

PUBLICATIONS READER SURVEY REPORT (2019–2020)



UN Women East and Southern
Africa Regional Office

PUBLICATIONS READER SURVEY REPORT (2019-2020)

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
AND RESEARCH UNIT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the product of a survey conducted by the Knowledge Management Unit at UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO). The authors gratefully acknowledge the leadership, guidance and contributions to the quality assurance, review, design, and execution of the survey provided by the Deputy Regional Director for UN Women in East and Southern Africa, Ms Zebib Kavuma.

The survey was led by Jack Onyisi Abebe of UN Women and Global Polltrax Consults. The authors consulted various stakeholders and actors in the region, including thematic advisors, country offices, policymakers, development partners, the UN family, the Civil Society, international non-governmental organizations, academia and research think tanks, individual gender advocates, private sector organizations, media agencies, Regional Economic Commissions, governments and other stakeholders and experts working with

UN Women both at country and regional levels; we acknowledge their useful contributions and inputs into the reader survey. Finally, we are grateful for the dedication of the thematic units at UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office to implementing the findings and recommendations of the survey, with an aim of improving the readership of ESARO publications while positioning UN Women as a go-to agency on issues of gender equality and women's empowerment in the region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) developed the Knowledge Management Strategy (2018–2021), the implementation of which is in its final year. The strategy included a biennial publications reader survey — the first was conducted in 2019 and this was followed by the final reader survey, which was conducted in 2021. These surveys have enabled understanding of publication needs and feedback from various stakeholders of UN Women regional offices in the region.

The feedback has been used to improve the trends and develop an evidence-based and demand-driven approach for ESARO publications. The surveys have also helped inform various publication processes, including the development of quality assurance guidance and the centralization of the publication process with stronger accountability mechanisms for knowledge production. The surveys have further informed formatting for ESARO publications and accessibility for development and policymaking (particularly in East and Southern Africa). They have also identified ways in which ESARO could improve the presentation of their publications to increase demand by diverse stakeholders. This survey recommends sustained improvement of the user-friendliness, practicality, and overall quality of ESARO publications. The survey targeted the United Nations agencies, non-governmental and civil society organizations, policymakers, development agencies, private sector agencies, regional economic communities, academic institutions, individual gender equality advocates and media and others. The analysis agrees with the previous survey conducted in 2019 and reaffirms that ESARO publications are readable and position gender equality and women's empowerment as a core principle of development. The online survey adopted an analytical model and 366 respondents participated, the majority of whom were female. This was complemented with key informant interviews,

which provided corroborating evidence on the readership of ESARO publications. The results show overwhelming response from the respondents that ESARO publications are easy to read and understand, with a confidence level of 95.0 per cent. In general, respondents shared positive feedback on the quality of UN Women regional publications, with 88.0 per cent of the respondents agreeing that the publications are useful. Some recommendations include strengthening accountability mechanisms for the quality assurance processes established at ESARO for all publications and ensuring that corporate templates for publications management are used and adhered to. The survey findings point to increasing interest on gender-related publications by diverse audiences and call for sustained efforts by ESARO in its efforts to coordinate knowledge production with a clear research and policy agenda that is implemented on an annual basis and which has a monitoring mechanism in place, using a structured knowledge management strategy aligned to the strategic note period (2022–2025). The survey confirmed that a knowledge management strategy (2022–2025) has been developed to sustain the efforts made during the previous Strategic Note period. This is a commendable step towards the continued institutionalisation of knowledge production and ensuring the standards of publications produced by ESARO are maintained and improved.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| BDPfA | Beijing Platform for Action |
| CSO | Civil society organizations |
| ESARO | Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office |
| FGM/C | Female genital mutilation or cutting |
| INGOs | International non-governmental organizations |
| RECs | Regional economic communities |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | I | 3.7 Awareness of UN Women publications | 9 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | II | 3.8 Overall quality of printed publications | 11 |
| LIST OF FIGURES | V | 3.9 Frequency of use of ESARO publications | 12 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 | 3.10 Purpose for consulting UN Women ESARO publications | 13 |
| 2. METHODOLOGY | 2 | 3.11 Usefulness of UN Women ESARO publications | 13 |
| 2.1 Administration of questionnaires | 2 | 3.12 Perception on quality of design for UN Women ESARO publications | 14 |
| 2.2 Respondents | 2 | 3.13 UN Women ESARO publications are easy to read and understand | 16 |
| 2.3 Survey participants by agency of employment | 3 | 3.14 Relevance of UN Women ESARO publications to work on gender equality and women's empowerment | 16 |
| 2.4 Respondents by country and region | 3 | 3.15 Level of interest in subject matter of publications | 17 |
| 2.5 Analysis | 4 | 3.16 Regular email updates about new ESARO publication titles | 18 |
| 3. READERSHIP SURVEY FINDINGS | 5 | 4. COMPENDIUM OF UN WOMEN ESARO PUBLICATIONS (2019–2020) | 19 |
| 3.1 Readership of UN Women regional publications by continent | 5 | 5. CONCLUSION | 25 |
| 3.2 Frequency of ESARO publications readership | 6 | 6. READER SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS | 26 |
| 3.3 Convenient means to access UN Women publications | 6 | | |
| 3.4 Types of UN Women publications consulted by respondents | 7 | | |
| 3.5 Specific publications accessed by respondents | 8 | | |
| 3.6 Preferred language of access of UN Women ESARO publications | 9 | | |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Gender of respondents (N = 366) | 2 |
| Figure 2: Distribution of respondents based on organizations of work (N = 366) | 3 |
| Figure 3: ESARO publications readership based on regions of origin (N = 366). MENA, Middle East and North Africa | 5 |
| Figure 4: Frequency of ESARO publications readership (N = 366) | 6 |
| Figure 5: Ways in which readers accessed ESARO publications (N = 364) | 7 |
| Figure 6: Types of ESARO publications consulted by respondents (N = 360) | 7 |
| Figure 7: Publications accessed by respondents (N=366) | 8 |
| Figure 8: Preferred languages for accessing ESARO publications (N = 360) | 9 |
| Figure 9: Awareness of ESARO publications (N = 366) | 10 |
| Figure 10: Knowledge of how to access online ESARO publications list (N = 364) | 10 |
| Figure 11: Overall quality of printed publications (N = 366) | 11 |
| Figure 12: Trends on the quality of ESARO publications in the past three years (N = 366) | 12 |
| Figure 13: Frequency of use of ESARO publications (N = 364) | 12 |
| Figure 14: Purpose for consulting ESARO publications (N = 366) | 13 |
| Figure 15: Usefulness of ESARO publications (N = 366) | 14 |
| Figure 16: Quality of design of UN Women ESARO publications (N = 366) | 15 |
| Figure 17: Substantive content of the UN Women ESARO publications (N = 360) | 15 |
| Figure 18: Ease of reading the UN Women ESARO publications (N = 364) | 16 |
| Figure 19: Relevance of ESARO publications on gender equality and women's empowerment (N=366) | 17 |
| Figure 20: Level of interest (per cent) in subject matter of publications | 17 |
| Figure 21: Interest in regular email updates about new ESARO publication titles | 18 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|---|
| Table 1: Respondents by country of origin | 4 |
|--|---|

1.

INTRODUCTION

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. UN Women is a strong and dynamic United Nations champion of women's rights, providing a powerful voice for women and girls at the global, regional and local levels.

The formation of UN Women also strengthens the UN's ability to provide coherent and timely support to Member States to advance gender equality, in line with national priorities and international norms and policies. It also strengthens effective partnerships with civil society.

UN Women ESARO has presence in Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa Multi-Country Office (MCO), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The South Africa MCO covers the Southern Africa Customs Union countries, namely Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The office in Ethiopia is both a country office for Ethiopia and a liaison office to the African Union and Economic Commission for Africa. The East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) in Nairobi provides oversight to all the countries in the region.

UN Women ESARO undertook to conduct a biennial publications reader survey. This survey is meant to continually improve the user-friendliness, practicality and overall quality of ESARO publications. Specifically,

the survey assesses the publications commonly sought by stakeholders of UN Women in the entire region, i.e. what form of publications diverse audiences look for, how often the publications are consulted by the audiences, which parties seek them and what format they prefer them to be in (i.e. either electronic or hard copies), accessibility for development and policy-making (particularly in East and Southern Africa), and the ways in which UN Women Regional Offices could improve the presentation of their publications to increase demand by diverse stakeholders. This survey follows a similar one conducted in 2019 and is meant to improve publication quality assurance processes, development, outreach and policy impacts.

The survey is informed by the fact that ESARO produces an extensive range of publications and knowledge products that aim to share information, express innovative ideas and practical experiences, provide evidence for policy engagements and discussions, inform development, investment and programming interventions on gender equality and women's empowerment, and stimulate related debates.

2.

METHODOLOGY

2.1

Administration of questionnaires

An open-source online questionnaire was distributed and made available through various virtual platforms. The questionnaire contained multiple rating responses to a number of categories about publications readership. The online survey questionnaire was launched via an email notification to all stakeholders, as well as via social media, and

sent to various stakeholders, including accredited non-governmental and international organizations, youth and the United Nations family. This was complemented with virtual key informant interviews that targeted experts on gender through referral pathways. The questionnaire was available online during October 2021.

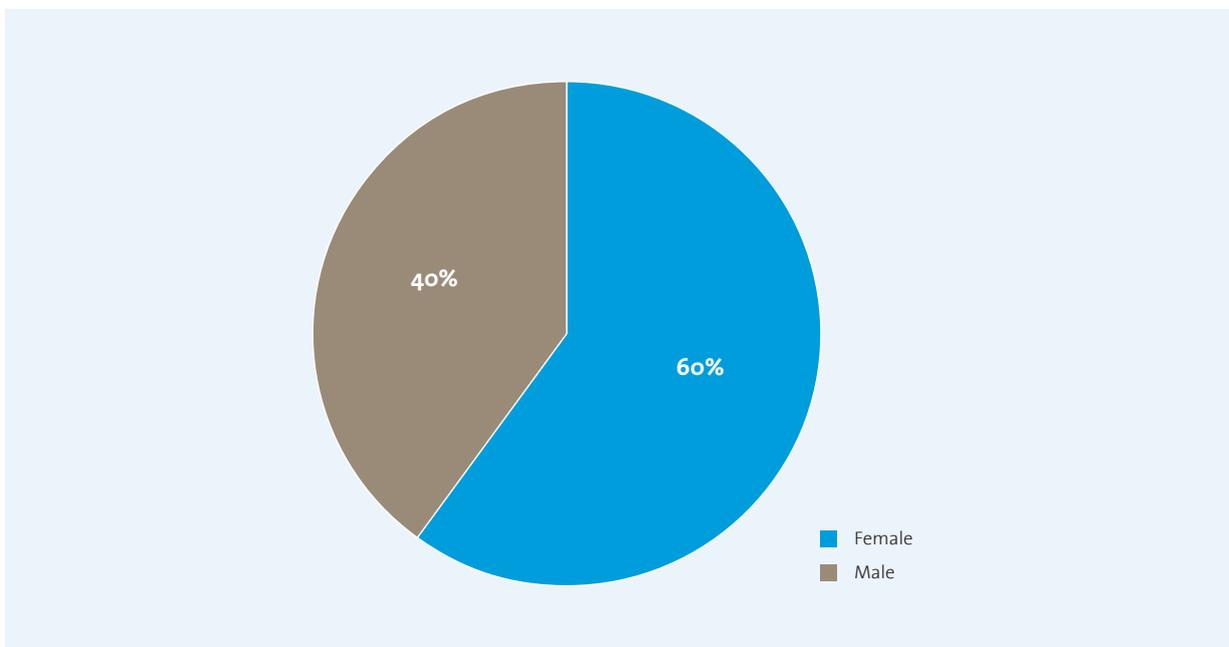
2.2

Respondents

The total number of responses received for this survey was 366, with 59.6 per cent female and 40.4 per cent

male respondents from 24 countries, mostly in East and Southern Africa.

