



GENDER-RESPONSIVENESS IN THE UNITED NATIONS DISABILITY INCLUSION STRATEGY

AN ANALYSIS OF UNITED NATIONS ENTITIES'
UNDIS REPORTS FROM 2023



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UN Women and UNFPA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. GENDER-RESPONSIVENESS AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN UNDIS ENTITY REPORTS	4
2.1 Integration of gender into UNDIS indicators	5
2.2 Gender and intersectionality references across indicators	7
3. PROMISING PRACTICES ON GENDER-RESPON- SIVENESS AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN UNDIS REPORTING	10
4. SYNERGIES WITH UNDIS AND UN-SWAP	14
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	17
6. CONCLUDING REMARKS	19
Annex 1: Glossary	20
Annex 2: Interview guide	22
Annex 3: Terms of reference	23
Annex 4: Tool for supporting gender-responsiveness of UNDIS reports	25
Annex 5: Suggested joint indicators	30

ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GDF	United Nations Global Disability Fund
IAWGGD	UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender and Disability Inclusion
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OIOS	United Nations Office for Internal Oversight Services
OPD	Organization of persons with disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDIS	United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNPRPD	United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UN-SWAP	UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the gender-responsiveness of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), based on an analysis of 2023 UNDIS entity reports. The UNDIS, adopted in 2019, provides a system-wide accountability framework to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities across the United Nations (UN). The assessment reveals that some entities have successfully incorporated gender considerations into their strategic planning, programming and evaluation processes, while others continue to face challenges in doing so systematically. Furthermore, integration of gender in UNDIS reporting remains inconsistent.

A key barrier is the lack of gender-specific accountability and guidance within the UNDIS accountability framework. Additionally, gender and disability are often addressed in parallel rather than through an intersectional lens, despite recognition of the importance of tackling intersecting forms of discrimination. Entities also report challenges in aligning their UNDIS reporting with the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

The report highlights several practices that demonstrate how entities are embedding gender-disability intersectionality across various areas of work. These include the use of disaggregated data to inform strategic planning, as well as the integration of intersectional perspectives into internal policies and operational frameworks. Some entities have initiated processes that actively involve women with disabilities and their representative organizations in consultations. Others have developed programmes that specifically address barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities. Evaluations increasingly apply intersectional analysis, and joint initiatives adopt both gender-responsive and disability-inclusive approaches. Furthermore, the report details efforts to promote the visibility and representation of women and girls with disabilities through inclusive communications.

The report identifies several key areas that could strengthen the gender-responsive implementation of UNDIS. These include ensuring that progress on indicators related to internal systems and operations including accessibility, reasonable accommodation, employment and procurement addresses barriers women, girls and persons with disabilities with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). Additionally, the report underscores the importance of moving beyond activity-based reporting to capture evidence of transformational change that advances both gender equality and disability inclusion. To strengthen the gender-responsive implementation of the UNDIS, the report offers five key recommendations:

1. Integrate gender and intersectionality into the UNDIS accountability framework.
2. Establish common indicators to strengthen system-wide coherence.
3. Strengthen system-wide capacity through shared learning and targeted technical support.
4. Strengthen collaboration through formalized roles and structures.
5. Advocate for Member State support for gender-responsive implementation of UNDIS.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationale and context

Gender and disability (see Annex 1 for definitions of terms) are cross-cutting dimensions of inequality that often intersect with other structural factors, including age, race, geographic location and socioeconomic status. Recognizing this, the UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender and Disability Inclusion (IAWGDD) has advocated for breaking down silos and addressing the intersectionality of gender and disability.

The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), adopted by the Secretary-General in 2019, provides a system-wide accountability framework to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities across the UN. As a key tool in operationalizing the UN's commitment to the rights of persons with disabilities, UNDIS has driven progress in mainstreaming disability inclusion in leadership, strategic planning and management, inclusiveness, programming and organizational culture across UN entities.

In 2023, entities continued to make progress in implementing the UNDIS, meeting or exceeding requirements for 38 per cent of the indicators, up from 34 per cent in 2022. In addition to the entity level, a complementary accountability framework is in place for UN Country Teams (UNCTs). The implementation of the UNDIS now spans all UNCTs and an increasing number of UN entities.

Disability inclusion cannot be achieved in isolation but must be grounded in an intersectional approach that recognizes and addresses the multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination.¹ Currently, the UNDIS framework does not require implementation of the intersection of disability inclusion and gender equality. However, intersectionality is promoted, for instance, through various examples in the Reports of the Secretary-General on Disability Inclusion in the UN system.

Numerous international mandates reinforce this imperative, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These commitments are further operationalized through frameworks such as the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

Up to 2024, 75 UN entities² had reported on the UN-SWAP indicators. As the first unified accountability framework for accelerating gender mainstreaming in the UN system since 2012, the UN-SWAP has provided UN entities with a set of indicators to benchmark performance and measure progress across all business areas and track gender-related Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG) results both at the entity level and by UN country teams (UN Country Team System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality Scorecard, UNCT-SWAP). This assessment takes into consideration the UN-SWAP.

This report comes at a critical moment, amid widespread funding constraints, the operationalization of UN reform, and growing political pushback against gender equality and human rights. These dynamics underscore the urgency of reinforcing inclusive, intersectional approaches as essential to delivering on the UN's mandate. The report contributes to synergies and opportunities for working more effectively across systems, even in a constrained and shifting global environment.

¹ "Intersectional discrimination" occurs when a person with a disability or associated to disability suffers discrimination of any form on the basis of disability, combined with, colour, sex, language, religion, ethnic, gender or other status. Intersectional discrimination can appear as direct or indirect discrimination, denial of reasonable accommodation or harassment. For example, while the denial of access to general health-related information due to inaccessible format affects all persons on the basis of disability, the denial to a blind woman of access to family planning services restricts her rights based on the intersection of her gender and disability. Source: CRPD Committee. 18. General Comment 6, para 19. CRPD/C/CG/6.

² UN-SWAP Participating Entities 2024. Available at: <https://gendercoordinationandmainstreaming.unwomen.org/entities/un-swap-participating-entities>

Framing the assessment

This report explores the gender-responsiveness of the UNDIS implementation based on 2023 UNDIS entity reports. According to the United Nations, “Gender-responsiveness describes processes or outcomes that explicitly take gender equality into account, for example through research, data collection, analyses, consultation and other processes. Gender-responsiveness implies consistent and systematic attention to gender-based differences and inequalities between women and men, with a view to addressing systemic and structural constraints to gender equality, as well as underlying causes of gender inequality, discrimination, and exclusion. Processes and outcomes that are gender-responsive could be laws, policies, programmes, services and other inputs that are formulated, planned and delivered in a manner that facilitates the achievement of gender equality.”³

Specifically, the assessment:

- Identifies areas in the UNDIS reports and under specific indicators where gender or intersectionality are mentioned
- Highlights promising practices that demonstrate the empowerment of women and girls and persons with disabilities with SOGIESC within the UNDIS framework
- Consolidates lessons learned of intersectional approaches applied across UN entities
- Proposes a tool for supporting gender-responsiveness in future UNDIS reporting cycles
- Recommends ways to strengthen synergies between UNDIS and the UN-SWAP to promote intersectional development outcomes.

The findings and recommendations aim to inform and support stronger gender-responsive implementation of the UNDIS and greater coherence across UNDIS and UN-SWAP 3.0, ultimately contributing to an inclusive, human rights-based UN system that leaves no one behind.

Approach and methods

In 2023, 81 entities reported under the entity accountability framework.⁴ This assessment reviewed a sample of 13 UNDIS entity reports for the year 2023 (16.05 per cent), made available by the participating UN entities. In addition to the written reports, three entities opted to participate in semi-structured interviews (see Annex 2 for the interview guide) to elaborate on their approaches and challenges in integrating gender into UNDIS reporting and implementation. One of the interviewed entities also submitted its report for the assessment. One non-reporting member of the IAWGGD also participated in an interview. Of the participating entities, six were from the Secretariat, three from funds and programmes, two from specialized agencies, and four from other related organizations. Consultations were also held with UN Women’s Global Task Team on Gender and Disability and with the IAWGGD members.

The selection of the 13 entities was based on voluntary submission of their 2023 UNDIS reports in response to the call for a gender-responsiveness assessment. Consequently, the sample composition reflects the entities that chose to participate and should not be interpreted as a representative cross-section of the entire UN system. Furthermore, this study did not undertake an analysis of potential correlations between organizational attributes such as entity size or mandate and the observed levels of gender and disability responsiveness. This constitutes a recognized limitation of the present study.

