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Gender equality at UNDP

**Annual report of the Administrator on the implementation of
the UNDP gender equality strategy in 2019**

Summary

This report presents the performance of UNDP in 2019 on implementing the gender equality strategy, 2018-2021. Chapter II of the report provides development results under each outcome of the Strategic Plan; chapter III contains institutional results to strengthen gender mainstreaming, and chapter IV summarizes lessons learned and indicates the way forward.

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I. Introduction

1. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals guide the work of UNDP. This annual report shows strong overall progress towards implementing the UNDP gender equality strategy. It demonstrates that, as the largest United Nations organization in the field, UNDP plays a vital role at the global and national levels for women's rights and gender equality, supported by programme countries.

2. The report shows that UNDP has gradually continued shifting from counting the number of beneficiaries by sex to promoting the agency of women and structural transformation. Governance proved to be the most transformative area, contributing to building a more equal society through our work on women's participation in decision-making and political processes. Strong results are reported in the areas of women's leadership in natural resource management and climate action initiatives, and in gender-based violence across regions. In crisis and fragility contexts, UNDP continued improving women's resilience and participation in economic recovery and building social cohesion.

3. The report also demonstrates that UNDP is sustaining its institutional efforts to address gender equality. UNDP was rated one of the best-performing organizations within the United Nations system in 2019, meeting or exceeding requirements for 88 per cent of the relevant indicators in the System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality. UNDP was listed as a high scorer in global health in the 50/50 Gender and Health Index, 2020. In 2019, UNDP personnel were better equipped with capacities to implement the gender equality strategy, including through the UNDP 'Gender Equality Seal' programme and the global gender community of practice of the Global Policy Network.

4. As the 2019 Human Development Report shows, progress in gender equality has been faster for basic capabilities such as self-employment, but harder for enhanced capabilities such as women's leadership in business and politics.¹ Men and women vote at similar rates, but only 10 women are heads of States.² Progress towards gender equality is slowing: following current trends, it would take 202 years to close the gap in economic opportunity alone.³ Ninety-two per cent of women workers in developing countries are employed informally,⁴ with limited social protection. Political violence towards women is at its highest level ever. Climate change is exacerbating gender-based violence. This disempowerment is perpetuated through social norms. Public trust in governments is decreasing, discontent with inequality has intensified, and in 2019 women's movements saw an unprecedented mobilization.

5. In the coming two years, the primary challenge for UNDP will be to move faster to help governments transform patriarchal institutions and structures, discriminatory social norms and collective behaviours across our programmes. As we learned from the 2018 evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries, UNDP should implement a next-generation offer on poverty and inclusive growth, emphasizing gender-responsive social protection. We will address new forms of inequality, such as the differentiated gender impact of digital transformation, and dedicate capacities to improving and systematically integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in crisis and post-crisis contexts. Increased financial investments and stronger architecture will be required to obtain better results.

Box 1. UNDP engagement in Beijing+25 and the 20th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

In 2020, the world is commemorating the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+25). UNDP is embracing Beijing+25 with a focus on three critical areas: Sustainable Development Goal 16; the 2019 Human Development Report on addressing social norms; and the intersection between gender equality and climate action. Our aim is to advocate for the urgent implementation of global and national political commitments and the allocation of funding to

¹ UNDP. 2019. *Human Development Report 2019. Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century*. New York.

² UN-Women and IPU. 2019. *Women in Politics 2019*. New York.

³ World Economic Forum. 2018. *Global Gender Gap Report 2018*. Geneva.

⁴ Bonnet, F. et al. 2019. *Women and Men in the Informal Economy – A Statistical Brief*. WIEGO.

achieve gender equality by 2030. UNDP is also marking the 20th anniversary of the landmark Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security by highlighting the importance of engaging women in decision-making.

Observations from performance in 2019

6. Performance against the gender equality strategy, 2018-2021, and the Strategic Plan, is strong. In 2019, 11 out of 15 gender-responsive output indicators met or exceeded their targeted milestones. UNDP was rated one of the best-performing organizations in the United Nations system in 2019, meeting or exceeding requirements for 88 per cent (14 out of 16) of the relevant indicators in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan. UNDP efforts to build capacities and a culture of equality are a priority. Overall, UNDP is a gender-balanced organization. We will continue to improve resource allocations and focus on lifting performance against under-performing indicators.

7. UNDP is gradually shifting from counting the number of beneficiaries by sex to promoting the agency of women and structural transformation. In times of democratic backsliding, governance proved to be the most transformative work contributing to building a more equal society. Forty-eight per cent of all voters registered through UNDP electoral support programmes were women. The other two areas with notable growth in removing structural barriers were women's leadership in natural resource management and climate action initiatives. In 2019, 74 countries integrated gender into their environmental and climate policies, plans and frameworks, and 97 countries strengthened women's leadership and decision-making in natural resource management.

8. UNDP contributed effectively to preventing gender-based violence when tackled as part of a complex development challenge. In 2019, UNDP tested new approaches in seven countries to address the linkages between gender-based violence and climate change, improve livelihoods, and build peaceful societies, which will help UNDP address the issue more effectively in 2020-2021.

9. UNDP made further strides in women's economic empowerment. With UNDP support, 23.4 million women had gained access to basic services, financial services and non-financial assets by 2019. Our work helped 1.4 million women-headed households in 16 countries to access clean energy. Much of this work was done in partnership, particularly with UN-Women, with whom UNDP collaborates in 102 countries. In 2020-2021, UNDP will carry out qualitative analysis and research to monitor how this access to basic needs can enhance the capacities of women to make choices.

