

UN Women Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Development Results Theory of Change

March 2026



ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY, THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS AND THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS

'IMPACT' LEVEL CHANGE
Change in the lives of women and girls

'OUTCOME' LEVEL CHANGE
Changes in institutional performance or behavior among individuals or group

THEN...

Norms & Standards

Institutions

Voice & Agency

IF...

WOMEN WILL LEAD AND EQUALLY PARTICIPATE IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AT ALL LEVELS

Programming Framework

- Women's Equal Participation in Decision Making and Institutions

A comprehensive set of legislative frameworks and electoral arrangements to strengthen gender balance in elections and decision-making bodies and ensure inclusive and violence free political institutions.

Strengthened institutional capacity, across legislatures, public institutions, statistical offices and national women's machineries, to track and deliver on commitments to women's leadership in decision-making.

Increased leadership and visibility of women and their networks, especially in sectors where women remain underrepresented; as well as greater capacity and influence of diverse women's rights organizations and networks, especially those led by young women and those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, to hold decision-makers accountable and lead transformative change.

WOMEN WILL EQUALLY PARTICIPATE IN AND BENEFIT FROM JUST AND RESILIENT ECONOMIES

Programming Framework

- Transforming Care Systems
- Women and the World of Work
- Gender-responsive Climate Action

Strengthened global intergovernmental norms, standards, and legal frameworks on economic justice and rights, gender-responsive macroeconomic policies and financial ecosystems that promote equality in the formal, informal and green/blue economies, gender-responsive climate action, and comprehensive care systems.

Improved accountability and gender-responsiveness of public and private institutions to women workers, entrepreneurs, caregivers and care recipients, including those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, by shifting institutional practices, improving the provision and accessibility of quality services and infrastructure and increasing data availability and use to build comprehensive care systems, promote decent work and entrepreneurship and enable just transitions to blue and green economies.

Enhanced women's voice, agency, autonomy and wellbeing through equal access to, ownership of, and control over resources - including land, technology and finance - and services; and support to trade unions, women's movements, cooperatives and businesses.

ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS WILL LIVE A LIFE FREE FROM ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE

Programming Framework

- Prevention of and Response to Violence Against Women and Girls

Enhanced global intergovernmental norms and standards on preventing and addressing violence against women and girls; and well-resourced action plans guiding implementation and monitoring at national and regional levels.

Expanded accountability of institutions to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls, including strengthened police and justice services to respond to women's and girls' diverse experiences, such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and address impunity; as well as better data, evidence and knowledge on prevention to inform effective policy-making.

Enhanced access to trauma-informed, integrated services for survivors of violence as well as strengthened feminist leadership and capacity of civil society and women's organizations to address violence against women and girls through movement-building, coalitions, and direct assistance.

WOMEN WILL LEAD AND BENEFIT FROM PEACE AND SECURITY PROCESSES, HUMANITARIAN ACTION, AND CRISIS PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Programming Framework

- Women, Peace and Security
- LEAP in Humanitarian Action

Strengthened global intergovernmental norms, standards and legal frameworks that advance women's rights and meaningful participation in peace and security (WPS) processes, including the Security Council, and humanitarian action (HA), including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC); and the adoption of impactful action plans on WPS and HA.

Strengthened state institutions and processes on prevention and sustaining peace, to ensure the accelerated implementation of WPS commitments; strengthened national systems for crisis preparedness and response that reach all women and girls; strengthened accountability across the humanitarian system for upholding gender equality and women's rights commitments; and increased availability and use of gender data and rapid gender analysis to inform decisions on WPS and HA.

Enhanced protection of women human rights defenders in crisis settings; and increased women's participation, influence and leadership in peace and security processes and humanitarian action, as well as enhanced partnerships providing integrated support to crisis-affected women to meet their immediate needs, reduce protection risks, and build long-term resilience.



By effectively leveraging UN Women's UN system coordination mandate to promote standard setting and accountability on GEWE and gender-responsive programming across the UN system with adequate allocation of resources,

and

By fostering strong and diverse strategic partnerships with Member States, UN agencies, civil society organizations especially women's organizations, the private sector, international financial institutions, men and boys, and other stakeholders.



