Implementation of A/RES/72/279 on Repositioning of the UN Development System

UN-Women's Update

I. Introduction

1. UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, and UN-Women are pleased to provide their Executive Boards with "harmonized agency-specific information" on their respective implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 in accordance with UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board decision 2019/4, UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2019/8 and UN-Women Executive Board decision 2019/1. Under the principle of collective ownership, we remain fully committed to a repositioned UN Development System, optimally equipped to support countries achieve the 2030 Agenda. We are unwavering in working together to drive UNDS reforms forward, under the primary objective of delivering more and better collective development results for the people we serve.

2. Much of the collective implementation of UNDS reform is being undertaken jointly by the UN Sustainable Development Group, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary General and with the support of the UN Development Coordination Office and the Transition Team. Our entities are very closely engaged in these ongoing system-wide processes. Meanwhile, there are also elements of the reform which impact us individually as agencies, and which may require specific adjustments and actions, in consultation with respective Executive Boards. This update focuses on these elements.

3. UN-Women has been actively engaged in the UNDS repositioning processes to place gender equality and women's empowerment at the heart of the reforms and enhance the coherence of the UN system in support of accelerated delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for women and girls, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Recognizing that a strong coherent and coordinated UNDS can accelerate the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, UN-Women has advocated for transformational proposals in various aspects of the UNDS reform. UN-Women is also updating its policies, procedures and guidance to align with General Assembly resolution 72/279 and its implementation.

4. In addition, UN-Women is implementing its own change process to make adjustments to its structure and way of working in order to enhance its impact and better support Member States to deliver results for women and girls. As previously noted in the papers submitted to the Executive Board at the 2018 second regular session and 2019 first regular session, these changes take place both in the context of the UNDS repositioning and to reflect lessons learned from the last eight years of UN-Women operations, including recommendations from evaluations and independent assessments that have been presented to the Executive Board.

II.   Supporting the new UN Resident Coordinator system

> a.   Management and Accountability Framework (MAF)

5.   UN-Women contributed to the review of the country-level chapter of the Management and Accountability Framework for the functioning of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) system. Through its engagement, the Entity promoted a more empowered RC system in the context of the new generation of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs). The revised Management and Accountability Framework features important references to the role and responsibility of the RC and UNCT members in the area of leaving no one behind, human rights and gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the role of the RC in promoting gender parity and preventing sexual abuse and harassment.

6.   In support of MAF implementation and mutual accountability within UNCTs, UN-Women has revised the job description for its Representatives. UN-Women is revising the performance management system for Representatives to align with the MAF. This will be done in consultation with other agencies to use common language and approaches as much as possible.

> b.   Funding, levy implementation and reference to cost sharing

7.   UN-Women has provided guidance on the operationalization of the 1 per cent levy across the Entity. Associated capacity-building and amendments to systems are currently in progress.

> c.   Supporting the RC pool

8.   UN-Women has been advocating for gender parity in the appointment of Resident Coordinators, which was reached in 2018. UN-Women is supporting the RC pool by nominating qualified candidates for the RC assessment. Candidates who successfully pass the assessment are subsequently nominated to be considered for available RC positions.

9.   UN-Women has established a rigorous internal review process to select the candidates, which also follows the RC assessment criteria requirements. This guidance was developed to ensure an open and transparent nomination process and the selection of the most suitable candidates. The identified candidates are also offered support to prepare for the RC assessment. UN-Women nominated three candidates for the latest round of assessment.

III.   Strengthening system-wide analysis, planning and reporting

10.   UN-Women strongly supports the positioning of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, formerly known as the UNDAF) as the main UN instrument for coherent and integrated support to Member States on implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Within the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), UN-Women has contributed to mainstreaming a

gender perspective in the guidance for the new generation of UNSDCF. Gender equality and women's empowerment have been recognized as guiding principles for the UNSDCF.

11. Upon approval of the UNSDCF guidance, UN-Women will revise the policies, guidance and business processes associated with UN-Women's programme cycle to ensure that UN-Women strategic planning, programme management and reporting at the country level is fully aligned with the new UNSDCF requirements and standards. Moreover, UN-Women will lead and provide guidance to the UN system on gender mainstreaming in common country programming processes, including, inter alia, common country analysis (CCA), UNSDCF, as well as the use of gender markers, etc. As an input into the CCA, UN-Women will lead the development of country gender profiles in collaboration with other entities.