10. UNDP was increasingly recognized as a partner of choice in promoting global gender equality. In 2019, UNDP collaborated with Sweden, Tunisia, and UN-Women to organize the Tunis Forum on Gender Equality. UNDP will deepen its partnerships with civil society in 2020-2021, and will engage with the Generation Equality Global Action Coalition. In 2019, we established 74 partnerships with governments and other partners to address discriminatory gender and social norms, compared with 58 in 2018.

11. UNDP is working to tackle discriminatory norms, biases and perceptions. By launching a new gender social norms index, created by the Human Development Report Office, and a global media campaign called #CheckYourBias, UNDP influenced the Beijing+25 global debate to highlight the need for a new generation of policies addressing biases, norms, and power structures. In 2020, UNDP will disseminate a set of concrete recommendations for country offices, partners and others on how to tackle such biases.

12. UNDP equipped its personnel with capacities to implement the gender equality strategy. In 2019, at least 36 country offices benefited from a stronger UNDP Seal learning programme, which delivered more than 15 virtual workshops attended by more than 600 staff on topics such as integrating gender into the programme cycle and how to mainstream gender into crisis and resilience. Breakout sessions complemented by tailored support to country offices were introduced.

13. On average, UNDP invests in gender equality more than other development actors, and the gender marker data show a steady increase of resource allocations to gender equality. Investment in programmes where gender equality was a principal objective doubled from 4 to 8 per cent between 2017

and 2019. Regular resources are critical to advancing UNDP work on gender, where 44 per cent of signature solution 6 is funded from regular resources. However, the United Nations recognizes that gender equality is still underfunded. To ensure adequate financing for gender equality, UNDP will implement the recommendations of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality established by the Secretary-General. During 2020-2021, UNDP will review its financial flow to establish financial targets, including for GEN2 and GEN3, that can be increased over time.

14. Our work on gender equality helped position UNDP in important conversations at the global, regional and national levels through the lens of climate change, inequality, and migration, the three main themes of the UNDP External Engagement Plan, 2019. This included 7,237 articles that referred to our gender work in the media; engagement through social media and digital channels; and the involvement of UNDP Goodwill Ambassadors.

15. Looking ahead, UNDP must invigorate efforts to address challenges. These include enhancing women's leadership within prevention and recovery mechanisms. The first step is the new 'Gender and Recovery Toolkit'. UNDP will make efforts to increase the number of countries we are supporting to address gender-based-violence with integrated programming. In 2020-2021, UNDP will roll out a portfolio review methodology to help country offices identify the 'untouched potential' of its poverty and inclusive growth initiatives to connect portfolios to upstream policy work and tackle barriers to achieving women's economic empowerment.

II. Gender equality results by Strategic Plan outcome

Outcome 1. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions

16. Learning from gaps identified by the 2018 evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries, UNDP looked beyond employment and income generation. UNDP has developed a next-generation offer on poverty that entails strengthening gender equality in national planning and addressing structural barriers to women's economic empowerment, including critical determinants such as the disproportionate burden of unpaid work.

Gender mainstreaming in national planning

17. In 2019, UNDP supported governments in developing gender-responsive poverty reduction strategies and plans in, for example, Bangladesh, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania. In Tanzania, UNDP supported the Ministry of Finance and Planning to develop concrete recommendations for integrating gender issues into poverty reduction plans, with a focus on the agricultural sector.

Gender-responsive social protection

18. Twenty countries reported supporting governments in implementing gender-responsive social protection in 2019. This includes the creation of national social protection institutions and policies, and the expansion of existing services that integrate gender equality. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, a regional initiative on social protection and gender was developed, through which Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Mexico assessed existing policies and conducted a cost analysis of early childhood services and more comprehensive social protection systems.

19. UNDP supported governments and civil society in implementing coherent interventions that promote gender equality under health programmes, drawing on its capacity development expertise and experience working with communities. In Zimbabwe, in partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNDP supported a multifaceted programme for adolescent girls and young women that included peer-led mentorship groups, educational subsidies, community-led advocacy on harmful social norms, and one-stop centres for medical and legal support for survivors of gender-based violence.

Integrated responses to poverty

20. Poverty is multidimensional and requires integrated solutions. UNDP partnered across government ministries to ensure that Sustainable Development Goals planning, implementation and reporting were gender-responsive. This included support for sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis, and the integration of gender analysis into voluntary national reviews. UNDP uses gender-responsive budgeting to ensure more equitable distribution of resources associated with national or subnational plans. For example, UNDP provided gender-responsive budgeting support to 20 ministries in Afghanistan. In Georgia, UNDP-supported women’s community centres advocated for priorities in local infrastructure that were taken up by local municipalities.

21. UNDP gradually moved towards multi-stakeholder platforms during 2018-2019. In Asia and the Pacific, the ‘Transforming the Future of Work for Gender Equality’ initiative is a platform linked with financial inclusion that works with policymakers, business leaders, regulators and civil society. Thanks to interventions in the Pacific Islands, nearly a million women will improve access to digital agriculture and financial service delivery among market vendors and rural women micro-entrepreneurs.

Access to basic services, finance and assets

22. Investing in basic needs linked to the most extreme deprivations remains essential. In 2018-2019, UNDP enabled 23.4 million women to gain access to basic services such as health, education, nutrition and water; financial services, including bank accounts and credit; and non-financial assets such as land. This was a significant increase from 2018, when 5.3 million women accessed these services and assets, due primarily to improved access to basic services in large countries such as Bangladesh. In 2020-2021, UNDP will analyse and research how this access to basic needs contributes to enhancing women’s capacities to make choices, as progress in basic capabilities is not in itself sufficient to respond to people’s aspirations.

