

UN-WOMEN STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

INFORMAL BRIEFING TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

27 February 2025



Photos | UN Women Brazil and UN Women El Salvador



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Photo: UN-Women / Ryan Brown

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UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT



Photo | Fotoperiodista documental El Salvador. Óscar Leiva

CRITICAL TRENDS – PART I

Population Dynamics

1. Decline in fertility in some regions with accelerated ageing in some countries, coexist with persistent high fertility rates where population remains young and has other needs.
2. Life course inequalities in access to education, health, and critical information and resources.
3. International migration slowly increasing, with the share of men growing vis a vis women.
4. Continued rapid urban population growth.

Livelihoods and Economic Conditions

1. Rising food insecurity and extreme poverty.
2. Economic growth in low-income countries insufficient to meet growing population demands.
3. Persistent gender inequalities in labour force participation and income.
4. Growth in demand for formalized care-economy.
5. Financing gaps for sustainable development remain large and growing.

Emerging Technologies

1. Digital transformation with growing uptake of technology across sectors.
2. Persistent digital divide across countries, rural/urban, women/men.
3. Persistent gender gap in STEM and in AI jobs, design and use.
4. Source of instability and violence, with limited adequate governance, reinforcing negative stereotypes and undermining governance and democracy.

CRITICAL TRENDS – PART II

Environment and Climate Change

1. Growing frequency and intensity of disasters with resulting increased socio-economic impact.
2. Livelihoods and mobility affected by weather unpredictability and slow-onset disasters.
3. Investment in adaptation remains insufficient, and recovery continues to sideline women's contributions and needs.

