



UN-WOMEN EXECUTIVE BOARD

INFORMAL BRIEFING ON RISK MANAGEMENT

22 January 2026

Enterprise Risk Management (ERM)

Strategy, Planning, Results and Effectiveness Division (SPRED)

Photo: UN-Women



Agenda

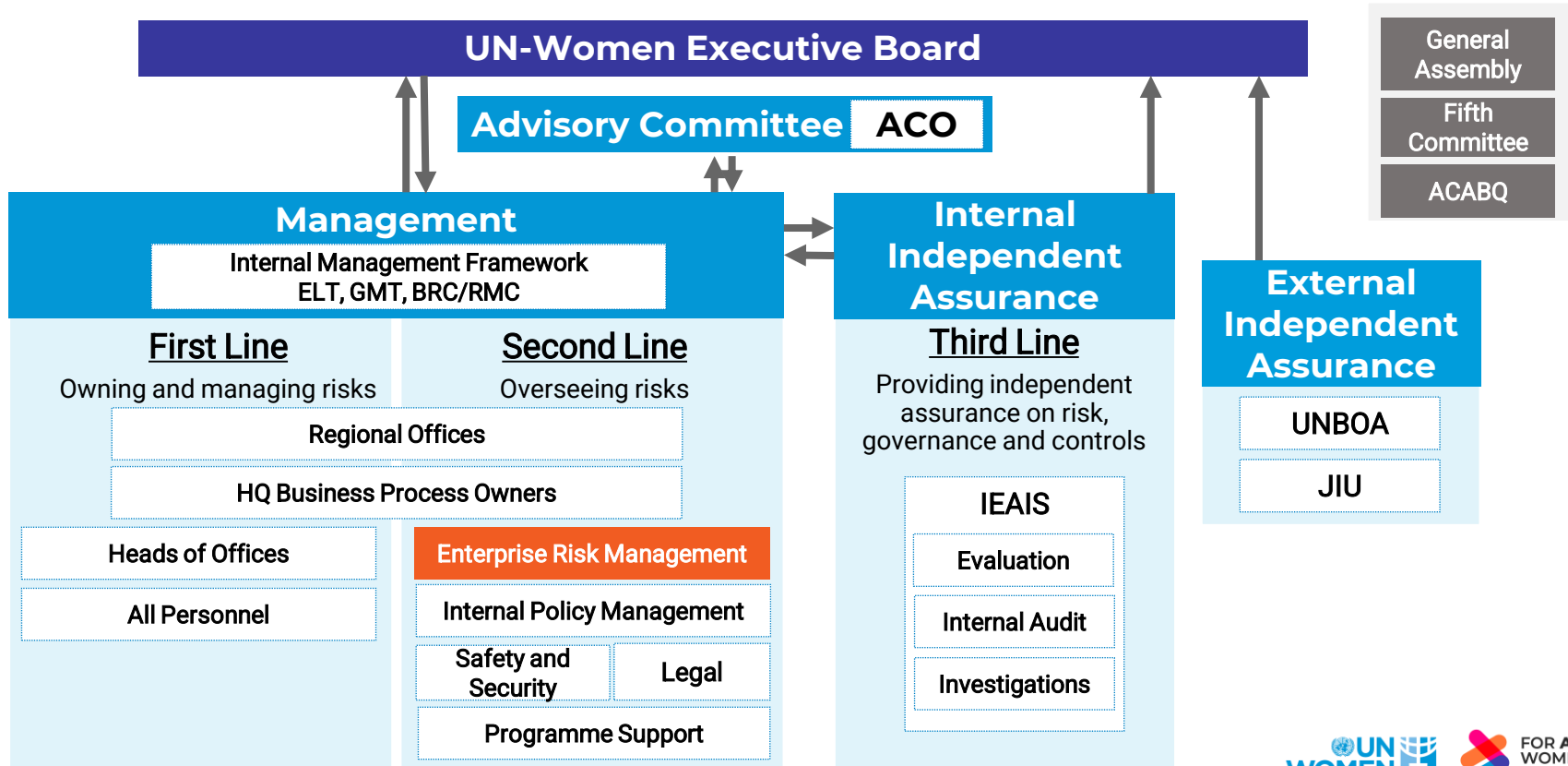


1. Overview of Enterprise Risk Management at UN-Women
2. Principal risks facing the organization

OVERVIEW

Enterprise Risk
Management (ERM) at
UN-Women

UN-WOMEN'S THREE LINES MODEL



STRENGTHENING RISK MANAGEMENT AT UN-WOMEN

Regular updates to ERM architecture

01

- Risk Management Policy and Procedure revised (September 2025) to reflect lessons learned, findings from oversight and assurance, and evolving needs
- Introduction of Regional Risk Management Committees

Continuous review of risk profile

02

- Continuous bottom-up (office-level) and top-down (corporate) risk monitoring
- Supported by Risk Deep Dives (in-depth discussions at the senior management level on principal risks)