Box 2. Addressing intersectionality while reaching those furthest behind

Taking into account the intersecting nature of gender inequalities, in Paraguay, with United Nations partners, UNDP contributed to a nationally led effort to modify a law on domestic employment in 2019. The law now entitles domestic workers, who are often young migrant women, to receive a minimum wage while maintaining access to health insurance. In Viet Nam, UNDP supported ethnic women’s cooperatives – which tend to be in a better bargaining position, with stronger networks – by connecting them to large digital-service providers. This resulted in improved productivity, with a third of the cooperatives increasing their value turnover by up to 50 per cent. In Rwanda, UNDP improved the capacity and livelihoods of refugee women entrepreneurs through YouthConnekt boot-camps.

23. UNDP will strengthen its effort to achieve the targeted milestone for women’s financial inclusion, having fallen short in 2019. Country offices reported challenges in areas such as resources, data and monitoring for evidence-based policy development, and broader contextual issues including political instability, discriminatory laws and policies, and societal norms.

Access to energy

24. UNDP expanded access to clean energy, particularly for women-headed households. In 2019, 1.4 million women-headed households were able to access clean energy in 16 countries. For example, in Sierra Leone, with UNDP support, women in nearly 2,000 poor households now use energy-efficient cook stoves. This contributed to reduced time spent on cooking, protection of the environment through the reduction of firewood consumption, and minimizing health risks associated with the use of firewood. UNDP will focus on scaling up and delivering gender-transformational impact through its climate, environment and energy work.

Gender-based violence

25. Integrated UNDP efforts to eradicate gender-based violence with other development initiatives show that this is not a ‘women’s issue’ and is crucial to ending poverty in its multiple forms. In 2019,

UNDP continued to assist countries in establishing frameworks to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence. In Sudan, for example, UNDP undertook a multi-pronged approach within a broader justice intervention that enhanced the capacities of the Bar Association and civil society and established new Justice Confidence Centres for internally displaced persons and vulnerable groups. In Uganda, UNDP partnered with ministries to integrate gender-based violence prevention into wetlands restoration and alternative livelihoods. New learning, research and partnerships have been established to help UNDP to address the issue more effectively in 2020-2021. Lessons learned will be applied to the ‘Spotlight Initiative’.

26. In 2019, UNDP continued to raise awareness about gender-based violence through research and media campaigns. In a groundbreaking study commissioned by UNDP in Peru, the economic costs of gender-based violence in a local community were found to be \$72.9 million – four times the total annual budget for infrastructure. This enabled a dialogue with national authorities to initiate similar studies in other municipalities, triggering better policy responses.

Box 3. The Spotlight Initiative: leading the United Nations reform

The Spotlight Initiative lies at the heart of United Nations development system reform and embodies a new way of delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated way. This is a global multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to help eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

In 2019, the Spotlight Initiative started implementation in five countries in Latin America (Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico) and eight countries in Africa (Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe). Initial activities are promising. In Mozambique, UNDP is implementing the United Nations essential services package to work with traditional courts on preventing and addressing gender-based violence. UNDP is leading on strong justice and police components in the Spotlight country programmes in El Salvador, Honduras, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, and Niger.

27. UNDP country offices faced several challenges that impeded progress towards ending gender-based violence. More work needs to be done to enforce judgments of gender-based violence cases in national justice systems. In 2019, only 36 per cent of the cases reported to authorities received judgment in the formal justice system in 13 countries. Country offices faced unstable political contexts, lack of prioritizing gender-based violence, and limited financial resources, as well as insufficient understanding of the interlinkages between this and other development issues.

Outcome 2. Accelerating structural transformation for sustainable development

28. UNDP amplified women’s voices and redoubled its support to women claiming and exercising their rights. UNDP worked on interventions such as: (a) enhancing women’s political participation and decision-making; (b) mainstreaming gender in addressing the impacts of climate change and natural resource management; and (c) legal, policy and institutional reforms to remove structural barriers to women’s empowerment.

Women’s political participation and decision-making

29. Democratic governance continued to be the most transformative work helping to build more gender-equal and peaceful societies. UNDP worked in all regions to promote women’s participation and leadership in public institutions, parliaments, the judiciary, and the private sector. With our support, 180 measures – from electoral quotas to gender-smart business policies – were put in place in 2019, an increase from 134 in 2018.

30. UNDP strengthened inclusive political processes and ensured that 48 per cent of all registered voters in 39 countries supported by UNDP electoral assistance were women – a continuing trend since 2018. In Moldova, for example, UNDP reached out to over 2,200 women to equip them with skills to participate in elections and run as candidates. The focus was on women from poor and vulnerable groups, those living with HIV/AIDS, and women belonging to ethnic minorities such as the Roma, with six Roma

women elected as local councillors in 2019. To secure equal representation of women and men on electoral lists, UNDP provided technical assistance to countries such as Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan to introduce quota laws. Small island developing States in Africa, such as Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, adopted parity laws with UNDP support.

31. UNDP continued its support to women’s networks, caucuses and parliamentary committees. In the Pacific Islands, UNDP helped create a women’s network that brought together female members of 17 parliaments to enable exchange, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning. In Serbia, UNDP supported the work of the Women’s Parliamentary Network, a cross-party caucus whose 2019 annual conference featured critical dialogues on sexism, discrimination and violence against women. In Iraq, UNDP provided technical support for the establishment of a women’s caucus comprising 39 members of parliament.

Box 4. The changing face of political representation in Latin America and the Caribbean

‘Atenea’, an inter-agency partnership between UNDP, UN-Women and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, is the flagship UNDP initiative to accelerate women’s progress in political participation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Implemented in 11 countries in the region so far, it has created national and regional political parity indexes and national actions. The findings have fed into legal mechanisms for political reform to enable women to exercise their political rights.