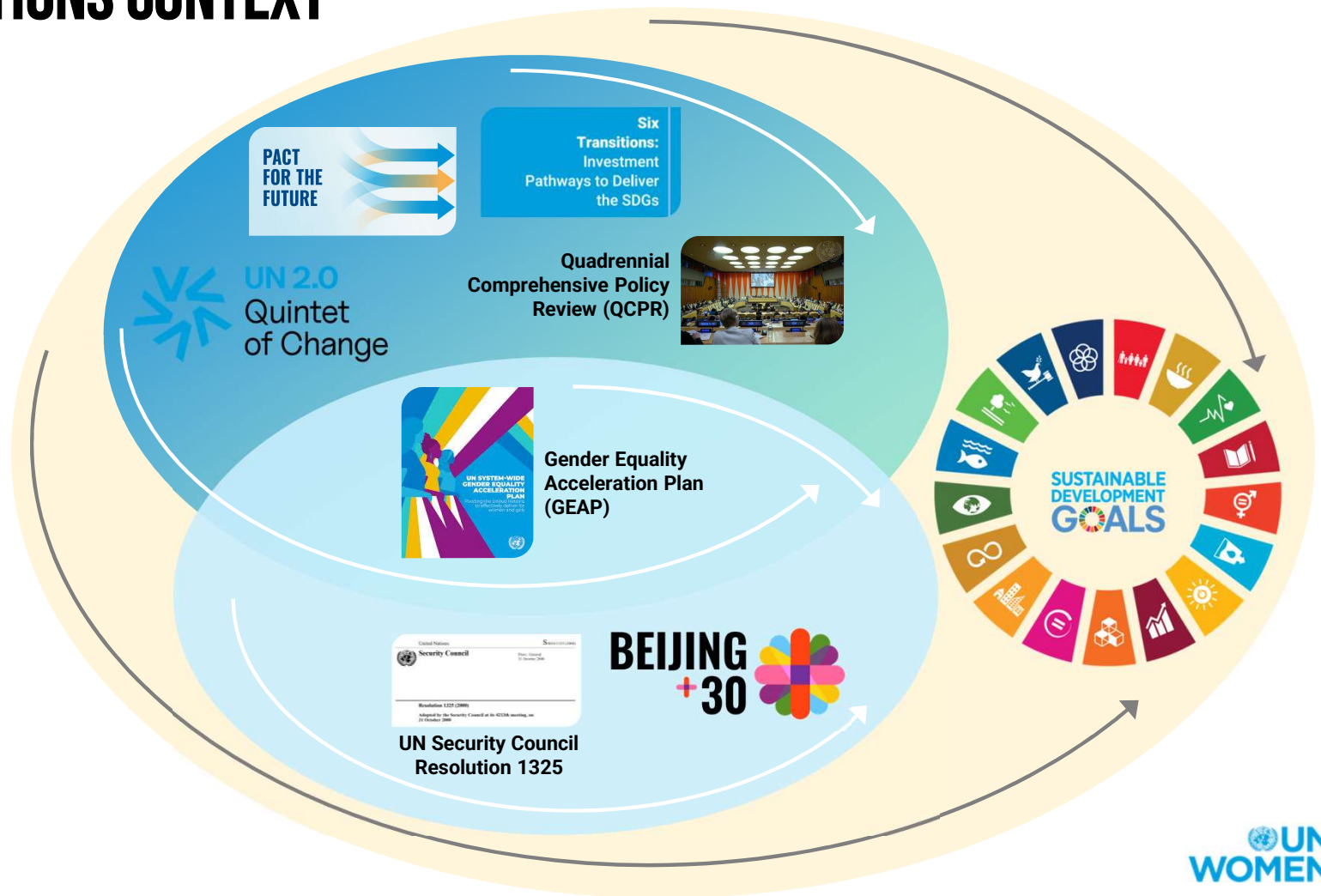
War, Conflict and Peace

1. Conflict landscape is gaining complexity and uncertainty, while violence continues to rise; including conflict-related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).
2. Number of forcibly displaced persons increased by 70% in 6 years
3. 50% increase in 10 years in number of women and girls living within 50km of conflict.
4. Women remain underrepresented in all peace processes.

Shifting Political Space

1. Gains in political representation and legal frameworks not fully translated to real gains in gender equality.
2. Growing pushback on Human Rights with direct implications for the lives of women and girls and for Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD).
3. Retrogressive movements continue to grow, jointly with support for the far-right, with a mix of anti-immigration and nationalist policies.
4. Widening ideological gap between young women and men.

UNITED NATIONS CONTEXT



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WHAT WE LEARNED



Photo | UN Women/Suleiman Hajji

SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM MID-TERM REVIEW, EVALUATIONS & AUDITS

The **integrated approach** is highly relevant for leveraging synergies, yet fully realizing its vision requires **new ways of working**, including clarity on linkages between systemic outcomes and Gender Equality Accelerators (GEAs).

Programme management requires investment in robust and integrated **planning, monitoring and reporting on results and resources**, including the Transparency Portal.

Governance, accountability and risk management have improved effectiveness and efficiency, yet **aligning structures, skillsets, processes, and systems** remains crucial.

Flexible, multi-year funding is key for delivery of **relevant and sustainable results** but **advocacy with funding partners** is needed for direct Strategic Note funding.

Partnerships with **women-led organizations** remain a key comparative and collaborative advantage, requiring **flexible and streamlined processes, long-term engagement**, and further application of **Leave No One Behind (LNOB)** principle.

The **UN system coordination mandate** is essential for accountability and influencing others to drive impact but needs **stronger integration and measurement** across thematic areas and outcomes.

The **normative mandate** is a key strength across thematic areas yet **translating global and regional commitments into national legislation and policies** requires more focus.

Social norms change is integral to gender equality, requiring **expanded evidence and knowledge on how changes happens** across thematic areas and levels.

UN-Women adds unique value across the **humanitarian, development, and peace** continuum, but further **strengthening crisis-response capacities** remains critical.

UN-Women is recognized as a bridge builder between diverse stakeholders need to further **refine and measure results** from **strategic partnerships**.

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WHAT WE HEARD



Photo | UN Women/Karen Shermbrucker

SP 2026-2029 DEVELOPMENT: **PROGRESS TO-DATE**



Executive Board

Informal Briefing on SP roadmap
Bureau Meetings

Joint Informal Briefing with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNOPS

Annual Orientation Session



Consultations

5 SP Core Group Meetings
Global Survey (+1400 responses)
14 Focus Group Discussions (137 colleagues)

Deep Dives on Systemic Outcomes

Geneva (MSs, UN, HR mechanisms, CSOs)

Dedicated Divisional briefings



Analytical Work

Trends Analysis
Theory of Change and overall corporate approach for coordination

Synthesis of findings from MTR, evaluation and audits

Synthesis of findings from global survey

Synthesis of findings from consultations



Communication

Global Kick-off Meeting
Infographic
PowerPoint Presentation

Intranet Site

Internal Updates

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE GLOBAL SURVEY

01  Focus

Women's economic empowerment, ending violence against women and girls, and women's representation and participation in public life are consistently identified as leading priorities, followed by financing for gender equality and women, peace and security and humanitarian action.

