

# TRANSFORM

Changing the World



## UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women

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## Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 22nd issue of Transform, which focuses on a critical step towards achieving gender equality: ending violence against women and girls (EVAW). Violence against women and girls is a significant global problem that takes many forms and has both immediate and long-term physical and mental health consequences. UN Women's work in this area spans its integrated mandate of normative support, United Nations system coordination, and operational activities on the ground. In working towards preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, UN Women coordinates and works with partner agencies in the UN system and also convenes and collaborates with civil society, the private sector, local governments and women's organizations. To gain further insight into this important strategic area, the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) led an evaluation to assess the contribution of UN Women's coordination and convening role to EVAW results.

The evaluation found that UN Women's mandate to lead, promote and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality and women's empowerment is a strategic asset that enables it to engage in both normative advocacy and operational support, with coordination acting as a bridge between the two. However, the evaluation also found that the existing accountability mechanisms are insufficient and need to be complemented with an appropriate coordination for EVAW results framework. In addition, lack of a clearly articulated, concrete value proposition of coordination has constrained the operationalization of the coordination role in thematic areas, while other challenges include a lack of sufficient financial investment and appropriate metrics to showcase the value of UN Women's coordination work to the United Nations system as a whole.

The recommendations in the evaluation are forward looking. They suggest reaffirming UN Women's mandate to coordinate for results in key thematic areas, clearly articulating the value proposition of coordination to accelerate EVAW outcomes, strengthening inter-agency and in-house coordination mechanisms, as well as systematically documenting and communicating the impact of the organization's coordination efforts.

**Inga Sniukaite**

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## *Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.*

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**ON THE COVER** *Violinist, June-Chanakarn Wisuk Cho* - To launch the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence on November 25 2020, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the UNiTE Inter-agency group hosted the Asia-Pacific Regional Curated Dialogue livestreamed in the format of a TV programme.

Photo ©UN Women/Supasan Banyongkasena



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**Why evaluate UN Women's  
United Nations coordination and  
broader convening role in ending  
violence against women?**

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## **UN Women's United Nations system coordination and broader convening role in ending violence against women**

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*Are we getting it  
right?*

*Does our support  
positively change  
the lives of women  
and girls and  
contribute to  
gender equality?*

*To get better results,  
we need to know  
what works. We  
also need to know  
what doesn't work  
and how to fix it.*

UN Women's Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) conducted a corporate evaluation of UN Women's United Nations system coordination and broader convening role with civil society, governments and other partners in ending violence against women (EVAW) as part of the revised UN Women Corporate Evaluation Plan (2018–2021). The evaluation was initiated in December 2020 and completed in April 2021.

UN Women works to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG), to increase access to services for survivors and to make private and public spaces safer for women and girls. In working towards ending VAWG, UN Women leverages its integrated mandate through the provision of normative support, coordination of the United Nations system, and implementation of its operational activities.

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UN Women engages on multiple fronts by partnering with governments, United Nations organizations, civil society organizations and other partners to build capacity among multiple stakeholders to prevent and respond to VAWG in public and private spaces; to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of VAWG; to provide policy and technical guidance on legislation and policy reform; to provide essential services for survivors; and to collect and analyse data, provide thought leadership and disseminate knowledge products on this issue, including through established global communities of practice.

The evaluation studied the value and benefit of UN Women's coordination activities and broader convening role in achieving collective outcomes in EAW. The overarching

question of the evaluation was: What value and benefit does UN Women's United Nations system coordination and broader convening role in EAW bring to UN Women, United Nations organizations, governments and other partners, and to the overall achievement of collective EAW outcomes?

The evaluation covered the period from 2018 to 2020, focusing in particular on UN Women's United Nations system coordination and convening role in EAW during the current Strategic Plan for 2018–2021 and allowed for the inclusion of relevant historical results and mechanisms. Although not a focus of this evaluation, the emerging lessons learned on coordination and convening from the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate VAWG were also considered to the extent possible.

