



# CORPORATE THEMATIC EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING

Final Report



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report, and the overall evaluation process, was informed and enriched by the participation of more than 170 stakeholders, staff and partners, many of whom actively contributed to the development of evaluation findings by serving as reference group members, attending focus group discussions and workshops, and completing comprehensive surveys. Without the support and active participation of all these women and men involved in the consultation process, this report would not have been possible.

The evaluation was conducted by an external evaluation company with a large team and co-led by Kirsty Milward and Claire Hughes from Itad Ltd. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service team included Florencia Tateossian as Evaluation Manager, and Inga Sniukaite as Chief of Independent Evaluation Service. Priya Alvarez initiated this corporate evaluation before moving to a new assignment in the Coordination Division of UN Women.

We thank the evaluation advisors Anne-Marie Goetz, Clinical Professor, Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University and Michael Bamberger, Independent Gender and Evaluation Consultant.

We are grateful to the Internal Reference Group members for their thoughtful comments and insights and for investing significant time and effort during the inception phase to ensure that the evaluation would be of maximum value and use to the organization. The External Reference Group members also provided an invaluable external perspective. We also extend our thanks to the Senior Management Team of UN Women for its feedback and contribution to the evaluation. The evaluation also benefited from active involvement of the UN Women offices visited. We thank the country representatives and staff of these offices for the time they invested in supporting the evaluation process and in facilitating the engagement and inclusion of a wide range of partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries (Uganda Country Office; Palestine Country Office; Ecuador Country Office; Albania Country Office; and Timor Leste Country Office).

Finally, we would like to thank all those who engaged or participated in this evaluation, be it through responding to a survey, making themselves available for interviews, or participating in the consultation process. We are grateful for your contributions, which have without doubt enriched this report.

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**Produced by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services of UN Women (IEAS)**

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CORPORATE THEMATIC EVALUATION

UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO

GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING



**INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND AUDIT SERVICES (IEAS)**

Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

UN WOMEN

*New York, June 2019*



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# FOREWORD



UN Women has considerable experience in governance and national planning over many years. It is an area of the entity's work that has far-reaching impacts and has contributed to UN Women's identity, for which it is recognized and valued.

During the seven years under evaluation (2011–2017), UN Women's approach to governance and national planning has evolved. UN Women's approach to integrating gender equality in governance and national planning entails establishing gender-responsive capacity, systems and resources for governments to plan, budget and monitor the functions of public institutions. The approach seeks to strengthen government accountability for gender equality by ensuring that it is explicit in governments' strategic objectives and priorities; is evidenced by the increase in invested resources allocated to gender-focused programmes and services; and is integrated in accountability frameworks that monitor government performance and effectiveness.

The Independent Evaluation Service of the UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Service undertook this evaluation as part of its corporate evaluation plan. It assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and extent to which a human rights approach and gender equality principles were integrated in UN Women's approach to governance and national planning across its integrated mandate: normative, operational and coordination at country, regional and global levels. The evaluation also assessed the specific contribution of UN Women to ensuring that national HIV/AIDS plans, budgets and monitoring frameworks were gender responsive.

The evaluation revealed examples of successful results, such as UN Women's ability to work sensitively and strategically with a wide range of governments; to create trust and build long-term relationships to advance progress in gender-responsive governance and national planning; and its capacity to support the role and relevance of women in governance. However, the evaluation also found some areas in which UN Women's work could be better supported with a more clearly defined theory of change and strategy,

adequate knowledge management systems, and effective systems to evaluate the impact of its work in this area.

The evaluation concludes that the twin contexts of UN reform driving greater coordination and collaboration between UN agencies, and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supported by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, offer an opportunity for UN Women's work in governance and national planning to become a central and essential component in both contexts. UN Women has agreed to develop an integrated policy and programme package that would support national governments and leverage the UN system to mainstream gender equality across governance and national planning. UN Women will further develop its theory of change in governance and national planning, working to support civil society organizations in monitoring budget expenditure and the gender equality results achieved. UN Women has committed to putting systems in place that can capture the impact of gender-responsive governance and national planning to drive accountability and learning for the benefit of women, especially the most marginalized.