02  Normative mandate

Internal respondents emphasize **aligning UN-Women's country programmes with normative commitments** while external respondents underscore importance of **leveraging UN human rights mechanisms**.

03  UN system coordination mandate

Evidence-based research to inform CCAs and having **gender-specific outputs** within UNSDCF are considered essential for maximizing collective UN impact.

04  Partnerships

Joint advocacy for **gender-responsive policies** and partnerships to drive **increased financial flows** emerge as most effective form of collaboration.

05  Funding

Most respondents call for **stronger communication and reporting** on results and resources, including demonstrating impact of flexible funding modalities and use of regular resources.

06  CSO partnerships

More than half of respondents highlight importance of **facilitating civil society participation, joint advocacy**, and **financial support and grants**, with CSO respondents more likely to prioritize the latter.

07  Integrated approach

Project-driven funding and **siloe internal structures and processes** are seen as key barriers to the full implementation of the integrated approach.

08  Priorities for GEAs

Supporting resource mobilization and **strengthening coherence and measurability** are highlighted as main imperatives for successful Gender Equality Accelerators.

QUOTES FROM THE GLOBAL SURVEY

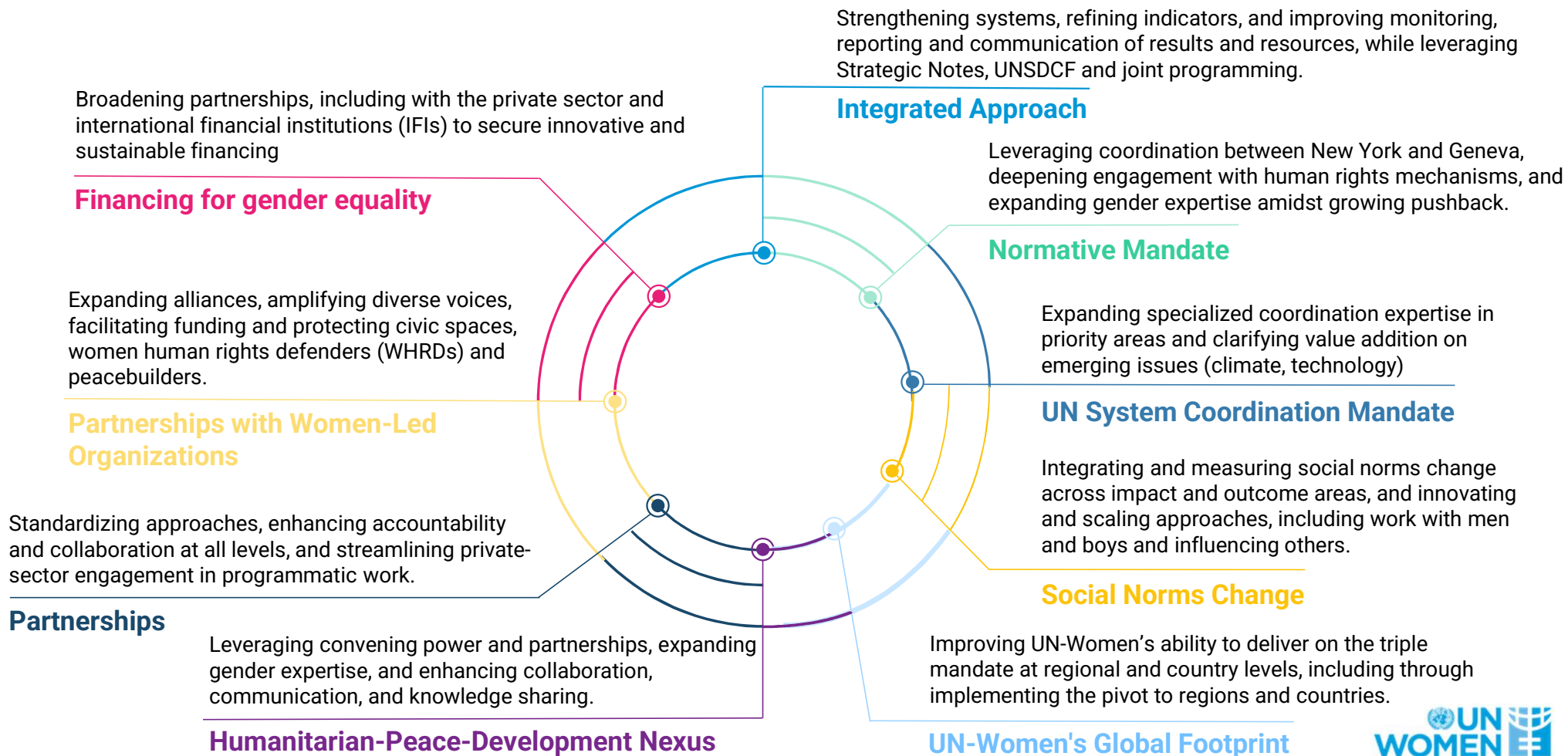
Given the current global context, the SP needs to be both ambitious and realistic.. (...) This SP should answer the question "what do we want to be known for" that others are not doing? (internal)