A qualitative content analysis was undertaken to identify where and how gender, gender-responsiveness and gender mainstreaming were addressed within each of the 15 indicators of the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework. Each report was systematically reviewed for references to mechanisms promoting gender equality and intersectionality within disability inclusion efforts reported by the entities.

3 United Nations Economic and Social Council. 1997. [Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General](#). E/RES/1997/66.

4 United Nations. 2023. [Report of the Secretary-General: Disability inclusion in the United Nations system](#)

Promising practices were documented, and gaps and recommendations were drawn from a comparative analysis across entities. The assessment also mapped potential synergies with other UN accountability tools, focused on the UN-SWAP.

The independent system-wide evaluation of UNDIS is ongoing and will provide an external assessment of the UNDIS after five years of implementation. It will contribute to accountability and learning on disability inclusion in the United Nations system and inform key processes and events in this area. Complementarity with the UNDIS evaluation has been taken into consideration in this assessment through dedicated meetings between the two teams to align scope and findings, ensure coherence, and avoid duplication of efforts.

As the UNDIS accountability framework currently does not require reporting on the intersections between gender equality and disability inclusion, gender and intersectionality dimensions are not presented in the UNDIS technical notes which is then reflected on the depth of reporting on gender and intersectionality. It is therefore important to recognize that the reports used for this assessment may not fully capture the scope of efforts underway across the UN system in this area.

The assessment was conducted from mid-February to May 2025, in line with the Terms of Reference (ToRs) (Annex 3).

2. GENDER-RESPONSIVENESS AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN UNDIS ENTITY REPORTS

The findings demonstrate that the integration of gender in UNDIS reporting remains inconsistent across entities. While some entities have developed action plans and endorsed policies to enhance gender-responsiveness, others face challenges in systematically incorporating gender considerations into their reports.

The assessment suggests that this may be due to a lack of guidance on gender and intersectionality in UNDIS reporting, and the absence of dedicated gender-specific requirements in the accountability framework. Moreover, in the reports, gender and

disability are often addressed separately rather than through an intersectional lens. Thus, efforts to apply intersectionality in reporting are limited, despite evidence that entities recognize the importance of doing this.

The entities' reports demonstrate difficulties in aligning UNDIS reporting with other UN entity-level accountability frameworks, such as the UN-SWAP and the Youth Scorecard for UN entities. This aspect was also made evident in the interview data.

2.1 INTEGRATION OF GENDER INTO UNDIS INDICATORS

UNDIS includes an Entity Accountability Framework composed of 15 performance indicators across four key areas: leadership, strategic planning and management; inclusiveness; programming; and organizational culture. While indicators do not

directly reference gender, each offers potential entry points for promoting gender-responsiveness and intersectionality. Below is a brief overview of all 15 indicators with reflections on entry points where gender can be further integrated.

LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Indicator 1: Leadership

Measures the extent to which senior managers publicly and internally champion disability inclusion and ensure accountability. Leadership that explicitly champions the rights and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC is essential to embedding disability-gender intersectionality at all levels of the organization.

Indicator 2: Strategic planning and management

Assesses whether disability inclusion is integrated into an entity's core strategic documents. The disaggregation of data by disability and sex, and the inclusion of targeted strategies for marginalized groups, are critical for gender-responsive planning.⁵

Indicator 3: Disability-specific policy/strategy

Evaluates whether the entity has a dedicated policy or strategy on disability inclusion, and whether it is implemented and reviewed. Effective policies would highlight the specific needs and rights of women and girls with disabilities and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC.

Indicator 4: Institutional set-up

Measures whether there is a designated unit or staff with substantive expertise on disability, and whether a network of disability focal points exists. Inclusion of gender and intersectionality expertise within these structures enhances capacity for intersectional approaches.

INCLUSIVENESS

Indicator 5: Consultation with persons with disabilities

Evaluates the extent and quality of consultations with organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). Gender-responsive and intersectional consultation approaches require the meaningful engagement of women-led OPDs and youth with disabilities, including in general decision-making processes.⁶

Indicator 6: Accessibility

Assesses the implementation of accessibility strategies, including physical, digital and communications accessibility. Ensuring that accessibility measures address barriers that prevent diverse women and girls with disabilities from equally participating and accessing (e.g. safety, privacy, cultural sensitivity) spaces or information is a key gender consideration.

⁵ To *meet or exceed* requirements the entity must report on “disaggregation of data by disability and sex in the main strategic planning document, as relevant”.

⁶ See more about intersectional and gender-transformative consultation practices: UN Women. 2022. [Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit: An Intersectional Approach to Leave No One Behind](#); UNFPA. 2023. [Gender-transformative Approaches – Technical Note](#).

Indicator 6.1: Accessibility of conferences and events

Specifically focuses on the accessibility of UN conferences and events. Gender dimensions could include the provision of inclusive and safe spaces, accessible childcare and gender-sensitive facilitation that encourages the participation of women with disabilities and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC.

Indicator 7: Reasonable accommodation

Assesses whether the organization provides reasonable accommodation for staff with disabilities. A gender lens ensures that accommodations address the specific barriers experienced by women and other staff with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC. This may include accommodations for parenting or reproductive health.

PROGRAMMING

Indicator 9: Programmes and projects

Assesses how disability inclusion is integrated into programmatic work. Gender-responsive programming includes targeted actions for women and girls with disabilities and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC, the use of sex- and disability-disaggregated data, and inclusive design processes.

Indicator 10: Evaluation

Assesses whether evaluations include disability inclusion, appropriate methodologies and indicators. A gender-responsive evaluation approach examines how interventions include and affect women, men and non-binary persons with disabilities differently and promotes learning on effective intersectional practices.

Indicator 8: Procurement

Measures whether accessibility and inclusion are considered in procurement policies and practices. Inclusive procurement can support women with disabilities as entrepreneurs or suppliers, and ensure that goods and services are gender-responsive and disability-inclusive.

Indicator 11: Country programme documents

This indicator reviews whether disability inclusion is integrated into country-level planning frameworks. Programmatic guidance on disability inclusion takes into account gender analysis and country programme documents are explicit about the intersectionality of gender and disability, among other factors.

Indicator 12: Joint initiatives

Assesses collaboration with other UN entities on disability inclusion. Gender-disability synergies in joint work – e.g. humanitarian action, disaster risk reduction (DRR), peacebuilding – can ensure that intersectional inclusion efforts are implemented.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Indicator 13: Employment

Evaluates whether recruitment, retention and career advancement systems are inclusive of persons with disabilities. For instance, flexible work arrangements can support the greater participation of women with disabilities and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC in the UN workforce. This indicator also should recognize unpaid care and support roles related to disability.

Indicator 14: Capacity-development for staff

Assesses whether personnel receive training on disability inclusion. Integrating gender and intersectionality into disability inclusion training builds awareness and skills to apply a rights-based, inclusive approach across all areas of work.

Indicator 15: Communication



Assesses whether an entity's internal and external communications are accessible and inclusive. Gender-sensitive language, showcasing stories or imagery of women with disabilities and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC, or aligning communications with inclusive messaging standards advance the gender-responsiveness of this indicator.

2.2 GENDER AND INTERSECTIONALITY REFERENCES ACROSS INDICATORS

This section summarizes how gender, gender equality, gender-responsiveness and intersectionality are reflected in the 2023 UNDIS entity reports, organized by each of the 15 performance indicators. The mapping

identifies whether gender references are explicit (e.g. named strategies, sex-disaggregated data, targeted actions), implicit (e.g. broad inclusion language without gender specificity), or not addressed at all.

TABLE 1
References to gender or intersectionality, as per UNDIS indicators

Indicator	Type of reference	References to gender
1. Leadership	 Implicit	Leadership messages frequently emphasize inclusion and diversity, but references to gender-specific leadership or the empowerment of women with disabilities are rare in the reports except for few exceptions.
2. Strategic planning & management	 Explicit	Several entities include sex-disaggregated data, gender-responsive results frameworks, or reference women and girls with disabilities in their strategic planning documents.

