

ENHANCED COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY ON COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



Photo: UN Women Uganda

Lessons from the following evaluations:

(all evaluations available at <https://gate.unwomen.org/>)

2015

Country Portfolio Evaluation.
Mozambique.



2017

Country Portfolio Evaluation. Sudan.



2017

Mid Term Evaluation of UN Women
Strategic Note. Kenya.



2018

Country Portfolio Evaluation. Rwanda.



2018

Country Portfolio Evaluation.
South Sudan.



2017

Mid-term Evaluation Gender Based
Governance Programme. Malawi.



2016

Country Portfolio Evaluation. Ethiopia.



2014-2016

Mid Term Evaluation UN Women
South Sudan Strategic Note.



2017

Evaluation of JP "Advancing and
Sustaining Gender Equality Gains in
Rwanda."



2017

Evaluation of UN Women ESARO
Capacity Development Initiatives.

2017

Country Portfolio Evaluation. Tanzania.



1. WHY ARE COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY ON COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IMPORTANT?



Photo: UN Women/Eva Sibanda

With the realization of massive challenges surrounding gender equality and women's empowerment in East and Southern Africa and the inability to do everything alone, UN Women needs to form strategic alliances within and outside the UN family. It should effectively coordinate with the government, the civil society, and the private sector to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level.

The new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF) requires UN development entities to put gender equality at the heart of programming and to empower women and girls.

Coordination, therefore, presents a key pillar of work for UN Women to increase and harmonize system-wide

efforts and investments in gender equality and women's empowerment. Evaluations acknowledge that there is a need for better analysis and evidence around the effectiveness of UN Women coordination work and its efforts of holding its partners accountable for gender equality and women's empowerment commitments.

UN Women Multi and Country Offices' coordination work has involved promoting the accountability of the UN system on gender equality and women's empowerment. The work includes monitoring of the system-wide progress and more broadly mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations. The coordination role has also extended to national non-governmental and governmental actors.

Why are coordination and accountability on commitments to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment important?



2. WHICH APPROACHES HAVE PROVEN EFFECTIVE FOR ENHANCING COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY ON COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?



Photo: UN Women/Faith Bwibo

Evaluations established that partners perceive UN Women as an organization that is well-placed to coordinate partners on gender equality and women's empowerment issues, including on normative, joint advocacy, and programmatic work.

The leadership of UN Women is highly acknowledged in this area. It is hence important to emphasize this coordination role and resource it accordingly in UN Women Strategic Notes. UN Women should continue to strengthen its leadership role on gender equality and women's empowerment within the UN system.

The ongoing reform of the UN development system provides a unique opportunity for UN Women to leverage more coherent support across UN agencies in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Examples include the minimum requirements stipulated in the UN Country Team System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) gender equality scorecard for UN Country Teams. The scorecard is an accountability framework that promotes improved UN planning, programming, and results for gender equality to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The scorecard is organized around the following seven dimensions: planning; programming and monitoring and evaluation; partnerships; leadership and organizational culture; gender architecture and capacities; financial resources and results.

Evaluations have demonstrated that the coordination of UN joint efforts can be more productive by targeting specific gender issues. For instance, Ending Violence against Women (EVAW) or Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) would be more viable as opposed to coordinating broad gender equality concepts across UN agencies. Some of the joint UN programmes that were found to be successful were addressing a particular gender priority rather than mainstreaming gender in a wide range of different initiatives. Identifying strategic partners becomes crucial in this context as they play a critical role in helping to deliver and sustain the expected programme results.



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3. HOW CAN UN WOMEN IMPROVE ITS WORK ON COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENTS TO GEWE?

UN Women Multi and Country Offices need to engage in a system-wide approach that involves a multi-partner, multi-sectoral collaboration to further strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment efforts.

The systematic strengthening of UN Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) is key to this as they present interagency coordination mechanisms that aim to enhance the collective approach and response by UN Country Teams. They provide policy advice, coordination on programming issues within the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and technical support on gender equality and women's empowerment.

To strategically influence the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda at the national level, it has proven effective for UN Women to increase coordination beyond the national gender machineries and engage with strong government ministries, e.g., health, education and finance. Options include the secondment of senior Gender Advisors and their inclusion in relevant gender working groups. Another approach is to identify and train Gender Focal Points within government structures who can help coordinate gender equality and women's empowerment work and liaise within and across sectors. This will provide these influencers with a higher capacity to coordinate and liaise within and across their sectors and help to speed up gender equality and women's empowerment processes.

Strategic policy reviews at sector level present another example of UN Women support. They can provide the basis for helping to transform rigid government policies and systems towards a more gender-responsive culture. UN Women can play a key role in engendering key government sectors and in leveraging their strength, expertise and funding for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

Evaluations have demonstrated that UN Women's main comparative advantage is in the areas of

partner coordination, normative work, mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in government policies and programmes and advocacy engagement. UN Women should minimize getting involved in the direct implementation of partner activities. To bridge the implementation capacity gap of some of its partners, UN Women should ensure capacity development for partners is integrated into programme implementation.

While the UN Sustainable Development Framework and the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women provide opportunities for UN Women as an accountability framework for enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment commitment across the UN system, evaluations have highlighted that the commitment of leadership and executive management is crucial to achieving progress. The responsibility of senior managers to create an enabling environment is an essential factor in ensuring the effective implementation of gender-related components of policies and programmes.

Existing coordination schemes such as Gender Working Groups should be better utilized and resourced to influence gender mainstreaming and promote joint programming on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Finally, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework at country level must reinforce the focus on human rights, gender equality, and Leaving No One Behind that are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. Practically, this must include an in-depth gender analysis on the structural causes of gender inequality and discrimination using sex-disaggregated, gender-sensitive data and assessing women's empowerment during the planning and development the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The commitment to gender equality should reflect in gender-specific results in the Cooperation Framework, and gender should be integrated into work plans and budgets of joint Results Groups, Monitoring and Evaluation and Communications Groups.