[UN-Women needs to establish] more operational partnerships and joint activities at the national level with other UN agencies, to create relevant synergies and leverage on respective capacity building and financing opportunities. (external)

While it is important to maintain and bolster our internal coordination and collaboration within the UN system, it is crucial for UN-Women to establish its own independent character as a UN body dedicated to supporting women and girls across all Humanitarian, Development, and Peace Nexus. (internal)

[UN-Women needs to ensure] sustainable implementation of the pivot to the countries and regions, to strengthen [its] ability to deliver on its triple mandate. [UN-Women also needs to] ensure full capacity and competence at regional and country levels through a differentiated presence, effective recruitment processes, decent working conditions, and support from headquarters and regionally. (external)

SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM CONSULTATIONS



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WHAT WE PROPOSE



Photo | UN Women/Violana Murataj

TOWARDS 2030 AND BEYOND: EQUALITY, EMPOWERMENT AND RIGHTS

Guiding Frameworks for Human Rights of Women and Girls

CEDAW

Beijing

UNSCR 1325

SDGs

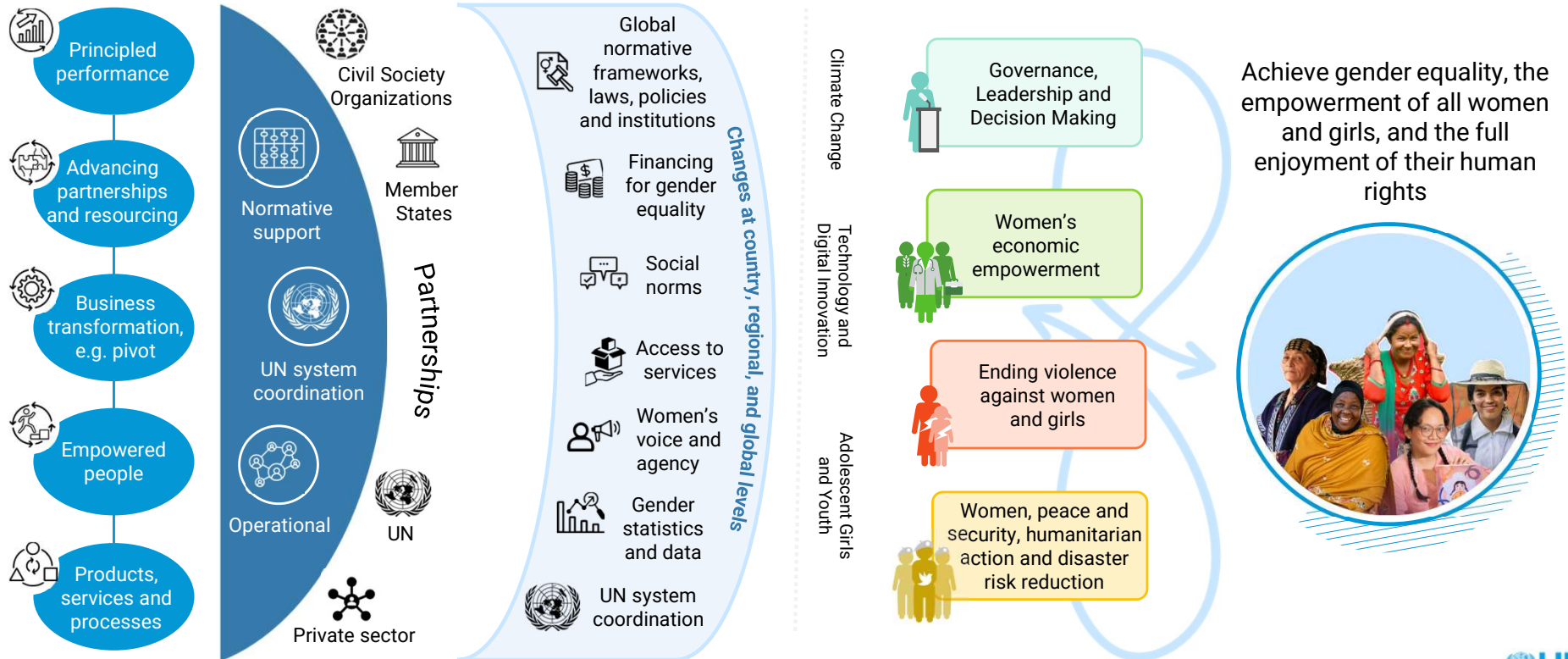
Enablers

Business model

Systemic outcomes

Cross-cutting priorities

Changes in the lives of women and girls



Achieve gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full enjoyment of their human rights



QCPR → UN 2.0 → Data | Digital | Innovation | Strategic Foresight | Behavioral Science | Forward-Thinking Culture



UN SYSTEM COORDINATION MANDATE

The UN System delivers on gender equality, ensuring that the rights and empowerment of women and girls are central to development, humanitarian, and peace and security efforts at country, regional, and global levels



Coordination for Results

Accelerate GEWE across the SDGs

1. Enhance gender-responsive **CCAs, UNSCDFs and Humanitarian Plans**
2. Increase and strengthen **joint programming on GEWE**
3. Support implementation of gender policies **IASC Gender Policy, Disability Inclusion**
4. Leverage **thematic convening power** on behalf of the UN System – with CSOs and others
5. Influence the UN System to **prioritize GEWE in different areas**
