

TRANSFORM

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Dear Readers,

The third issue of *Transform*, a new magazine developed by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office, aims to make more accessible good practices and lessons learned from the recently concluded “Evaluation of UN Women’s normative support work and its operational linkages”. This evaluation brings forward important findings, conclusions and lessons on UN Women’s normative support work at the global, regional and country level that are relevant to all offices and units within UN Women, as well as its partners. It also provides the management response and action plan endorsed by UN Women to implement the recommendations.

The evaluation was managed and conducted by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, in close collaboration with the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office, which forwent its own planned evaluation on the subject in order to increase efficiencies and avoid duplication of efforts. As a result, the findings of the evaluation also have further reach through presentation to both the General Assembly Committee on Programme and Coordination and the UN Women Executive Board. The implementation of the recommendations will be reported back to both the Committee on Programme and Coordination and UN Women in three years.

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to the colleagues from the Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation team and from UN Women who participated in this evaluation.

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Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Opening of the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women The opening of the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters on 9 March 2015. During the meeting, the Commission adopted a political declaration on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Normative Support Work of UN Women: *What is it?*

In intergovernmental forums at the United Nations, Member States come together to debate and seek agreement on global gender equality norms and standards. These commitments offer the basis for action by governments and other stakeholders to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment at the global, regional and national levels, through laws, policies and programmes.

As part of its three core functions – normative support, UN system-wide coordination and operational activities – UN Women plays a leading role in supporting improvements in global norms and standards that accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women provides substantive expertise and policy analysis, works to strengthen the knowledge base on gender equality and incorporates good practices and lessons learned from regional and national experiences in its normative support work. It engages with Member States

through awareness-raising and advocacy, and facilitates alliance-building and partnerships. UN Women contributes to the implementation of norms and standards through its country programmes.

UN Women provides substantive support to the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The Entity also engages with other intergovernmental processes in an effort to strengthen the integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women in their outcomes.

UN Women's normative support work contributes to results at three levels:



**DEVELOPMENT OF NORMS AND STANDARDS
AT THE GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL**

in conventions, declarations, guidelines and other standard setting instruments such as resolutions and agreed conclusions



**IMPLEMENTATION OF NORMS AND STANDARDS
AT THE POLICY LEVEL**



**IMPLEMENTATION OF NORMS AND STANDARDS
AT THE PROGRAMME LEVEL**

The normative work of UN Women has taken on additional importance at a time when a number of global intergovernmental processes provide unprecedented opportunities for an accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment

Conference in July 2015, the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted in September 2015, the 15-year review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and

Evaluation Division of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services used the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) definition of normative work approved by all UNEG members, including UN-Women, in 2012: “the support to the development of norms and standards in conventions, declarations, regulatory frameworks, agreements, guidelines, codes of practice and other standard setting instruments, at global, regional and national level. Normative work also includes the support to the implementation of these instruments at the policy level, i.e. their integration into legislation, policies and development plans, and to their implementation at the programme level”. This definition encompasses UN Women’s mandate for such work at global, regional and national level, through its three core functions.

*UN Women plays a leading role
in supporting improvements in global norms
and standards that accelerate the realization of
gender equality and the empowerment of women.*

of women. These are, in particular, the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in March 2015, the Financing for Development

security, as well as the new climate agreement to be adopted in Paris in December 2015.

For the evaluation of normative support work, the Inspection and

WHAT WORKS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

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What does it mean to evaluate normative support work?

Evaluation of normative support work can be challenging, as establishing causality in the logic chain of normative work is rarely straightforward.

For this evaluation, normative work is defined as “the support to the development of norms and standards in conventions, declarations, regulatory frameworks, agreements, guidelines, codes of practice and other standard setting instruments at global, regional and national level. Normative work also includes the support to the implementation of these instruments at the policy level, i.e., their integration into legislation, policies and development plans, and to their implementation at the programme level”. There are many factors beyond the control of the organization that come into play when a government translates an agreed norm into national policies, legislation and action on the ground. The outcomes and impact of most normative work often depend on the enabling environment and complementary actions by government, UN agencies and others.

Much of the normative work carried out in the UN system can be difficult to assess because the very nature of the work requires flexibility and regularly realigning outputs and outcomes, which are not always well documented. In addition, normative work is not always linear, takes a long time

undertook an evaluation of UN Women’s normative work.

The objective of the evaluation was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance and effectiveness of UN Women in achieving its mandate in support of gender equality through normative support work and its link with operational activities. Given the need for UN Women to strengthen the linkages between intergovern-

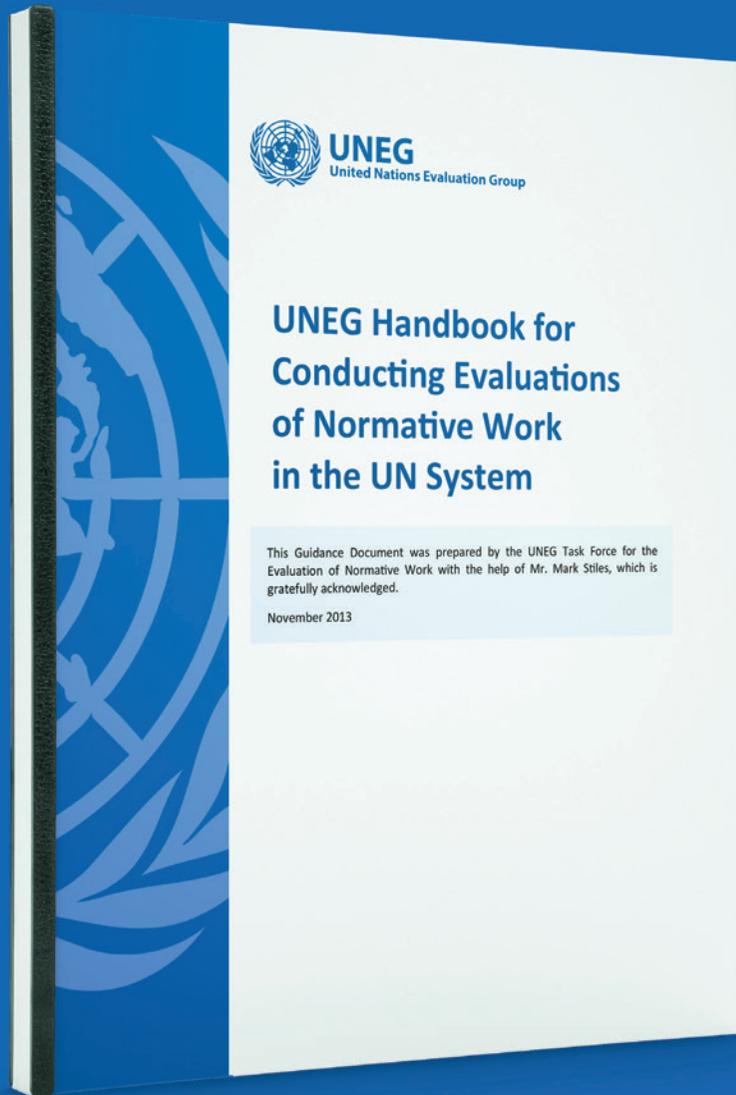
The outcomes and impact of most normative work often depend on the environment, Governments, UN agencies and others