*What value and benefit does UN Women's United Nations system coordination and broader convening role in EAW bring to UN Women, United Nations organizations, governments and other partners, and to the overall achievement of collective EAW outcomes?*



[Corporate evaluation of UN Women's UN System coordination and broader convening role in EAW](#)

## UN Women's Joint Programmes and Initiatives in Ending Violence Against Women



**Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence**, a partnership between UN Women, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP and UNODC



**The EU–UN Spotlight Initiative**, a partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices



Global programme on **violence against women data** (with WHO)



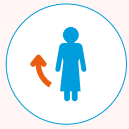
**The Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls** Global Initiative



**INTER-AGENCY INITIATIVE: the United Nations Trust Fund (UNTF) on EAW**

Administered by UN Women, the UNTF for EAW is a global, multilateral grant mechanism that supports efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls

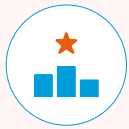
## EVALUATION QUESTIONS



What is the **strategic significance** of UN Women's United Nations coordination and broader convening role in advancing globally agreed goals on EVAW?



How has UN Women **operationalized** its UN system coordination and broader convening power on EVAW issues?



What are the **results** of UN Women's UN system coordination and broader convening role on EVAW issues?



How has UN Women's coordination and convening role contributed to EVAW during the **COVID-19 global pandemic**?



What **lessons** emerge from programmes where UN Women's UN coordination and broader convening work has led to **demonstrated impact in EVAW**?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women played an integral role in the United Nations system response and in raising awareness of VAWG. This included leading the development of an [inter-agency statement on VAWG in the context of COVID-19](#), supporting the United Nations Secretary-General's political engagement strategy on gender-based violence, providing substantive input to support the inclusion of violence against women in the [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, and producing and disseminating a [series of EVAW and COVID-19 policy briefs](#) on key issues to help inform the adaptation of policies and programmes in developed and developing countries at different stages of the pandemic.

The evaluation findings are expected to contribute to strategic decision-making, organizational learning, accountability and the strengthening of UN Women's United Nations system coordination and broader convening role in EVAW, including through the development of UN Women's Strategic Plan for 2022–2025.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN Women Executive Board, senior management and programme staff directly working on, or with an interest in, EVAW. The evaluation is also intended to be useful for other actors working on EVAW, including civil society organizations, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and development partners.



Photo ©UN Women/Asfandyar Khan

What methods and tools are available to advance gender-responsive evaluation?

What can we learn from successful gender-responsive evaluation approaches?

How can we empower rights holders and maximize their participation?

## GOOD PRACTICES IN GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATIONS

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## KEY INSIGHTS

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**What value and benefit does UN Women's UN coordination and broader convening role in ending violence against women bring to UN Women, United Nations organizations, governments and other partners, and to the overall achievement of collective outcomes?**





## UN Women's mandate to lead, promote and coordinate mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment across the United Nations system is a strong, strategic asset.



*UN Women's mandate to lead, promote and coordinate mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment across the United Nations system is a strong, strategic asset. However, current system-wide accountability and reporting frameworks are inadequate to enable effective coordination for system-wide results in thematic areas. Therefore an accountability framework for thematic areas, including ending violence against women (EVAW), that incorporates system-wide results needs to be developed.*

UN Women's founding resolution clearly empowers the organization to lead effective coherence, coordination and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system at both the global and country levels, and to establish appropriate mechanisms to assist and support the achievement of the strategic objectives and actions agreed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the national and international commitments stipulated in the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the United Nations General Assembly. UN Women's coordination mandate is a strategic asset that enables it to engage and coordinate with several larger United Nations organizations.

In the initial five-year phase (2012–2017) of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations system coordination and accountability focused on the achievement of minimum standards in mainstreaming gender perspectives within the processes and functions of individual organizations. Accountability for harnessing the

potential of coordinated actions (planning, mobilizing, delivering and reporting) for transformative development results was incorporated in the second phase of the UN-SWAP and in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT)-SWAP, which started in 2018. In the case of EVAW, the current accountability systems should be complemented by a system-wide accountability instrument that comprehensively reviews and reports on the UN system's high-level results and progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.2 "Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private sphere, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation" across countries, regions and globally.

The adoption of UN-SWAP 2.0 in 2018 was a positive development in ensuring accountability for transformative results. This has important implications for system-wide coordination and broader convening mechanisms in thematic areas, including a redesign or recalibration of objectives, processes and outputs and engagement modalities.