Systems to identify and manage risks

03

- Key risk indicators and outcomes of micro risk assessments feed into Strategic Note (SN) risk registers for evidence-informed identification of risks
- Ongoing integration with the results management system PRISM for end-to-end linkage to Planning, Monitoring and Reporting

Driving compliance across UN-Women

04

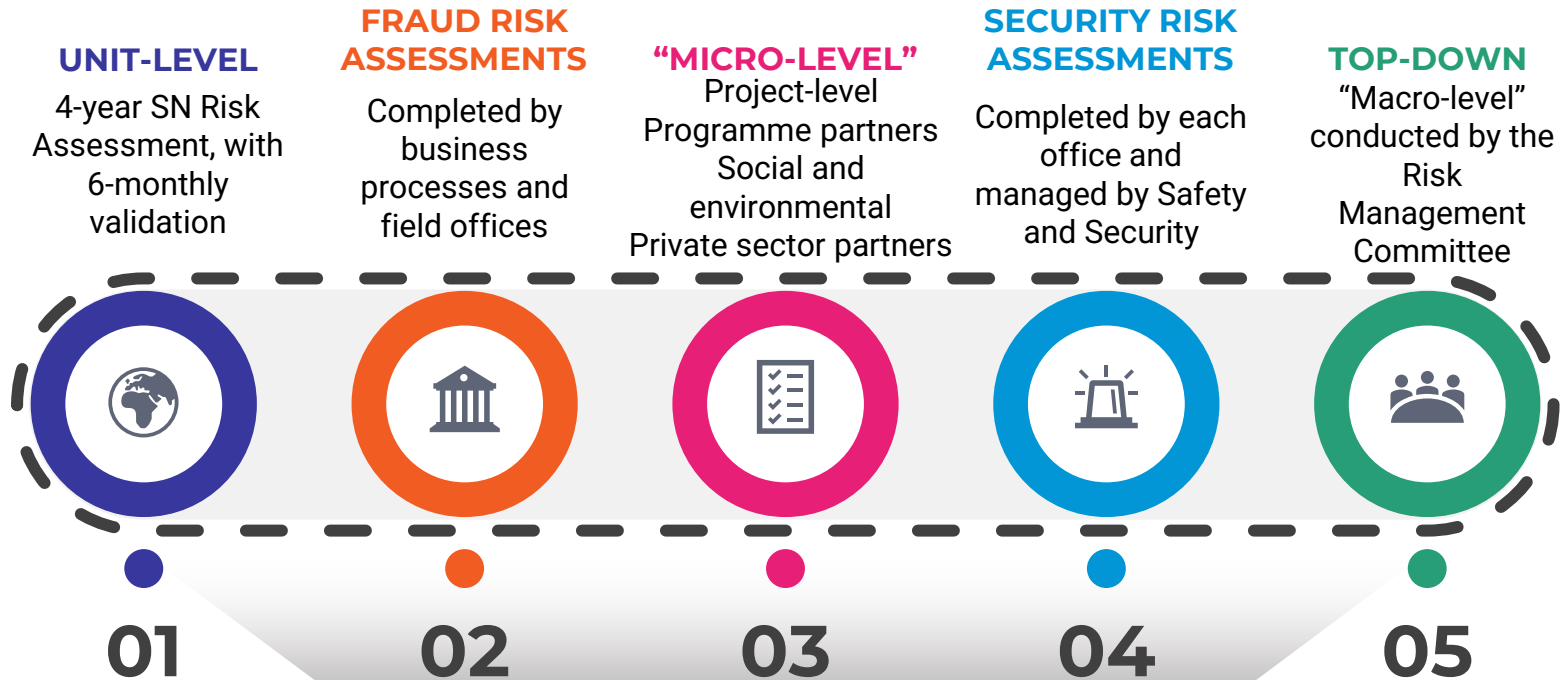
- Quality assurance reviews of all SN risk registers
- Enhanced training for all personnel, informed by recommendations from upcoming Internal Audit Services (IAS) audit of risk management
- Quarterly Business Review (QBR) regularly tracks risk compliance metrics

Oversight of programme partner risks

05

- Introduction of mandatory risk registers for programme partners in 2026, to reinforce early detection and risk-based assurance
- Outcomes feed into SN risk registers for continuous monitoring

UN-WOMEN'S RISK ASSESSMENT UNIVERSE



UN-Women's Risk Profile

PRINCIPAL RISKS FACING THE ORGANIZATION

Financial sustainability risk: Decline in the quality, level and/or type of funding affects programme delivery and strategic objectives.