The management response and action plan show the commitment of UN Women to use evaluation as a means to inform future programming, decision making and learning. It is a reflection of UN Women's engagement and responsiveness to learning from its work and to providing strong evidence of what works and what doesn't to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Sutton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lisa Sutton**

*Director, Independent Evaluation and Audit Services*

# ACRONYMS

<b>AAAA</b>	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>BPfA</b>	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CSW</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>EVAW</b>	End Violence Against Women
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence
<b>GELD</b>	Gender Equitable Local Development
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
<b>GNP</b>	Governance and National Planning
<b>GPEDC</b>	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
<b>GRB</b>	Gender-responsive Budgeting
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IA</b>	Impact Area
<b>IATF</b>	Inter-Agency Task Force
<b>IES</b>	Independent Evaluation Service
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring & Evaluation
<b>MCO</b>	Multi-country Office
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MoPAD</b>	Ministry of Planning & Administrative Development
<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NPA</b>	National Planning Authority
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PFM</b>	Public Financial Management
<b>RMS</b>	Results Management System
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community

<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UAC</b>	Uganda AIDS Commission
<b>UBRAF</b>	Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNCDF</b>	United Nations Capital Development Fund
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UN DESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>UN-SWAP</b>	UN System-wide Action Plan
<b>WEE</b>	Women's Economic Empowerment
<b>WLWHIV</b>	Women Living With HIV
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Security

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1

### Background

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) conducts corporate evaluations to assess UN Women's contribution to results in gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). This evaluation, planned under UN Women's corporate evaluation plan<sup>1</sup>, focuses on **UN Women's contribution to Governance and National Planning (GNP) fully reflecting accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities in the period 2011–2017**. In line with the scope of Impact Area (IA) 5 of the two UN Women Strategic Plans during this period, **work on gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning is also included in the scope of the evaluation**.

The evaluation was conducted by an evaluation team contracted by Itad, with support and oversight from IES. The evaluation took place over a 12-month period, December 2017–December 2018, and involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders both within UN Women and externally. Key stakeholders included UN Women Policy and Programme Divisions, Regional and Country Offices, and governments and civil society actors at national level.

## 1.2

### Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

The **purpose** of the evaluation is:

1. To support accountability, learning and knowledge generation by providing evidence of what has been achieved in GNP.
2. To provide a forward-looking platform to inform future decision-making on UN Women's support to GNP.

Specifically, the evaluation seeks to:

- Assess the current and continued **relevance of UN Women's GNP work** given the changing global development landscape and priorities at country level.
- Document **the achievements of UN Women's GNP work against anticipated results at country level**.
- Establish the **effectiveness of UN Women's GNP management arrangements** at different levels.
- Document **the extent to which human rights and gender equality principles and objectives have been integrated** in the design and implementation of country interventions.
- Identify **the extent to which, and how, UN Women has used GNP learning to strengthen policy and programming and to promote accountability** for gender equality commitments and priorities.

The evaluation is intended to be used primarily by UN Women stakeholders, including the Executive Board, the Senior Management Team, staff of the Leadership and Governance Section, and other staff in headquarters, Regional and Country Offices.

## 1.3

### Global context

Over the last decade, the gender inequality gap has widened in many countries. A squeeze on public sector investment and social services, resulting from the global financial crisis of the mid to late 2000s, has disproportionately affected women in many countries. This has increased the need to develop functioning systems to ensure that steps towards gender equality globally are financed and implemented.

Locking gender analysis into GNP systems (the policy-planning-budgeting-monitoring-review cycle) holds

<sup>1</sup> Independent Evaluation Service (2014) 2014–2017 Evaluation Strategy. UN Women, New York.



the potential to systematically guarantee gender equality targeted finance. UN Women and one of its predecessors, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), have long experience in gender-responsive national planning and budgeting, spanning more than a decade prior to the period covered by the evaluation. National planning and budgeting processes represent a crucial component in efforts to guarantee gender equality targeted finance. Building on this early experience, UN Women has sought to deepen and extend its approach to cover the full GNP cycle. The entity engages with mainstream planning processes and broader public administration to embed gender analysis in policy, planning and budgets to create change for gender equality at scale.