## 2 The lack of articulation of a concrete value proposition of United Nations system coordination has constrained the operationalization of UN Women's coordination role in thematic areas.



*The lack of articulation of a concrete value proposition of United Nations system coordination that clearly defines action areas, roles and responsibilities and includes metrics to track contributions to development results has constrained the operationalization of UN Women's coordination role in thematic areas. It is within the organization's mandate to articulate this value proposition through consultations.*

Although there is sufficient clarity on UN Women's coordination functions relating to accountability for gender mainstreaming in United Nations entities, what such coordination means, entails and is expected to achieve in specific thematic areas, including EAW, is neither publicly stated nor uniformly understood.

The promotion, leadership, and coordination of the United Nations system for performance and results in thematic areas such as EAW involves coordination and convening beyond global intergovernmental processes and engagement within and outside the United Nations system at both the regional and country levels. The lack of a system-wide

accountability framework and periodic reporting on EAW present challenges in operationalizing a coordination framework for results through collaborative actions. Coordination is therefore largely voluntary for United Nations entities, with no sanctions or incentives established.

At the country level, coordination and broader convening tasks involve both United Nations system and external stakeholders. United Nations system coordination mechanisms at the country level (e.g. Gender Theme Groups) often do not include specific workplans and budgets linked to coordination-specific actions and deliverables for EAW.





UN Women has struggled to raise resources for its coordination mandate. Donors are reluctant to fund United Nations system coordination activities from non-core or earmarked contributions (where UN Women has seen the largest growth in recent years), as they expect United Nations system coordination activities to be funded from assessed contributions or voluntary contributions in regular (core) resources. However, this logic is not necessarily applicable to coordination in thematic areas that have joint programmes implemented through significant United Nations system coordination and broader convening, support provided to national governments to implement normative commitments, and communi-

cations and advocacy activities, as these actions take place more at the regional and country levels and tend to have human and financial resource costs that are not explicitly delineated.

Another gap in building the case for coordination is the lack of recognition of the resources expended by UN Women as a convening organization (which is the case in most joint programmes). The administrative organization of a joint programme receives 1 per cent of the programme budget, yet the convening organization is expected to deliver on its role with no additional resources. This lack of extra resources places a considerable burden on UN Women's programme staff.

*The lack of a system-wide accountability framework and periodic reporting on EVAW present challenges in operationalizing a coordination framework for results through collaborative actions. Coordination is therefore largely voluntary for United Nations entities, with no sanctions or incentives established.*

## 3

## Despite challenges, UN Women has achieved successful results with significant linkages to its United Nations system coordination and collaborative actions.



*Although there is evidence that UN Women's coordination and convening roles have helped advance EVAW across regions, the results management framework needs to be strengthened to systematically capture these results.*

Joint programmes and advocacy initiatives are the most visible examples of how coordination is used to achieve results. Several joint EVAW programmes and advocacy initiatives (e.g., the essential services package and the United Nations joint prevention framework) have contributed to the creation of international standards and guidance, with a steady increase in their adoption among countries. This has led to improvements in legislation, as well as increased investment in the prevention of violence and the provision of quality essential services to survivors. The United Nations system has promoted several initiatives to strengthen data and statistics to provide evidence of challenges and responses.

Several joint EVAW programmes have been designed as global, regional or multi-country programmes. This has enabled the use of standardized approaches (with due contextualization) based on a theory of change, drawing from internationally accepted standards and good practices.

Some programmes have clearly elaborated coordination elements and human and financial resources specifically allocated for United Nations system coordination. In some programmes, UN Women and partner organizations have made efforts to develop pragmatic inter-agency arrangements in joint programming, such as the development of global knowledge products, and advocacy and communication activities.