to have impact and is not often visible within the time frame of an organization’s programme cycle. Nonetheless, it is a critical function and it is equally critical to assess it regularly.

In 2014, the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

mental decisions and implementation of these decisions on the ground, its normative support work is critical to the achievement of its overall objectives and mandate. The evaluation was conducted in conformance with Norms and Standards of the UN Evaluation Group.

How to evaluate normative work?



The latest guidance from the United Nations Evaluation Group will provide you with an integrated approach to the evaluation of normative work in the UN along with hands-on methodological guidance, concise practical examples and tools for conducting evaluations of normative work.

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UNEG
United Nations Evaluation Group



How relevant and effective is UN Women in achieving its mandate through normative support work?

The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services examined the relevance and effectiveness of UN Women in achieving its mandate through normative support work and its link with operational activities.



1

Maximizing resources

High visibility despite low resources

Despite resource levels below originally envisioned, UN Women has enhanced the visibility of and attention to gender equality and empowerment of women through its normative support work

The level of voluntary contributions received by UN Women—on which it heavily depends to deliver its mandate—has been significantly lower than original estimates. Despite a 20 per cent increase from 2011 to 2013, the level of voluntary contributions in 2012–2013 was 51 per cent below the original estimate in 2011, as well as 31 per cent below the revised 2012 budget that UN Women’s Executive Board deemed necessary to deliver on the organization’s mandate.

Although this less-than-estimated level of resources has significantly affected UN Women’s capacity to effectively implement its normative mandate, UN Women has improved the visibility of gender equality and increased opportunities

for the integration of gender equality into member state deliberations and related normative outcomes and the work of the UN system. Nearly all member states, UN partners and UN Women staff interviewed asserted that, compared to before, gender

equality of women—as championed by UN Women senior management and country programme representatives—is now addressed more prominently. Staff and stakeholders volunteered that increasing visibility and awareness of gender equality was one of the three most important results that UN Women’s normative support work had achieved since its creation. All agreed that, without UN

UN Women voluntary contributions Compared to original and revised budgets 2012–2013



Sources: A/66/6 (Sect. 17), UNW/2013/7, UN Women voluntary contributions list (2013), UN Women Informal Integrated Budget 2014–2015

*Without UN Women,
the discourse and legislative
outcome on gender issues
would not exist*



At the regional and country level, UN Women's normative support work strengthened the dialogue on gender equality with government and development partners. In Mali, for example, the High-Level Conference on Women's Leadership in the Sahel region gathered 40 women ministers, activists and experts to promote women's roles in crisis management. In Colombia, UN Women's engagement prompted the mobilization of women's civil society organizations and a greater representation of women at peace talks. The "Gender equality in political governance" project in the Pacific enhanced public support for gender equality, resulting in increased demand for gender equality in governments' programmes. In Senegal, UN Women enhanced the visibility of the UN joint programme on gender equality, and advocated with ministries for the use of gender-responsive tools in public management.

Panel members react to comments from participants at the Conference on Women's Leadership in the Sahel, Bruxelles, 9 April 2013.

EU/SHIMERAJAIN.ROLLAND

Women as the sole UN entity with a dedicated gender equality mandate, the discourse and legislative outcomes on these issues would not exist.

At the global level, UN Women's leadership created and supported opportunities to discuss and strengthen gender equality in inter-governmental and other meetings. In addition to the technical support offered to member states during the negotiation of new norms, UN Women co-sponsored high-level meetings and other events to raise awareness and promote the integration of gender equality concerns in various sectors. These included: environment and climate change, humanitarian affairs, sustainable urbanization, indigenous peoples' rights, youth and health. For example, the collaboration between UN Women and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office during the 2013

Peacebuilding Commission meeting resulted in the adoption of a declaration on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding. In 2012, UN Women organized several events on strengthening women's access to justice. It also promoted the integration of gender perspectives in the Secretary-General's report in preparation for the high-level debate of the 67th United Nations General Assembly on rule of law.

UN Women's normative support work has further contributed to elevating gender equality in UN country programming and activities. A majority of resident coordinator survey respondents (67 per cent) stated that greater visibility of gender

equality and norms and standards was the main added value that UN Women brought to their countries of operation, due to its exclusive focus on gender equality and significant advocacy efforts. At the country level, UN Women has contributed to more UN development assistance frameworks with increased numbers of joint programmes on gender equality, greater capacity building of UN staff around gender equality and greater use of gender scorecards.

UN Women effectively raised the visibility of gender equality standards among the general public, particularly regarding the normative framework for ending violence against women. In the context of

Increased visibility of gender equality standards thanks to UN Women

Examples of UN Women public awareness campaigns around gender equality norms and standards



UN URUGUAY/ESTEBAN ZUNIN

The “Ready for the list” campaign in 2014 aimed to raise public awareness on the importance of having more women in decision-making in Uruguay, as per the quota electoral law of 2009. It featured well-known Uruguayan artists, businesswomen and journalists and aired on TV channels across the country, and via social networks.