FIGURE 1
Gender of respondents (N = 366)



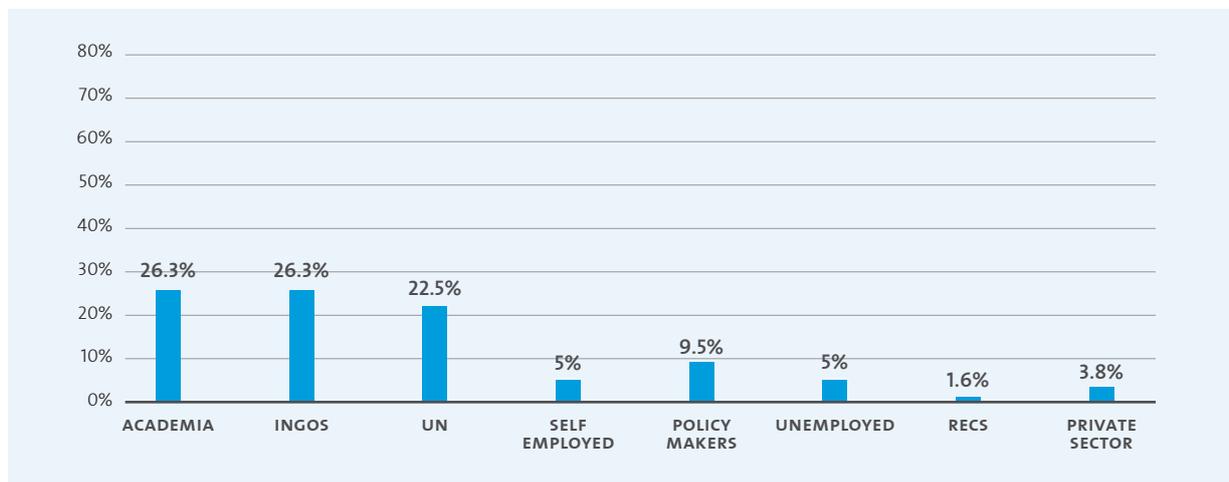
2.3

Survey participants by agency of employment

The participants in the survey were from different organizations, namely academia, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), the United Nations, governments (including policymakers), private sector agencies and regional economic communities (RECs); some respondents were self-employed or unemployed. Most of the respondents were employed by academia and INGOs/CSOs (26.3 per cent each) while only 5.0 per cent of the respondents were unemployed

(Fig. 2). In total, 22.5 per cent of the respondents worked for the United Nations family, 5.0 per cent were self-employed and 9.5 per cent were based in government agencies. The survey further showed that 3.8 per cent and 1.6 per cent of respondents worked with the private sector and the RECs, respectively. This shows that almost all readers of UN Women regional publications have an interest in gender and development and are affiliated to agencies of which the work in some way focuses on gender.

FIGURE 2
Distribution of respondents based on organizations of work (N = 366)



2.4

Respondents by country and region

The study reports a varied reach of respondents, with the majority of respondents located in East and Southern Africa. Some of the leading countries in responding to the survey include Ethiopia (6.0 per cent), Kenya (12.0 per cent), Somalia (2.4 per cent), South Africa (4.0 per cent), Tanzania (3.6 per cent), Uganda (4.2 per cent), United States (2.7 per cent) and Zimbabwe (2.2 per cent), (Table 1) while only

0.6 per cent of the respondents were from Ghana. The survey has reported responses from across the globe with cumulative 5.2 per cent responses from outside the African continent (Table 1). The limited number of respondents from outside Africa could be attributed to the fact that most of the publications listed only covered regional issues in East and Southern Africa.

TABLE 1
Respondents by country of origin

| Country | Per cent |
|----------------|----------|
| Ethiopia | 6.0 |
| Ghana | 0.6 |
| Kenya | 12.0 |
| Outside Africa | 5.2 |
| Somalia | 2.4 |
| South Africa | 4.0 |
| Tanzania | 3.6 |
| Uganda | 4.2 |
| US | 2.7 |
| Zimbabwe | 2.2 |

2.5 Analysis

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the distribution of responses to each question. To provide further corroboration of information collected from respondents, key informant interviews were conducted with

various stakeholders selected through referral. The analysis below shows results from the online survey and key informant interviews.

3.

READERSHIP SURVEY FINDINGS

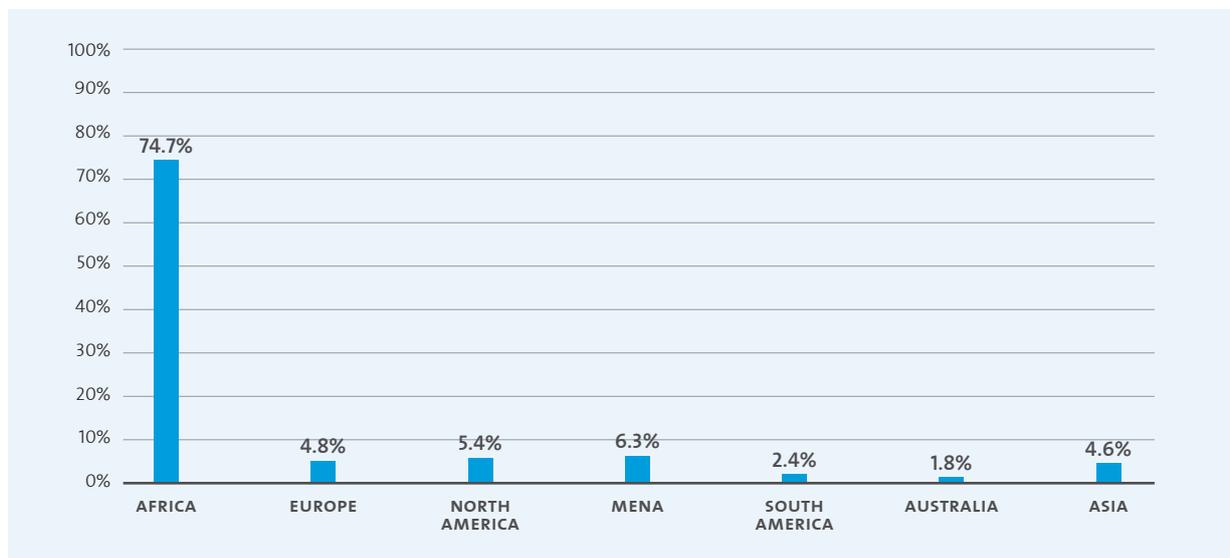
3.1

Readership of UN Women regional publications by continent

Most of the East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) publication readers surveyed were from sub-Saharan Africa (74.7 per cent) while fewer readers were from Australia (1.8 per cent) and South America (2.4 per cent) (Figure 3). The number of readers from Africa increased by 2 per cent from the 2019 reader survey, which indicates the greater efforts around

outreach and dissemination. This increase could also be attributed to the fact that ESARO publications in the region cover issues affecting only that region and, to an extent Africa. Among the publications analysed, none covered regions outside Africa. Only one publication ('Compendium of Laws on Child Marriage') covered Africa as a continent.

FIGURE 3
ESARO publications readership based on regions of origin (N = 366). MENA, Middle East and North Africa



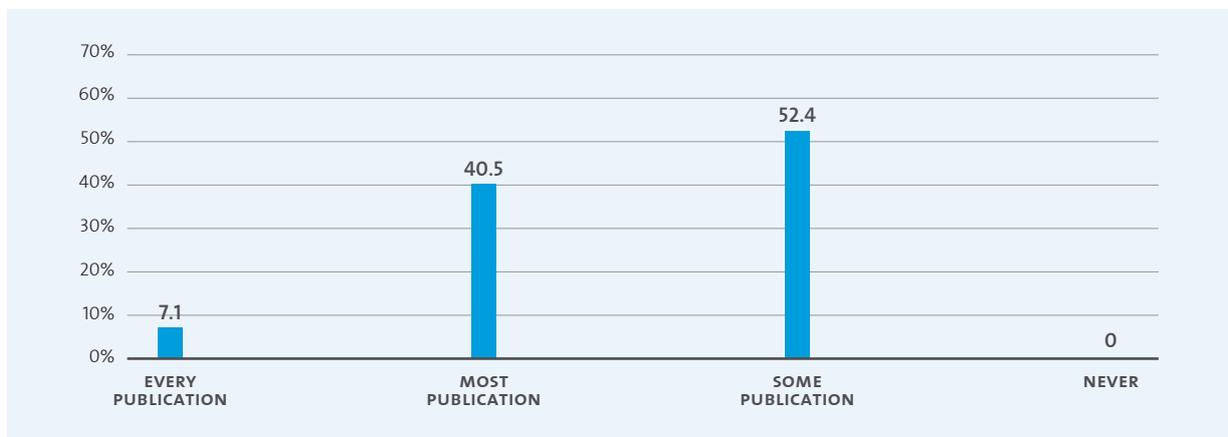
3.2

Frequency of ESARO publications readership

UN Women publications have a wide readership. All the respondents in the survey had read at least one publication (Figure 4). This presents a decline in the breadth of readership presented by the two previous reader surveys conducted in 2019. More than half of the respondents (52.4 per cent) reported reading

only selected publications from ESARO and 40.5 per cent of the respondents read most of the regional publications produced by the regional office covering the period of the survey. In the period under review, 7.1 per cent of respondents had interacted with all the profiled publications (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4
Frequency of ESARO publications readership (N = 366)



3.3

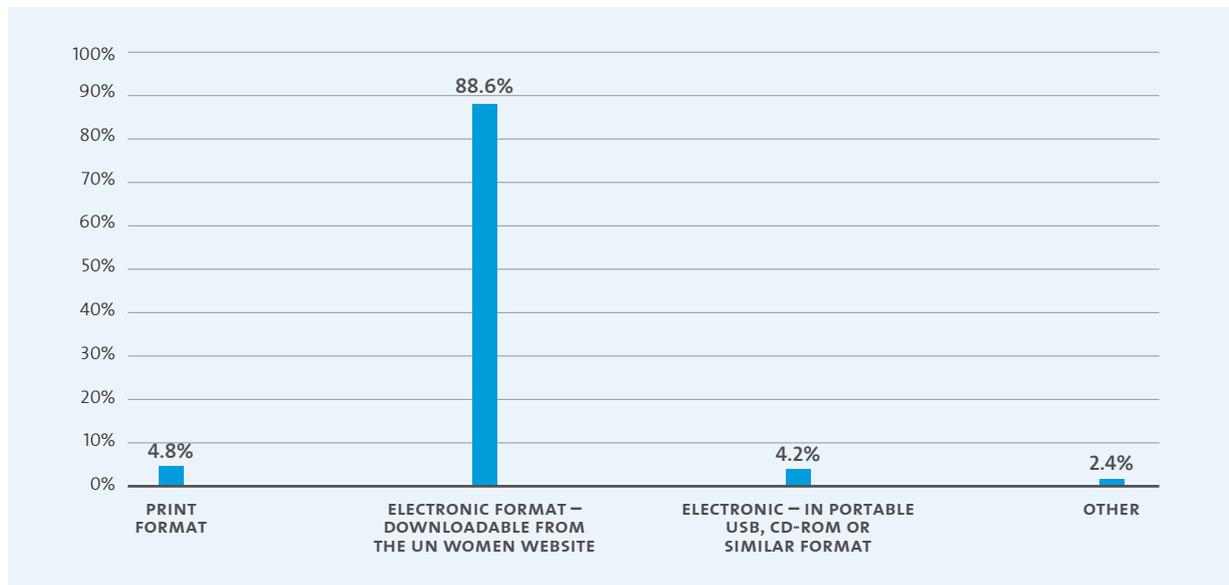
Convenient means to access UN Women publications

The survey confirms that readers preferred electronic versions of the publications. As the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in limited physical dissemination events, virtual dissemination became the primary strategy used by ESARO. Most respondents (92.8 per cent) reported downloading publications from the UN Women Africa website. Less than 5 per cent of respondents prefer hard copy (printed) publications. Respondents used summary videos, animations and

subscription newsletters the least (Figure 5). This survey concludes that investment on publications should be focused more on electronic dissemination through various virtual platforms than on hard copies, which are rarely accessed by readers in the region. Providing publications in various formats increases the ease of access and dissemination. Using other United Nations websites and partner websites could further increase accessibility to publications.