Mainstreaming gender in climate change and natural resource management

32. Two areas with notable growth are women’s leadership in natural resource management and climate action initiatives. Both have removed structural barriers and strengthened women’s capacities. In 2019, the UNDP environment, climate and energy portfolio, financed by global environmental and vertical funds, led to a record 74 countries integrating gender concerns into their environmental and climate policies, plans and frameworks – 11 countries more than in 2018.

33. UNDP continued supporting 17 countries in integrating gender equality into their nationally determined contributions process since 2018, as part of the ‘NDC Support Programme’. In 2020, UNDP committed to assisting 50 countries in integrating gender equality into the revision process of nationally determined contributions as part of the ‘Climate Promise’. UNDP focused on supporting countries in conducting gender analyses and encouraging gender-responsive budgeting in nationally determined contributions governance, planning and implementation. For example, Ecuador incorporated gender equality into its nationally determined contributions, the by-law of the national environmental law, and the national strategy for climate change. Based on the gender analysis of energy and agriculture, Ghana developed a toolkit to mainstream gender across other nationally determined contributions sectors.

34. A lack of access to natural resources is the underlying cause of many conflicts around the world. Women are primary users and managers of natural resources, and UNDP promotes women’s participation in decision-making processes related to natural resource management. UNDP supported work to strengthen women’s leadership in natural resource management in 97 countries in 2019 – a 31 per cent increase since 2018. In Cambodia, for example, women now represent at least 40 per cent of the members of water management committees and, thanks to improved water management, farmers doubled their rice crop yields and were better able to adapt during drought and dry spells. Recognizing women’s collective organization as a powerful force to advance resilience, UNDP increased its support to strengthen women-led community-based associations from 41 countries in 2018 to 57 countries in 2019.

Box 5. Women’s agency in climate change adaptation in post-conflict Sri Lanka

As managers of the household care economy – from water availability to food security – women in the Mahaweli River Basin in Sri Lanka are experiencing the adverse effects of climate change. To empower them as leaders, UNDP created an inclusive platform that enabled women to generate income from alternative livelihoods. In 2019, 3,430 women farmers took part in UNDP interventions, accounting for 59 per cent of all participants. That support enabled women to become community leaders and productive family members, unleashing their ‘power within’.

Legal, policy and institutional reforms to remove structural barriers to women's empowerment

35. **We increased our support in 2019 by assisting countries in adopting legal, policy and institutional reforms to remove barriers to women's empowerment.** This included addressing workplace discrimination, enhancing social protection through the care economy, and developing more gender-equitable value chains. In 2018-2019, UNDP increased the number of women accessing justice from 1.6 million to 3.7 million in 34 countries. Interventions included legal aid, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, and more efficient justice services.

Outcome 3. Building resilience to shocks and crises

36. **In 2019, UNDP remained one of the largest operational entities in humanitarian contexts.** UNDP reported work on improved livelihood and employment opportunities; developing gender-responsive crisis response; preventing violent extremism; and improving women's resilience and participation in economic recovery. We also strengthened support to the women, peace and security agenda.

Improving livelihood and employment opportunities

37. **UNDP works with communities and societies affected by disasters and conflicts to achieve early and long-term economic and livelihoods recovery.** In 2019, we worked in 26 countries to ensure that 1.7 million women gained access to jobs and improved livelihoods in crisis or post-crisis settings – up from 1.2 million in 2018. For example, at least 34 per cent of all direct beneficiaries of jobs created and conditional cash transfers in the Yemen emergency crisis response project were women.

Gender-responsive crisis response

38. **UNDP supported governments in strengthening the gender component in their national disaster response policies to better address gender-differentiated needs.** In 2019, we supported countries in developing gender-responsive recovery plans and systems. In Nepal, for example, UNDP contributed to the revision of the national disaster response framework and contingency plans on health, shelter, food, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene, to incorporate a gender equality and social inclusion perspective. We need to extend our support to a greater number of countries.

39. **Re-establishing the rule of law in conflict-affected countries forms the core of UNDP work to promote gender equality, prevent relapse into conflict and achieve sustainable peace.** In 2019, our global programme on strengthening the rule of law and human rights supported nearly 40 conflict and crisis-affected contexts, putting in place non-discriminatory laws and policies, promoting women's access to justice and enhanced security, and supporting accountability for conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

Preventing violent extremism

40. **Efforts continued to enhance gender mainstreaming in the prevention of violent extremism.** Through the Partnering Against Violent Extremism project in Sudan, UNDP promoted conflict prevention, institutional support, behavioural research and arts-based strategic communications interventions. In 2019, new insights into 'what works' for women's rehabilitation and reintegration helped in designing more gender-responsive and effective policies and programmes.

Women's participation in economic recovery

41. **UNDP continued to ensure gender-balanced representation among those supported by its recovery work.** In 2019, women accounted for 50 per cent of beneficiaries in 15 countries, compared to 54 per cent in 2018. In 2019, UNDP began the development of the 'Year 1,000,000 Women in Crises' initiative, which aims to economically empower one million women in 24 countries in crisis and post-crisis situations. In 2020, UNDP will make a consistent effort to monitor research on how access to basic services contributes to enhancing women's capacities to make choices.

42. **Advancing women's leadership in humanitarian settings remains a challenge.** In 2019, the share of women holding leadership positions in social dialogue and reconciliation mechanisms in 15 countries increased from 25 per cent in 2018 to 35 per cent in 2019. However, leadership positions within prevention

and recovery mechanisms held by women in both 2018 and 2019 was dramatically low. To address this, UNDP developed and began rolling out its ‘Gender and Recovery Toolkit’.