MEDEER SADRALIEV

As the secretariat to the Secretary-General’s Campaign to End Violence Against Women (UNiTE), UN Women organized events around the world as part of the yearly **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**. In 2013, the theme was “Safe spaces for women and girls”, and UN Women promoted the recommendations of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

UN Women has effectively deployed its advocacy role to promote increased dialogue around gender equality

the Secretary-General’s Campaign to End Violence Against Women (UNiTE), UN Women led efforts to make this a public issue. Other examples of UN Women’s initiatives in raising public awareness are shown in the box above.

UN Women has effectively used social media and public figures to raise awareness of gender equality among the general public. Through Twitter, UN Women not only promoted its work and highlighted its good practices, but also forwarded information published by newspapers and others to enhance awareness on the new and remaining

challenges for the achievement of gender equality world-wide. UN Women social media audience grew to more than 1.9 million followers in 2014. On the occasion of the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2014, UN Women reached an audience of 47

million Twitter users, compared to 28 million in 2013.

UN Women has effectively deployed its advocacy role to promote increased dialogue around gender equality. For example, in the lead-up to the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN Women organized approximately 100 global, regional and national events addressing the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform and forged a media compact with 30 media organizations worldwide. Starting in 2011, UN Women organized, in partnership with other UN entities, 25 to 30 open days each year on women, peace, and security, to commemorate the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as well as to promote dialogue among civil society representatives, activists and UN staff.



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Getting strong

UN Women has achieved positive results in strengthening the normative framework on gender equality

UN Women has successfully supported the adoption of global and regional norms and standards

Within an often challenging political and cultural environment, UN Women has strengthened the gender equality normative framework by supporting the adoption of gender-specific norms and standards and promoting the integration of gender equality into global and sectoral agendas. Particularly, nearly half of UN Women headquarter staff (48 per cent), one-third of UN partners at headquarters (35 per cent) and one-fourth of UN Women field staff (25 per cent) interviewed indicated the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the proposal of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable

Development Goals, together with the integration of gender-sensitive targets for the other goals, has been the most significant normative support result to which UN Women has contributed at the global level.

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals: it provided advice to the Technical Support Team and other working groups, and co-led, with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the global the-

Despite challenging environments, UN Women has contributed to gender equality normative frameworks

UN Women's 2013 position paper "A transformative stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment" constituted a solid basis for member states and stakeholder

consultation on addressing inequalities.

UN Women's engagement in the Rio+20 process triggered the mainstreaming of gender equality in the conference's outcome document.

In parallel, UN Women effectively supported the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change towards the approval of the decision on gender balance (23/CP.18) and

consultations and was used to facilitate dialogue at 42 meetings at national and regional levels. UN Women substantially contributed to proceedings of the





UNWOMEN/RYAN BROWN

the Lima work programme on gender (-/CP20). UN Women also supported the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, where references to gender equality were included throughout the outcome document in 2014.

UN Women's work with the Commission on the Status of Women has been particularly effective. Most UN Women staff interviewed at headquarters (64 per cent) mentioned the achievement of agreed conclusions at the end of 57th and 58th Sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women as one of the key results regarding the adoption of gender equality norms and standards to which UN Women contributed during the last three years. These conclusions advanced the normative framework on ending violence against women (with an emphasis on prevention services) and actions needed to accelerate the achievement of the

Greater gender mainstreaming in General Assembly outcomes

Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.

UN Women's normative support work has also contributed to important results at the global level in the area of women, peace, and security. These included: the adoption of Security Council resolutions 2122, which set in place stronger measures to enable women to participate in conflict resolution and recovery; and the adoption by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of "General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations" Nearly one-third of UN partners interviewed at headquarters

(29 per cent) noted UN Women had strengthened its engagement with the Security Council, supporting participation of civil society representatives and ensuring consistent language in Security Council outcomes.

UN Women has contributed to greater gender mainstreaming in General Assembly outcomes. The share of General Assembly resolutions that included a gender perspective increased from 32 per cent in 2011 to 42 per cent in 2013. While the Third Committee maintained the highest share of resolutions that integrated gender equality (68 per cent), the share of Second and Fifth Committee decisions with a gender perspective doubled from 2011 to 2013.



Meeting of the Civil Society Advisory Group of UN Women Mexico, 2015

ONU WOMEN / GUSTAVO BENÍTEZ

UN Women, including its regional offices, has also contributed to enhancing the gender equality normative framework at regional level. It has effectively supported regional intergovernmental bodies—for example, the

Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Council of Europe—in the process leading up to the approval of conventions and declarations, particularly in the area of ending violence against women.

UN Women has contributed to stronger national legislation and policies

At the national level, UN Women's normative advisory support to governments included: ensuring that international commitments (such as the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women or Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions) were reflected in national development agendas, promoting legal frameworks aligned with these commitments, and supporting governments and civil society organizations in monitoring implementation (for example through Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women reports and the Universal Periodic Review). In several countries (including Laos, Mexico and Uzbekistan), UN Women engaged with civil society organizations and provided technical support to

UN Women's revised approach towards the preparation of strategic intergovernmental meetings has contributed to the achievement of normative outcomes.

According to UN Women staff, key elements of this approach included:

- A strengthened evidence and knowledge base for discussion, including inputs from UN and civil society partners
- Early engagement with member states through formal and informal meetings—at the global, regional and country level—to achieve political consensus
- Internal coordination of inputs from all UN Women divisions and field offices, through the establishment of dedicated task forces (such as the working group on post 2015)
- A coherent UN position on the themes being discussed
- Sustained advocacy efforts

Number of countries where UN Women contributed to policy and legislative outcomes

BY IMPACT AREA

Women's leadership and decision-making



35

Women's economic empowerment



32

Ending violence against women



54

Women, peace, and security



23

Governance and national planning



38

ASIA & PACIFIC ARAB STATES EAST & SOUTHERN AFRICA WEST & CENTRAL AFRICA AMERICAS & THE CARIBBEAN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

national women's ministries to integrate Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women concluding observations into national gender equality programmes. The civil society advisory group mechanism provided a forum to enhance UN Women's advocacy for gender equality norms.