## Examples of key results



### Joint programmes and interconnected programmes on EVAW

Joint Global Programme on **Essential Services for Women and Girls** Subject to Violence (with UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, UNODC)

Joint Programme on **VAW data** (with WHO and UNFPA)

**Partners for Prevention, Stepping Up and Blueprint for Prevention:** the Pacific Partners for Prevention (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV), Blueprint for Prevention, as a global initiative, and Stepping Up – a multi-country programme in the Asia and the Pacific region

The **Safe Cities and Public Spaces for Women and Girls** Global Programme



### Regional and multi country engagements

AS: **Gender Justice Study Initiative** (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and ESCWA)

ECA: **'Implementing norms, changing minds'** (UN Women-UNDP joint programme) in Western Balkans and Turkey and a sub-regional dialogue: **"Turning policies into action: eliminating gender-based violence against women and girls in Central Asia"** (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, Resident Coordinators Office Kyrgyzstan)

AP: **Safe and Fair Migration joint programme** (UN Women, ILO, UNODC and ASEAN institutions, under the Spotlight Initiative umbrella) in the ASEAN



### Collaborative knowledge products and advocacy campaigns

The **RESPECT framework** (with WHO, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNDP and UNODC)

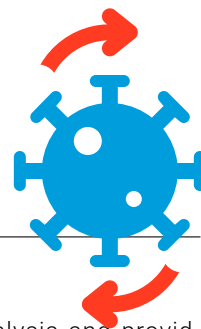
**Handbooks to Address Violence against Women** (sports, media, workplace, law enforcement) (with UNESCO, ILO, UNODC, UNDP, others)

**Essential Services Package** (with UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, and UNODC)

UN Secretary-General's **UNiTE by 2030 to End Violence Against Women campaign** (UNiTE Campaign)

## 4

## The COVID-19 response is a strong example of the power of a coordinated United Nations system response.



*Not only did the response elicit the best efforts of the entire United Nations system, it also established UN Women's credentials in a system-wide coordination role, emphasizing its capacities in thought leadership, swift mobilization of evidence, and strong and cohesive advocacy for action to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls in public and private spaces.*

UN Women's engagement in the United Nations system's COVID-19 response spanned several dimensions. The organization demonstrated perspicacity in highlighting the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis, especially its adverse impacts on gender-based violence, at a very early stage. Early evidence-based advocacy was instrumental in the articulation of the need for a system-wide response. Policy briefs from several agencies and a 10 point checklist for governments to enable a gender-responsive COVID-19 response were key in this regard.

UN Women made a useful contribution in the formulation and roll-out of a political engagement strategy on the COVID-19 response for the United Nations Secretary-General and other principles, in particular leveraging inter-agency mechanisms such as the Secretary-General's Executive Committee. The organization also reallocated resources across its EAW programme portfolio to incorporate COVID-19 responses at the regional and country levels through strengthening data

collection and analysis and provided support to strengthen access to services as part of individual countries' pandemic-response measures. In addition, UN Women collaborated with UNDP in developing the COVID-19 Gender Response Tracker to monitor governments' policy responses and engaged effectively with the media, as evidenced through its partnerships with Google and Facebook, which helped UN Women reach more than 2 million people worldwide



Photo ©UNWomen/Johis Alarcón

## Selection of Policy Briefs and Guidance Products in the Early Phases of the COVID-19 Response



- UN Women Executive Director's Call to Action ([link](#))
- 10-point checklist ([link](#))
- Inter-Agency statement on VAWG in the context of COVID-19 ([link](#))
- Inter-Agency Group note: COVID-19 and Human Rights: We are all in this together ([link](#))
- Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 ([link](#))
- Five Policy Briefs: economic fallout, care economy, violence against women, women's leadership and women's role in post conflict ceasefire and peace processes ([link](#))
- IANWGE Compendium on Integrating Gender considerations in the response to COVID-19: key messages and actions from UN entities ([link](#))
- COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker ([link](#))
- A series of policy briefs on VAW and COVID-19 ([link](#))
- UN SG Policy Brief on COVID-19 and Cities. Covid in an Urban World ([link](#))

**Source:** Compiled by the evaluation team from desk reviews and the Report on UN Women's Global Response to COVID-19.

Photo © UN Women/Fahad Abdullah Kaizer



Photo © UN Women/Kate Brown



# Examples of UN Women's support during the COVID-19 pandemic

## HELPLINES, ONLINE & SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



### Argentina and Chile

WhatsApp, government and CSOs: upgraded existing national helplines for access by women in lockdown with abusers



### DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Eswatini, Zimbabwe

UNTF supported CSOs in setting up new helplines or expanding existing ones to handle increased caseloads



### North Macedonia

Online legal counselling by Women Forum



### Serbia and Kosovo

Mobile app featuring access to chat, SOS and panic buttons



### Ukraine

Virtual safe spaces on social media platforms in conflict-affected areas in east Ukraine



### Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan

Toll-free helplines and hotlines sustained during COVID-19



### Pakistan

Online psychological counselling, therapy and legal aid for survivors



### India

National hotline network with multiple language assistance

## PREVENTION



### Jordan, Pakistan, Senegal, Uganda and Caribbean

Training of law enforcement officials to respond remotely to VAWG



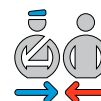
### Uganda

Uganda Police Force dedicated toll-free hotline



### Kyrgyzstan

Training sessions including online dialogue to monitor violence against women



### Nigeria

Community surveillance groups for monitoring and referral of case

## SHELTERS, PPE AND SUPPLIES



### Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Tanzania

Face masks and kits, washing buckets



### Zimbabwe

Emergency care packages and PPE kits



### Iraq, Somalia, Bangladesh

PPE, cash transfers and women hygiene kits



### Ethiopia

Transitional shelters/safe houses, provision of dignity kits and services, food and hygiene materials for HIV-positive women



### Guatemala

Protective suits for personnel – for crime scenes of femicide and for returnees and quarantined women in shelters

## 5

## The value and contribution of coordination to outcomes remains undetermined and underrecognized as these are not systematically captured in coordination-related plans.



*Not systematically capturing and reflecting coordination-related plans, actions, costs and contributions to EAW thematic area results does not support the acknowledged importance of coordination of UN Women and the United Nations system as a whole. As a result, the value and contribution of coordination to outcomes remains undetermined and underrecognized.*

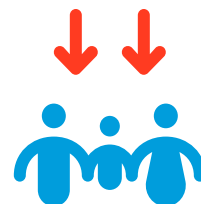
UN Women's Strategic Plan for 2018–2021 did not set aside coordination budgets for thematic areas, even though a large part of coordinating for results takes place within programming. EAW, a major area of programming for UN Women, was the most prioritized thematic area within the United Nations system in 2014–2019, with 57 per cent of reporting United Nations organizations listing EAW as a priority.

Noting the complexity of the undertaking and several efforts of UN Women, the Strategic Plan for 2018–2021 did not include optimal results and success indicators to capture and report the contributions of its coordination pillar in the context of thematic area results. Coordination was treated as a contributor to operational efficiency and not as a critical component in mainstreaming gender perspectives in development results in thematic areas. Coordination workplans therefore were not systematically outlined, budgeted, documented or reported to showcase their benefits and their value to participants and beneficiaries. The common chapter mechanisms of the organizations of the Chief Executives Board for

Coordination include no specific areas of coordination or collaborative actions that would drive a common, shared corporate understanding of coordination and minimize inter-agency dynamics. As a result, insights on the effectiveness of UN Women's coordination and broader convening role are based on a mix of perceptions of UN Women staff and other actors, rather than on objective and agreed measures.

Coordination responsibilities are intensive and take up a considerable amount of staff time. Senior headquarters staff who were interviewed for the evaluation estimate that more than one third of their time is spent coordinating with counterparts. Despite this, many key stakeholders perceive coordination and broader convening activities as abstract tasks that are conflated with other tasks. For staff who primarily have programme implementation responsibilities, coordination tasks may be considered an added responsibility, as they are not based on clear deliverables and resources and, in most cases, are considered a further responsibility in addition to programme implementation tasks.

## 6 Successes are achieved more through individual leadership, motivation, charisma and other interpersonal skills.



*In the absence of clear institutional arrangements, enabling structures and processes for coordination in thematic areas, successes are achieved more through individual leadership, motivation, charisma and other interpersonal skills.*

UN Women faces challenges in fully operationalizing its United Nations system coordination role and in managing expectations among United Nations entities, with the biggest challenge being the balance between its coordination and operational roles. A major reason for some pushback against UN Women within Gender Theme Groups is that the organization does not generally have a sizeable field programme footprint to be able to coordinate other entities. There are some concerns about the variation in technical expertise across UN Women's headquarters, field offices and regions, and the organization's perceived lack of neutrality among United Nations organizations in contexts where UN Women also mobilizes resources for programmes, which results in competition among organizations.