Box 6. From launching to rolling out the Gender and Recovery Toolkit

UNDP started to roll out its Gender and Recovery Toolkit on Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Crisis and Recovery Settings in 2019. The toolkit provides concrete entry points and proven approaches for gender-equitable, transformative recovery and resiliency programming. Since its launch, UNDP has facilitated a series of trainings, webinars, and interactions through the communities of practice to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange of experiences in gender and recovery. In August 2019, UNDP conducted a workshop in Istanbul with practitioners from more than eight country offices to build practical skills in using the gender and recovery framework. Somalia and Mozambique validated the tool, leading to increased support for the effective use of the toolkit across the organization.

The women, peace and security agenda

43. UNDP reinforced its support for the women, peace and security agenda in 2019, including through engagement with parliaments. Our flagship ‘Global Project on Parliaments and Civil Society as Partners Supporting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda’ assisted members of parliament in seven countries to promote accountability for their commitments by developing and implementing parliamentary ‘women, peace and security’ road maps. Sierra Leone, for example, adopted a resolution on women, peace and security and developed a complementary parliamentary women, peace and security national action plan, paving the way for gender-responsive law-making, policies and budgets.

44. To invigorate joint action on this agenda, UNDP continues to implement its N-Peace ‘Engage for Equality, Access, Community and Empowerment’ initiative in Asia. It builds the capacity of women peace advocates and expands their networks to implement Security Council resolution 1325. The civil society grants component of the initiative supported over 8,000 women through leadership programming in 2019.

45. Gender perspectives and women, peace and security need to be better integrated into UNDP work on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. This includes enhancing organizational commitments to the women, peace and security agenda, strengthening gender capacities in crisis-affected settings, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. UNDP will establish a dedicated gender and crisis work stream to tackle these issues.

Partnerships

46. Partnerships are critical to delivering on the gender equality strategy. In 2019, UNDP expanded its collaborations with actors across society, including with United Nations organizations, the private sector, international financial institutions, civil society, women’s organizations, and academia.

Box 7. Co-leading the Tunis Forum on Gender Equality

In collaboration with the Government of Tunisia, Sweden, and UN-Women, UNDP organized the Tunis Forum on Gender Equality, held on 24-26 April 2019. It garnered more than 590 participants and over 15 million online viewers. Over 40 per cent of participants were under 35, and more than 6,000 people engaged in an online discussion of the priority themes.

The Forum was the first global meeting leading up to the commemoration of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. The hallmark of the Forum was co-creation, with intergenerational dialogue, inclusiveness, youth engagement, strong participation from civil society, and high-level political support.

47. UNDP is a joint implementer of the common chapter of the Strategic Plan of the United Nations Children’s Fund, UNFPA and UN-Women, and an active member of the Inter-Agency Network on

Women and Gender Equality. In 2019, UNDP co-chaired sub-working group 2 of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality. At the country level in 2019, 39 country offices reported that UNDP co-chaired an interagency gender theme group. In 2019, 42 country offices implemented the gender equality scorecard of the United Nations country teams system-wide action plan – up from 27 offices in 2018.

48. UNDP remains the main partner of UN-Women. Pursuant to a memorandum of understanding signed in 2019, our collaboration grew to 102 country offices, up from 91 in 2018. Of those, 80 per cent partnered on at least one substantive joint project or initiative. The largest areas of collaboration remain advancing legal and policy reforms, women’s political participation, and economic empowerment.

49. UNDP is scaling up its work on gender justice under the auspices of the Global Focal Point for the Rule of Law. The innovative platform is co-led by UNDP and the Department of Peace Operations, in partnership with UN-Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, to strengthen justice and security, gender equality, and respect for human rights. In 2019, UN-Women and UNDP, with other Global Focal Point partners, spearheaded a dedicated partnership focused on closing the justice gap for women and girls through joint programming at global, regional and country levels.

50. Under the principle of leaving no one behind, UNDP, with UN-Women, UNFPA and WHO promoted the rights of persons with disabilities. In 2019, with UNDP support, the provincial government in Nepal formed the Inclusive Disability Coordination Committee to effectively implement disability-inclusive policies, regulations and budget.

51. At the regional level, UNDP collaborated with regional commissions. UNDP collaborated with UN-Women, UNFPA and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia to produce a regional report, ‘Gender Justice and Equality Before the Law in the Arab States Region: A Regional Analysis of Progress and Challenges’, which included a consolidated dashboard of gender equality laws in the region.

52. UNDP support to the African Union Commission on Women, Gender and Development Directorate resulted in the adoption of the African Union Gender Equality Strategy, 2018-2028, by its heads of state in 2019.

53. There has been an evolution towards more strategic partnerships with the private sector. The Gender Equality Seal for the Private Sector programme operates in 16 countries, supporting more than 750 companies and impacting 1.5 million workers. For example, the BHD Bank in the Dominican Republic implemented a gender-smart business strategy, leading to an increase in women’s financial contribution by nearly 40 per cent over three years.

54. UNDP is a leading member of the GEF Gender Partnership, which has leveraged members’ skills and experiences to ensure that the work financed by the Global Environment Facility is gender responsive.

Box 8. Engineer Girls of Turkey: challenging social norms in partnership with UNDP, the private sector and educational institutions

The ‘Engineer Girls of Turkey’ project, led by UNDP and the Limak Foundation, supports girls in pursuing engineering education and professions. Working with ministries, the private sector, educational institutions, and families, by January 2020 the project reached over 2,000 high school students, educators and parents through the high school programme, and 120 university students from engineering disciplines benefited from scholarships, as well as mentorship support provided by 180 women engineers. An anti-bias campaign was launched to change behaviours and stereotypes while reducing gender gaps in science and technology. The project was adapted in different countries, such as Kuwait’s ‘Engineer Girls Project’, and similar campaigns were conducted in Moldova, North Macedonia, and Uzbekistan.