IMPACT AREAS

Norms & Standards



NORMS AND STANDARDS THAT UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS WILL BE PROTECTED, STRENGTHENED AND IMPLEMENTED IN LAWS AND POLICIES.

THEN...

- Member States, global and regional intergovernmental bodies are supported to ensure intergovernmental processes, including the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), result in stronger outcomes on gender equality and women's rights and empowerment;
- National and local legislatures, public institutions, and governments have stronger capacities to develop and adopt gender-responsive, non-discriminatory laws, policies, (multi) sectoral strategies and action plans in alignment with obligations on gender equality and women's rights and empowerment;
- Policymakers have access to quality research, data collection, and analysis;
- Country support and advocacy for normative change are effectively coordinated with the UN System under the Resident Coordinator/UN Country Teams/ Humanitarian Country Teams and with relevant public institutions, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders.

Institutions



INSTITUTIONS ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS, WITH FINANCING, DATA AND PRACTICES THAT ADVANCE EQUALITY

- Key partners, particularly national women's machineries, have the capacity to more effectively promote, coordinate, implement, and evaluate gender equality and women's empowerment policies and programmes, in line with internationally agreed norms and standards on gender equality and women's rights and empowerment;
- Key government, public, and private institutions have a stronger understanding of international gender equality norms and standards, and these are built into their decision-making, structures, and everyday practices, challenging discriminatory social norms that restrict women's rights and roles, including through active, principled, accountable private sector and multi-stakeholder engagement;
- Key government, public and private institutions have stronger capacities to enhance both public and private capital flows to scale up financing aligned with gender equality objectives, including through strengthened public sector capacity in gender-responsive planning, budgeting, and public financial management, as well as transparent and accountable gender responsive financing frameworks, market infrastructure, investment standards, policies and regulatory frameworks;
- The production and use of sex-disaggregated data and analysis to monitor the SDGs and inform policy making and programming are increased, including through support to coordination mechanisms and institutions on gender statistics and the strengthening of national statistical capacity;
- Accountability for gender equality across the UN system is strengthened, including through leading the implementation of the system-wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, the other UN system and IASC policies, plans and strategies on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Voice & Agency



MORE WOMEN AND GIRLS WILL BE ABLE TO EXERCISE THEIR AGENCY AND HAVE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES, RESOURCES AND ASSETS

- An operating environment that supports women's participation in decision-making, free from violence, intimidation, and discrimination, is promoted;
- Networks and alliances of women leaders are fostered, and civil society organizations and women's rights movements are provided with platforms, opportunities and funding to influence local, national, regional and international policymaking as well as UN system-wide programming;
- Women's capacities to claim their rights, to participate in public life, and exercise leadership are strengthened;
- Women and girls, including those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, have increased access to information, resources, services, and assets; including increased access to justice services, economic opportunities and financial resources, across humanitarian action, peacebuilding, and development contexts.

ASSUMPTIONS

- **Political will exists** at all levels to uphold and implement gender equality norms and standards, including renewed **commitments to multilateralism, the SDGs, and support for women's rights organizations** and civil society, as well as the GEAP across the UN system.
- Member States and funding partners remain willing and able to **sustain and increase financing for gender equality**, including flexible funding to UN Women to deliver its triple mandate and Strategic Plan priorities.
- **Coordinated social norms change efforts and multi-stakeholder partnerships** can help **counter backlash** against gender equality, women's empowerment, and women's rights.
- **UN80 reform efforts strengthen** the UN system and advance gender equality within it, supported by sustained leadership buy-in and commitments across the system.

RISKS

An increasingly challenging environment with growing backlash, regressive policy reversals, erosion of political will, shrinking civic space and the politicization of gender agendas as well as the reliance on donor-funded short-term projects, limited financial sustainability, and scarce resources may hinder long-term impact and prevent the Entity from fully and effectively delivering on its mandate and reaching the women and girls most at risk of being left behind.

By providing technical support and targeted advocacy to governments, partnering with and supporting women's organizations, and leading and coordinating the UN system, UN Women ensures that:

'OUTCOME' LEVEL CHANGE

Changes in institutional performance or behavior among individuals or group

'OUTPUT' LEVEL CHANGE

Changes in skills or abilities or the availability of new products and services

IF...