UN Women's convening role is also not assertively defended by some country office staff, as it neither attracts additional core and non-core resources, nor provides dedicated posts, often resulting in an

additional workload on staff with programme implementation tasks. A practical problem in this regard is the different seniority levels of programme staff in UNCT structures and decision-making bodies, with lower-ranking staff members usually facing more senior counterparts in key meetings.

As a result, not all United Nations organizations automatically accept UN Women's mandate, with the organization having to earn such acceptance through showing its added value on the ground. Where UN Women has sizeable human and financial resources, or where it has cordially agreed the division of labour (such as the division of pilot countries and respective sector engagements within the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence), this has worked well. However, coordination between entities with greater capacity has sometimes been challenging, with successes often the result of individual leadership rather than institutional arrangements.

# UN WOMEN RAPID ASSESSMENT TOOL

To Evaluate Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Results In Humanitarian Contexts



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MOVING FORWARD

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# Six ways to strengthen UN Women's United Nations coordination and its broader convening role in ending violence against women



Photo ©UN Women/Leovigildo Nhampule

### Recommendation 1

*UN Women should reaffirm its United Nations system coordination mandate for results in key thematic areas (i.e. beyond its promotion of gender mainstreaming in United Nations organizations).*

UN Women should reaffirm its coordination mandate as a mandate to lead, promote and coordinate ending violence against women (EVAW) towards meeting minimum standards in the United Nations system and to maximize collective efforts to achieve agreed thematic area results, i.e. EVAW goals and outcomes (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.2). UN Women should present the need for an appropriate system-wide accountability instrument for EVAW that also complements existing accountabil-

ity instruments. UN Women should work with partners to change the narrative around coordination for EVAW results, as this is not the exclusive responsibility of one entity, but the collective responsibility of all entities in the United Nations system. Coordination is therefore to be exercised throughout the United Nations system (and not just by UN Women) and also requires further engagement outside the system, including with governments and other key stakeholders, in order to achieve results.

## Recommendation 2

*UN Women should clearly articulate the value proposition of coordination to accelerate EAW outcomes and the risks and costs of non-coordination.*

UN Women should undertake a review of the gaps in existing mechanisms in respect of system-wide accountability for transformative results. UN Women should itemize the coordination tasks specific to EAW (with United Nations and other stakeholders) carried out at the headquarters, regional and country levels by various sections, including an estimation of the human resources, time and financial resources involved in these tasks.

UN Women should develop a coordination for EAW results package, menu or compact, which lists

outputs, products and services, structures, mechanisms, partners and alliances. Some examples of package contents at the global level could include a flagship review report on the state of violence against women as an annex to the Secretary-General's biennial report; an annual dialogue with the Office of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by State parties; and standardized EAW guidance.

## Recommendation 3

*UN Women should appropriately recognize and reflect coordination and convening functions in the thematic areas of its Strategic Plan for 2022–2025 with specific results indicators and resource requirements at the global, regional and country levels to present a full picture of actions and funding gaps.*

The theory of change in the Strategic Plan for 2022–2025 should highlight the results and outputs that cannot be achieved without strong coordination by UN Women and the United Nations system and should itemize mechanisms and processes that call for coordinated actions to achieve EAW goals and targets. UN Women should formulate and include coordination results and indicators in the EAW development results of its strategic plan using the coordination for EAW results package as the basis, and should also include relevant metrics for substantive qualitative outcomes of coordination in the EAW thematic area of the development results framework.

UN Women should prepare a breakdown of coordination resources linked to United Nations system coordination and broader convening actions for accountability and EAW development results, with financing targets, minimum package costs for coordination in thematic areas of the strategic plan or strategic notes at the country level, budgets for system-wide EAW reviews and stocktaking as part of costs to support the Secretary-General's biennial reports, coordination costs for minimum packages as budget items in donor agreements, and the costs of all tasks of a convening organization in joint programmes. The breakdown should also highlight any funding gaps.