In its annual reports UN Women notes the achievement of normative results at the country and regional levels in all six impact areas of its strategic plan. However, these same reports note, UN Women was somewhat more successful in promoting national legislation and policies on ending violence against women, gender-responsive budgeting, and women's leadership in politics and decision-making than it was in promoting women's economic empowerment and women and peace and security (in contrast to UN Women's success in the latter area at the global level).

Specific examples of these results included:

- Strengthened policy and legal frameworks on ending violence against women in 54 countries
- Gender-responsive national planning and budget documents in 38 countries
- Quota systems and reforms to promote the participation of women in electoral and political processes in 35 countries
- Support to national governments in enhancing labour, land, property and inheritance rights through legal and policy reforms, and incorporation of women's economic empowerment in the national plans in 32 countries
- Development of 15 national action plans on implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 and support to constitutional and electoral reforms in 8 post-conflict countries

When challenges remain...

UN Women's support to the implementation of gender equality norms and standards at the global, regional and national levels has been challenged by several factors

UN Women has been generally effective in supporting development and implementation of norms and standards, with greater success in the former than the latter

The UN Evaluation Group definition of normative support work includes both direct support to the development of norms and standards as well as support to implementing those standards at the policy and programme levels. A survey conducted during the evaluation showed that most UN Women headquarters and field staff surveyed rated UN Women's normative support activities effective. However, they rated activities supporting implementation of norms and standards less effective than activities supporting the development of norms and standards.

While acknowledging that supporting the implementation of gender equality norms and standards was more challenging than supporting their development, most UN Women staff (97 per cent in headquarters and 90 per cent in the field), a majority of civil society

organization representatives (61 per cent) and half of UN and government representatives interviewed stated that UN Women had been generally more effective in supporting development than implementation. The indicators reported as "almost on track" and "off track" in the Executive Director's most recent report to the Executive Board on progress made on UN Women's 2011–2013 strategic plan referred mostly to implementation activities.

UN Women staff, civil society advisory groups and resident coordinator survey respondents gave

mixed ratings to UN Women's normative support work in achieving results in its six impact areas over the past three years. UN Women staff gave positive ratings to all of their work, with the exception of one area. Civil society advisory group survey respondents rated UN Women positive in three areas and negative in the other three. Resident coordinators only gave positive ratings to UN Women's normative support work in the area of ending violence against women, which also had the highest number of outputs in UN Women's 2014 monitoring report.



"Voices against Violence" curriculum training in Zambia



UN WOMEN/SAMIR JUING THAPA

Insufficient resources and other factors beyond UN Women's direct control have made supporting implementation of norms and standards challenging

Insufficient resources have particularly hindered UN Women's capacity in the field, which is critical for the successful implementation of global gender equality norms and standards. A majority of UN Women professional staff (63 per cent, including national staff) is now based in one of its 84 field offices. However, the average size of a UN Women's field office (excluding regional offices) is 2.8 staff, and UN Women is represented by only one person in 27 countries. UN Women's capacity in the field is particularly limited in West and Central Africa, which account for only 8 per cent of UN Women field

staff, and the Arab States, which account for 11 per cent.

Most UN Women staff surveyed (83 per cent) stated that inadequate human resources in the field negatively influenced UN Women's capacity to support governments in norm formulation and implementation, and to develop the capacity of civil society organizations to advocate for gender equality. UN Women's field capacity has also been inadequate to fulfil demands from governments and meet stakeholder expectations. As two examples, a high-level stakeholder interviewed in India stated that project proposals often came unfunded, and the limited size of UN Women's office in Senegal hampered the organization's capacity to follow-up on commitments with a national ministry. Nearly half of UN partners interviewed in the field (46 per cent), including resident

coordinators, stated UN Women's high staff turnover and insufficient capacity to follow-up on coordination meetings and sustain operations was the most notable challenge they faced in their country of operations. The majority of resident coordinators surveyed in countries where UN Women has no physical presence (63 per cent) reported the absence of a full-fledged office was the biggest challenge they faced in their working relationship with UN Women.

Several other factors beyond UN Women's direct control made it difficult for UN Women to fully support implementation of gender equality norms and standards. These included the lack of political will of national governments and/or individual ministries, limited government capacities to implement norms and standards, and cultural resistance to gender equality.



Women leaders of the Network of Women of African Descent and the National Coordination of Indigenous Women of Panama (CONAMUIP)

UN Women has faced challenges regarding broadness of its impact areas, as well as insufficient linkages between its headquarters and field offices and its support activities to norm development and implementation

Additional factors have made it challenging for UN Women to support the implementation of normative gains it helped to achieve. First, the six impact areas of UN Women's Strategic Plan covered a very broad range of development results to which UN Women planned to contribute, thus making it difficult to develop specific strategies and tools to operationalize the outcomes established in the plan. This challenge was also stated in the Multilateral Performance Assessment Network review, which expressed concern that "UN Women does not provide explicit theories of change for its impact areas that explain how outputs are intended to contribute to the outcomes

identified in the development results framework". UN Women's 2014 humanitarian strategy is a good example of a clear document where linkages between normative, operational and coordination activities are explicitly discussed.

Second, insufficient linkages between UN Women headquarters and field offices have hampered implementation of normative gains. These weak linkages were one of the three main obstacles volunteered by staff surveyed when asked about challenges in implementing their gender equality normative support mandate, and fewer than half of UN Women staff survey respondents (48 per cent) rated UN Women effective at coordinating headquarters and field offices in supporting the adoption and implementation of gender equality norms and standards. Furthermore, until 2014, UN Women regional offices had not been represented in the UN Women Senior Management Team, which was composed entirely of headquarters staff. Headquarters thus did not obtain the full benefits of the

regional perspective in its deliberations and decisions, and the regional offices were not completely aware of considerations that led to headquarters' decisions. The Extended Senior Management Team, which now includes the regional directors, is however scheduled to meet only two to three times a year. This seems insufficient to foster more regular and systematic working relationships between regional directors and headquarters senior management colleagues.