However, promoting gender equality is not simply a technocratic exercise; it is a political process that involves changing the perceptions and world view of those who prioritize budgets and make policy decisions. Therefore, it inevitably involves confronting power. Over past decades, there has been an ebb and flow of global support for action to achieve gender equality. While some gender equality commitments have been achieved, progress has been slow. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) has acted as a global agenda for gender equality, but the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted these commitments only in a very narrow manner. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), was agreed in 2015 in the second half of the period under evaluation. The 2030 Agenda embeds gender equality in a much stronger manner and explicitly recognizes the structural barriers faced by women and girls in realization of their rights.

Since the MDGs were agreed in 2000, significant progress has been made in the prevention and treatment of HIV. The MDG 6 target of universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS has been achieved<sup>2</sup> and new HIV infections have been reduced by 16 per cent in the period 2010–2016<sup>3</sup>. Despite these successes, progress in halting and reversing the HIV epidemic remains insufficient to achieve fast-track health targets of less than 500,000 new infections by 2020, and less

than 100,000 new infections among adolescent girls and young women<sup>4</sup>. The dynamics of the epidemic vary significantly by region, country, age and key population group. In many contexts, women and girls, especially adolescent girls, remain highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and gender inequality is recognized as a key factor in this vulnerability<sup>5</sup>. AIDS-related illnesses are the leading cause of death among women and girls of reproductive age (aged 15–49 years) globally, and the second leading cause of death among young women aged 15–24 in Africa<sup>6</sup>.

SDG 3 seeks to build on progress made to date by committing Member States to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 (target 3.3), something that can only be achieved if gender inequalities are addressed. Achievement of the target also requires that the US\$ 7.2 billion funding gap is addressed and those populations with the highest need are prioritized<sup>7</sup>.

As the UN agency mandated to lead on gender equality, UN Women is well placed to take on the dual political challenges of gender-responsive GNP and a gender-responsive HIV/AIDS strategy and approach. Yet during the period under review, the UN has initiated a deep reform process, aiming to streamline UN country presence and optimize coordination across the UN System. This realignment provides an important context for envisaging UN Women's future GNP work.

## 1.4 UN Women's support to Governance and National Planning

UN Women and one of its predecessors, UNIFEM, have been at the vanguard of work on gender-responsive GNP for over 20 years. UN Women's approach to integrating gender equality in GNP is aimed at ensuring that governments take the necessary measures to achieve results in GEWE. The necessary capacities, systems and resources must be established to plan, budget and monitor the functions of public

2 Report of the Secretary-General on women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS (E/CN.6/2016/9), 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2016.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Women, the girl child and HIV and AIDS, Report of the Secretary-General, Commission on the Status of Women 62nd session, 12-23 March 2018, United Nations Economic and Social Council.

7 Resources and financing, UNAIDS website.

institutions to meet GEWE goals. The approach seeks to strengthen government accountability towards gender equality by: ensuring that gender equality is explicit in governments' strategic objectives and priorities; is evidenced by the increase in invested resources towards gender-focused programmes and services; and is integrated in accountability frameworks that monitor government performance and effectiveness.

Over the period of the evaluation, while there has been some modest nuancing in terms of the intended outcomes, outputs and indicators articulated in the Strategic Plans, overall, the focus of UN Women's GNP work has been consistent. However, towards the end of the Strategic Plan 2011–2013, and moving into the Strategic Plan 2014–2017, a shift in terminology occurred, the implications of which are unclear. Up until 2012, UN Women used the term gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) to refer to IA 5. In 2012, the term governance and national planning (GNP) was introduced and became more commonly used during the Strategic Plan 2014–2017. However, the scope of GNP appears broadly similar to that of GRB and the two terms could be used interchangeably.

In line with UN Women's triple mandate, its GNP work includes efforts to strengthen normative frameworks at global, regional and national levels; operational work in support of national governments and other country-level partners; as well as coordination with other UN agencies at global, regional and national levels. Starting in 2014, global normative work focused on supporting negotiations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. At the operational level, focus was given to supporting implementation of these frameworks and developing the methodology for SDG Indicator 5.c.1.