12. As part of its change process, UN-Women has prioritized the strengthening of capacity at regional and country level, notably in order to be able to systematically engage in CCA/UNSDCF processes and ensure that gender perspectives are embedded in UNSDCFs. Wherein cases where UN-Women does not have a country presence, UN-Women will support the Resident Coordinator in developing a gender equality strategy aligned with the UNSDCF, implemented by other UN entities and supported technically from UN-Women's regional offices to the extent that resources allow.

13. UN-Women is in the process to develop a new country typology, which will be implemented in two phases. The first is to 'right-size' UN-Women's field footprint to ensure that all presences meet a minimum capacity standard aligned with resources available. The aim is to ensure field offices have the capacity to deliver in a way which mitigates risks identified in various audit reports and the recent assessment by the Multilateral Organizations Performance Assessment Network, which highlighted uneven capacity at country level and the risk associated with it. Clear criterion which measure level of vulnerability, gender inequality, and financial vulnerability were used along with sustainable funding interest to develop the field footprint. Future growth will be determined by a bespoke set of indicators which are connected to UN-Women's five areas of focus in the Strategic Plan.

14. Together with other UN agencies, in 2019, UN-Women will work to harmonize and synchronize the various data collection and reporting platforms in the UN. It will explore how agency-specific online results tracking systems including UN-Women's Results Management System (RMS) and UN INFO can be synchronized in a consistent manner across agencies and entities to facilitate coordination, standardized data capturing and harmonized reporting. UN-Women will continue to lead, coordinate, promote and expand the roll-out of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard which constitutes a rich source of harmonized data and information across the UNCTs on meeting common standards for gender equality and women's empowerment.

15. UN-Women's financial tracking is fully aligned to the UN Data Cube (with some small exceptions, which will need to be manually mapped until business requirements are met in the Enterprise Resource Planning system). Notably, UN-Women is on track to report 2018 Financial Data aligned to the UN Data Cube to the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination by the deadline of 15th May 2019.

16. Implementation of the gender markers will continue to be supported and strengthened through the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard and its integration in broader UN system-wide monitoring and reporting systems, such as UN INFO. Concomitantly, to ensure a harmonization of approaches between the Entity and country level, UN-Women will continue to embed the gender marker into UN entity-level ERP systems, inter alia as part of the support to UN-SWAP 2.0. At the United Nations system-level, the UN-Women Executive Director co-chairs the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality to review and track budgets and expenditures across the system and make recommendations on how to increase financing for gender equality. Recommendations will be made by the Task Force to the Secretary-General in June 2019.

17. With respect to reporting on gender-related SDG results, the UN-SWAP 2.0, as well as the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard, have for the first time provided an overview[1] of the UN system's performance related to results, especially on SDG 5 and the gender-related outcomes in the UNSDCF, in line with requests[2] for accountability on collective results in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Effective reporting will require strengthening of individual and system-wide common methodologies and systems, including through system-wide reporting and system-wide evaluations of the UN's normative work in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of the SDGs.

IV.   Strengthening joint implementation/support to the SDGs:

    a.   Policy action:

18. UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN-Women introduced a common set of SDG indicators in the Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) to monitor collaborative contributions to the SDGs through the implementation of the Common Chapter. Relevant QCPR indicators were also incorporated in the IRRF to monitor how agencies work together to achieve organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

19. UN-Women is committed to providing coherent and integrated policy support together with other entities. UN-Women supports UNSDG's Mainstreaming, Acceleration, Policy Support (MAPS) as a tool for effective and coherent support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. UN-Women will strengthen its engagement with MAPS.

---

[1] https://undocs.org/E/2019/54

[2] The updated UN-SWAP responds to the QCPR resolution (resolution 71/243, para. 12), by which the General Assembly requested "the United Nations development system and its individual entities to continue to strengthen results-based management, focusing on long-term development outcomes, developing common methodologies for planning and reporting on results". The Secretary-General report on Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet emphasizes the system's collective contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including accountability for system-wide mandates and actions, as well as for collective results. The UN-SWAP reporting was oriented to respond to these requests.