Insufficient headquarters/field linkages were also exemplified by the need for more specific and regular guidance to field offices. While headquarters communicates with the field regarding significant normative decisions of intergovernmental meetings, such as it did with Rio+20, and has developed some guidance notes on particular norms and standards, specific and practical advice on how to translate these decisions in the field was not regularly provided. Many UN Women field staff surveyed (43 per cent) and interviewed (20 per cent) volunteered that they received insufficient support from headquarters with regard to substantive guidance for supporting the implementation of gender equality norms and standards.

Third, implementation of gender equality norms and standards was hindered by inadequate integration between UN Women's normative development and implementation activities. The UN Women Programme and Operations Manual broadly refers to the need to develop country programmes within the gender equality normative framework, and acknowledges the need to align these programmes

Insufficient linkages between headquarters and field offices have hampered the implementation of normative gains

with national priorities: country strategic notes refer to internationally agreed norms and standards (for example, 10 of 13 notes reviewed discussed how to implement the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women conclusions). However, there is no analysis and guidance linking the different norms by strategic issues, nor wider organizational policies on how to interpret and implement those norms. Four of 25 UN Women headquarters staff interviewed volunteered UN Women should better articulate how operational results had been achieved due to its normative support work, and it

was one the main recommendations made to strengthen UN Women. The Multilateral Performance Assessment Network evaluation identified the linking of UN Women's policy dialogue and normative support roles at global level with lessons learned and operations at the regional and country levels as a major challenge, and also noted that systems for internal knowledge dissemination and communication of lessons learned between headquarters and country offices required improvement. It reported it was difficult to see a clear link between UN Women's activities and its outputs, thus making it difficult to assess UN

Women's contributions to development results.

UN Women's structure also limited the optimal integration of its normative development and implementation activities. While coordination between the subprogrammes worked very well for key events such as the Commission on the Status of Women, it had not yet been fully translated into more regular day-to-day interaction. Of UN Women headquarters staff interviewed, 28 per cent indicated there was limited dialogue between and within the two subprogrammes and poor coordination between the divisions at headquarters. Following UN Women's first staff survey in 2014, the Executive Director established a working group on internal communications to optimize communication between headquarters divisions as well as across regional and country levels.

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka meets with United Nations Country Team heads of agencies in Abuja, Nigeria



Pulling ahead: More partnerships needed

UN Women has not yet fully leveraged its UN partnerships in order to more effectively support implementation of the gender equality normative framework

UN Women has effectively led and guided coordination mechanisms at headquarters level

In order to effectively support the development and implementation of the normative framework on gender equality, UN Women must effectively coordinate with its UN partners, and it has had some successes in this regard even though the coordination mandate was only added when UN Women was created. A majority of UN Women staff surveyed (55 per cent) rated coordination between UN Women and other United Nations entities as very effective or effective, and two-thirds rated UN Women very effective or effective in promoting integration of gender issues into the work programmes of other UN entities. Additionally to the normative gains discussed in area 2, UN Women has, for example, spearheaded the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for the Implementation of the Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), which has enhanced the United Nations system's ability to hold itself accountable for gender

equality. UN Women's technical support included the coordination of 13 inter-agency workshops with participation from 12 to 31 entities between 2012 and 2014. The introduction of this accountability system was repeatedly cited in interviews as having significantly contributed to gender equality progress in the United Nations system.

At the global level, UN Women has participated in several coordination mechanisms. It chaired and provided substantive servicing to the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women

participants at the 2013 meeting regarding the extent to which the specific objectives of the annual session were addressed was 4.5 out of 6. UN Women has used its UN partnerships to support and monitor the implementation of key intergovernmental resolutions, such as the section on gender in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution.

However, UN Women has not always used coordination mechanisms to their fullest potential for promoting the implementation of the gender equality normative

The UN-SWAP has enhanced the UN's ability to hold itself accountable for gender equality

and Gender Equality (the Network) and the UN Development Group Task Team on Gender Equality. Starting with the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, UN Women has used the Network to exchange experiences and to prepare a joint UN position statement for the priority theme of the Commission, and the average rating of Network

framework. The Network meets in its plenary before the Commission on the Status of Women session and there are one or two interim meetings throughout the year, thus not taking advantage of opportunities for more regular and systematic institutional follow-up to the Commission's commitments and recommendations. UN Women's UN partners noted that



A Celebration of Unity to Step It Up on GE and WHR 2015 in Timor-Leste

UN WOMEN/CHRISTINA YANAKIS

the extent to which commitments and recommendations are followed up depended on the professional level of Network representatives: gender focal points were often at an insufficiently high level of authority or too junior to make decisions and commitments. Eight of nine Network members interviewed volunteered it could be used more effectively for policy discussions and strategy development to support the implementation of Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions.

UN Women has been more effective in working within UN country teams where it has a country presence

At the country level, UN Women has contributed to increasing synergies and coherence within the UN country teams that support implementation

of the gender equality normative framework, including through its regional offices in countries where it has no field presence. It chaired or co-chaired 91 UN gender theme groups supporting the work of resident coordinators and country teams. Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of UN partners interviewed in the field indicated that UN Women played an important advocacy and coordination role within the UN country team, with particular focus on ending violence against women (all UN Women country work plans reviewed discussed a multi-sectoral approach) and reporting against normative frameworks such as the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. For example, the UN Women office in India played an important leadership role in the UN support to the government after the highly publicized gang rape in Delhi in 2012. Joint

programming with UN Women was referenced in 40 per cent of the resident coordinator reports reviewed, and 8 of 11 UN development assistance frameworks reviewed included gender-specific outcomes.

UN Women's UN partnerships around its normative support work have been stronger in those countries where it has a presence. Resident coordinators in countries with a UN Women presence consistently rated it more positively on its participation in the UN country team than resident coordinators in countries where it was not present. UN Women has also been more effective in mainstreaming gender into the work of the UN country team when it has a country presence: a majority of resident coordinator survey respondents (73 per cent) for the former rated UN Women very effective or effective in this regard, compared to less than half (43 per cent) for the latter.