FIGURE 5

Ways in which readers accessed ESARO publications (N = 364)



3.4

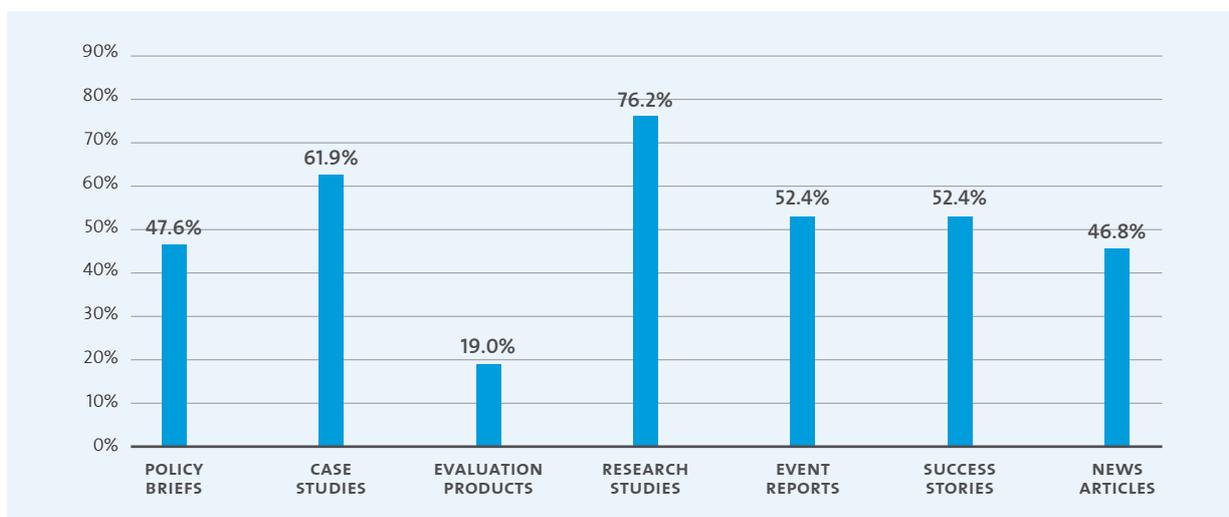
Types of UN Women publications consulted by respondents

Most respondents (76.2 per cent) prefer research studies and reports from ESARO, followed by case studies (61.9 per cent), success stories and event reports (each 52.4 per cent), policy briefs (47.6 per cent) and news articles (46.8 per cent). Evaluation reports were the least preferred type of publication (at 19.0 per cent). This shows that study reports and

subsequent related packages such as policy briefs, fact sheets, journal papers and background papers are the most preferred and ESARO should investment in and pay attention to these more. Evaluation products may not have rated highly because they are mostly accessed by evaluation specialists and technical experts.

FIGURE 6

Types of ESARO publications consulted by respondents (N = 360)



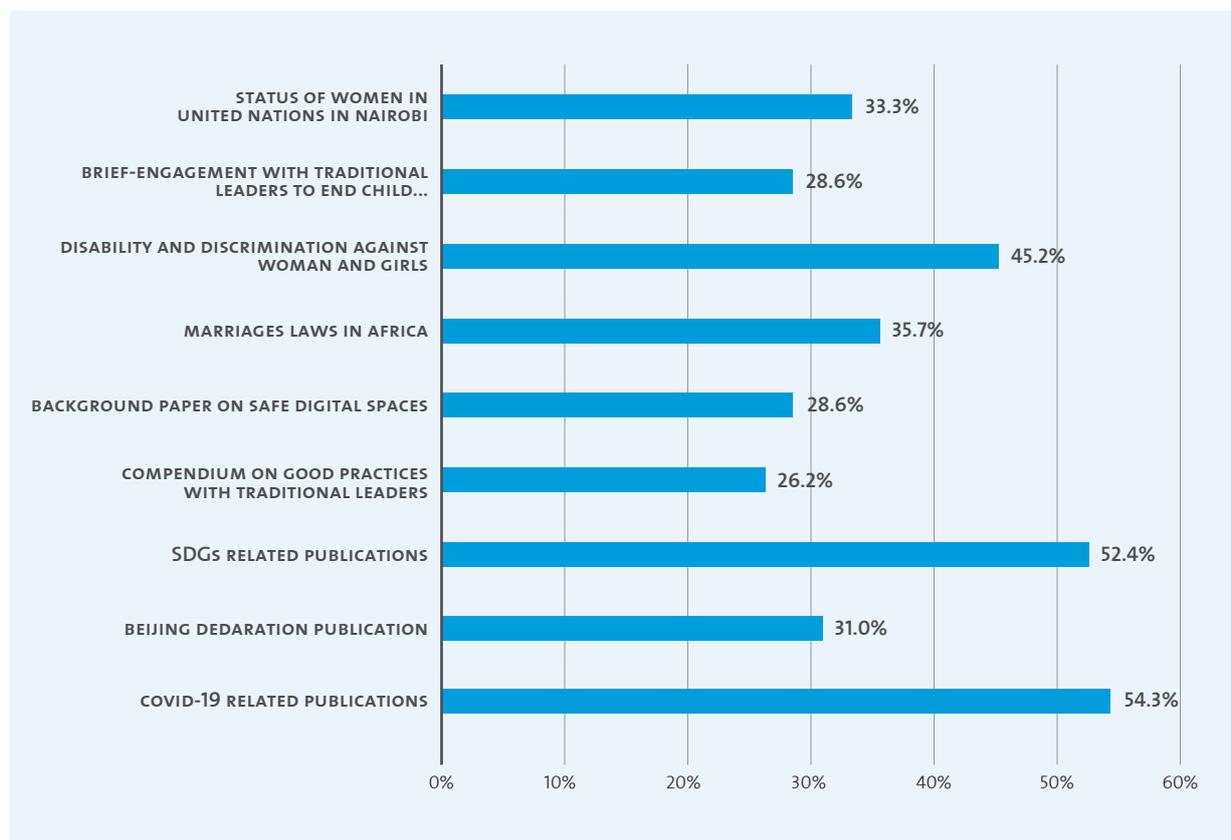
3.5

Specific publications accessed by respondents

The region has produced a number of publications in the last two years. Respondents confirmed accessing diverse publications depending on the thematic focus of publications and the time from dissemination. Publications related to COVID-19 were the most accessed, with 54.8 per cent of respondents confirming they accessed such reports. This could be attributed to the pandemic, which resulted in increased reference and interest in these publications. This was followed by Sustainable Development Goal-related publications, which were read by 52.4 per cent of respondents. The study on women with disabilities and COVID-19 also received attention from 45.2 per

cent of the respondents. 'Marriage laws in Africa', a continental publication developed jointly with the African Union, Ethiopia Liaison Office and ESARO, was read by 35.7 per cent of the respondents. The report on the status of women in the United Nations was accessed by 33.3 per cent of respondents, who were mainly United Nations staff based at the duty station in Nairobi. The background paper on safe digital spaces, the compendium of good practices on engagement with traditional leaders and the related brief were accessed by almost equal number of respondents, ranging between 26.0 per cent and about 29.0 per cent.

FIGURE 7
Publications accessed by respondents (N=366)



3.6

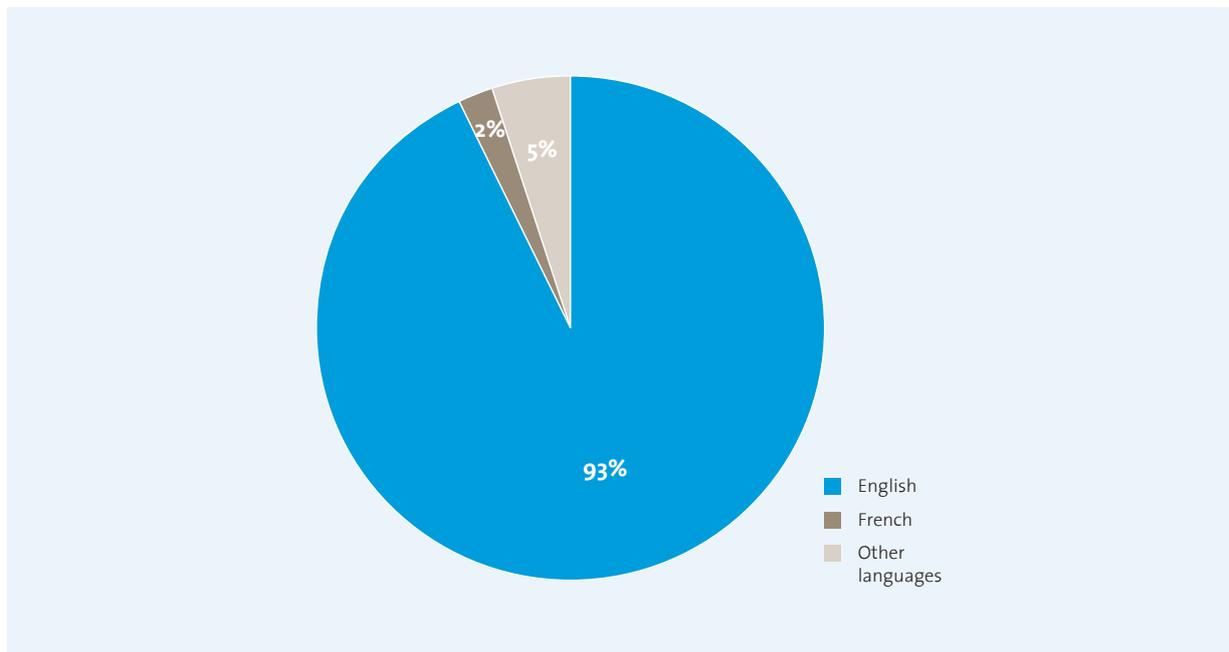
Preferred language of access of UN Women ESARO publications

Most respondents (93 per cent) prefer UN Women ESARO to continue producing its publications in English. This survey however cautions that UN Women ESARO, being part of a wider United Nations agency, needs to ascribe to the languages prescribed by the United Nations as official languages where possible.