55. **UNDP increased its support to strengthening women-led community-based associations from 41 countries in 2018 to 57 countries in 2019.** We supported 10 more countries in enabling women's groups to function in the public sphere. In Ethiopia, UNDP contributed to establishing the CSO Peace Forum, targeting women-led community service organizations under the umbrella of the Union of Ethiopian Women Charitable Association with 80 member organizations. The forum focuses on capacity-building for women leaders to engage in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Academia

56. **As a thought leader, UNDP has worked with United Nations partners, academia and think tanks across the world to produce evidence-based research and policy guidance on gender equality.** In consultation with over 12 governments in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, UNDP has been developing a gender-responsive multidimensional poverty index comprising 37 indicators.

57. In 2019, UNDP continued its partnership in the Gender in Public Administration initiative, resulting in a memorandum of understanding with the University of Pittsburgh. Cutting-edge research conducted under this collaboration showed the critical relationship between women's inclusion in formal peace talks and their participation in public administration, as well as the effectiveness of gender quotas and targets in conflict-affected countries.

58. In Malawi, UNDP collaborated with the National Council for Higher Education to develop a model gender policy for higher learning institutions and revise university performance review criteria to ensure that gender equality issues are integrated in tertiary education curricula and operations.

Innovation

59. **Advancing gender equality requires innovative approaches,** from community conversations to behaviour change campaigns, to break traditional patriarchal supply chains of information, resources and power. UNDP has been reinventing the ways in which it thinks and works, focusing on creating innovative solutions – from coalition-building in political participation in Latin America to transforming the future of work in Asia and the Pacific or designing survivor-centred approaches to addressing gender-based violence in Europe and Central Asia.

60. **Examples of innovative practices have been featured throughout this report.** In Kyrgyzstan, grassroots-level partnerships with religious leaders resulted in their support for community awareness against bride kidnapping, exemplifying innovative advocacy and collaboration with civil society to help change discriminatory stereotypes and practices.

61. In Azerbaijan, UNDP supported the creation of the Women's Resources Centres initiative, which equips women entrepreneurs and women's community groups with tools and resources to exercise their rights to participate and achieve greater access to employment opportunities.

62. With the support of the UNDP Innovation Facility and in partnership with the National Council of Justice, Brazil employed artificial intelligence to evaluate gender policies, using a gender-gap analysis tool, and improve the effectiveness of courts, resulting in improved data on judiciary system activities and stronger monitoring and planning tools.

Thought leadership to promote gender equality and women's empowerment

63. **UNDP drew on its flagship publications to advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment,** and to demonstrate the linkages between gender equality and improved development outcomes to influence global discourse, including in the context of Beijing+25, Security Council resolution 1325, and the 2030 Agenda.

64. **At the global level, a highlight was the seminal Human Development Report, 2019,** 'Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century'. In recognition of resolution 1325, UNDP produced the 'Parliamentary Handbook on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda' in 2019.

65. **At the regional level, UNDP advocated for gender equality** through the flagship report ‘Gender Justice and Equality Before the Law in the Arab States Region’; in Asia and the Pacific, UNDP and UNHCR published ‘Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights’.

66. **At the national level, several valuable knowledge products with practical implications were developed by country offices.** In Armenia, UNDP and UN-Women produced ‘Inclusive Electoral Processes: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Participation’. In Panama, UNDP developed a comprehensive diagnostic on women’s participation in the knowledge society as part of the national assessments on gender and science, technology and innovation.

67. **In 2019, UNDP contributed to academic debates** with its chapter ‘Aligning Perspectives in Gender Mainstreaming: Gender, Health, Safety and Well-Being’ in the book series ‘Aligning Perspectives on Health, Safety and Well-Being’, edited by the University of Nottingham. The chapter, to be published in 2020, discusses public policy alternatives illustrating the connection between gender-sensitive policies and improved business performance.

III. Institutional results

68. **This chapter focuses on UNDP progress in enhancing its institutional framework to strengthen gender equality development results.** This includes interconnected elements such as leadership; gender-responsive policy, planning and programming; accountability and oversight, gender capacities and gender architecture; inclusive and safe working environments; and gender parity.

69. **Performance against the System-wide Action Plan 2.0.** UNDP was rated as one of the best-performing United Nations system organizations in 2018 – with similar results for 2019 – meeting or exceeding requirements for 88 per cent (14 out of 16) of the relevant indicators. In 2018 UNDP outperformed the average performance of the funds and programmes (67 per cent) and the United Nations system overall (58 per cent). Leadership and development results are new categories as of 2018 in which UNDP exceeded requirements.⁵

70. **Implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy requires ongoing leadership.** In 2019, the Administrator continued to chair the two annual meetings of the Gender Equality Steering Committee. Gender parity was again achieved in the Executive Group (six female and three male assistant secretaries-general), and in UNDP resident representative appointments (52 per cent women) and deputy resident representative appointments (48 per cent women). In 2019, the Administrator’s commitment to preventing and addressing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse was evident in his all staff messages. He has also communicated on the subject during three all-staff town hall meetings and three Executive Board sessions.

“By becoming an International Gender Champion and encouraging the senior leadership of UNDP to do the same, I believe that UNDP will move closer to ‘walking the talk’ on gender equality and strengthen our commitment to advancing gender equality both in our internal practices and our assistance to partners.”

Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator

71. **From 2018 to 2019, UNDP progressively integrated gender perspectives and ensured gender-responsive policies and programming.** In 2019, two-thirds of country offices reported having gender equality strategies and time-bound action plans with clear deliverables. The number of strategies rose by 11 per cent from 2018 to 2019. UNDP country programme documents integrated satisfactory gender analysis. Despite the progress made, evaluations indicate a need to ensure that gender analysis is thorough. Good practices from the Gender Seal programme indicate that systematic programme portfolio reviews increase the potential for transformative results and support accuracy in gender marker scores.

72. **Financing for gender equality.** In 2019, the combined financial resources allocated for GEN2 and GEN3 projects accounted for 59 per cent of total expenditures, for a total of \$2.2 million. Gender

⁵ Comparisons for 2019 not yet published.

mainstreaming expenditures (GEN2) increased from 48.7 per cent in 2018 to 50.3 per cent in 2019. Gender-specific expenditures (GEN3) increased slightly, from 6.7 per cent in 2018 to 8.4 per cent. However, 41 per cent of UNDP programmes still do not contribute to reducing gender gaps. While UNDP investment in gender equality is above the average of other development actors, our financial allocations to gender equality mirror global trends. To ensure adequate financing for gender equality, UNDP will implement the recommendations of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality established by the Secretary-General. During 2020-2021, UNDP will review its financial flows to establish comprehensive targets, including for GEN2 and GEN3, that can be increased and adjusted over time.

73. UNDP has a budget allocation, the Gender Mainstreaming Initiative, that supports UNDP gender mainstreaming initiatives to meet system-wide action plan commitments such as the Gender Equality Seal and UNDP participation in inter-agency and global initiatives. In 2019 there was a budget increase of 59 per cent in one year for a total allocation of \$1.67 million (compared to \$1.05 million in 2018).

74. Deepen accountability and oversight for gender equality results. The Gender and Implementation Steering Committee is the main instrument for senior managers at headquarters to monitor and make decisions on the implementation of the Gender Equality Seal. In 2019, the committee met twice, with all assistant secretaries-general (UNDP bureau directors) participating. Committee members agreed upon: enhancing the leadership of senior managers; improving areas with low gender marker ratings (such as crisis contexts); strengthening integrated country support; and capitalizing on distinctive UNDP contributions to thought leadership. On the Gender Parity Strategy, participants agreed to prioritize work on the new mobility/rotation policy and continue building pipelines towards more senior positions for women.

75. Gender-responsive staff performance management was strengthened in 2019. Heads of offices, including deputy directors, now have a mandatory goal to “effectively implement the Gender Equality Strategy, 2018-2021 and the Gender Parity Strategy, 2018-2021”.

76. UNDP has one of the strongest institutional reporting mechanisms in the United Nations system and the results-oriented annual report has become an important driver of reporting on gender equality. In 2019, country offices reported on gender-specific achievements and gender-specific organizational results. UNDP utilized artificial intelligence to analyse raw data for the report. From 2017 to 2019, the integrated results and resources framework shifted away from gender-sensitive indicators and sharpened its focus on gender-responsive indicators. UNDP has substantially increased the number of sex disaggregated indicators requested in framework.

77. Since 2018, the Office of Audit and Investigations has redoubled efforts to integrate gender concerns into its audit plans. In 2019, the office circulated a new gender audit questionnaire to collect data to be used during the gender audit in 2020-2021. A thorough analysis of results and recommendations will be critical to the next iteration of the gender equality strategy.

Gender capacities

78. The Gender Team, consisting of 19 staff in the Central Unit and Regional Hubs, remains the pillar of the UNDP gender architecture.

Table 1. Professional full-time staff positions at global and regional levels

Location	Staff
New York	8
Addis Ababa	3
Amman	2
Bangkok	1
Istanbul	2
Panama	3
Total	19

79. Multidisciplinary gender focal teams have been an effective mechanism to advance co-ownership of the gender equality agenda and improve vertical and horizontal coordination. In 2019, 70 per cent of country offices reported having a multidisciplinary gender focal team led by a senior manager, 68 per cent of offices had a focal team with a clear terms of reference, 65 per cent of offices had one with an action plan and 37 per cent of offices had specific resources allocated to support the team. From 2017 to 2019, approximately 70 per cent of country offices had gender focal teams. UNDP Kyrgyzstan, for example, established a three-person team, including monitoring and evaluation and communications, which provided technical backstopping across teams – programmatic and operations. Other organizations and United Nations entities are adopting our multidisciplinary gender focal team architecture.

80. The Gender Seal as an innovation for organizational change towards gender equality. The UNDP Gender Equality Seal is the Gender Team’s flagship evidence-based initiative, with nine years of experience in improving standards and building transformative change. In the 2018-2019 round of the Gender Seal, demand was higher than ever before, with 55 offices applying to the programme (36 were accepted) and a retention rate of 94 per cent. The Seal has contributed to increasing allocation of funds for gender equality, better partnerships, and gender-responsive programming. At the end of the 2019-2020 round, 79 country offices will be certified, impacting more than 10,000 personnel.

Box 9. The Gender Equality Gold Seal

In 2019, UNDP Kyrgyzstan became one of 10 UNDP country offices to receive the Gold Certification of the Gender Equality Seal. Transformative results included the adoption of a national action plan on gender equality for 2018-2020; 30 per cent of gender quotas introduced into the composition of local councils; promotion of a law criminalizing child marriage and bride kidnapping; and the introduction of 112 hotlines for gender-based violence response.

81. The Gender Seal learning plan is the backbone of our capacity-building on gender equality. In 2019, the Seal delivered more than 15 virtual workshops on topics such as integrating gender into the programme cycle, and how to mainstream gender into crisis and resilience; 10 breakout sessions (targeted small-group discussions, by region, on highly technical issues); and an active community of practice with approximately two queries or discussion points per week. The learning plan was targeted at the 36 country offices presently in the plan, and sessions were opened to the global gender community of practice.

