women to continue working in close partnership with these organizations to further enhance effectiveness and delivery of results in line with their commitment to United Nations reform;
6. *Requests* UN-Women to keep the Executive Board updated on the status of its internal reform processes, including the country typology and the headquarter review, and to provide a timeline for progress in their implementation, including information with regard to possible budgetary implications and consequences for the internal control mechanisms at its first regular session 2020;
7. *Acknowledges* the increase in UN-Women's other resources; encourages countries in a position to do so, to increase their contributions, especially to regular resources; and requests UN-Women to provide an overview of the funding situation in relation to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and the approved integrated budget for the biennium 2018-2019, taking into account both regular and other resources, in advance of the second regular session 2019 and in the context of the Structured Funding Dialogue;
8. *Takes note of* UN-Women's efforts to strengthen and expand its partnerships for gender equality and women's empowerment, and to increase visibility of its results through better communication, and encourages UN-Women to continue its efforts in this regard;
9. *Requests* the Executive Director of UN-Women to include in the annual report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, information on how the individual flagship programme initiatives contribute to the five outcome areas, identify their cooperating partners and indicate the role and contribution of these partners;
10. *Commends* UN-Women for successfully leveraging its mandate in supporting Member States, upon their request, and strengthening global normative frameworks and their implementation; and reaffirms the important role of UN-Women in leading, coordinating and promoting accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment and on gender mainstreaming across the United Nations System;

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11. *Decides* to transmit the report to the Economic and Social Council.

20 June 2019

**2019/5**  
**Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2018**

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Takes note of* the report on the evaluation function of UN-Women 2018 and the programme of work and budget for 2019 of the Independent Evaluation Service;
2. *Notes* with appreciation the steps taken by UN-Women to maintain an independent, credible and useful evaluation function and its contribution to system-wide gender-responsive evaluation efforts and national evaluation capacity development;
3. *Expresses* continuing support for strengthening the evaluation function in UN-Women; notes the progress made in implementing the decision 2018/2 and that requested UN-Women to continue increasing the implementation rate, coverage and use of evaluations and to address the drop in the implementation of management responses in this regard;
4. *Requests* UN-Women to continue to address the quality of evaluation reports, to invest to evaluation capacity development and professionalization, especially to the country level and to ensure that all regional and country offices complete evaluations;
5. *Requests* UN-Women to continue the gender-responsive evaluations of country programmes, in order to improve programming at country level; and to continue using evaluation findings and recommendations in policies, strategies and programming;
6. *Notes* with concern the continuing decrease in total spending on evaluations and encourages UN-Women to reach the target of allocating 3 percent of the total UN-Women programme budget to the evaluation function by the end of the period of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021;
7. *Requests* that IES continues to seek opportunities with other United Nations agencies to conduct further joint evaluations, and independent system-wide evaluations in line with General Assembly resolution 72/279 on repositioning the United Nations Development System;
8. *Takes note of* UN-Women's work in evaluating its performance in governance and national planning and encourages UN-Women to take into account lessons learned in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

20 June 2019

**2019/6**  
**Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018**

*The Executive Board,*

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1. *Takes note of* the successful in-housing of Internal Audit Service and its co-location with the Independent Evaluation Service, emphasizing that the independence of both functions needs to be preserved;
  2. *Takes note of* the annual report on internal audit and investigation activities and the related management response; and expresses its continuing support for strengthening the capacity of Internal Audit Service;
  3. *Takes note with appreciation* the transparency on the status of investigations and the actions taken, including the Report of the Executive Director of UN-Women on disciplinary measures and other actions taken in response to misconduct and wrongdoing by UN-Women staff members, other personnel or third parties and cases of possible criminal behavior 2013-2018, and requests the Executive Director of UN-Women to continue efforts in this regard;
  4. *Takes note of* the Audit Advisory Committee's report for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018; and encourages UN-Women to consider the Audit Advisory Committee's recommendations;
  5. *Encourages* the management of UN-Women in its reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment to further enhance transparency on how implemented actions ensure a victim-centered approach and are aligned with United Nations system-wide efforts;
  6. *Notes with appreciation* that Internal Audit Service has been allocated appropriate and sufficient resources in the year 2018, and requests UN-Women to continue to allocate sufficient resources to ensure satisfactory number of internal audits and investigations each year and to support the increased responsibilities of the IEAS Director, which involves coordinating and receiving information on investigation activities;
  7. *Requests* UN-Women to address areas of recurring issues and the high number of audit recommendations related to implementing partners;
  8. *Notes with concern* that there is one long outstanding and three high-priority audit recommendations and requests UN-Women to address these.