These languages include Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. In the region, the survey indicates that English is the preferred language; French is preferred by 2.0 per cent and other languages are preferred by 5.0 per cent of the survey respondents (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8

Preferred languages for accessing ESARO publications (N = 360)



3.7

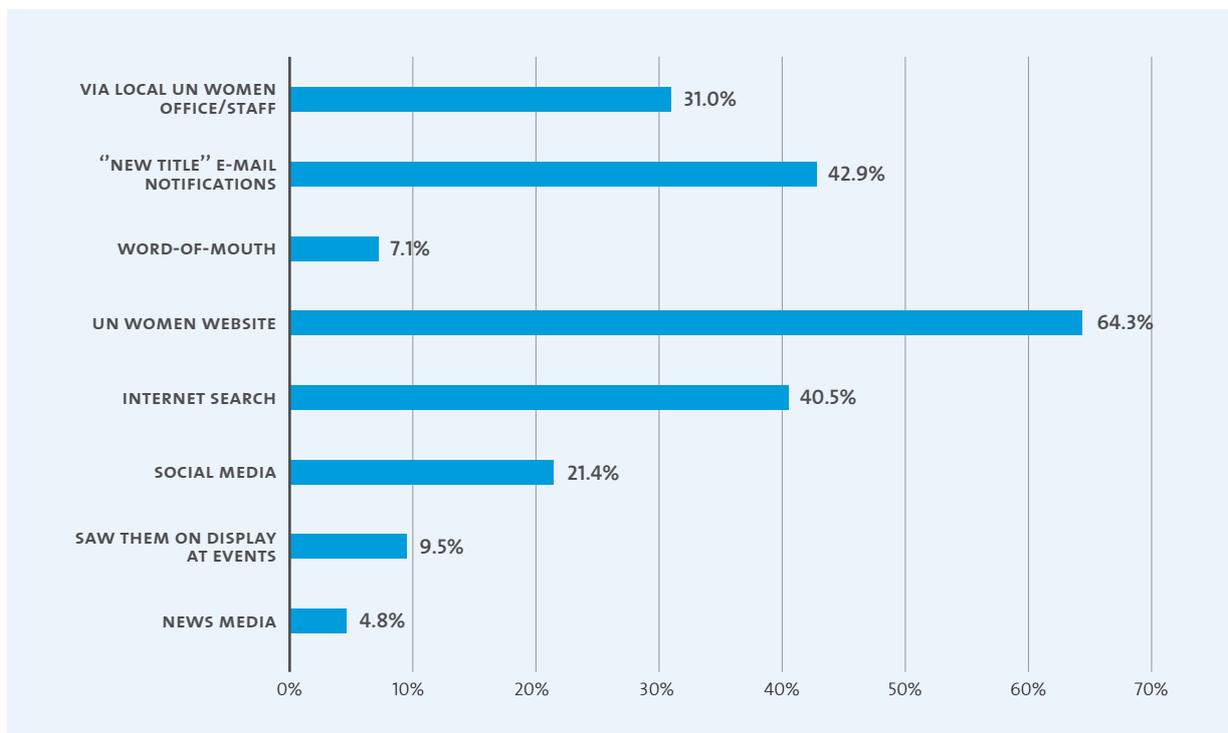
Awareness of UN Women publications

The majority of the respondents participating in the survey were made aware of the publications through the UN Women Africa website,¹ and 64.3 per cent stated that they accessed the publications through the website. Email notifications of new publications and general Internet searches emerged as the top ways in which UN Women ESARO publications were accessed (42.9 per cent and 40.5 per cent of the respondents, respectively). Local UN Women offices, which constitute country offices, and the regional office also disseminated some publications to

31.0 per cent of the respondents. Social media (which includes Facebook and LinkedIn) enabled access to publications for 21.4 per cent of the respondents participating in the survey. Only 9.5 per cent accessed the publications listed for the period through UN Women organized events and only 4.8 per cent accessed them via various news media channels. The survey continues to emphasize the use of virtual tools to disseminate UN Women ESARO publications, as most believe that they can access the web platforms easily.

¹ UN Women Africa. n.d. "Welcome". Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/>.

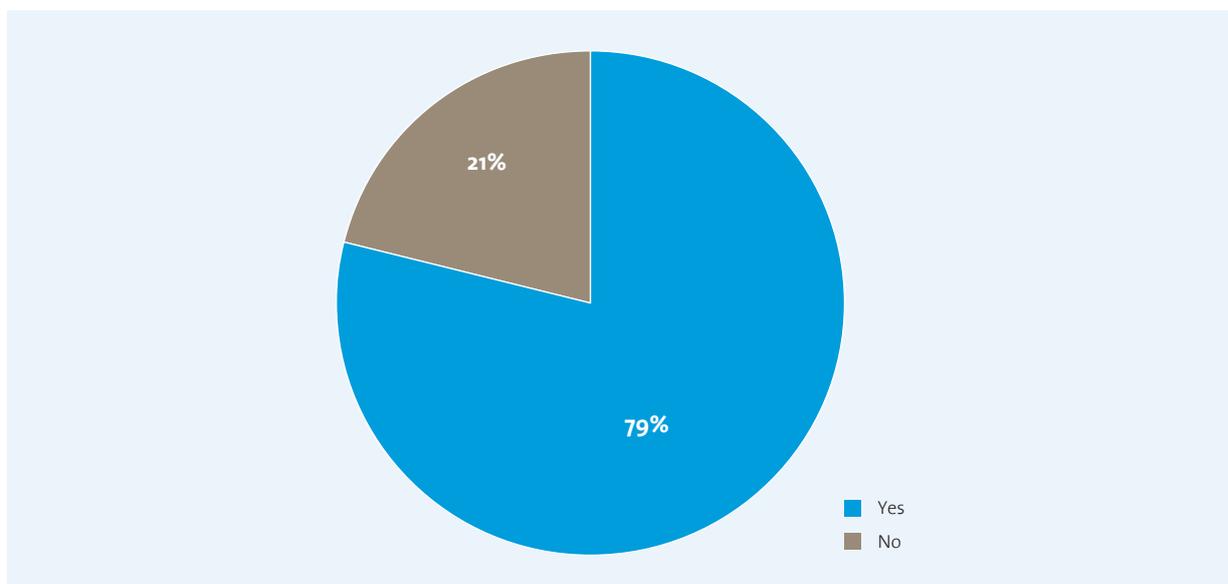
FIGURE 9
Awareness of ESARO publications (N = 366)



Although 79.0 per cent of the respondents knew how to access the UN Women ESARO publications list from the various sources mentioned above (Figure 10), 21.0 per cent did not know how to access them. The

targeted audiences that are not well informed on how to access these publications require interventions that focus on dissemination and packaging to ensure proper outreach and increase accessibility.

FIGURE 10
Knowledge of how to access online ESARO publications list (N = 364)



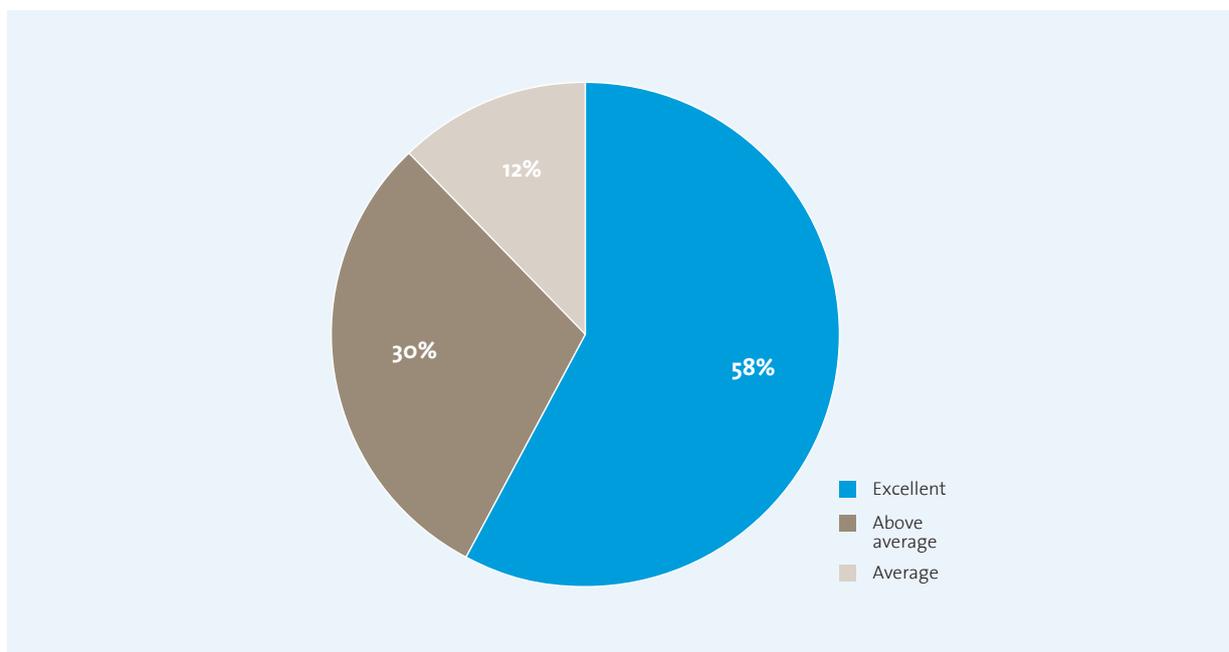
3.8

Overall quality of printed publications

This survey confirms the findings of the two previous reader surveys which show that the quality of printed UN Women publications for the period was excellent (58.0 per cent) and above average by (30.0 per cent). No respondents felt that UN Women ESARO publications produced in the last two years are below average in quality (Figure 11). ESARO has a quality assurance

guidance note in place outlining quality assurance parameters and centralizing the role of quality assurance in the knowledge management unit which have contributed to a coherent and systematic approach to quality and standards of knowledge production in the regional office.