Photo ©UN Women/ Long Duong

## Recommendation 4

*UN Women should lead and strengthen inter-agency mechanisms for coordinated actions in the thematic area of EAW towards accountability for development results as envisioned in UN-SWAP and internationally agreed goals on EAW, especially SDG 5.2.*

UN Women should present the case to United Nations organizations and to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General for re-forming an official inter-agency mechanism for coordinated reviews of system-wide EAW initiatives and results as part of accountability for development results in UN-SWAP 2.0 and reports of the Secretary-General on EAW. UN Women should also propose a coordinated response framework for EAW based on a system-wide agenda, which should include system-level diagnosis and coordinated actions. The coordination aspects of the framework could include monitoring and evaluation of EAW results, mutual accountability frameworks (governments, United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) and other stakeholders) under SDG and CE-

DAW reviews, collaborative knowledge products and guidance, joint programmes and multi-partner initiatives, and joint advocacy and communications (speaking in one voice).

UN Women should explore the interest of organizations of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination in developing a collaborative areas section for SDG 5.2 in their strategic plans using principles of engagement under a coordinated EAW response framework, including common coordination success indicators and metrics. UN Women should also build trust through neutrality and establish a credible distinction between its United Nations system coordination function and implementation of its operational activities.

## Recommendation 5

*UN Women should strengthen in-house coordination mechanisms to better represent thematic area highlights and coordination challenges in inter-agency mechanisms and reporting.*

UN Women should review work processes to enhance coherence in coordination among the United Nations System Coordination Division, the Ending Violence Against Women Section of the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division, and the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women to better compile, review and report on coordination-related initiative results in the EAW thematic area. UN Women should also instil coordination into its corporate programming culture, including making the role of coordination in all UN Women programme staff's tasks more explicit.



Photo ©UN Women/ Long Duong



## Recommendation 6

*UN Women should systematically document and compellingly communicate the impact of coordination to the United Nations system, donors and national stakeholders.*

UN Women should systematically document and compellingly communicate the impact of coordination to the United Nations system, donors and national stakeholders through high-level messaging of the value proposition of its coordination work, using metrics and case studies suitable for external audiences.

UN Women should consider using the Resident Coordinator's Office, the United Nations Cooperation Framework and UNCT-SWAP struc-

tures to promote and report on coordinated actions and programmes at the country level. There is a need to systematically document coordination impact stories, i.e. results that could not have been achieved without coordination, using metrics and case studies suitable for external audiences. Furthermore, the real costs of coordination activities and the challenges resulting from insufficient resources being budgeted and allocated for coordination should be highlighted.

### RECOMMENDATIONS\*



#### RECOMMENDATION 1.

UN Women should reaffirm its UN system coordination mandate for results in key thematic areas (i.e. beyond its promotion of gender mainstreaming in UN organizations).



#### RECOMMENDATION 2.

UN Women should clearly articulate the value proposition of coordination to accelerate EAW outcomes and the risks and costs of non-coordination.



#### RECOMMENDATION 3.

UN Women should appropriately recognize and reflect coordination and convening functions in the thematic areas of its Strategic Plan for 2022–2025 with specific results indicators and resource requirements at the global, regional and country levels.



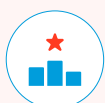
#### RECOMMENDATION 4.

UN Women should lead and strengthen inter-agency mechanisms for coordinated actions in the thematic area of EAW towards accountability for development results as envisioned in UN-SWAP and internationally agreed goals on EAW, especially SDG 5.2.



#### RECOMMENDATION 5.

UN Women should strengthen in-house coordination mechanisms to better represent thematic area highlights and coordination challenges in inter-agency mechanisms and reporting.



#### RECOMMENDATION 6.

UN Women should systematically document and compellingly communicate the impact of coordination to the UN system, donors and national stakeholders.

\*The recommendations are based on the evaluation framework, findings and conclusions. The recommendations were developed in consultation with key evaluation stakeholders, including the Evaluation Reference Group, PPID, UNSCD, SPRED and the EAW section.



# EVALUATING IMPACT IN GENDER EQUALITY

Guidance note to evaluate impact in gender  
equality and women's empowerment



Download the Guidance Note [here](#)



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## REFLECTIONS FROM MANAGEMENT

# Learning from this corporate evaluation

*This article is developed based on UN Women's management response presented to the UN Women Executive Board.*

*UN Women welcomes the corporate evaluation of UN Women's United Nations coordination and broader convening role in ending violence against women (EVAW), which sought to analyse the strategic significance, operationalization and results of UN Women's work in this area, including during the COVID-19 global pandemic.*

UN Women acknowledges a key evaluation finding, that a large part of coordination in thematic areas takes place within the context of normative work and programming, and that coordination needs to be viewed from the value it adds to normative and programming results and outcomes. UN Women welcomes the evaluation recommendations on the need for this aspect to be further recognized, resourced, leveraged and strengthened.