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UN Women has not fully leveraged its UN partnerships to support implementation of norms and standards, although some tools and mechanisms have been effective

UN Women has not adequately capitalized on its UN partnerships to fully leverage the comparative advantages of other entities with a greater field presence in order to better support implementation of normative gains. For example, at the country level, UN Women has traditionally worked primarily with the ministries of women. While it has worked with other sectoral ministries in some countries, it has not always fully utilized the wider networks and broader agendas of other UN agencies in order to further reach out to these ministries. Also 13 of 26 UN partners interviewed in the field suggested that UN Women should provide advice to other UN partners on integrating gender equality into their work, rather

than being involved in direct project implementation.

On its own field missions, the Office of Internal Oversight Services observed examples of UN Women effectively leveraging its UN partnerships, as well as opportunities for doing this more. These included, as a positive example, working with UNAIDS on adoption of a national law on HIV, and as an example of an unexploited opportunity, not partnering with the UN Educational, Scientific

recognizing the respective mandates of UN Women and its UN partners have facilitated UN Women in better leveraging these partnerships to support implementation of norms and standards, and have provided an overall framework for cooperation, enhanced interaction and sharing of information. However, according to five of six UN partners interviewed with whom UN Women had such agreements, these needed to be updated and better integrated

Strategic partnerships agreements have sometimes facilitated UN Women in better leveraging these partnerships to support implementation of norms and standards

and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for greater access to the Ministry of Education to advance gender equality norms around education.

Strategic partnership agreements

into field work. The absence of such agreements can lead to inefficiency. For example, on one Office of Internal Oversight Services mission, the country representative of

a UN entity stated that confusion with UN Women on definitions and approaches for human trafficking led to delays in important anti-trafficking legislation.

UN Women's coordination role in supporting implementation has not been fully defined

Within this context, UN Women's roles and responsibilities regarding coordination in supporting implementation of the normative framework have not been fully defined. The 2012 UN Women Meta-evaluation determined that there was "room for improvement in UN Women's coordination" and noted "an absence of identifying and understanding UN partner complementarities". The 2014 UN Women Coordination Strategy is intended to "enhance UN coherence by creating synergies and strengthening collective action on gender equality", but acknowledges there is "opportunity for greater complementarity and coherence" and that "evidence suggests that obstacles and challenges remain at the global, regional and national levels". More than one-fourth of government representatives interviewed in the field (27 per cent) indicated that UN entities should work more closely together on achieving gender equality goals, and one-third of UN partners interviewed in the field suggested UN Women should more clearly articulate its core business. Many UN partners interviewed at headquarters (40 per cent) stated UN Women needed to clarify its coordination role; one-fourth of headquarters UN Women staff interviewed volunteered the same. Furthermore, close to one-fifth

of resident coordinators surveyed (17 per cent) volunteered "insufficient coordination" and "overlapping and unclear mandates" with other UN entities as one of the biggest challenges that UN Women faced in mainstreaming gender equality norms and standards into the work of their country teams. The Multilateral Performance Assessment Network assessment noted UN Women staff is uncertain "about how to operationalize this dimension [coordination] of the mandate". In this context, discussions with UN partners—such as the one organized by the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in 2014 on the implications of its coordination role within the UN system—helped define roles in those impact areas of UN Women's strategic framework for which it

had a responsibility to trigger a UN response but did not have technical capacity to implement projects.

Other factors may account for limitations in UN Women's capacity to fully leverage its coordination role to support implementation of the normative framework. Forty-two per cent of UN partners interviewed in headquarters volunteered that UN Women had limited resources, particularly within the context of its large mandate. Also, UN Women cannot be held accountable for the priority given to gender equality by other UN entities or for their willingness to cooperate with UN Women in this regard, and the gender equality normative framework does not always clearly define or imply UN Women's role in supporting its implementation.



Jacqueline Moudeina, Lawyer and Human Rights Advocate, speaks at the Conference on Women's Leadership in the Sahel

LOOKING FORWARD:

UN Women is at a critical juncture



Pakistan: Skills training
held for female community
activists in Khyber Pass.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Four years after its creation, UN Women stands at a critical juncture for making an even greater impact in the lives of women. Since 2011, it has made significant strides in advancing the global normative agenda for women's rights. For this, it is to be commended.

Throughout the conduct of this evaluation, UN Women was consistently acknowledged as effectively advocating for and championing gender equality. Its unique added value is its singular focus on gender equality and the authority it brings to the discourse on women's human rights.

UN Women needs to capitalize on the impressive gains it has achieved in its normative support work and transform these into even greater results on the ground. It is important to acknowledge the very real challenges UN Women faces in moving forward, including cultural resistance, limited resources, competing demands and still evolving organizational roles. If UN Women is to make a difference, it needs to more strategically focus on a few critical issues that can have significant impact and systematically implement activities to address these subjects. UN Women also needs to gain greater synergies from its normative and operational work. It needs to improve how it communicates about the important work it does and about how gender equality is vital to the achievement of the larger goals of the United Nations.

In the 69th session of the General Assembly, member states recognized the confluence of key intergovernmental processes in 2015—including the target date for the Millennium

Development Goals, the crafting of the post-2015 Development Agenda, the Beijing+20 process, the 15-year review of Security Council resolution 1325 and climate change work—as a critical opportunity for enhancing efforts to accelerate achieving the goals of gender equality and empowerment of women. 2015 thus marks a great opportunity for UN Women to achieve even greater impact.

At the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2014, it was recognized that not a single country has achieved full equality for women. With a stand-alone gender equality goal and with gender perspectives mainstreamed throughout its framework, the post-2015 Development Agenda provides a strong context for furthering the work and results around gender equality. As stated by the Executive Director in her address to the Third Committee on 13 October 2014, UN Women must focus now on “closing the gap between commitments and action, between words and deeds”.