20 June 2019

## **2019/7 Update on the implementation of GA Resolution 72/279 on repositioning of the United Nations development system**

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Welcomes* the updates provided by UN-Women on the Implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31st of May 2018 on repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;
2. *Requests* UN-Women to work towards adequately sequencing entity-specific country programming documents so that the individual programmes derive directly from the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now renamed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework), which is to be prepared and finalized in full consultation and agreement with national Governments and is the most important

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planning document of the United Nations development system at the country level; and requests UN Women to provide an update at the next session of the Executive Board on adjustments required;

3. *Requests* UN-Women to provide, for information at the next session of the Executive Board, a detailed mapping of their regional assets and capacities, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/279, and mindful of ongoing discussions on the revamping of the regional approach of the United Nations development system;

4. *Notes with appreciation* the preliminary updates provided by UN-Women on efficiencies, including through shared business operations and premises; calls upon the Executive Director of UN-Women to continue to take action to ensure full achievement of efficiency gains and their redeployment in line with relevant existing mandates, including from General Assembly resolutions 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and 72/279 on repositioning of the United Nations development system, as well as to take into account the applicable recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in the report on opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation (JIU/REP/2018/5);

5. *Requests* regular updates to the Executive Board on efficiency gains and their redeployments, through existing reporting mechanisms;

6. *Requests* UN-Women to support the efforts of the Secretary-General to develop a tracking system to monitor efficiency gains;

7. *Welcomes* that UN-Women contributed its doubled contribution to the resident coordinator cost-sharing, and calls on UN-Women to implement the 1 per cent levy, as applicable, as per the operational guidance for implementing the coordination levy (12 March 2019) issued by the United Nations Development Coordination Office;

8. *Recalls* decisions 2018/5 and notes that the agency-administered option for collecting the coordination levy adds administrative tasks to UN-Women and requires adjustments to agency administrative processes, and requests UN-Women to provide information on the adjustments and to promptly report to the Executive Board on any additional transaction and administrative costs associated with the administration of the levy, within existing reporting;

9. *Recalls* the importance of funding predictability and urges Member States in a position to do so to prioritize regular resources and multi-year pledges, given that reductions in regular resources risk jeopardizing the ability of UN-Women achieve planned strategic results;

10. *Encourages* UN-Women in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, to place special emphasis on the implementation of their respective Strategic Plans, including the common chapter on joint programming, in accordance with their respective mandates and comparative and collaborative advantages, and to report at the annual session in 2020, including through the midterm reviews of their respective Strategic Plans, where and how the inter-agency process among the United Nations funds and programmes has led to greater efficiencies and effectiveness.

20 June 2019

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## 2019/8 Working methods of the Executive Board

### *The Executive Board,*

1. *Reaffirms* the rules of procedure of the Executive Board of UN-Women;
2. *Welcomes* the written account of the core group of Member States that led the joint consultative process with Member States, in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, with a view to examining the efficiency and quality of its current sessions, as well as the functions of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards in line with decisions 2019/2 and 2018/7;
3. *Recognizes* the technical support provided by the secretariats of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP Executive Boards to the core group and notes in this regard the annex to the written account as prepared by the secretariats;
4. *Stresses* that the overarching principles of the discussion on working methods of the Executive Boards are the preservation of executive guidance and oversight of agencies; avoidance of duplication with the function of the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment and the respective Executive Boards; and respect for the different mandates and characteristics of each agency, fund, programme and entity;
5. *Requests* UN-Women, in collaboration with the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP, to organize joint informal briefings/consultations on common topics and strongly encourages that they be scheduled within socially acceptable hours to allow the WFP Executive Board to participate from Rome;
6. *Requests* the secretariat of the UN-Women Executive Board, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP, to present initial proposals to improve the working methods of the joint meeting of the Boards, including an optimal timing for convening the joint meeting of the Boards, for consideration by Member States at the second regular session 2019, mindful that the joint meeting of the Boards does not have decision making authority and of the need to avoid duplication and overlap with the functions of the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment;
7. *Requests* that the secretariat propose different alternatives of adjusting the date of the second regular session, mindful that it does not overlap with the other schedules, for consideration by the Executive Board at the second regular session 2019;
8. *Requests* that an informal, at no cost to the organizations, meeting of the Presidents of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP be held on a regular basis for enhanced harmonization of common issues, and for increased coordination among agencies, funds, programmes and entities and the respective Executive Boards, while bearing in mind that according to the rules of procedure of Executive Boards the Presidents remain under the authority of the respective Executive Boards and do not have the authority to make decisions on any substantive matters, and that the outcome of the meetings be shared with the wider membership;
9. *Affirms* the need to elect the Bureau members early on to minimize leadership gaps and enhance the efficient functioning of the Presidency and Executive Board at large;
10. *Recommends* that for continuity and smooth transition between outgoing and incoming Bureaux, whenever appropriate and consistent with the relevant rules of procedure, regional