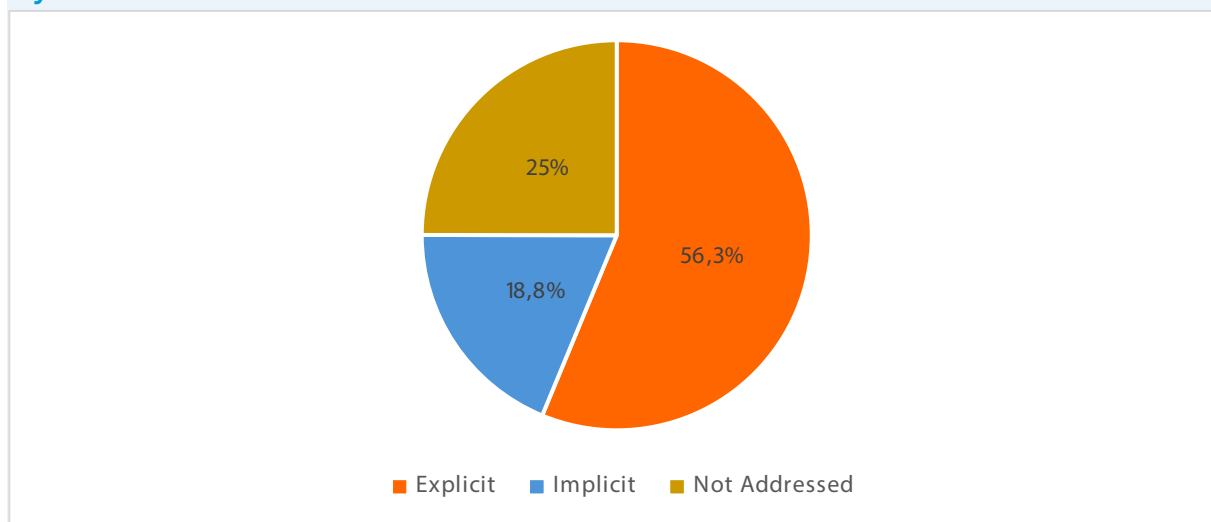
Indicator	Type of reference	References to gender
3. Disability policy/strategy	 Explicit	Some disability strategies or policies include specific references to the rights of women and girls with disabilities and acknowledge intersectionality as a guiding principle.
4. Institutional set-up	 Implicit	While disability focal points are designated, gender expertise within these networks or structured collaboration with gender focal points is rarely reported.
5. Consultation	 Explicit	Some entities report meaningful and prolonged engagement with women-led organizations of persons with disabilities.
6. Accessibility	 Not Addressed	Accessibility is addressed broadly; however, gender-specific considerations are absent in the reports.
6.1. Accessibility of events	 Not Addressed	Accessibility measures are described, but reports do not include gender-responsive approaches tailored for women with disabilities at events.
7. Reasonable accommodation	 Not Addressed	Provisions for reasonable accommodation are mentioned, but no entities report on gender-responsive or individualized accommodations addressing gender-specific barriers.
8. Procurement	 Not Addressed	There are no mentions of gender-responsive procurement or inclusion of women with disabilities as suppliers or entrepreneurs across the reports.
9. Programmes and projects	 Explicit	Several examples from reports demonstrate targeted interventions for women and girls with disabilities and examples of mainstreaming gender in programming.
10. Evaluation	 Explicit	Some evaluations apply an intersectional analysis, consider the differentiated impacts on women and girls with disabilities, or use sex-disaggregated indicators.
11. Country programme documents	 Explicit	A few entities reference gender-disability considerations in country-level planning frameworks and use disaggregated data to guide national programming.
12. Joint initiatives	 Explicit	Various joint initiatives are reported with gender-disability responsive elements.
13. Employment	 Implicit	Employment policies generally address disability inclusion, but references to gender parity as a goal, affirmative action or inclusive career progression for women with disabilities, or persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC, are limited.
14. Capacity-development	 Explicit	Some capacity-building initiatives and staff training integrate modules on gender, intersectionality, or the rights of women and girls with disabilities.
15. Communication	 Explicit	Public communications include few reports of portrayals of women with disabilities; however, reporting on systemic gender-sensitive communication remains limited.

The mapping of gender-related or intersectionality mentions and references across UNDIS indicators reveals a mixed picture of progress towards the intersectionality of gender and disability through the entity reports. Encouragingly, a number of UN entities have taken steps to explicitly integrate gender considerations in strategic planning, programming and evaluation processes. Indicators 2 (Strategic planning), 9 (Programmes and projects), and 10 (Evaluation) stand out for their more consistent application of sex-disaggregated data, references to gender-based barriers, and examples of targeted interventions for women and girls with disabilities. Moreover, Indicators 5 (Consultation), 12 (Joint initiatives) and 15 (Communication) also show promising practices.

Reporting against indicators related to internal systems and operations – such as Accessibility (6 and 6.1), Reasonable accommodation (7), Procurement (8) and Employment (14) – are limited in how they address gender. For example, accessibility and reasonable accommodation measures do not indicate attention to gender-specific barriers such as safety, privacy, caregiving responsibilities or access to menstrual health. Similarly, employment and procurement frameworks do not report on how systemic gender inequalities affect women with disabilities differently in hiring, retention or participation in economic opportunities

FIGURE 1

Extent to which the 15 UNDIS indicators address gender and intersectionality: explicitly, implicitly or not at all



Across most indicators, explicit gender-responsive and intersectional approaches remain the exception rather than the norm. This suggests that there remains a substantial opportunity to expand gender-responsive disability inclusion across the UN system. The findings also suggest that rather than including gender as a stand-alone indicator, gender could rather be considered as a cross-cutting requirement across UNDIS, as illustrated by an interviewee:

“UNDIS is a strong framework, but it lacks a specific section on gender. Gender isn’t just about counting women’s participation; it’s about power. We would

welcome a gender lens within UNDIS, but it must go beyond box-ticking or reductionist approaches like simply counting how many women and men are involved. It’s not about adding a separate indicator on gender because everything is gendered.”

Annex 4 contains a tool developed to incorporate gender considerations into UNDIS reporting across all indicators. This has been designed as a series of questions that prompt entities to consider disability and gender together.

3. PROMISING PRACTICES ON GENDER-RESPONSIVENESS AND INTERSECTIONALITY IN UNDIS REPORTING

The entity reports present various promising practices in different institutional, operational and programmatic contexts.

LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Strategic planning remains a strong area of gender-responsiveness in the entity reports indicating a more systematic approach. This finding is in line with the Secretary-General's 2023 Report on Disability Inclusion in the United Nations System, which demonstrates that the percentage of entities incorporating disability inclusion in their strategic plans increased significantly in 2023, with 44 per cent of entities disaggregating data by disability and sex.⁷

Entities have taken steps to embed gender-disability intersectionality into their internal policies, strategies and operational frameworks through diverse measures. For instance, in 2023, UN Women added a performance measure on the proposed programme budget for 2024, indicating the “number of organizations of persons with disabilities partnering with UN country offices to address the specific needs and demands of women and girls”.

The current Strategic Plan of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) showcases the organization's commitment to disability inclusion. As it works to strengthen policy, legal and accountability frameworks, improve access to essential services, and address harmful gender and social norms, there is a specific focus on the sexual and reproductive health

and rights of women and youth with disabilities, as well as their right to live free from violence. This commitment is rooted in the organization's Leave No One Behind operational plan, which approaches disability and gender from an intersectional perspective.

The placement and coordination of gender and disability focal points varies across entities. Some entities have integrated these roles within a single unit, while others maintain separate structures, limiting engagement. While there are some positive examples of collaboration, focal points often operate with varying levels of capacity on both gender-responsiveness and disability inclusion.

While disability focal points are designated, gender expertise within these networks, or structured collaboration with gender focal points, is rarely reported. Moreover, in several cases, the same individuals are tasked with multiple focal point roles, covering gender, disability, inclusion, and intersectionality. This has raised concerns that the staff in these critical roles are being stretched too thin, potentially limiting the depth and effectiveness of their engagement across each area.

⁷ United Nations. 2023. Report of the Secretary-General: Disability inclusion in the United Nations system.

Structural changes have been made in some entities to reflect an intersectional approach in the **institutional set-up**. As one interviewee reported:

“The entity [UNDP] is undergoing a transition aimed at enhancing its capacity to capture and address intersectionality more effectively. As part of this shift, a portfolio has been established to focus on participation, information and inclusion. In the context of this portfolio, disability and youth have been brought together as distinct but mutually reinforcing workstreams under one integrated area. This institutional setup was intentionally designed to reflect and operationalize an intersectional approach, recognizing the overlapping and interconnected experiences of marginalization and ensuring more coherent and inclusive programming and advocacy efforts.”