Not a single country has achieved full equality for women, but the post-2015 development agenda provides a new opportunity for furthering the work towards universal gender equality



RECOMMENDATION 1

Define how change happens in normative work

In the context of the mid-term review of its strategic plan in 2016, UN Women should define how it will address key issues within its six impact areas.

Specifically, UN Women should develop theories of change that represent a visual roadmap conveying what UN Women aims to achieve and how it intends to achieve it at the global, regional and country level.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Strengthen communication and coordination

UN Women should further enhance the synergies between its two subprogrammes by making linkages between them more systematic, regular and—where appropriate—formal.

This should build upon good practices and lessons learned from existing mechanisms in order to further strengthen communication and coordination between Subprogramme 1 and Subprogramme 2 in all phases of normative support work.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Tighten linkages between headquarters and field offices

UN Women should further strengthen the existing linkages between its headquarters and field offices, including enhanced support to field offices in the implementation of the gender equality framework, including by:

- a) Ensuring the participation of Regional Directors in Senior Management Team meetings where the topic(s) discussed would benefit from their direct input, and regularly sharing minutes or summaries of all Senior Management Team meetings with Regional Directors
- b) Enhancing the terms of reference for Thematic Advisors in the regional offices to provide more guidance to country offices on strategies and tools to implement the normative framework, including on how to use theories of change at country level for the implementation of that framework
- c) Organizing regular regional meetings of UN Women country representatives to share experiences in the implementation of gender equality norms and standards, and to draw lessons learned to better inform normative support work at all levels.

RECOMMENDATION 4

A step further: Work with partners to strengthen the gender equality normative framework

UN Women should, in consultation with its United Nations partners, further clarify complementarities with regard to implementing the gender equality normative framework.

Building upon existing tools, UN Women should identify specific ways in which it can best utilize the comparative advantage of its partners to strengthen implementation of the gender equality normative framework.



RESPONDING TO THE EVALUATION

Building on UN Women's strengths

UN Women issued a management response to the Evaluation of UN Women's Normative Support Work and its Operational Linkages where it agreed to all 4 recommendations put forward. The evaluation will be used to assist UN Women to further consolidate the linkages between its normative and operational work.

However, the evaluation also rightly pointed to available resources as a key issue; namely, that strengthening the linkages between normative and operational work is constrained by the persistent significant under funding of UN Women. Some of the recommendations contained in the report are not resource neutral and UN Women's ability to fully comply with them depends – at least in part – on the future increase of available resources, especially at the field level.

The report recognizes that UN Women has contributed to the increased visibility and awareness of gender issues in the global policy arena. This success is due to UN Women's investment in substantive and technical expertise, knowledge bases, sustained advocacy efforts,

extensive alliance and partnership building and proactive outreach efforts among all stakeholders, which, in turn, led to more systematic global attention to gender equality.

UN Women has also focused its efforts on promoting multi stakeholder consensus building, advocacy and constituency building, as well as mobilizing new partnerships with key stakeholders, particularly Member States and civil society. There are several examples that demonstrate a synergistic approach. This would have not been possible without effective internal communication, coordination and collaboration.

As an organization with a growing field presence and a commitment to supporting countries to implement the gender equality framework,

UN-Women works diligently to maintain strong links between its field offices and headquarters but recognizes that every opportunity for improving both vertical and horizontal linkages within the organization should be exploited. Consolidating and further enhancing linkages between the headquarters and the field is a priority for UN Women. The implementation of the regional architecture (endorsed by the Executive Board in 2012 and rolled out in 2013) is critical in that regard, and will continue to be regularly monitored to ensure effective empowerment of field structures and strong linkages between country offices, regional offices and headquarters.

The midterm review of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 provides an opportunity to rigorously interrogate the implicit theory of change that is reflected primarily in the development results framework of the Strategic Plan, and to support the development of a more explicit

Nayna Patra (third from the left), has been a ward member for the past two years and has successfully created women's self help groups to tackle local problems. Village Maluagoda, Dhenkanal District, Odisha.



UN WOMEN/GAGANJIT SINGH

theory and strategy in relation to the organization's main areas of focus.

The 2014 reporting process for field offices has raised the bar considerably in terms of how the organization systematically tracks the links between normative and operational work – and in particular how support to the implementation of norms and standards is done at field level. This includes the finalization and roll out of a new results management system for the organization.

UN Women will also further enhance linkages between the Policy and Intergovernmental Support Divisions, as well as between the UN System Coordination and the Programme Divisions, which are in separate sub-programmes.

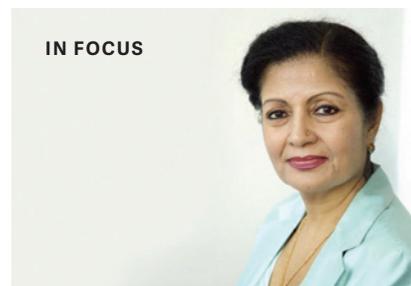
Finally, the current discourse on a UN fit for purpose suggests a fundamental departure from interventions that are mainly based on rigid divisions of labour, towards a much more integrated way of working with other UN partners, building on horizontal

coherence, integration, synergies and collaborative approaches. UN Women will work consistently with this forward looking fundamental shift and recognizes that further strengthening partnerships with other UN agencies is critical.

Subject to availability of resources, the Entity will increase its capacity to leverage the UN system, and support the strengthening of its gender equality work based on the needs identified from the UN SWAP implementation results. UN Women will also execute the updated strategy for implementing its System-wide and Inter Agency mandates for gender equality, which will also be complemented by an underlying theory of change further articulating the various elements of its UN coordination mandate.

The full text of the management response and detailed action plan for the four evaluation recommendations is available on the UN Women Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use System (GATE): <http://gate.unwomen.org/>.

IN FOCUS



Ms. Lakshmi Puri

Deputy Executive Director

It was a pleasure to be involved in this evaluation of UN Women's normative work. The evaluation allowed us to reflect on our achievements as well as on the lessons for strengthening even further to deliver on our normative mandate.

In its management response, UN Women agrees with all four evaluation recommendations. The management response showcases our commitment to take on the recommendations and continue our work to support gender equality and the empowerment of women around the world. I particularly appreciate the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services for undertaking this evaluation and the collaborative nature and constructive dialogue that was a hallmark of the exercise, also thanks to UN Women IEO.