UN Women appreciates the evaluation finding on its strong positioning with external actors at the country level and recognition as the 'go-to' agency for EVAW matters. In particular, the evaluation notes the strong technical capacity, including among the EVAW headquarters team and in several field offices, and the

organization's established networks on the ground, where strong constituencies have been built with national women's machineries, government-led coordination structures, civil society organizations and women's organizations, resulting from long-standing engagements in advocacy for a human rights-based, woman- and survivor-centred and multisectoral approach to EVAW. UN Women appreciates the evaluation finding on UN Women's credentials in a system-wide coordination role on EVAW throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, especially its thought leadership, expeditious mobilization of evidence, and strong and cohesive advocacy for action to respond to and prevent violence against women and girls in public and private spaces.

UN Women has achieved a number of successful results in leveraging its United Nations coordination function and collaborative action in support of efforts on EVAW. Through several high-impact global initiatives (e.g., the Spotlight Initiative, the United Nations Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, the Global Joint Programme “Strengthening methodologies and measurement and building national capacities for violence against women data”, prevention work, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women), UN Women has been able to work through inter-agency challenges, develop pragmatic inter-agency arrangements in joint programming and global knowledge products, and strengthen a shared inter-agency

understanding of and approach to prevention, response, advocacy and communications.

UN Women agrees with the evaluation’s recommendation to establish clear accountability frameworks that better reflect its coordination and convening functions in the UN Women Strategic Plan for 2022–2025, which will amplify UN Women’s delivery footprint, based on field capacity and resource mobilization targets set out in the next strategic plan. The initial work on a corporate theory of change and theory of action aims to sharpen UN Women’s programmatic focus and address cross-cutting issues that can fully integrate our triple mandate and ensure programming impact and effectiveness for delivering high-quality results.

*UN Women agrees with the evaluation’s recommendation to establish clear accountability frameworks that better reflect its coordination and convening functions in the UN Women Strategic Plan for 2022–2025, which will amplify UN Women’s delivery footprint, based on field capacity and resource mobilization targets set out in the next strategic plan.*



Photo ©UN Women/ UNDP/Yuichi Ishida

# Comprehensive methodology for a broad evaluation

## DATA COLLECTION



**Desk review** and synthesis, portfolio analysis and review of UN Women management systems, reports and internal assessments



**Key informant interviews and focus group discussions:** 6 focus group discussions with country level EAW specialists in 6 regions (AC, AP, AS, ECA, ESA, WCA)



**Online surveys** of UN Women staff and partners. 32.5% total response rate for 2 surveys (UN Women EAW staff 34.5%, GTG members 30.6%)



**Five case studies:** Inter-agency mechanisms and coordination bodies, regional dialogues and conferences, Knowledge products, Joint Programmes and Advocacy, Covid-19 response

**200+**  
documents reviewed

**6**  
focus group discussions

**100**  
stakeholders engaged

**306**  
survey respondents

**2**  
online surveys

**5**  
case studies

*The key emphasis of the evaluation was mapping and validating UN Women's coordination work on EAW outcomes (as reflected in the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of UN Women's Strategic Plan for 2018–2021) and the targets enshrined in international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals.*

To facilitate this analysis, the evaluation relied on theory-based approaches to identify the intended outcomes of EAW initiatives and programmes; pathways for change; activities undertaken and resources dedicated to achieving outcomes; evidence and degree of change; and causal linkages to the building blocks of coordination, including leadership and advocacy, partnerships and networks, and mobilization and capacity-building of national actors.

The evaluation team used both primary and secondary data sources to provide and validate evidence against the evaluation questions.

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with United Nations standards on ethical obligations to participants with respect to confidentiality, informed consent and treatment of sensitive data. More than 400 stakeholders were involved in the evaluation through interviews, focus group discussions, surveys and questionnaires. The evaluation team also carried out five in-depth case studies, which were considered of an appropriate scale and maturation to offer useful lessons.