6. Support **Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) implementation**
7. Support multi-stakeholders convening around SDGs
8. Enhance capacity building and knowledge management



Coordination for Rights

Support and implement normative frameworks

1. Support prep and follow-up to CSW at all levels - SG report
2. Drive QCPR implementation – **GE markers/disability marker**
3. Convene and provide policy advice for CEDAW and CRPD CO implementation with CSOs
4. Enhance **research, data, and monitoring** on GEWE
5. Influence and advocate with CSOs for GEWE in normative frameworks
6. Lead **Women, Peace and Security agenda** – UNSCR 1325 - 2475
7. Support multi-stakeholder convening on normative frameworks
8. Lead preparation of SG reports for CSW, ECOSOC and GA



Coordination for Accountability and Resourcing

Ensure accountability and resources in the UN

1. Lead and support **accountability frameworks (UN/UNCT-SWAP, UN/UNCT-GEM, IASC Gender Policy, Disability Inclusion)**
2. Lead **UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality Secretariat, UN Working Group Gender and Disability Inclusion**
3. Lead **UN Gender Parity Strategy**
4. Advocate for **Financing for GEWE** and integration in **Financing for Development**
5. **Lead and convene** coordination mechanisms at all levels with CSOs and others
6. Lead/Co-lead **Gender Theme Groups and Issue-Based Coalitions**
7. Advocate for increased gender-responsive budgeting, gender funding, and improved delivery

NORMATIVE MANDATE

Achieve gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full enjoyment of their human rights

Governance and Participation in Public Life

Women's Economic Empowerment

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Women, Peace and Security, Humanitarian Action, Disaster Risk Reduction



SUPPORT MEMBER STATES IN INTERGOVERNMENTAL SPACES TO ADVANCE NORMS AND STANDARDS

- Normative support to conventions, declarations, guidelines and other standard setting instruments
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and common understanding on Gender Equality and women's and girls' rights through evidence and data



SUPPORT COUNTRY LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORKS/OBLIGATIONS THROUGH LAWS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