20. As part of UN-Women's change process, UN-Women will strengthen policy support at the regional level by identifying capacity that can be decentralized in order to strengthen regional and country offices. Decentralized Policy Advisors will strengthen expertise available locally in each of the thematic areas relevant to that region, allowing UN-Women to provide stronger and more integrated policy support on gender equality and women's empowerment to Member States. UN-Women will also adopt a networked approach to its policy work, ensuring that global policy capacity is fully connected to regional/country capacity, including through a robust knowledge management system. This will further enhance consistency in the policy advice provided by the Entity. At headquarters, the integration of policy and programme functions under one Director will contribute to greater coherence between the Entity's global policy work and its application in UN-Women programmes.

21. UN-Women will continue to invest in knowledge generation and management to promote evidence-based policy support for implementation of the SDGs. For example, UN-Women's 2018 flagship report on the SDGs, "*Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*", provides a comprehensive and authoritative assessment of progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the SDGs from a gender perspective and offers practical guidance for the implementation of gender-responsive policies and accountability processes. UN-Women collaborates with other UN agencies to promote joint utilization of this report for policy support to Member States.

    b. Data:

22. UN-Women has spearheaded methodological development for three SDG indicators that measure progress in critical dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment: legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality (SDG indicator 5.1.1); increased representation of women in local government (SDG indicator 5.5.1b); and tracking of gender budget allocations (SDG indicator 5.c.1). This methodological work resulted in all three indicators being reclassified from Tier III to Tier II by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators, which means they are conceptually clear with established international standards and methodologies. The indicators have relevance for countries and can inform policy and legislative review processes, as well as strengthen policy formulation and implementation for the achievement of SDG 5. Data will be reported for the first time in 2019 in the UN Secretary-General's annual report on the SDGs.

23. Given the importance of gender data for gender-responsive SDGs implementation, UN-Women will continue to roll out its Flagship Programming Initiative (FPI) "*Women Count*". The FPI provides technical and financial support to countries to improve the production and use of gender data to monitor the implementation of the SDGs and other national policy priorities. As part of the programme, UN-Women collaborates with the United Nations Statistics Division and all Regional Commissions to monitor the SDGs, provide technical support to countries, and strengthen coordination.

24. UN-Women also collaborates with WHO through a joint programme to improve data on violence against women. The establishment and launch of the Centre of Excellence on Gender

Statistics, a collaboration between UN-Women and Mexico, is another milestone that will lead to innovations in new and emerging areas and increased south-south and triangular cooperation in gender statistics.

c.   Joint Programming:

25.   UN-Women is committed to joint programming as a way of promoting collective efforts by UN entities and national partners to jointly plan, implement, monitor and evaluate development interventions aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDG 5 on gender equality. Joint programming offers UN-Women an opportunity to strengthen the systematic gender mainstreaming in the work of UNCTs in partnership with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including women's organizations, community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders, and girls' and youth-led organizations. UN-Women has leveraged its UN system coordination mandate to lead and coordinate the implementation of joint programmes on gender equality and women's empowerment in various countries under the leadership of RCs. Given the importance of joint programmes, UN-Women has asked all field offices to ensure that 25 per cent of the office's programme budget by 2021 is implemented through joint programmes as stated in the organization's Strategic Plan. Based on 2018 figures, joint programmes currently represent 13 per cent of programme expenditures.

d.   Joint SDG Fund:

26.   UN-Women has actively participated in the working group supporting the Joint SDG Fund to ensure gender mainstreaming is undertaken in all aspects of the Fund. UN-Women is not currently part of the Fund's Steering Committee. Given the relevance of UN-Women's mandate, UN-Women has been given special expert status and invited to nominate two specialists to review concept notes for the first call of proposals.

27.   In addition, UN-Women has actively contributed to the work of the inter-agency working group which has drafted the guide for UNCTs on leaving no one behind. Due to the relevance of this principle to the work of the Joint Fund, the working group has also been asked to play an active role in supporting UNCTs in both conceptualization and implementation of projects supported by the Fund.

e.   SDG training:

28.   UN-Women has been providing substantive contribution to the UN Development Coordination Office on the design and development of the SDG Primer. UN-Women will continue to build capacity of its staff members to effectively support Member States in the implementation of the SDGs. This will be done in partnership with other entities including the UN System Staff College.