INCLUSIVENESS

Inclusiveness presents the fewest references to gender of all core areas, which could reflect the continued lack of capacity on operationalizing intersectional approaches to gender and disability in this area. Gender-responsive progress in the area of inclusiveness depends on understanding the intersectional aspects disability, the critical role of accessibility and disability and gender-based stigma and various forms of discrimination in surmounting these barriers.

Meaningful participation of women with disabilities is essential for full inclusion. UN entities are increasingly working together to consult with persons with disabilities, including women-led OPDs. These joint efforts enhance inclusivity, consistency and shared accountability across the UN system. For instance, the Sendai Framework Gender Action Plan was developed in consultation with women with disabilities, ensuring an intersectional approach whereby gender and disability were systematically addressed in the development of DRR policy and programming guidance. The process of developing the Action Plan was co-led by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UN Women and UNFPA.

Another promising practice was identified from the UN Women report, where a global coordinator for disability inclusion and intersectionality leads UN Women’s global portfolio. The coordinator engages closely with senior leadership, various business units, UN inter-agency and multi-stakeholder groups as well as civil society to strengthen attention to the intersectionality of disability, gender and age, among others.

Accessibility is a prerequisite for participation. UN Women has been urging all side event organizers at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to ensure accessibility at side events, and has provided guidelines, such as the Feminist Accessibility Protocol, with CSW event organizers. Accessibility has been a key priority for UN Women in its own side events.

In 2021, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed, tested and finalized a [toolkit](#) on accessibility in camps and evacuation centres, which was developed bearing in mind the needs of women with disabilities. The guidance and accompanying tools highlight the importance of key accessibility needs of women with disabilities, such as incorporating locks that are easy to use in accessible toilets, lighted pathways to latrines and water pathways, discussions with women with disabilities when determining accessibility works.

PROGRAMMING

Several entities have developed and implemented **programmes and projects** that are gender-responsive and address the unique barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities. These initiatives stand out for their participatory design, targeted actions and measurement of outcomes.

For instance, through its Women's Participation Project in Bangladesh, Mozambique, Yemen, Nigeria and South Sudan, the IOM provided: cash-for-work; training on entrepreneurship, leadership and participation, literacy and numeracy; as well as access to climate adaptation mechanisms to women living in displacement. The IOM reports actively involving women and girls with disabilities. These interventions were reported to contribute to economic empowerment and the enhanced participation of women with disabilities in local governance, including climate action processes.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the Age, Gender, and Diversity Policy and Accountability Reports highlight consistent progress in disaggregating data by sex, age and disability, with programming tailored to reduce risks and enhance protection for refugee and displaced women and girls with disabilities.

UNDRR's report showcases a good practice of recognizing a woman with a disability with the 'WIN DRR Rising Star' Award, reinforcing leadership and the visibility of women with disabilities in DRR.

While the application of a fully intersectional approach is still evolving, the following developments represent positive progress. As a member of the task force supporting the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) played an instrumental role in providing support to the negotiations and implementation of the Investment Protocol, adopted in February 2023. UNCTAD contributions are formally recognized in the preamble of the protocol, underscoring the organization's influence in shaping inclusive investment policies. Importantly, the Investment Protocol incorporates explicit commitments to gender equality and disability inclusion. Article 6(g) promotes investments that contribute to the empowerment of women,

youth and persons with disabilities, while Article 29 emphasizes that State Parties must pay particular attention to the needs of youth, women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups when formulating investment policies.

In 2023, the Organized Crime Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched the Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights in the Implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Designed to support policymakers and legislators, the Toolkit guides the integration of intersectional gender and human rights considerations into laws, strategies and policies addressing organized crime. Notably, it highlights the experiences of persons with disabilities as a critical lens throughout the policy and legislative development cycle. The Toolkit is actively used across all activities of the Global Programme on implementing the Convention.

Despite these advancements, this assessment highlights the limitation of UNDIS in capturing transformational change when it comes to gender and intersectionality. This is illustrated through the following quote by an interviewee:

"Indicators 9 and 11 could better reflect transformation both along gender and disability lines. One key gap in the UNDIS reports is that they don't capture the bigger picture: are we actually transforming the lives of persons with disabilities? It's not just about whether programming was gender-responsive, but whether it led to meaningful change."

Under the **evaluation** indicator, the United Nations Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has demonstrated leadership in advancing intersectional approaches within the UN system by contributing to the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Working Group on Gender, Disability and Human Rights. As part of this role, OIOS led the group's efforts to revise and finalize the UNEG publication "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations", ensuring the inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting dimension. This handbook serves as a field guide for conducting evaluations that are responsive to human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion.

Across the UNDIS reports, **joint initiatives** are increasingly embracing gender-responsive and intersectional approaches to ensure that the rights of women and young persons with disabilities are effectively addressed. These collaborative efforts reflect a growing recognition that promoting gender equality and disability inclusion must go hand-in-hand. Many of the reported joint initiatives are focused on advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights and protection from violence. Moreover, the interviews highlighted the importance of collaboration with gender-focused UN entities in disability-inclusive programming.

For instance, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reports that as part of its efforts to promote inclusive population and development policies, ECLAC supported the preparation and delivery of the virtual dialogue “Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities” in August 2023 to mark the 10th anniversary of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. Organized in collaboration with UNFPA, the event aimed to enhance the visibility of persons

with disabilities and advocate for the fulfilment of their rights – particularly focusing on the sexual and reproductive rights and participation of women and young people with disabilities.

The role of the UN Global Disability Fund (GDF), formerly the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), is also recognized in the reports for its force in bringing together UN entities, governments, OPDs and civil society to support the implementation of the UNCRPD. The GDF embeds an intersectional and gender-transformative approach in all programming ensuring gender equality and leadership of women and girls with disabilities.⁸

Moreover, the United Nations IAWGGD, convened by UN Women, promotes an intersectional approach to disability inclusion. The reports highlight that in 2023, it facilitated the development of an inter-agency statement on violence against girls with disabilities. Nevertheless, only two of the submitted reports mention the working group in their joint initiatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Some entities reported on efforts to promote the visibility and representation of women and girls with disabilities through inclusive **communications**.

For instance, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has actively leveraged both internal and external communication platforms to promote gender-responsive disability inclusion. In internal communications, online feature articles focus on the importance of inclusivity to drive better results, with an emphasis on intersectionality and diverse representation. FAO also highlighted inclusive programming and gender-sensitive approaches in external communications in projects such as its Dryland Forestry initiative. These efforts contribute to the increased visibility of diverse women and men with disabilities.

Another good practice in external communications is the strategic amplification of disability inclusion messages through creative, multi-sensory storytelling platforms that centre gender and intersectionality. UNFPA and its partners’ *The Wanted: A World for One Billion* exhibit is a powerful example, featuring photographs, audio recordings and immersive films that highlight the diverse lived experiences, activism and art of persons with disabilities, especially youth and women from Morocco, Ecuador and Mozambique. The exhibit also includes the work of artists with disabilities, ensuring that their creative voices and perspectives are authentically showcased. By elevating voices at the intersection of disability, gender, age and geography, the exhibit challenges stereotypes and brings underrepresented perspectives into public view. First launched on the UN website, it has also been replicated in public activations in Oslo, Helsinki, New York and Berlin.

⁸ This approach is further elaborated in GDF’s disability inclusive gender transformative guidance: [Inclusive Gender Transformative Approach Guidance Note - Global Disability Fund](#).

TABLE 2

Core elements of promising practices for gender-responsive disability inclusion

Accountability area	Core elements of promising practices
Leadership, strategic planning and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embedding gender-disability intersectionality into core strategies, policies and structures. - Top-level commitment and dedicated coordination for disability inclusion and gender equality. - Systematic data disaggregation to inform planning.
Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring meaningful engagement of women with disabilities and their representative organizations in decision-making processes. - A coordinated approach among entities to consulting with women-led OPDs provides opportunities for the effective intersectional implementation of common frameworks.
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing and delivering programmes that address the barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities. - Developing and utilizing tools and guidelines for mainstreaming intersectional approaches. - Fostering collaborative partnerships with various UN and civil society organizations to enhance reach and impact.
Organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proactively promoting the diverse representation and voices of persons with disabilities. - Utilizing diverse communication channels and creative storytelling to challenge stereotypes and raise awareness.