The Office of Internal Oversight Services assessed UN Women's support to both the development and implementation of gender equality norms and standards, including operational activities. It assessed UN Women's UN partnerships and coordination activities within the specific context of how these relate to its normative support work. It did not directly assess UN Women's partnerships with civil society organizations.

The evaluation team used the following combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods:

- a) **Document review**
Content analysis of documents, including: intergovernmental resolutions; UN Women strategic plans, country strategic notes, budgets, annual reports, and coordination strategy; UN development assistance frameworks, resident coordinator reports, and Beijing+20 country reports
- b) **Interviews**
161 semi-structured interviews with UN Women headquarters and field staff, representatives of member states, civil society and UN partners
- c) **Field missions**
Visits to Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, Senegal and Thailand
- d) **Surveys**
Web-based surveys of:
 - All UN Women staff
 - UN Women civil society advisory groups
 - UN Resident Coordinators
 - UN Women Executive Board
 - Commission on the Status of Women
- e) **Twitter analysis**
Structured analysis of information from UN Women accounts
- f) **Meta-analysis**
Review of 15 UN Women evaluation reports
- g) **Direct observation**
Observation of meetings of the UN Women Executive Board, General Assembly committees and advocacy events organized by UN Women

An independent gender expert consultant reviewed the evaluation terms of reference, data collection instruments, preliminary results and draft report. The Office of Internal Oversight Services consulted UN Women during the conduct of the evaluation and expresses thanks to it for its cooperation and assistance.

WHAT DO I NEED
TO KNOW TO
MANAGE OR
CONDUCT AN
EVALUATION AT
UN WOMEN?

HOW CAN
EVALUATION BE
A DRIVER FOR
CHANGE TOWARDS
GENDER EQUALITY
AND WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT?

HOW IS GENDER-
RESPONSIVE
EVALUATION
DIFFERENT
FROM OTHER
EVALUATION?

HOW TO MANAGE GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

EVALUATION HANDBOOK

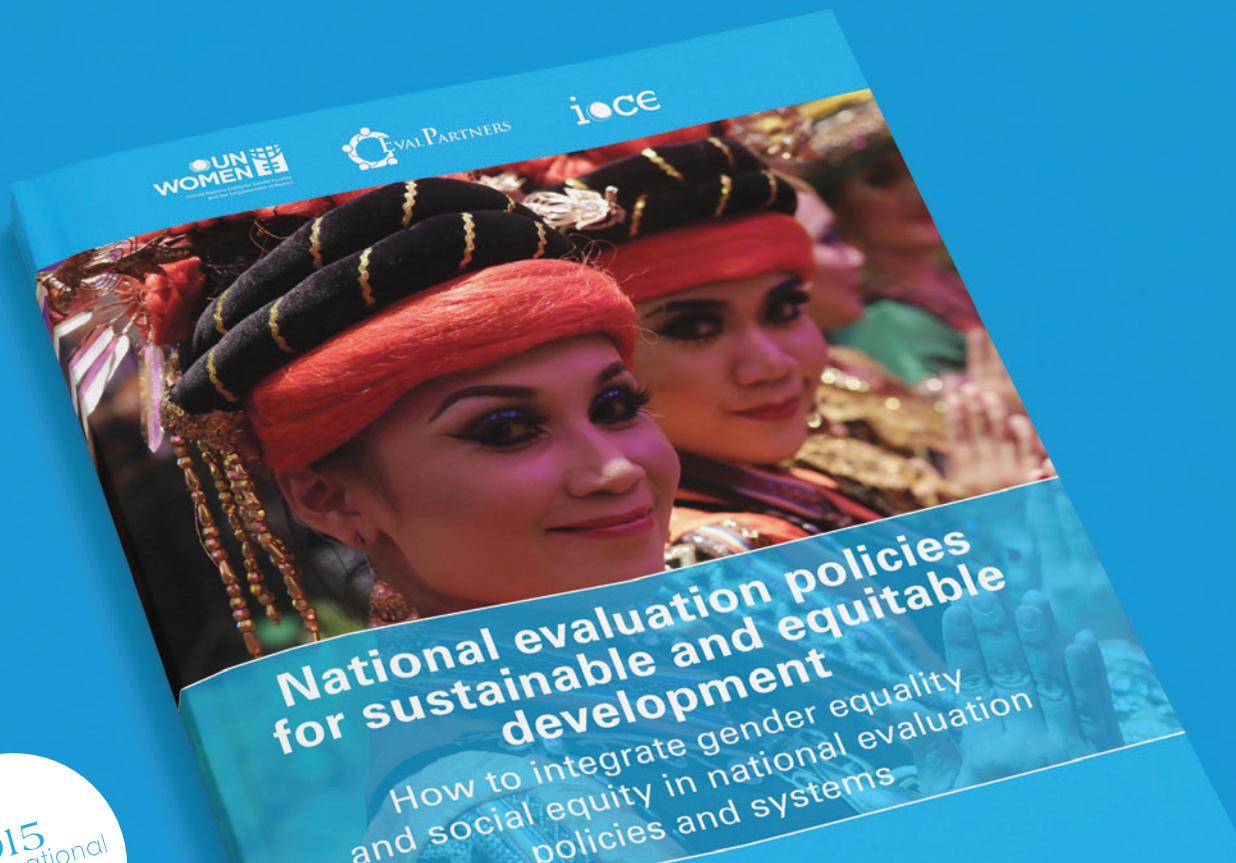


Find out how UN Women manages gender-responsive evaluation
with the new UN Women Evaluation Handbook:
How to manage gender responsive evaluation.

The Handbook is available at:
<http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org>

How do we integrate gender equality into national evaluation policies and systems?

Find the latest guidance and tools to strengthen national evaluation capacities for equitable and sustainable development



National Evaluation Policies for Sustainable and Equitable Development—Providing guidance on integrating gender equality into national evaluation policies and systems being implemented in an increasing number of developing countries around the world.

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