Risk Description

- Regular resources \$153.2m (-6.6%) in 2024
- Other resources \$429.9m (+10.7%) in 2024
- Share of regular resources to total voluntary contributions 26% in 2024
- Regular Budget ~ 20% reduction in 2025 and 2026
- Possible consequences:
 - Constraints to maintain a **balanced, predictable resource base**
 - Limitations to investments in **innovation and institutional strengthening**
 - Impact on ability to deliver on the **normative intergovernmental functions**

Mitigation Measures

- ⌚ **Strengthen predictable and flexible funding** through integrated resource mobilization/partnership strategies.
- ⌚ **Boost transparency and value proposition** via improved systems and communication.
- ⌚ **Increase resilience through diversification, efficiency and internal controls:** broaden donor base, advance efficiency gains from pivot to countries and regions, and rigorous cost recovery and financial oversight.

2

External environment risk: Adverse changes in the external operating context, including political, economic, climate and/or humanitarian crisis impacting UN-Women's operations.



Risk Description

- **Backlash against gender equality and shrinking civic space** restrict rights and limit women's organizations engagement, complicating partnerships, implementation and access to communities.
- **Crisis hit women and girls hardest:** more violence, lost livelihoods, reduced access to services, heavier care burdens, more food insecurity.
- **Climate change** deepens vulnerabilities, poverty and inequality for women and girls.
- **Conflict and displacement** increase **humanitarian needs** amid limited resources

Mitigation Measures

- ➔ **Multi-stakeholder partnerships and UN coordination**, promoting **women's leadership** across the HDP continuum, and joint **gender equality advocacy**.
- ➔ **Country-level monitoring and analysis** by tracking political/civic space shifts, advising RCs/UNCTs, and leading UN advocacy for women's rights.
- ➔ **Crisis and climate readiness**, integrating disaster preparedness, climate resilience and gender-responsive risk reduction in programmes.

3

Strategic positioning risk: Challenges in advancing UN-Women's triple mandate in a competitive and evolving multilateral environment (e.g., UN80).



Risk Description

- **Evolving multilateral landscape raises expectations** for efficiency, coherence and joint results, underscored the need to clearly articulate its **unique value-add**.
- Delivering the integrated triple mandate depends on a **diversified financing base** and the right balance of **regular vs. other resources**, with **regular resources especially critical** for normative and UN coordination functions.

Mitigation Measures

- ➔ **Sharpen strategic positioning and delivery of the triple mandate** through upstream, integrated programming that translates norms into policies and results at country level.
- ➔ **Leverage convening and accountability roles**, deepen partnerships, strengthen UN system-wide accountability, boost visibility and secure support through revamped communications/advocacy.
- ➔ **Increase efficiency and impact through the “pivot to regions and countries”**

4 **Cybersecurity risk:** Exposure to cyberattacks, data breaches, and/or digital disruptions that compromise operations, information integrity or service continuity.



Risk Description

- **Greater reliance on digital platforms and external networks** increases UN-Women's exposure to cyber / digital vulnerabilities, even as technology boosts efficiency.
- **Threats are escalating and evolving** (e.g., ransomware, supply-chain attacks, AI-enabled intrusions), raising the likelihood of targeted incidents.
- Risks associated with **misinformation, data/privacy breaches, service disruption, and reputational damage**—especially in challenging operating environments and with third-party providers/partners.

Mitigation Measures

- ④ **Strengthened cyber governance and controls**, by secure software development, vulnerability management, secure personal-device use, stronger cloud security, and a review of information security.
- ④ **Manage emerging-tech risks** proactively (bias, misuse, gender-based harms) while harnessing opportunities for efficiency and impact.
- ④ **Use digital innovation to build resilience**, modernizing/streamlining processes, improving data quality and access, and strengthening evidence-informed decision-making.

5

Accountability and reputational risks: Loss of stakeholder trust or reputational damage due to perceived or actual lapses in accountability, transparency, or ethical conduct.



Risk Description

- **Internal risks:** misconduct, data privacy breaches, suboptimal oversight, and duty-of-care / safety and security obligations for personnel, assets and operations.
- **External risks:** misuse/diversion of funds by partners/suppliers/third parties, and unintended harm to people, communities, or the environment—requiring a constant balance between acting and **zero tolerance** for wrongdoing.

Mitigation Measures

- ② **Integrated integrity and safeguarding approach:** strong due diligence on projects/partners, training, independent oversight, and grievance/investigation mechanisms for timely, transparent follow-up.
- ② **Survivor-centred SEA/SH prevention and response:** safe reporting, access to quality support services, and consistent safeguards with implementing partners.
- ② **Tighter risk-based controls on resources & operations:** risk-based partner management, strengthened anti-fraud measures, safety/security accountability frameworks, and integration of social/environmental sustainability standards.

UN-WOMEN'S RISK APPETITE



01

UN-Women accepts **higher contextual and strategic risks** when responding to crises or operating in fragile and high-need settings, where opportunities for impact are greatest.



02

UN-Women maintains a **low risk appetite for safety and security, fiduciary, safeguarding, and accountability risks**, reflecting its duty to protect people, resources, and trust in all contexts.



03

Risks are continuously monitored against defined tolerances and **promptly escalated** when thresholds are approached or exceeded, enabling timely mitigation, management action, and informed decision-making.



THANK YOU

Photo: UN-Women