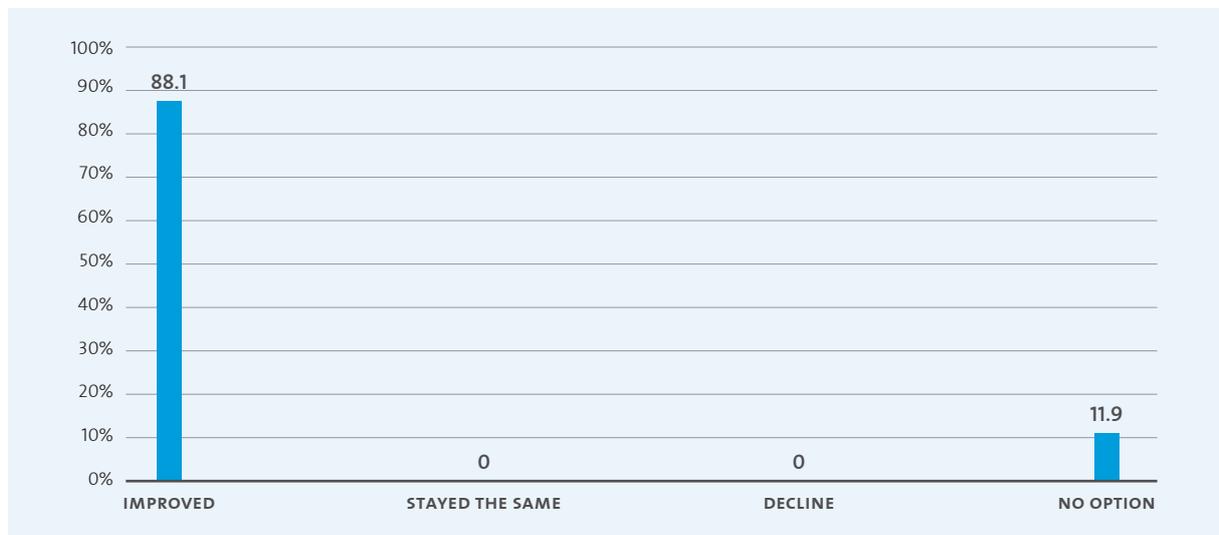
FIGURE 11
Overall quality of printed publications (N = 366)



Of the respondents who accessed the UN Women publications over the past two years, 88.1 per cent noted a significant improvement in the quality of these publications. The level of confidence is much higher than that reported in the 2019 survey, when it was slightly above 80.0 per cent. About 12.0 per cent did not provide an opinion on the trends of quality

for the publications in the two years under survey. No respondents reported a decline or similarity in the quality of these publications, compared with 6.6 per cent of respondents who considered the quality of the publications to have remained the same for the last three years in the 2019 survey (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12
Trends on the quality of ESARO publications in the past three years (N = 366)



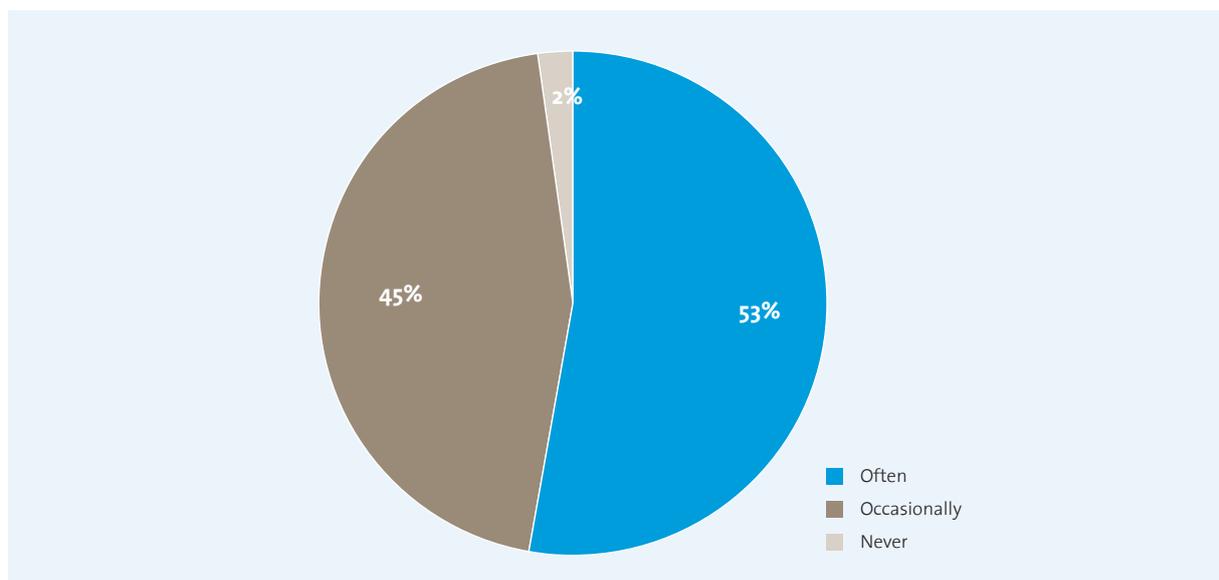
3.9 Frequency of use of ESARO publications

The survey established that 53.0 per cent of the respondents often use UN Women ESARO publications, with 45.0 per cent having used the publications occasionally. Only 2 per cent had never used UN Women ESARO publications in the period under survey (Figure 13). The number of target audiences who never used UN Women publications narrowed from 7.7 per cent to 2.3 per cent in the last two years, reflecting

the efforts made to reaching those who had not been reached before.

Responses from key informants indicated that they use the UN Women publications periodically at all programmatic levels to extract findings for dissemination to relevant stakeholder groups and audiences in the form of webinars, Zoom calls and infographic presentations.

FIGURE 13
Frequency of use of ESARO publications (N = 364)



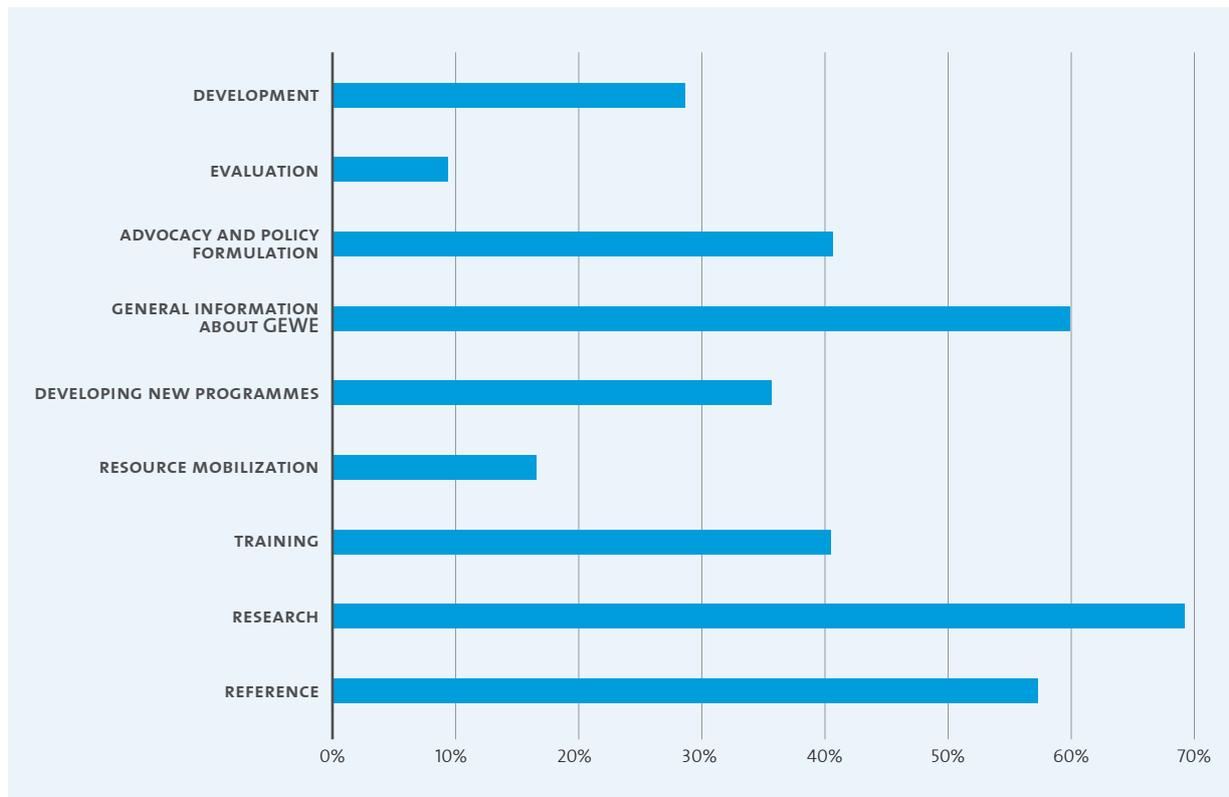
3.10

Purpose for consulting UN Women ESARO publications

The survey indicates that ESARO publications are used for a variety of purposes. Most respondents (69.0 per cent) used the publications for research (Figure 14) and for reference (57.1 per cent). Other uses include advocacy and policy formulation (40.5 per cent), training purposes (40.4 per cent), developing new programmes (35.7 per cent) and

designing development interventions (28.6 per cent). A few respondents noted that they used the publications for resource mobilization and evaluations (16.7 per cent and 9.5 per cent, respectively) (Figure 15). The pattern of use seems to corroborate the findings of 2019 reader survey but with slightly different results.

FIGURE 14
Purpose for consulting ESARO publications (N = 366)



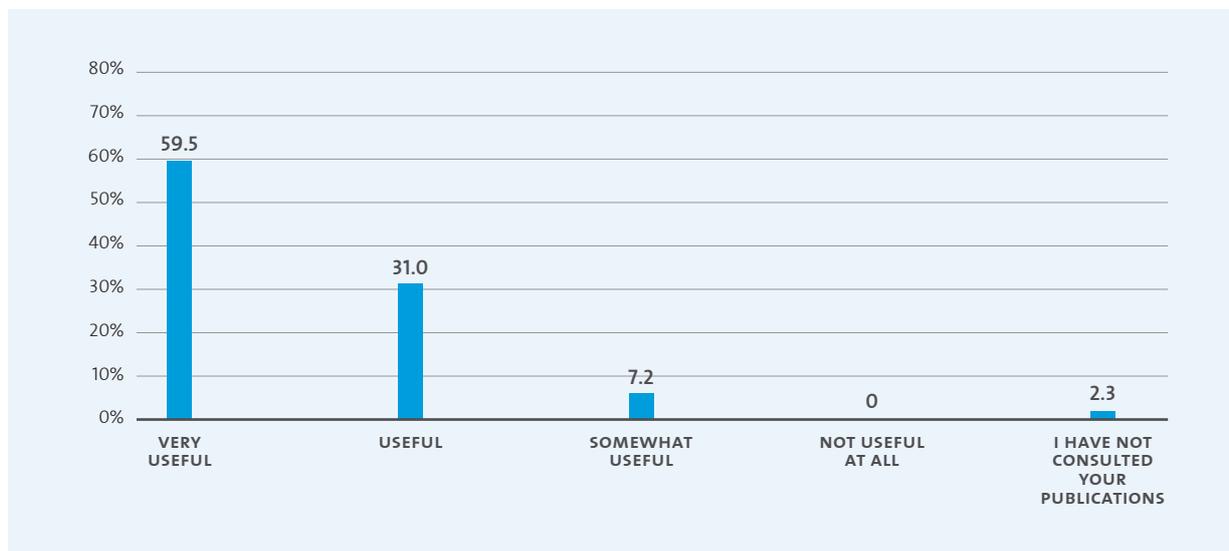
3.11

Usefulness of UN Women ESARO publications

Over 90 per cent agree that UN Women ESARO publications sustain their relevance and are useful in providing information related to gender equality and women's empowerment and that they have used the publications for various purposes outlined in the preceding section. Only 7.2 per cent felt that the

publications are only somewhat useful to them while 2.3 per cent of the respondents had not consulted UN Women ESARO publications in the period under review and thus could not ascertain their usefulness (Figure 15).

FIGURE 15
Usefulness of ESARO publications (N = 366)



Key informant interviews complemented survey results that UN Women ESARO publications have proved very useful across all programmatic levels. The publications are found in academic institutions, government offices, non-governmental organizations and regional organizations, and are actively being used to inform gender and policy programming at different levels. One example is the publication ‘Marriage Laws in Africa — A Compendium from 55 African Union Member

States,’ which is a collection of marriage laws across African Member States developed inform Governments, policymakers, researchers, advocates, partners and other stakeholders on countries’ marriage laws, to help track child marriage reforms and identify best practice of the Member States to enable targeted advocacy in the countries that require review and reform in their marriage laws is generating debates in academic and policy angles in different universities.