82. In 2019, UNDP invested significantly in knowledge-sharing and capacity-building by sustaining the global communities of practice. The gender community of practice membership exceeded 1,000 members, and facilitators organized seven e-discussions and eight chats (with 620 participants in total) to address thematic priorities identified in the Gender Equality Seal, 2018-2021. Looking forward to 2020, the communities of practice will be able to connect with external stakeholders through the ‘Digital Lighthouse’ initiative to position UNDP as the convener of global decision-makers, the development community, and citizens.

External knowledge-sharing

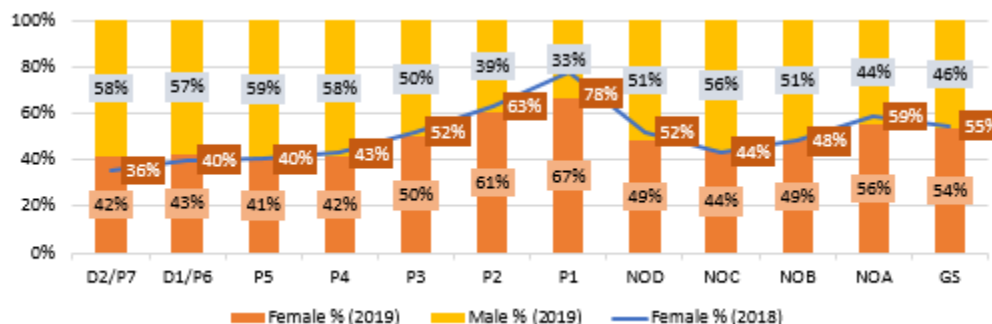
As of mid-January 2019, UNDP had a social media audience of 5.29 million followers, and our tweets about gender appeared up to 115.3 million times (in English) on the newsfeeds of up to 30.8 million Twitter subscribers.

At the regional level, the web portal of the Regional Bureau in Latin America and the Caribbean, entitled ‘América Latina Genera’ on gender equality in the region, recorded more than 1,800,000 visits in 2019 and accounts for 53,000 followers on Facebook (and 52,500 ‘likes’), 8,700 on LinkedIn and 6,800 on Twitter. It recorded more than 161,000 visits on YouTube.

83. As of December 2019, 50 per cent of all UNDP staff were women and 50 per cent were men. While at many levels there is full parity or close to parity – including at the ASG, resident representative and deputy resident representative levels – some challenges persist at the P4 level and above. The percentage

of women for the P4, P5, D1 and D2 levels are 42, 41, 43 and 42 per cent, respectively. However, since 2012 there has been consistent growth towards parity at the ASG, D2, D1 and P5 levels.

Figure 1. Proportion of UNDP female and male staff at all levels, 2019 and 2018



84. **Under the Gender Parity Strategy, specific initiatives to achieve gender parity targets are being implemented by each Bureau.** Following the successful experience of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Bureau for Arab States started a mentoring programme for women in the region that will become an institutional initiative. The Regional Bureau for Africa launched the African Young Women Leaders Fellowship Programme.

85. **Sexual Harassment and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.** In 2019, UNDP's actions to address sexual harassment in the workplace focused on prevention, reporting and response, survivor support, and accountability. Actions on prevention included continued communication and outreach; expanded scope of the external helpline to include harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority; and launch of the Respectful Workplace Facilitators programme. Reporting and response focused on ensuring that sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse cases are investigated within approximately six months and increasing the capacity of the investigation team. In terms of accountability, UNDP finalized the internal standard operating procedures for using the interagency database on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse; ensured that all Bureaus and offices have related action plans; and submitted annual certifications of implementation in 2019 to the Administrator.

IV. Lessons learned and the way forward

86. This report has highlighted the progress made in 2019, as well as the challenges and emerging trends. It provides lessons learned and outlines how we can accelerate progress towards the scale we need.

87. Evaluations revealed that thorough, systematic gender analysis remains a crucial success factor for achieving strong performance, and good practices from the Gender Seal show how programme portfolio reviews contribute to transformative results and offer a way forward. UNDP will continue investing in methods and instruments to ensure that gender analysis is at the centre of our policy, advocacy and programming work.

88. The commemoration of Beijing+25 and Security Council resolution 1325 offers an opportunity to re-think gender equality. UNDP will promote changing discriminatory social norms through government policies and programmes.

89. Investing in scaling up transformation in key portfolios is a priority. UNDP will implement a next-generation offer on poverty and inclusive growth, including through gender-responsive social protection, addressing the gender-differentiated impact of the 'fourth industrial revolution' and the digitalization of the labour market.

90. UNDP will invest in enhancing our capacities to ensure that gender equality is addressed systematically in crisis and post-crisis contexts, and that Security Council resolution 1325 is fully implemented.

91. New partnerships are crucial to realizing the implementation of the gender equality strategy, including with civil society and the private sector. In 2020, UNDP will engage with the Generation Equality Global Action Coalition.

92. Financial investments, time, and stronger architecture are required to achieve stronger results. The gender marker shows a steady increase of resource allocations to gender equality. However, we recognize that gender equality remains underfunded. UNDP will implement the recommendations of the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality, establishing financial targets for gender.

93. UNDP will coordinate efforts with other United Nations entities, and will ensure that our programmatic response to the COVID-19 pandemic integrates the gender impact, including the need for sex-disaggregated data, the inclusion of women in decision-making, and addressing the high prevalence of gender-based violence, since COVID-19 can worsen the situation.