- Strengthen accountability by supporting State implementation and reporting of human rights frameworks/obligations (Beijing, CEDAW, UPR)
- Ensure national/local sectoral strategies, policies and plans mainstream a gender perspective and are aligned with human rights obligations, including through support to CSOs
- Support collection of data for monitoring



SUPPORT UN SYSTEM AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO ADVANCE THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS

- Lead high-level political advocacy and harmonized messaging on non-discrimination and women's rights across the UN system
- Integrate human rights mechanisms and outcomes in UNSCDFs; Joint programming
- Catalyze integrated policy support in line with UN-Women's thematic priorities; convening and facilitating multistakeholder platforms

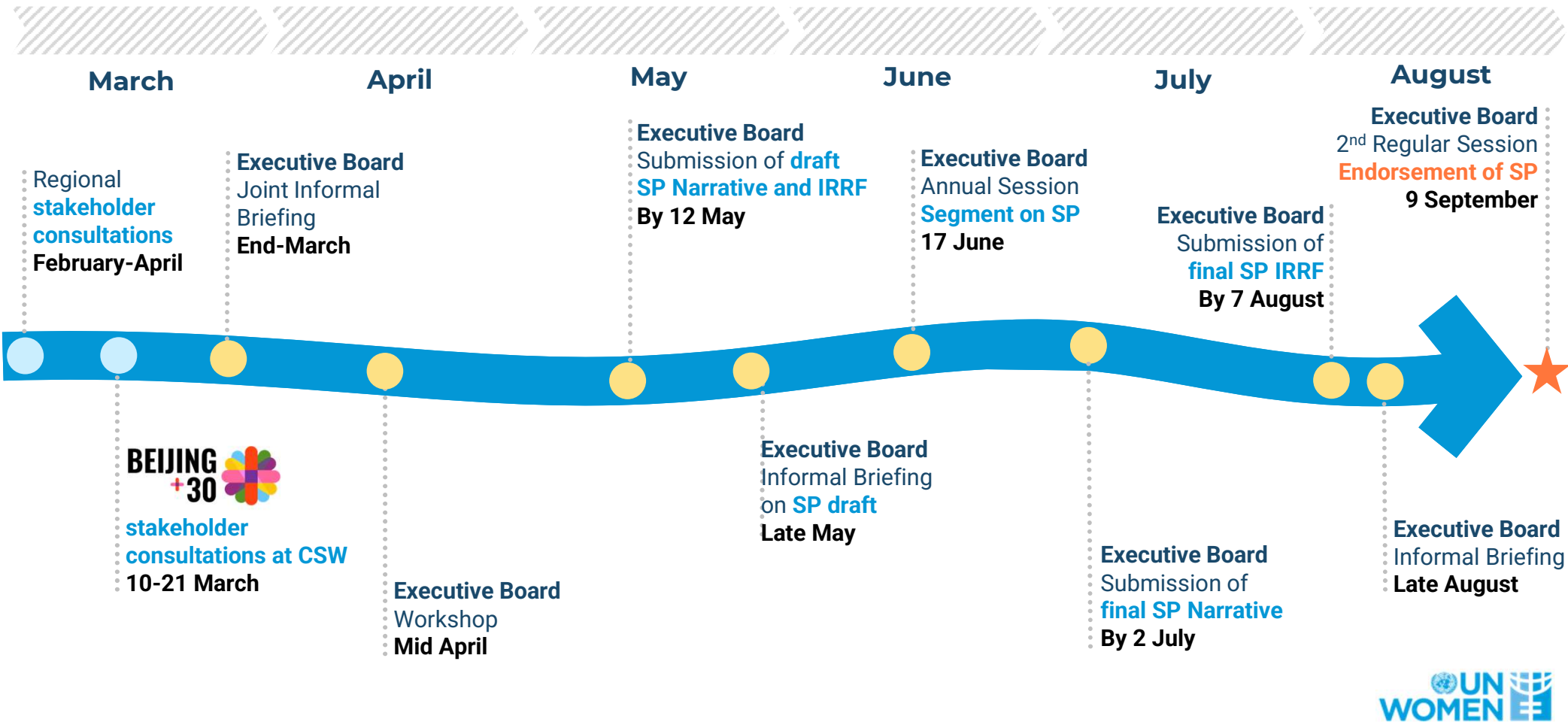
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NEXT STEPS



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WHAT IS COMING





THANK YOU!