3.12 Perception on quality of design for UN Women ESARO publications

The quality of design of UN Women ESARO publications was considered excellent by 38.0 per cent of the respondents who had used the publications in the period under survey. Some 28.6 per cent felt that the design and layout of UN Women ESARO publications were very good and 26.2 per cent thought that the designs are good. A few respondents (7.2 per cent) felt that the design of UN Women ESARO publications

is fair and requires some improvement (Figure 16), with specific feedback focusing on increasing the visual content by including infographics and animated videos created from the designs. No respondents felt that the designs of the publications are poor which returned positive feedback over the last two years under review.

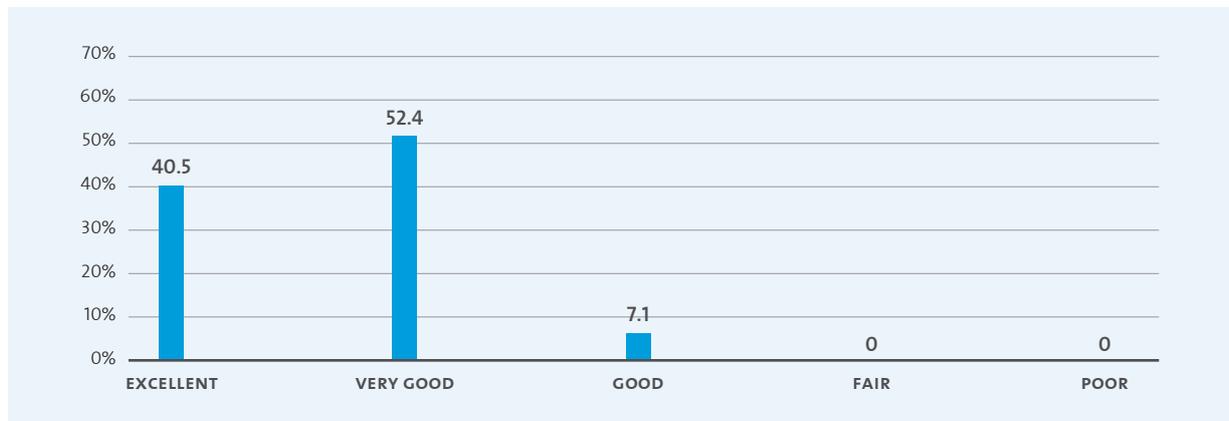
FIGURE 16
Quality of design of UN Women ESARO publications (N = 366)



The quality of the substantive content of UN Women ESARO publications was mostly considered to be very good (52.4 per cent) and excellent (40.5 per cent) (Figure 17). Some 7.1 per cent felt that the publications quality in terms of useful content was good. No respondents rated the quality of the content in the publications

as fair or poor, which reflects the sustained efforts by UN Women ESARO in knowledge production, dissemination and use. The results show positive progress from the 2019 survey, in which some UN Women ESARO publications were rated below average and average in terms of quality for that period under review.

FIGURE 17
Substantive content of the UN Women ESARO publications (N = 360)



The study established that this is attributable to the centralized quality assurance process of all publications, which includes establishing a technical review committee, performing plagiarism checks on various products, ensuring proper referencing, using an editorial style and policy, and creating design and branding aligned to institutional guidance. However, the survey notes that the global corporate templates and guidance for publication management have not yet been operationalized at ESARO, as the researchers did not capture any

filled templates. Although the templates are available, they are not used. This survey recommends increasing accountability in publication production by ensuring all thematic units complete the relevant templates and have them approved in accordance with corporate requirements. Furthermore, it is recommended that all thematic units adhere to the quality assurance guidance. From the key informant interviews, the guidance note was developed collaboratively with all units and all users must be held to account on utilization.

3.13

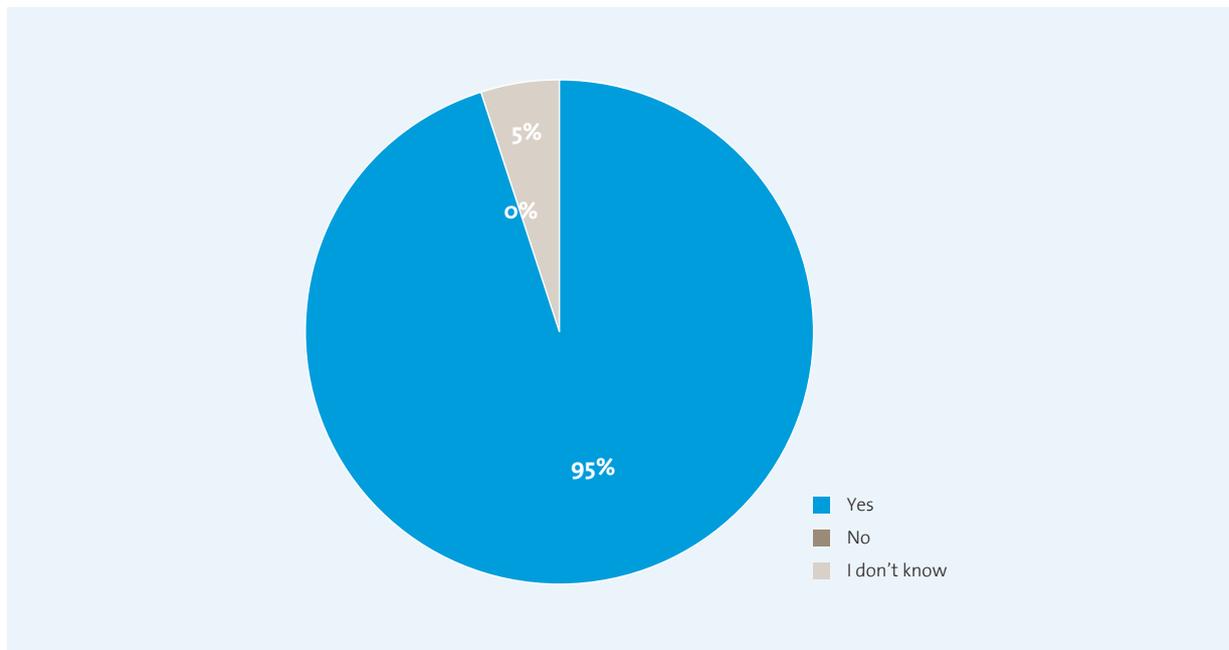
UN Women ESARO publications are easy to read and understand

Most respondents (95.0 per cent) find UN Women ESARO publications are easy to read and understand, with the remaining 5.0 per cent reporting that they did not know (Figure 18). This rating has improved over the last four years, from 80 per cent to 90 per cent in the last two reader surveys and now to the current high of 95.0 per cent. This confirms continuous improvement on the part of UN Women ESARO in ensuring its publications meet the goals of reaching wider audiences

and being used by the audiences targeted. Key informant interviews indicated that the diverse packaging mechanisms, including executive summaries, fact sheets, key messages, journal papers, info graphs and other shorter versions, have accelerated progress towards ensuring that UN Women ESARO publications are readable and understandable to various audience targeted. This practice should be sustained in the view of the respondents and key informants interviewed.

FIGURE 18

Ease of reading the UN Women ESARO publications (N = 364)



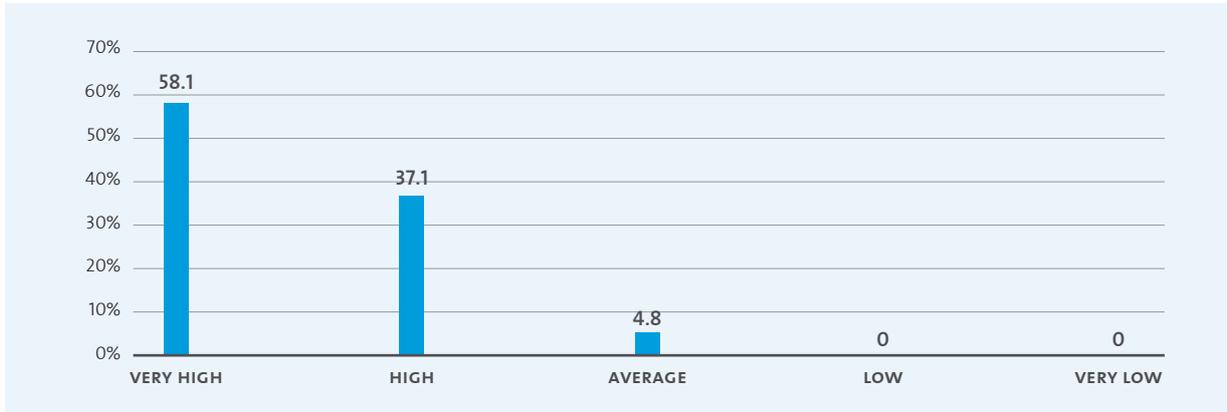
3.14

Relevance of UN Women ESARO publications to work on gender equality and women's empowerment

UN Women ESARO publications were highly rated (95.2 per cent) for relevance to gender equality and women's empowerment work by the various stakeholders surveyed, and the remaining 4.8 per cent of respondents reported that these publications are

relevant to their work on this issue to only some extent (Figure 19). The large percentage of respondents who felt that the publications are relevant reconciles with the number of respondents who felt that the publications are easy to read and understand.

FIGURE 19
Relevance of ESARO publications on gender equality and women’s empowerment (N=366)



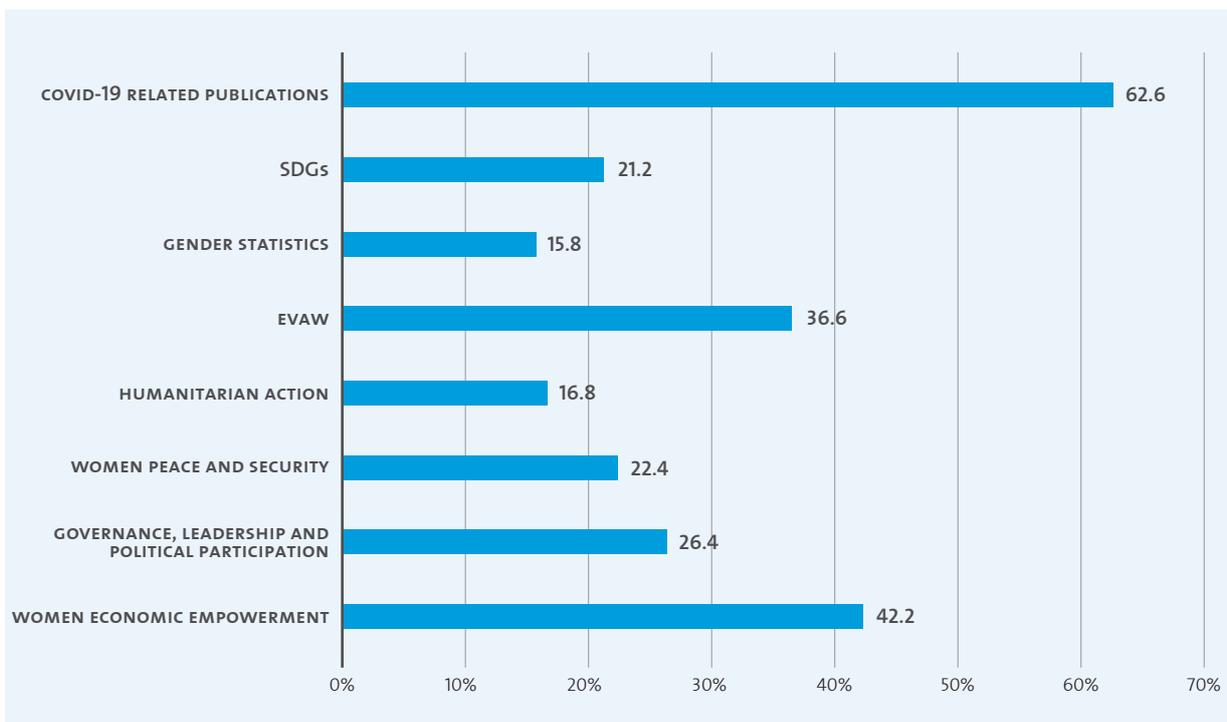
3.15

Level of interest in subject matter of publications

According to the survey, the most read publications were those related to COVID-19 (62.6 per cent of the respondents), probably because of the pandemic, which accelerated in Africa in 2020. This was followed by publications on the themes of women’s economic empowerment (42.2 per cent); ending violence

against women and girls (EVAW; 36.6 per cent); governance, leadership and political participation (26.4 per cent); women, peace and security (22.4 per cent); Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; 21.2 per cent); humanitarian action (16.8 per cent); and gender statistics (15.8 per cent) (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20
Level of interest (per cent) in subject matter of publications