4. SYNERGIES WITH UNDIS AND UN-SWAP

UNDIS is designed to be aligned with international instruments and commitments, including those related to gender equality and other human rights dimensions and create an institutional framework for implementation of the CRPD and the 2030

Agenda. Overall, most of the indicators in the UNDIS and UN-SWAP frameworks have the potential for synergies that can streamline reporting and enable an intersectional focus.

LEADERSHIP, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

In terms of **leadership**, the UNDIS and UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 indicators align to recognize the importance of senior leaders championing inclusivity, and this includes specific indicators related to representation at senior-level meetings and for specialists in inclusion to have direct access to senior leadership.

Likewise, in **strategic planning** there are clear synergies where both UNDIS and UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 require reports on disability and gender in strategic planning documents, with disaggregated data. The indicators closely align across this area.

In terms of **specific policies** on disability and gender, there is some alignment in that the UNDIS and UN-SWAP require reporting on mainstreaming. The newly updated UN-SWAP 3.0 takes this a step further than it did in the UN-SWAP 2.0 by requiring reports on resourcing for activities. This may be an area where UNDIS could examine the ability of entities to go further in their reports to include more concrete data.

INCLUSIVENESS

Inclusiveness in the form of **consultation, accessibility and reasonable accommodation** are areas where the UNDIS has comprehensive indicators and requirements that relate specifically to measures designed to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the physical environment, communication and information. The UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 do not have indicators related to accessibility and accommodation, and consultation is more broadly covered by 'stakeholder engagement'. Part of the reason for this may be that consultation with women's groups is standard practice, but there is an opportunity to encourage entities to dig deeper in examining the intersection of gender and disability (and other factors) in consultation practices.

On **accessibility**, the UNDIS framework indicators are broad. As such, there is no requirement for entities to consider gender or other factors when

Institutional set-up is an area where synergies exist between UNDIS and UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0, but while the UNDIS takes a broad approach the UN-SWAP 3.0 has incorporated more concrete requirements, such as specifying the grade of the specialists who should be appointed to focal point functions.

reporting on this indicator. Similarly, for **reasonable accommodation** there is no requirement to consider gender or other factors when reporting against the UNDIS indicators.

The final aspect of inclusiveness is **procurement**, where clear synergies currently exist. Both frameworks include requirements to promote opportunities for more diverse firms to bid for contracts and to promote awareness of how certain technologies may create barriers. These indicators are presented in the context of ensuring equality of opportunity. The UNDIS indicators are specific and include targets, and the UN-SWAP 3.0 has adapted the requirements from UN-SWAP 2.0 to also include financial targets and spending justifications to demonstrate results

PROGRAMMING

Both the UNDIS and UN-SWAP (2.0 and 3.0) indicators on **programming** are broad and relate to the mainstreaming of disability and gender in planning and results and there is scope to align these indicators. This broad scope also applies to indicators related to **country programme documents** for both frameworks, as well as **joint programmes**. The UN-SWAP prompts reporting on specific measures such as implementing indicators jointly with another agency, which may also be useful guidance in creating more specific indicators for UNDIS.

On **evaluation and audit** indicators, both the UNDIS and UN-SWAP rely on the UNEG standards for mainstreaming disability and gender. In addition, both require systematic reviews every five years. As such, there is scope to streamline these indicators.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

On **employment** measures, the UN-SWAP (2.0 and 3.0) focuses on representation, stratified by grade (general services, professional level, etc.). The UNDIS framework takes a more comprehensive approach, expanding the indicator to include retention and job satisfaction indicators. There is scope to harmonize the two frameworks to incorporate gender measures related to retention and job satisfaction in addition to representation.

On **capacity-building**, both the UNDIS and UN-SWAP have strong indicators related to mandatory training. The UN-SWAP 3.0 has taken these indicators a step further than the 2.0 version to include unconscious bias training, leadership training and requirements for reports on budgets. The UNDIS also has a focus on leadership, but there may be room to include more specific requirements in the UNDIS, and the UN-SWAP 3.0 may offer guidance.

The final indicators are on **communication**. The UNDIS indicator is broad, and the requirements may be met using a technical definition (for example, by including a photo of a person with disabilities as an example of ‘representation’.) Entities may choose to approach the indicator more broadly, but currently it relies on each entity’s willingness to do so. The UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 are more comprehensive and specific, and

include indicators related to analysis of best practices and involvement in interagency communities of practice. There is also a requirement that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in high-level reports, including those of the Secretary-General. There may be scope to use the UN-SWAP 3.0 indicators to inform a more comprehensive and prescriptive set of indicators for UNDIS related to internal and external communication.

Examining the synergies between the UNDIS and UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 is a first step in analysing intersectionality in UN reporting frameworks more generally. This pilot analysis may inform broader work to incorporate and streamline indicators, such as those of the Youth Scorecard, so that ultimately reporting on indicators is done in an intersectionality-aware manner. Guidance may also be prepared to inform the development of indicators that can be applied in a range of contexts to encourage the participation of diverse groups more generally.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Integrate gender and intersectionality into the UNDIS accountability framework with a focus on transformational change

Gender-responsive and intersectionality-informed reporting requirements should be explicitly integrated into the UNDIS accountability framework, with a greater emphasis on outcome-oriented indicators to complement current activity-based reporting. The findings suggest that priority should be on embedding gender-responsiveness across all 15 indicators as this reinforces the principle that every aspect of the framework has a gender dimension and that strengthening accountability for disability-gender intersectionality across all areas is critical. To meet or

exceed the requirements, gender and intersectionality considerations should be made visible in the reports. Without formal reporting requirements, progress in these areas may remain limited, undocumented and unrecognized.⁹

In addition to mainstreaming gender across all indicators, the inclusion of a stand-alone gender indicator would also be valuable in supporting a twin-track approach. This would allow for focused monitoring of gender-specific commitments.

Recommendation 2: Establish common indicators to strengthen system-wide coherence

Developing joint indicators that integrate disability inclusion and gender equality would help align UNDIS with UN-SWAP and the UN Gender Parity Strategy, reducing duplication and competing priorities in implementation and reporting, while promoting intersectional synergies across the UN system (see Annex 5 for suggested joint indicators). Reciprocal alignment between UNDIS and UN-SWAP is important, as otherwise there is a risk of placing the burden solely on the UNDIS to ensure gender/disability coherence.

Positioning disability inclusion as integral to gender equality in the design of future UN-SWAP systems reinforces the idea that meaningful progress on gender cannot be achieved without addressing the specific barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC.

In UN-SWAP 3.0, the performance indicator most relevant to intersectionality is PI1 on Strategic Planning Gender-related SDG Results. This indicator evaluates whether an entity's strategic planning includes an intersectional gender analysis, grounded in sex-disaggregated data, and the inclusion of diverse voices and experiences, particularly those of marginalized groups. This could be a starting point for designing joint indicators for system-wide coherence

on intersectionality. In addition, the current data limitations could be progressively addressed through enhanced system-wide coherence on data collection, analysis and use.

Furthermore, any proposed additions or changes to entity-level reporting must take into account that the UNDIS UNCT scorecard operates in complementarity with the entity accountability framework. Therefore, gender integration must be coherent and complementary across both frameworks, including implementation of the UNDIS at the country level. Ongoing plans through the UN Development Coordination Office to streamline accountability frameworks at the UNCT level could support this development.

To strengthen accountability, results and insights generated from country-level analyses should systematically inform entity-level frameworks, and vice versa, establishing a two-way flow of learning and accountability.

In addition, where the UN-SWAP is reported on in the yearly Secretary-General's report on gender mainstreaming, some gender-related and/or intersectional data from UNDIS should be included.

⁹ For instance, to meet the requirements on Indicator 1 on leadership, entities should ensure:

- 1.b.i. Senior managers internally and publicly champion disability inclusion with explicit attention to gender equality and intersectionality, recognizing the diverse experiences of persons with disabilities, including women, girls and other marginalized groups.
- 1.b.ii. Implementation of the entity's disability inclusion policy/strategy is reviewed by senior management annually, with specific attention to gender and intersectional dimensions, and remedial action is taken as needed to address any gaps.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen system-wide capacity through shared learning initiatives and targeted technical support on the intersectionality of gender and disability

Promote shared capacity-development initiatives and provide targeted technical guidance to ensure gender and intersectionality are effectively mainstreamed across all UNDIS indicators. UNDIS and UN-SWAP training mechanisms could be adapted and scaled to explicitly incorporate the intersectionality of gender and disability. Inter-agency workshops or a shared online toolkit could build consistent understanding, enhance skills and promote coherent implementation across the UN system.