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groups could consider taking appropriate measures so that one of the Vice-Chairs/Vice Presidents of the bureau can take on the Chair/Presidency and could be effective in that capacity in the following year;

11. *Notes* the need for flexibility on chairing the informal meetings of the Executive Board from the President of the Bureau or one of the Vice-Presidents or designated members of their delegations;

12. *Requests* that the secretariat of the UN-Women Executive Board, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and UNICEF, to continue convening consecutive formal sessions of the Executive Boards in order to avoid gaps between the formal sessions of the various Executive Boards;

13. *Requests* that the secretariat of the UN-Women Executive Board present practical proposals for improving the efficiency of the sessions of the Executive Board, including by reviewing the agenda items and the efficient consideration of these, for deliberation and consideration by the Executive Board at the second regular session 2019;

14. *Requests* that its sessions be made interactive, with the support of the secretariat, while securing the time slots for group and national statements as appropriate and necessary;

15. *Requests* that while encouraging interactive discussions, any format for enhanced interaction with senior management should have a follow-up within existing mechanisms;

16. *Encourages* the heads of agencies, funds, programmes and entities participating in Board sessions to provide the full texts of their statements or opening remarks (presentation) online in advance and deliver shorter statements at the Executive Board sessions. The statements and presentations should be concise in highlighting the main issues, evidenced-based and action oriented in addressing the challenges;

17. *Strongly encourages* the President to enforce implementation of time limits for statements;

18. *Affirms* the participation of diverse stakeholders in Executive Board sessions with full respect of the relevant clauses in the rules of procedure and based on the agreement of the Executive Board, recalls decision 2018/7, paragraph 11, and reiterates its request to give due consideration to gender balance in all panels;

19. *Requests* the Bureau upon consultation with the respective regional groups to decide the destination of field visits two years in advance, while allowing the flexibility to change host countries if circumstances dictated, in order to give host countries as well as agencies as much time as possible to prepare for the visits;

20. *Requests* the Bureau, assisted by the secretariat, to consult with the Bureaux of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP, to coordinate for the selection of joint field visits and to propose harmonized criteria for individual field visits, for evaluation by the Board at the first regular session 2020;

21. *Requests* the secretariat to circulate proposed draft decisions to the wider membership at least four weeks prior to each session, at the discretion of the Bureau, and reiterates its strong encouragement to Member States to provide their comments on draft decisions, to the extent possible, prior to the start of the session, with a view to starting substantive consultations on the draft decisions on the first day of negotiations, without pre-empting bringing in additional proposals during negotiations;

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22. *Requests* the secretariat in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and WFP, to track the implementation of Executive Board decisions using the matrix of common use as attached to the written account of the core group;

23. *Requests* the secretariat to distribute the minutes of Bureau meetings to members and observers of the Executive Board once these minutes have been approved by the Bureau;

24. *Reiterates* the request that the secretariat of the Executive Board of UN-Women regularly updates the joint online calendar of all Board meetings in real time so as to avoid overlap of schedules with other funds and programmes as well as major official meetings including the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment.

20 June 2019

**2019/9**

**UN-Women policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment**

*The Executive Board,*

1. *Takes note with appreciation of* the independent victim-centered review of UN-Women policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, as requested in the decision 2018/3, para 11, and the related UN-Women management response; and requests UN-Women to provide an update on implementation of recommendations in the independent review and as noted in the related management response, within existing reporting, to the Executive Board at its annual session in 2020;

2. *Requests* UN-Women to lead by example in ensuring all its policies and procedures on matters related to sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, including policies on protection from any form of retaliation, apply to all UN-Women's personnel, including consultants, volunteers, fellows and interns; and requests UN-Women to reinforce to its implementing partners of the need to have appropriate policies in place and to make them aware of UN-Women's policies and reporting mechanisms;

3. *Supports* the ongoing strong commitment to 'zero tolerance' for sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, by the head of UN-Women, and appreciates the actions UN-Women has taken so far, including efforts to implement further institutional and cultural changes, including mechanisms for victim support, reporting, accountability and partnerships, and stresses the need for adequate resources;

4. *Encourages* UN-Women to continue to take action to ensure a joined-up system-wide coherent approach to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment, while leveraging its mandate.

20 June 2019