3.16

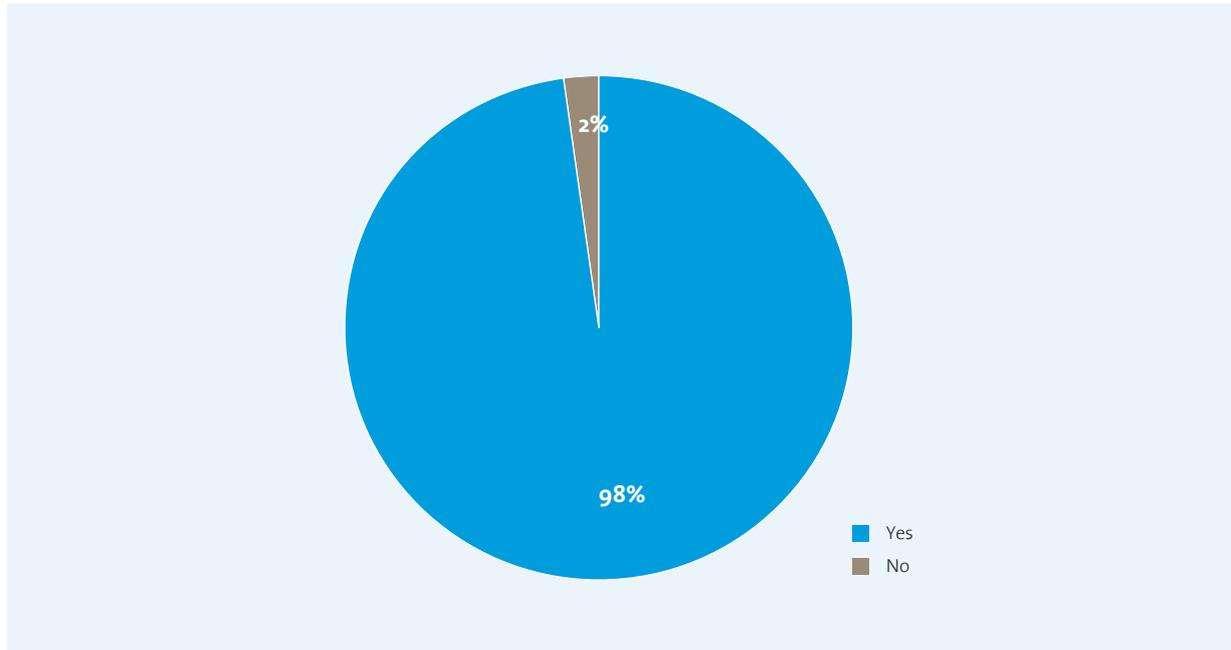
Regular email updates about new ESARO publication titles

Electronic updates remain the preferred format and 98.0 per cent of the respondents would prefer to receive regular email updates about any new UN Women’s publications from UN Women ESARO;

only 2.0 per cent did not express interest in this (Figure 21). This presents an opportunity to develop a publication mailing list for the regional office to be used for relevant notifications.

FIGURE 21

Interest in regular email updates about new ESARO publication titles



4.

COMPENDIUM OF UN WOMEN ESARO PUBLICATIONS (2019–2020)

a. Advancing Administrative Sources of Data for Monitoring Gender-specific Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

The study examined the potential of administrative data to produce gender statistics for monitoring gender-specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators and to present best practices in the use of gender statistics generated from administrative data for policy interventions. The study was based on three pathfinder countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) and three non-pathfinder countries (Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda) in the UN Women East and Southern Africa region. The results of this publication revealed that there were notable and varied quality concerns and capacity challenges that need to be addressed to ensure comprehensive,

widespread use of gender data produced from administrative sources. The publication revealed that administrative data systems in Africa have great potential for bridging observed gender-specific SDG data gaps, but various stakeholders — including Pan-African institutions; governments; national statistical offices; ministries, departments and agencies; academic and research institutions; and the private sector, including civil society organizations — need to support countries in overcoming challenges in producing relevant gender-specific indicators in the SDG monitoring framework from administrative data.²

b. Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in the Context of the African Continental Free Trade Area

This publication presents the findings and recommendations of the UN Women-commissioned study ‘Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in the Context of the African Continental Free Trade Area’. This publication aimed to identify opportunities for women entrepreneurs with regard to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), focusing on three areas of interest, namely (1) women in informal cross-border trade, (2) gender and value chain analysis, and (3) affirmative action/preferential public procurement. The publication further analysed challenges for women entrepreneurs in the context of the AfCFTA, examining interlinkages between trade,

public procurement, value chains and gender inequality. It assessed potential ways for improving regional integration frameworks from a gender perspective and also analysed potential ways of integrating gender concerns into value chain development projects and programmes to help women maximize their profitability and competitiveness. Finally, the publication analysed different preferential procurement schemes adopted in four countries in East and Southern Africa, namely Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda, which were selected based on UN Women’s ongoing work on preferential public procurement in these locations.³

2 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2019. *Advancing Administrative Sources of Data for Monitoring Gender-specific Sustainable Development Goals*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2019/08/advancing-administrative-sources-of-data-for-sdgs>

3 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2019. *Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in the Context of the African Continental Free Trade Area*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2019/07/opportunities-for-women-in-the-acfta>.

c. The Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Causes, Costs and Solutions

This policy brief analyses the gender gap in agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of causes, costs and solutions. Across sub-Saharan Africa, the agricultural sector remains critical to local and regional economies. It is the basis for food security and an important source of employment, particularly for women. However, studies consistently find that female farmers have lower rates of agricultural productivity than male farmers. Based on original research in five countries (Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda,

Tanzania and Uganda), this policy brief report shows that gender gaps in agricultural productivity do not arise because women are less efficient farmers but because they experience inequitable access to agricultural inputs, including family labour, high-yielding crops, pesticides and fertilizer. Equalizing women's access to agricultural inputs, including providing access time-saving equipment and increasing the return from these inputs, is therefore critical to close gender gaps in agricultural productivity.⁴

d. The Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity: Five African Countries

Within this context, the UN Women ESARO, the United Nations Development Programme-United Nations Environment Programme Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) Africa and the World Bank commenced a collaboration to create evidence of the links between women's economic empowerment, sustainable agricultural production and economic growth. This effort resulted in an initial report in 2015 and two sets of studies by UN Women ESARO and PEI in 2017 on the cost of the gender gap in agricultural productivity. This report provides an overview of the key trends identified in these studies and how they compare with patterns documented in other published studies. The UN Women ESARO-PEI studies focus on five Eastern and Southern African countries, namely Ethiopia,

Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. This report also summarizes lessons on best practices in eradicating inequities in the agricultural sector emerging from the UN Women ESARO and PEI studies, including highlighting reforms and best practices. These are grouped into five areas addressing increasing women's access to labour and time-saving equipment and services; facilitating women's shift to high-value crops; improving women's access to non-labour agricultural inputs; strengthening women's land rights; pursuing other interventions that close the gender gap, such as initiatives that improve women's access to credit; providing skills training; and helping end their isolation from social and market networks, thus facilitating the flow of productivity-enhancing information.⁵

e. Good Practices on Engagement with Traditional Leaders to End Child Marriage & Other Harmful Practices Against Women

This compendium is a collection of good practices derived from an extensive literature review, a consultation with traditional and cultural leaders, authorities and others in ending child marriage and other harmful practices against women and girls. In addition, this compendium is a collation of the experiences shared by traditional leaders from meetings held in Kenya, Malawi and Nigeria (2018) and Ethiopia (2019). This

report profiles the engagements that have built a coordinated and sustainable approach to recognise and contribute to the African Union-led commitments and campaign to end child marriage and female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C). The engagements have also enhanced a collective understanding of the crises that follow the abuse of children, especially child marriage, FGM and other harmful practices, and

4 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2019. "The Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Causes, Costs and Solutions. Policy Brief No. 11." Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/04/the-gender-gap-in-agricultural-productivity-in-sub-saharan-africa>.

5 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), UNDP-UNEP (United Nations Development Programme-United Nations Environment Programme) Environment-Poverty Initiative. 2018. *The Cost of the Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity: Five African Countries*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org//digital-library/publications/2019/05/the-cost-of-gender-gap-policy-brief>.

their impact on development; to share experiences, successes, best practices and challenges among each other to enable scaling up of efforts; and to set the agenda for high-level consultations on movement building for traditional and cultural authorities in ending child marriage, FGM/C and promoting gender equality. The engagement has also been informed by the realities in Africa and grounded by global commitments to advance dignity, human rights and the development of African nations, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination

Against Women, the SDGs, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights, and the Africa Common Position on Ending Child Marriage. Therefore, this compendium of good practices showcases how traditional cultural leaders and authorities have engaged with their communities to end these harmful practices against women and girls. The compendium defines a good practice within the guideline provided for in the guide documenting good practices on gender equality developed by UN Women in 2015.⁶

f. Background Paper — Safe Digital Spaces: Protection of Women and Girls from Technological Violence

This publication analyses the ways in which technology helps women and contributes to achieving SDGs. It examines the various forms of technology-assisted violence against women and the impacts and consequences in the light of the global and Africa region frameworks, how this type of violence affects women's lives, where various African governments are in terms of policy provision to access justice for victims and proposed recommendations to end the problem. The paper argues that making information

and communication technologies accessible and filling the gender divide is important for achieving the SDGs. It also seeks to offer collective understanding of what constitutes technology-assisted violence against women and girls. Furthermore, it makes recommendations to address technology-assisted violence against women and girls with the emphasis on the transformative changes that are possible by making the digital world accessible and safe for women and girls.⁷

g. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Mapping of Regional Institutions

The study mapped all the 17 SDGs within the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda, including the various ways in which women and girls will remain key to the attainment of the global goals. Furthermore, the publication outlined a step-by-step localization process for the regional institution from a gender perspective, in terms of what it takes for a country or region to effectively implement the SDGs, including step-by-step analysis and linking this to the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support Framework. The publication also reviewed the roles of various regional institutions on the localization and

implementation of gender-related SDGs in terms of collaboration and partnership, stakeholder participation, capacity-building, policy dialogue, consistency and coherence, and innovative financing, as well as peer learning and knowledge exchange on gender-related SDGs. The publication further showcases the different interventions and efforts such as programmes, advocacy for policy change and intergovernmental work that the UN Women ESARO has rolled out. The publication also presents the challenges, opportunities, lessons learnt and recommendations for engagement with regional institutions in gender-related SDGs.⁸

6 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *Good Practices on Engagement with Traditional Leaders to End Child Marriage & Other Harmful Practices Against Women*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/01/trad-leaders-and-cm>.