Additionally, strengthening the role and relevance of the IAWGGD as a platform for coordination, knowledge-exchange and joint advocacy is key. This could involve broadening its membership, dedicating specific working groups to strategic areas,

and enhancing its communication and outreach capabilities. In this context, it is particularly important to build and sustain strong, dedicated networks on disability inclusion to mitigate the risk of these issues being subsumed under broader Leave No One Behind frameworks, which can inadvertently lead to the invisibility of disability-specific issues.

Furthermore, the GDF could play a valuable role in providing technical guidance and capacity-building for entities receiving its funding. This support could help strengthen their capacity to implement UNDIS and integrate gender and disability inclusion more effectively into their programmes.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen collaboration through formalized roles and structures

Entities should leverage and formalize collaboration between gender and disability inclusion focal points and networks within their organizational structures and across the UN system. Regular coordination enhances knowledge-sharing, supports consistent reporting and implementation, and reinforces that gender and disability mainstreaming are shared institutional responsibilities, not tasks delegated solely to individual advisers. In addition, collaboration with gender-focused UN entities should be encouraged.

To promote more cohesive implementation and reporting, entities should ensure that the ToRs for gender and disability focal points reflect cross-cutting responsibilities. Where one individual serves in both roles, their ToR should explicitly cover both gender equality and disability inclusion. Where the roles are separate, each ToR should still include elements that promote collaboration and integration on both areas.

Recommendation 5: Advocate for Member States' support for the gender-responsive implementation of UNDIS

In the current context of funding constraints, the roll-out of UN reform, and increasing political pushback against gender equality and human rights, Member State support is more important than ever. Strategic advocacy at the intergovernmental level is essential to ensure that gender and disability inclusion remain visible, resourced and prioritized.

Member States can play a critical role in advancing the gender-responsiveness of the UNDIS. They are encouraged to formally endorse the continuation of the Strategy with a stronger gender and intersectional approach, prioritize the regular monitoring of disability inclusion through the Executive Boards of UN entities, and advocate for the allocation of adequate resources to support disability inclusion in the UN system.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings clearly highlight that while there has been progress in some areas, the integration of gender, particularly through an intersectional lens, remains inconsistent and fragmented across entities' 2023 UNDIS reports. Although several UN entities have taken concrete steps to develop gender-responsive policies, programmes and strategic frameworks, the absence of dedicated gender-specific indicators and guidance within the UNDIS accountability framework poses a significant barrier to reporting. As a result, gender and disability are often addressed in parallel rather than as intersecting dimensions of inequality in the UN system.

In areas such as programming, evaluation and strategic planning, encouraging examples demonstrate how intersectionality can be operationalized. However, gaps persist in internal systems, especially in accessibility, employment, procurement and reasonable accommodation, where gender-specific considerations are frequently overlooked. The limited alignment of UNDIS reporting with other UN accountability frameworks, such as the UN-SWAP, the Youth Scorecard, System-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends

of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and LGBTIQ+ accountability framework further complicates efforts to mainstream intersectionality across the disability inclusion agenda. Despite these challenges, promising practices identified across entities point to a growing recognition of the need to embed gender and intersectionality more deeply into institutional structures, joint initiatives and communications.

The next phase of work should focus on building synergies between UNDIS and other accountability frameworks, developing clearer guidance and strengthening capacity across the system to ensure that intersectionality is consistently applied. Only through such coordinated and deliberate efforts can the UN system fully uphold the rights and agency of all persons with disabilities and ensure that no one is left behind.

Annex 1. Glossary

Accessibility refers to ensuring that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.¹⁰

Disability inclusion refers to the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹¹

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female, and the associated relationships between women, men, girls and boys. The attributes, opportunities and relationships assigned to women and men, girls and boys, are socially constructed and are learned; they are context and time-specific, and thus subject to change. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources and decision-making opportunities.¹²

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but concerns all men, women, girls and boys. Equality between women and men is both a human rights issue and a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.¹³

Gender mainstreaming refers to mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.¹⁴

Gender-responsive describes processes or outcomes that explicitly take gender equality into account, for example through research, data collection, analyses, consultation and other processes. Gender-responsiveness implies consistent and systematic attention to gender-based differences and inequalities between women and men, with a view to addressing systemic and structural constraints to gender equality, as well as underlying causes of gender inequality, discrimination and exclusion. Processes and outcomes that are gender-responsive could be laws, policies, programmes, services and other inputs that are formulated, planned and delivered in a manner that facilitates the achievement of gender equality.¹⁵

10 United Nations. 2006. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Treaty Series, 2515, 3. Article 9.

11 Ibid.

12 <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

13 Ibid.

14 ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2.

15 United Nations. 1997. [Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General](#). E/RES/1997/66.

Intersectionality recognizes that people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression depending on a person's context and existing power structures such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism.¹⁶

Organizations of persons with disabilities are organizations comprising a majority of persons with disabilities – at least half of their membership – and governed, led and directed by persons with disabilities.¹⁷ Such organizations should be rooted in, committed to and fully respectful of the principles and rights recognized in the Convention.¹⁸

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.¹⁹

Reasonable accommodation refers to necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.²⁰

¹⁶ UN Women. 2023. [UN-SWAP 2.0 Framework & Technical Guidance](#).

¹⁷ United Nations. 2006. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Treaty Series, 2515, 3. CRPD/C/11/2, annex II, para. 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., para. 11.

¹⁹ Ibid., Article 1.

²⁰ Ibid., Article 2.

Annex 2. Interview guide

Interview Guide: Assessing gender-responsiveness in the 2023 UNDIS Reports

1. Integration of gender in UNDIS reporting

How did your entity incorporate gender considerations in its 2023 UNDIS reporting?

What are the specific indicators where gender is explicitly addressed in 2023 UNDIS reporting?

2. Intersectionality

Can you provide examples of how your agency applies an intersectional approach in disability inclusion?

How is it reflected in the 2023 UNDIS reporting?

In your view, which UNDIS indicators led themselves more to incorporate an intersectional approach?

In your view, what would be a useful UNDIS accountability framework requirement that could contribute to better incorporating intersectional approaches to implementation, reporting and accountability?

3. Strengthening gender-responsiveness of UNDIS reporting

What additional indicators or approaches could be introduced to improve gender-responsiveness in UNDIS reporting?

What support or guidance would be helpful to enhance gender mainstreaming in the implementation of UNDIS?

4. Alignment with other accountability frameworks

How does your agency align its UNDIS reporting with other gender-related accountability frameworks, such as the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality, or the Youth Scorecard?

What are some ways to better align efforts for stronger gender-responsive disability inclusion?

Where in your entity are the disability focal point and gender focal points located?

Level	Disability focal points	Gender focal points	Disability and gender focal points		
			are the same person	are in the same organizational unit	report to the same person
Unit					
Section					
Division					
Department					
Regional Office					
Country Office					
Other?					

What, if any, is an example of how gender focal points and disability focal points worked together?

Can we draw any promising practices from this experience?

Annex 3. Terms of reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ASSESSMENT OF GENDER RESPONSIVENESS IN THE 2023 UNDIS ENTITY REPORTS

BACKGROUND

Gender and disability are cross-cutting to all areas of life and often intersect with other factors. Breaking silos and addressing the intersectionality of gender, disability and other factors is critical to effectively achieve the aims and principles of human rights instruments, and internationally agreed development goals across the development and humanitarian continuum. Under the auspices of UN Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender and Disability Inclusion (IAWGDD), intersectional work is gaining momentum across the UN system. With the remarkable role that The [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) (UNDIS) plays in holding UN entities accountable for advancing disability inclusion within the UN system, it is worth exploring the intersectionality of gender and disability also in the context of UNDIS.

There is a clear mandate for advancing the operationalization of intersectionality of disability and gender within the UN system. Our respective entities' mandates include: The [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD), The [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW), [International Conference on Population Development Programme of Action](#) (ICPD PoA), [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), and [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). In addition, the following policy framework provides a clear justification for conducting a joint assessment on gender in the context of UNDIS: The [UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#), and The [United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#) (UN-SWAP).

SUMMARY OF FUNCTIONS

The Consultant will be responsible for the following:

- Identify areas or indicators in which UNDIS entity reports mention or indicate gender, gender-responsiveness, and/or report(s) on gender mainstreaming.
- Identify promising practices of gender mainstreaming/empowerment of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of UNDIS.
- Consolidate elements/examples of lessons learned and promising practices of the intersection of gender and disability.
- Propose a gender assessment methodology that can be used to analyse the upcoming reports.
- Identify where and how entities can mainstream gender in the implementation of UNDIS, including synergies between the UNDIS and the Gender Equality SWAP, Youth Scorecard, etc.

SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The UNDIS accountability framework has been designed for self-assessment. A five-year review of UNDIS and a review of the Gender Equality accountability framework are underway.

Since 2019, when the Secretary-General adopted UNDIS, United Nations entities report on its implementation. The most recent reports are for the year 2023. UNDIS entity reports are not publicly available. UN Women will invite entities to share their reports to inform the assessment.

The consultant will conduct the following activities within a stipulated timeframe of 21 working days.

Background document review:

- Document that outlines indicators of the UNDIS accountability framework and relevant another thematic framework (i.e., UN-SWAP, Youth, etc.), grouped by areas of synergies.
- Review UNDIS reports for the year 2023 that are made available for the purpose of this assessment by UN entities. Depending on the number of available entity reports, the scope of analysis may be adjusted, and the methodology may be adjusted to include interviews.

Producing a draft and final assessment report:

- Proposing complementary indicators to be included in both the UNDIS and Gender and SWAP [and any other relevant accountability framework i.e., youth etc.) that could be introduced to ensure intersectional lens to gender and disability is consistently promoted by the UN entities.
- Conduct a mapping exercise on how and where gender is included in the UNDIS entity reports.
- Consolidate the information from the mapping and identify promising practices and recommendations.
- Draft and submit an analysis of how and where gender is included in the UNDIS entity reports.
- Review and complete the final draft of the document based on feedback, including, as appropriate, from various UN entities.

The consultant is expected to finalize the activities by 30 May 2025.

KEY DELIVERABLES

Assessment report with:

- An analysis and actionable recommendations on how to strengthen gender responsive implementation of and reporting on UNDIS for increased impact of disability inclusion and accessibility.
- Promising practices and lessons learned that could be replicated.

Annex 4. Tool for supporting gender-responsiveness of UNDIS reports

UNDIS Accountability Framework indicators	Proposed gender assessment questions for UNDIS reporting
Core Area 1: Leadership, strategic planning & management	
Indicator 1: Leadership 1.c.i. Senior managers internally and publicly champion disability inclusion 1.c.ii. Implementation of entity disability policy/strategy is reviewed by senior management annually, with remedial action taken as needed 1.c.iii. A specific senior-level mechanism is in place for ensuring accountability for disability inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do internal and external senior managers' communication on disability inclusion address the intersection of gender and disability? If so, provide examples. - Are the intersection of gender and disability, gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and consideration of persons with disabilities of all marginalized genders addressed in the entity's disability policy/strategy and its periodic review? If so, provide examples. - Does the senior-level mechanism that ensures accountability for disability inclusion also incorporate a gender perspective and promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and/or persons of other marginalized genders with disabilities? If so, provide examples.
Indicator 2: Strategic planning 2.c.i. Entity commitment to disability inclusion is in the overview/preamble of the main strategic planning document 2.c.ii. Entity commitment to targeted and mainstreamed disability inclusion is reflected in results statements and/or indicators of the main strategic planning document 2.c.iii. Disaggregation of data by disability and sex in the main strategic planning document, as relevant 2.c.iv. System implemented to track resource allocation to disability inclusion across the entity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples of targeted and mainstream disability inclusion indicators that incorporate a gender perspective/contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC. - Examples of disaggregation of data by disability and sex in the main strategic planning document, as relevant. - Examples of how the entity tracks resources allocated to disability inclusion and gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and other people of marginalized genders with disabilities results. - Examples of disability inclusion in overview/preamble of strategic planning document.
Indicator 3: Disability-specific policy/strategy 3.c.i. Policy/strategy on mainstreaming disability inclusion is in place and implemented 3.c.ii. Entity provides an update at least every two years to Governing Body or equivalent on implementation of policy/strategy, and implements remedial action as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the policy/strategy on mainstreaming disability inclusion that is in place and is being implemented also address gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and other people of marginalized genders with disabilities, including gender mainstreaming? If so, provide examples. - Do updates to the entity's Governing Body or equivalent on implementation of the policy/strategy on mainstreaming disability inclusion also address gender mainstreaming? If so, provide examples.

21 This table has been adapted from an analysis by UN Women on UNDIS indicators corresponding to UN-SWAP indicators.

UNDIS Accountability Framework indicators	Proposed gender assessment questions for UNDIS reporting
Indicator 4: Institutional set-up 4.c.i. Entity has a unit/individual with substantive expertise on a human rights-based approach to disability 4.c.ii. Entity coordinates a focal point network on disability including all relevant departments and country offices 4.c.iii. Entity holds a focal point network meeting at least once a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the entities' disability inclusion focal points and gender focal points collaborate/work with each other? If so, provide examples of how. Do the ToRs reflect cross-cutting responsibilities.
Core area 2: Inclusiveness	
Indicator 5: Consultation with persons with disabilities 5.c.i. Systematic close consultation with, and active involvement of, organizations of persons with disabilities on all disability-specific issues and broader issues 5.c.ii. Guidelines for consultation are in place 5.c.iii. Entity has a partnership with organizations of persons with disabilities at the headquarters level and guidance on engagement with a diversity of organizations of persons with disabilities at the regional/country level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do consultations with, and the active involvement of, organizations of persons with disabilities on all disability-specific issues and broader issues systematically include women with disabilities, their representative organizations, and gender perspectives? If so, provide examples. - Do the guidelines for consultation also call for gender representation and perspective? If so, provide examples. - Does the entity use guidance on how to engage organizations of and organizations led by women with disabilities and organizations of people with other marginalized genders? - Does the entity have partnerships with organizations of women with disabilities and/or persons of diverse SOGIESC with disabilities. If so, share examples.
Indicator 6: Accessibility 6.c.i. Baseline assessment on accessibility is complete 6.c.i. Accessibility policy/strategy is in place and has been implemented 6.c.ii. Review/assessment of the policy/strategy is undertaken at least every five years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do accessibility measures respond to the needs of diverse women and girls and people of other marginalized genders with disabilities (e.g. safety, privacy, support, autonomy, cultural sensitivity, language)?
Indicator 6.1: Accessibility of conferences and events 6.1.c.i. Baseline assessment of accessibility and reasonable accommodation for conferences and events has been completed 6.1.c.ii. Policies and guidelines on accessibility of conference services and facilities are in place and accessibility targets are established and met 6.1.c.iii. Accessibility action plan for conference services and events is assessed every year and revised, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the accessibility policies and guidelines include the provision of inclusive and safe spaces, financial support, accessible childcare, and gender-sensitive facilitation that encourages the participation of women and people of other marginalized genders with disabilities in all their diversity?

UNDIS Accountability Framework indicators	Proposed gender assessment questions for UNDIS reporting
Indicator 7: Reasonable accommodation 7.a.i. Reasonable accommodation policy/strategy is under development 7.c.i. Reasonable accommodation policy/strategy has been implemented, including adequately funded mechanism 7.c.ii. Entity keeps a record of reasonable accommodations requested and provided and the level of satisfaction with the provision of reasonable accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do reasonable accommodation policies/strategy address gender to ensure accommodations meet the specific needs of women and gender diverse staff with disabilities? - Does the reasonable accommodation policy/strategy address gender to ensure safety, autonomy and choice?
Indicator 8: Procurement 8.c.i. Procurement policies ensure that relevant goods and services acquired are accessible or do not create new barriers 8.c.ii. Procurement policies ensure that the procurement process is accessible 8.c.iii. Target is established and met for number/percentage of relevant procurement documents that have accessibility as a mandatory requirement 8.c.iv. Procurement policy promotes purchasing from disability-inclusive suppliers, and guidelines have been developed for this purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the procurement policies support women and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC as entrepreneurs or suppliers, and ensure that goods and services are gender-responsive and disability-inclusive?
Core area 3: Programming	
Indicator 9: Programmes and projects 9.c.i. Guidance note or equivalent adopted on mainstreaming disability inclusion at all stages of the programme/project cycle 9.c.ii. Entity establishes and [meets]/exceeds the minimum level of programmes and projects that mainstream disability inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the intersection of gender and disability, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC addressed in programming? If so, provide examples. - Do guidance notes or equivalent on mainstreaming disability inclusion also provide guidance on gender mainstreaming and results on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and people of persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC? If so, provide examples. - Does a requirement for the entity's minimum level of programmes and projects that mainstream disability inclusion also include a minimum requirement of programmes and projects that include results on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC? If so, provide examples.
Indicator 10: Evaluation 10.c.i. Evaluation guidelines contain guidance on how to address disability inclusion 10.c.ii. Disability inclusion is mainstreamed effectively throughout the evaluation process and reflected in the terms of reference, inception and evaluation report(s) 10.c.iii. Meta-analysis of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations relating to disability inclusion is performed at least every five years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do evaluation guidelines, processes and results on disability inclusion incorporate gender perspectives / assess gender mainstreaming <i>[UNEG gender-equality-related norms and standards, and apply the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation during all phases of the evaluation]</i>? If so, provide examples.