V.   Efficiencies through shared business operations and premises

a.   Mutual recognition:

29. UN-Women actively engages in the inter-agency Business Innovation Group (BIG) Project. The BIG Project Team will start to focus on how to operationalize the Mutual Recognition Statement. UN-Women will continue to explore how the Entity can best benefit from universal policy solutions in the context of common services and common back offices.

b.   Business operations:

30. UN-Women participates in the ongoing discussions led by the BIG Project Team on the Common Back Office (CBO) and Business Operations Strategy (BOS). The Entity contributed to the finalization of the revised BOS guidelines as well as to the further enhancement of BOS for future piloting at country level. UN-Women actively contributes to the development of the BOS at the country level through its participation in the Operations Management Team as one of the key structures of the UNCT to promote joint operations at the country level.

31. In the context of its change process, UN-Women is also looking at ways to streamline business processes, decentralize authority and fully leverage the capacity of other entities, when available, in support of its work.

c.   Premises:

32. UN-Women is an active participant in the inter-agency Task Team on Common Premises and will participate in pilot programmes across 6 countries where existing data demonstrates high opportunity for consolidation of premises at country level. In addition, 84 per cent of UN-Women's Country Offices are already co-located with one or more agencies. As part of UN-Women's participation in the Task Team, the Entity highlights the importance of Duty of Care and safety of women, as well as the alignment with the Secretary-General's Disability Framework.

VI.   Review of agency assets at country and regional level

33. UN-Women is committed to help ensure the UNDS is fit for purpose at the regional level and that the UNDS has the ability to provide country-focused support in an optimal and efficient manner. UN-Women supports the vision of the UN at the regional level to be a convening platform and a community of knowledge to provide best policy solutions to accelerate implementation of Agenda 2030 while leveraging all UN regional assets. A close cooperation between UNDS and Regional Commissions should be established to avoid gaps and overlaps but at the same time preserve some key functions performed by Regional Offices and Regional UNSDG to support Country Offices/UNCTs on policy guidance, quality assurance of UNSDCF, programme oversight, RC performance assessment, operational procedures for Joint programmes, etc.

34. UN-Women will continue to strengthen its partnerships with regional bodies such as the African Union, ASEAN, CARICOM, Council of Europe, OSCE, etc. in collaboration with other UN entities. UN-Women supports the need to ensure the normative and human rights dimension of the work of the UN. Further, UN-Women also advocates for inclusiveness and openness towards engaging civil society, the private sector and academia at the regional level.

35. As previously noted, the strengthening of regional offices, particularly their policy capacity, is a key element of the change process and supports the broader vision for the UNDS repositioning at regional level.

VII.   Funding Compact

36. UN-Women will engage with the Executive Board on the Funding Compact as part of its Structured Dialogue on Financing and in ongoing reporting to the Executive Board.

37. UN-Women believes that the visibility of results and a strong link between results and resources is essential to enhancing funding to the Entity. It presents results achieved as part of annual reporting to the Executive Board and through other channels, including its website and social media. In 2018, UN-Women published its first Core Resources Report specifically highlighting the impact of core contributions (regular resources) and the importance of prioritizing such resources to ensure the institutional strength of the Entity. In addition, UN-Women provides project-specific reporting and visibility for earmarked contributions.

38. On its global website, UN-Women highlights information on its financial resources and partners and acknowledges contributions. UN-Women is developing a transparency portal to provide a comprehensive data visualization of UN-Women's results. The transparency portal will allow users to search, filter, group, and generate information by attributes such as programme/thematic areas, SDGs, funding source and geographic locations. As a first step, the data companion to the annual report on implementation of the Strategic Plan has been built online to allow for greater interactivity and better visualization of performance.

VIII.   Conclusion

39. Together with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNOPS, UN-Women reiterates its strong commitment to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 and to build on the lessons learned to further strengthen our common impact on the ground.

40. UN-Women will continue to proactively engage in system-wide processes on repositioning of the UNDS and to ensure they support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. UN-Women will seek to influence the system to ensure system-wide commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women are implemented. UN-Women will also continue to align progress on the UNDS repositioning with its ongoing change processes aimed at enhancing UN-Women's impact for women and girls.