7 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women). 2020. "Background Paper — Safe Digital Spaces: Protection of Women and Girls from Technological Violence." *Journal of Culture, Society and Development* 56, p. 68.

8 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Mapping of Regional Institutions*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/01/sdgs-mapping>.

h. Africa Marriage Laws: A Compendium from 55 African Union Member States

This compendium is a collection of marriage laws across African Union Member States and was developed to serve as an updated compilation of Member States' legal frameworks and legislation related to marriage. The compendium, first developed in 2016 and updated in June 2018, was compiled through desk reviews of Member States' legal frameworks, including constitutions, civil codes, family laws and other

partner documents and publications. The compendium is a tool to inform governments, policymakers, researchers, advocates, partners and other stakeholders on countries' marriage laws, to help track child marriage reforms and identify best practice of the Member States to enable targeted advocacy in the countries that require review and reform in their marriage laws.⁹

i. Mapping of Discrimination Against Women and Girls with Disabilities in East & Southern Africa

The report is premised on the fact that information and data on women and girls with disabilities in East and Southern Africa are limited, and that the specific needs of women and girls are not always addressed in initiatives promoting women's empowerment. The study targeted six countries in the region including Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. These countries, just like other countries, have made progress in the form of legislation, policy

and programmes promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. They, however, experience different socio-economic and gender-related challenges. For almost all of these countries, the human development index is higher for men than for women. Men have higher average incomes and more years of education than women in the countries studied. These differences are exacerbated for women and girls with disabilities in the region.¹⁰

j. Good Practices on Engagement with Traditional Leaders to End Child Marriage and Other Harmful Practices Against Women

This compendium showcases good practices on how traditional and cultural leaders and authorities have engaged with their communities to end these harmful practices against women and girls. As such, UN Women ESARO has collected a number of good practices that are both replicable and feasible within

the framework of this engagement. These are just a few selected examples of how these stakeholders have contributed to the efforts towards ending child marriage, FGM/C and other harmful practices against women and girls in Africa.

k. Report on the Status of Women in the United Nations Office in Nairobi

This report was commissioned in 2017 by UN Women ESARO, at the request of the Network of Women Leaders in the UN Nairobi Duty Station, to inform efforts to support the realisation of the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity launched by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on 13 September 2017. In commissioning this report, the Network of Women Leaders in the United Nations

Nairobi Duty station hopes that the findings will be taken on board by all entities resident in Nairobi and provide a benchmark for setting targets for themselves towards the realisation of gender parity. It is also hoped that, through the report, individual entities will be able to identify areas of focus and opportunities for cross-learning and collaboration to support their efforts. The system-wide strategy

9 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. "Africa Marriage Laws: A Compendium from 55 African Union Member States". (Infographic.) Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/02/infographic-on-child-marriage>.

10 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *Mapping of Discrimination against Women and Girls with Disabilities in East & Southern Africa*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/04/mapping-of-discrimination-on-disabilities-in-esar>.

is intended to facilitate the attainment of this commitment across the United Nations system and it provides a roadmap to enable United Nations

entities to reach parity at the senior levels of leadership by 2021 and, ultimately, by 2028 across the United Nations system.¹¹

I. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Beijing Platform for Action: Pathway to Gender Equality in the East and Southern Africa Region and its Synthesis Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The brief provides a snapshot of the progress made and achievements of the East and Southern Africa region towards gender equality and women's empowerment. The aim is not to list all the achievements from all the countries, but to outline key challenges in realizing gender equality and women's empowerment, as identified in the Beijing+25 national reports. The analytical report and policy brief are based on an analysis of country reports and other relevant documents and offer a snapshot of regional trends in terms of the achievements and challenges in the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (BDPfA), as well as making some critical recommendations for future action. The report

acknowledges and emphasizes the essential linkages between commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment in the BDPfA and those in global and regional instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Maputo Protocol, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. This report and its policy brief celebrate the BDPfA's achievements in the East and Southern Africa region while keeping various gender equality and empowerment of women stakeholders at par with the challenges and gaps that must be innovatively mitigated for the full realization of the BDPfA's promises for women and girls.¹²

m. Survey of COVID-19-related publications (2020)

This section provides compendium briefs for publications related to COVID-19 in the East and Southern Africa region. The following publications have been developed:

- **Guidance Note for Conducting Qualitative Research during COVID-19.** The guidelines focus on qualitative research methods with specific reference to gender-related research and the adjustments that will be needed if qualitative research methods are used to collect data during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³
- **Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in COVID-19 Response.** This report highlights key recommendations for immediate response and
- **Mainstreaming gender in COVID-19 Response in Refugee and IDP Camps: Women's Political Participation for COVID-19 response.** This report proposes interventions for relevant multi-country and country offices in women's economic empowerment, communication and decision-making, coordination on gender-responsive response and recovery efforts in refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. The publication also

long-term recovery interventions for prevention and response to violence against women in the East and Southern Africa region during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁴

11 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2019. *Report on the Status of Women in United Nations Office in Nairobi*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2019/03/report-on-the-status-of-women-in-unon>.

12 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *Synthesis Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/11/synthesis-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-beijing-declaration-and-platform-for-action>

13 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Data Hub. 2020. "Guidance Note for Conducting Qualitative Research during COVID-19." Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://data.unwomen.org/publications/guidance-note-conducting-qualitative-research-during-covid-19>.

14 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in COVID-19 Response*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org/digital-library/publications/2020/05/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-covid-19-response>.

recommends approaches to leveraging resource mobilization among other opportunities in the context of COVID-19.¹⁵

- **Mainstreaming Gender in Water and Sanitation in COVID-19 Response.** This report highlights key interventions including promoting and supporting access to critical information to women, girls, the elderly and people living with disabilities on the effective use of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in the prevention and management of COVID 19, community mobilization for hand washing, advocating for and promoting increased access to clean water and soap for women, girls and other vulnerable groups, and advocating and supporting an analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, and boys and men among other proposals.¹⁶
- **Women’s Economic Empowerment in COVID-19 Response.** This report proposes programmatic and policy interventions of the priorities for consideration for the prevention and response to COVID-19 for the Women’s Economic Empowerment area. It also encourages UN Women multi-county and country offices to develop guidelines on the gender impact of COVID-19 and disseminate these to governments and other stakeholders.¹⁷

- **Women’s Peace and Security on COVID-19 Response.** Most of the countries within the East and Southern Africa region have, in the last two decades, experienced instability and myriad conflicts, including politically motivated conflict, the spread of violent extremism and terrorism, competition for natural resources and regional conflicts, all against a backdrop of wider social marginalization, poverty, social inequality, high youth unemployment and resource-based tensions. At the centre of stakeholder efforts is gender-responsive women’s peace and security efforts, which should ensure that women are active participants and not mere recipients of services and products during the COVID-19 response and recovery. Therefore, this report recommends key areas of intervention in the areas for peace and security for consideration.¹⁸
- **COVID-19 Response Mainstreaming Gender in Health Sector.** Health systems across the globe are overwhelmed by the rapidly increasing number of COVID-19 patients requiring treatment and hospitalization. Health supplies, including protective equipment are in short supply and hospital beds are unavailable because hospitals and healthcare workers struggle to cope with the demand for services. This report proposes key interventions on how UN Women can respond to strengthen the mainstreaming of gender in the health sector.¹⁹

15 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *Mainstreaming Gender in COVID-19 Response in Refugee and IDP Camps*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org//digital-library/publications/2020/05/mainstreaming-gender-in-covid---19-response-in-refugee-and-idp-camps>

16 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *Mainstreaming Gender in Water and Sanitation in COVID-19 Response. Guidance Note*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org//digital-library/publications/2020/05/mainstreaming-gender-in-water-and-sanitation-in-covid---19-response>

17 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. n.d. “Women’s Economic Empowerment in COVID-19 Response.” Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org//digital-library/publications/2020/05/womens-economic-empowerment-in-covid---19-response>

18 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. n.d. “Women Peace and Security on COVID-19 Response.” Accessed 10 November 2021, from <https://africa.unwomen.org//digital-library/publications/2020/05/women-peace-and-security-on-covid---19-response>

19 UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) Africa. 2020. *COVID-19 Response Mainstreaming Gender in Health Sector*. Accessed 10 November 2021. <https://africa.unwomen.org//digital-library/publications/2020/05/covid---19-response-mainstreaming-gender-in-health-sector>

5.

CONCLUSION

The survey received a total of 366 responses, of which 59.6 per cent were female and 40.4 per cent male, from 24 countries, the majority of whom are located in East and Southern Africa.

This survey confirms the findings of the two previous reader surveys and also confirms that the quality of printed UN Women ESARO publications for the period was excellent (58.0 per cent) and above average by (30.0 per cent). The survey indicates that UN Women ESARO publications are used for a variety of purposes with research topping the list of uses, followed by programming and policy advocacy on gender equality and women's empowerment. The results show 95 per cent of respondents thought that UN Women publications are easy to read and understand. In general, feedback on the quality of UN Women regional publications was positive, with 88.0 per cent of the respondents agreeing that the publications are useful. The survey shows that, as

in the two previous surveys, although many readers continue to indicate their interest in receiving publications via a mailing list or electronically, the demand for hard copies continues to decrease. In conclusion, UN Women ESARO publications continue to gain relevance and interest from various stakeholders, who feel that the publications are readable and understandable. From the survey, packaging publications into various formats continues to elicit interest and reaching the unreached featured prominently in the survey's key informant interviews. Dissemination approaches and tools must ensure that the furthest are also reached with the publications through possible localization of all regional studies undertaken by UN Women in the region.

6.

READER SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen the quality assurance process by building an accountability mechanism for the use of the quality assurance guidance developed in 2020 by the regional office.
 - Sustain targeted electronic dissemination processes, including social media, that build a robust way to reach to the target audience, as electronic access to publications was preferred by the respondents in the survey.
 - Launch and validate all publications with varied stakeholders, for example through policy dialogues, knowledge seminars, webinars, Hangouts, social media chats and other tools that reach wider audiences.
 - The period under review utilised online peer-reviewed journals for specific thematic publications, ensuring reach of the academia and development space. This practice should be sustained in light of the new strategic period (2022–2025).
 - The previous (2019) reader survey had recommended developing a mailing list for publications, but this could not be gathered by the survey team. The recommendation is that an electronic mailing list be established, as dissemination of publications is easier to manage through a mailing than through a list of individual emails, which is current practice.
 - This survey recommends increasing the accountability of publication production by ensuring all thematic units complete the related templates and have them approved in accordance with corporate requirements.
 - Continue using packaging mechanisms, such as executive summaries, fact sheets, key messages, journal papers and info graphs and other shorter versions of publications, including translation into United Nations-approved languages, which have contributed to ensuring that ESARO publications are easy to read and understand by the various audiences targeted.
 - Sustain efforts towards producing COVID-19-related publications as an emerging area of interest for stakeholders on gender equality and women's empowerment within the context of the pandemic.
 - Consider using short, animated videos scripted from the findings of the publications or study to illustrate recommendations and statistical findings to improve demand for different audiences.
- Sustain regular thematic publications and research seminars targeting diverse audiences on thematic topical issues to increase the usability and readership of ESARO publications.

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED
TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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