UNDIS Accountability Framework indicators	Proposed gender assessment questions for UNDIS reporting
<p>Indicator 11: Country programme documents</p> <p>11.c.i. Guidance on country programme documents mainstreams disability inclusion</p> <p>11.c.ii. All country programme documents include analysis and corresponding programming on disability inclusion</p> <p>11.c.iii. Knowledge-management practices and processes promote improved mainstreaming of disability inclusion into country programme documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do country programme guidance and/or documents on mainstreaming disability inclusion address the intersection of gender and disability, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC? If so, provide examples. - Do country programme documents include analysis and corresponding programming on disability inclusion incorporating gender perspectives? If so, provide examples - Do knowledge management practices and processes promoting improved mainstreaming of disability inclusion into country programme documents also promote addressing the intersection of gender and disability? If so, provide examples.
<p>Indicator 12: Joint initiatives</p> <p>12.c.i. Entity participates actively in inter-agency coordination mechanism(s) on disability inclusion</p> <p>12.c.ii. [One]/More than one joint programme/initiative is in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do country inter-agency coordination mechanisms on disability inclusion address the intersection of gender and disability, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC? If so, provide examples. - Does the entity in its participation in inter-agency coordination mechanism(s) on disability and/or on gender equality and the empowerment of women and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC address the intersection of disability and gender? If so, provide examples. - Do joint programmes/initiatives address the intersection of gender and disability? If so, provide examples.
<p>Core area 4: Organizational culture</p>	
<p>Indicator 13: Employment</p> <p>13.c.i. Employment policy/strategy and other human resources-related policies/strategies include provisions to attract, recruit, retain, and promote career development of employees with disabilities</p> <p>13.c.ii. Employees with disabilities report satisfaction and well-being at a level similar to that of the general staff body</p> <p>13.c.iii. Number of persons with disabilities entering the organization through targeted or mainstream recruitment practices has increased</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do employment policies/strategies and other human resources-related policies/strategies and plans on disability inclusion that are in place also pay attention to achieving the equal representation of women with disabilities? Do they give attention to achieving representation of persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC? If so, provide examples. - Is gender parity taken into consideration in attracting, recruiting, retaining and promoting the career development of employees with disabilities? If so, provide examples. - When measuring and analysing the satisfaction of employees with disabilities, does the entity look at gender perspectives, and the sex of respondents?

UNDIS Accountability Framework indicators	Proposed gender assessment questions for UNDIS reporting
<p>Indicator 14: Capacity-development for staff</p> <p>14.c.i. Entity-wide learning and/or training opportunities are available to increase the capacity of staff at all levels in disability inclusion</p> <p>14.c.ii. Successful completion of learning activities and use of available learning resources on disability inclusion are mandatory, and completion and use are tracked</p> <p>14.c.iii. Tailored learning activities and learning resources on disability inclusion are available, in particular for senior managers and staff union representatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do learning and/or training activities resources and opportunities available to increase the capacity of staff at all levels in disability inclusion address the intersection of gender and disability/incorporate gender perspectives? If so, provide examples. - Does the entity, when assessing the capacity of staff at HQ, regional and country levels in gender equality and women's empowerment also address the intersection of gender and disability? If so, give examples.
<p>Indicator 15: Communication</p> <p>15.c.i. Guideline(s)/procedures are in place to ensure that internal and external communication are respectful of persons with disabilities</p> <p>15.c.ii. Persons with disabilities are reflected in mainstream communications</p> <p>15.c.iii. Communication campaign on disability inclusion is undertaken at least every two years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do internal and external communication plan/guideline(s)/procedures and practices address the intersection of gender and disability, and gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC? If so, provide examples. - Are women and girls and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC reflected in mainstream communications?

Annex 5. Suggested joint indicators

Effective joint indicators can be most easily developed at the policy level rather than programme level. Entities have more control over policy, while programmes are often subject to external factors such as donor imperatives. The most effective areas for initial intervention in developing joint indicators are those where entities have the most control and there is consistency over time, allowing for easy comparison both within the entity and with other entities. In practical terms, this would involve initially looking to develop joint indicators in the areas of procurement, audit and evaluation, data collection and management and human resources, as well as making use of tools developed by other entities such as the UN Evaluation Guidelines.

For procurement, standard indicators can be developed to encourage and measure the use of firms owned and/or operated by people belonging to marginalized groups, and a joint indicator would allow more in-depth analysis of intersectionality. The indicators could include factors related to procurement from firms owned and/or operated locally, and the degree of localization could also be captured. Procurement may not, however, be suited to testing indicators related to youth engagement and empowerment.

Audit and evaluation indicators can be adapted from the UNEG guidelines to further explore ways to capture intersectionality.

Data collection and management indicators can be adapted to incorporate all diverse groups individually and collectively and allow for more meaningful analysis of intersectionality across a range of interventions. In this respect, programme data could inform policy interventions on intersectionality.

In human resources and employment, indicators could be developed to capture not just quantitative data but in-depth analysis of intersectionality. For example, entities could be prompted to report on data related to a full range of factors that can affect employability and access that includes disability and gender but can also be extended to other factors that intersect with these, such as educational access (geographical and financial), family history of education, language, access to technology, etc. This encourages entities to avoid tokenism in employment but to look deeper into how employment practices can contribute to dismantling systems of gendered oppression but can also contribute to maintaining them.

The following table outlines suggested joint indicators that could capture data on disability and gender, but also incorporate other factors that can present a more accurate picture of intersectionality at a system-wide level.

UNDIS indicator	UN-SWAP indicator	Suggested joint indicator
UNDIS 1 - Leadership	UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 7: Leadership and UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 8: Gender-responsive performance management	The senior-level mechanism that ensures accountability for disability inclusion promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women and persons with disabilities with diverse SOGIESC?
UNDIS 2 - Strategic planning	UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 1: Strategic Planning	The entity tracks resource allocations that include both disability inclusion and gender equality results.

UNDIS indicator	UN-SWAP indicator	Suggested joint indicator
UNDIS 2 - Strategic planning	UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 2: Reporting on Gender-related SDG resultst	Programme data are collected and disaggregated according to factors including but not limited to sex, gender, age, disability, educational attainment and household income level. Analysis is conducted to assess the types and extent of intersectional disadvantage and these results are used to inform programmes.
UNDIS 4 - Institutional set-up	UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 11: Gender Architecture	Entity holds a focal point network meeting at least once a year where gender and disability focal points meet for learning and collaboration.
UNDIS 4 - Institutional set-up	UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 11: Gender Architecture	Focal points have written terms of reference that include responsibilities for supporting the mainstreaming of both gender equality and disability inclusion across programmes and operations, facilitating coordination and knowledge sharing, and monitoring implementation in line with institutional policies and accountability frameworks.
UNDIS 8 - Procurement	UN-SWAP 2.0 Indicator 9: Financial Resources UN-SWAP 2.0 Indicator 10: Financial Resource Tracking and UN-SWAP 3.0 Indicator 10: Financial Targets	a. Proportion of; and b. value of contracts with firms owned and/or managed by people belonging to one or more marginalized groups
UNDIS 10 - Evaluation	UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 5b: audit (risk assessment) and UN-SWAP 2.0 Indicator 9ci: (finance tracking)	a. An analysis is conducted regularly/ at a set timeframe to assess the extent to which individuals, organizations or firms are excluded from participation due to the agency's risk settings, and b. a review of risk settings is conducted in consultation with relevant organizations to enable increased participation.
UNDIS 10 - Evaluation	UN-SWAP 2.0 and 3.0 Indicator 4: Evaluation and 5: Audit	a. Evaluation guidelines contain guidance on how to address the intersectionality of disability and gender. b. The intersectionality of disability and gender is mainstreamed effectively throughout the evaluation process and reflected in the terms of reference, inception and evaluation report(s).

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