The main areas of engagement in the operational work outlined in the two Strategic Plans were: promoting gender equality through national development plans and sectoral plans; monitoring the implementation of government gender equality commitments and strengthening mechanisms for government accountability; building the capacity of government, gender advocates and civil society partners to analyse, formulate, execute and monitor gender-responsive plans and budgets; and enabling mechanisms for the voices

of women to influence government policies, plans and budgets, and to monitor their implementation.

UN Women's GNP-related coordination with UN agencies has enabled and strengthened normative and operational work, e.g. through coordination with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) to promote gender equality in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA); with the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Financing for Development; and with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), co-custodians of SDG Indicator 5.c.1.

UN Women's work on gender and HIV/AIDS began in 1998 with the global programme 'Gender-Focused Responses to Addressing the Challenges of HIV/AIDS' implemented in six countries. The 2003 Rapid Assessment of UNIFEM's involvement in HIV/AIDS highlighted the opportunity for UNIFEM to engage more with governments to effect national-level policy change<sup>8</sup>. Over time, support to gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS planning has become a core part of UN Women's work in the area of HIV/AIDS. The entity's Strategic Plans 2011–2013 and 2014–2017 outline work in this area as a core part of IA 5, which focuses on promoting gender equality through national planning and budgeting processes. The EC-UN Women global programme "Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS" was an important vehicle for driving this programming focus.

While gender-responsive GNP forms a core focus of UN Women's operational work on HIV/AIDS, the overall scope is broader and now includes operational work with national AIDS coordinating bodies, relevant sectoral ministries and women's organizations to:

- Integrate gender equality and women's rights into the **governance of HIV/AIDS responses** including in national HIV/AIDS strategies, policies, laws, institutions, budgets and accountability frameworks.
- Promote and support **the leadership and participation of women living with HIV (WLWHIV)** and those affected (including unpaid care givers), and

8 Report of Rapid Assessment: UNIFEM Programming on HIV/AIDS, undated, UN Women.

their networks in key decision-making processes at local, national, regional and global levels.

- **Promote access to justice** of women living with and affected by HIV, including their access to property and inheritance rights.
- Address **the intersections between HIV/AIDS and violence against women**, specifically the violence faced by WLWHIV.<sup>9</sup>

The global context for UN Women's work on gender and HIV/AIDS has evolved significantly and UN Women has played a key role in international dialogue, strengthening the gender focus of international efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic, aligning it with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the BPfA and other relevant human rights treaties.

UN Women's relationship with the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has been central to its operational and normative support, and to its gender coordinating remit. UN Women became the 11th co-sponsor of UNAIDS in 2012, providing an avenue for UN Women to mainstream gender dimensions into normative frameworks, operational work, and within the work of UNAIDS and co-sponsors such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). As a co-sponsor, and within UNAIDS agreed Division of Labour, UN Women is the convener on gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV), coordinating and leading co-sponsor efforts in this area.

Over the course of 2011–2017, UN Women's GNP operations were conducted across 76 countries, 74 of which focused on GNP specifically, while 35 included targeted HIV/AIDS programmes. In the period 2011–2017, the total expenditure for UN Women's GNP work, including HIV/AIDS components, amounted to US\$ 125.8 million.<sup>10</sup> The proportion of HIV/AIDS work within this was 15 per cent (US\$ 19.7 million), having reduced from 33 per cent in 2011 to 10 per cent in 2017 (although these figures may be marginally higher on average, and are not inclusive of total HIV spending across

<sup>9</sup> UN Women (2018) Background Note: Briefing to the Executive Board, First Regular Session 2018: Briefing on UN Women's follow-up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

<sup>10</sup> Figure extracted from the Data Companion to the UN Women Annual Reports.

other impact areas, which are considerably higher)<sup>11</sup>. Collectively, the GNP Impact Area represents approximately 8 per cent of expenditure across all impact areas. In the period under evaluation, the GNP portfolio included seven global programmes representing a combined budget of US\$ 33.5 million, of which US\$ 4.4 million was for global programmes supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS (EC), and for action to promote the legal empowerment of women in the context of HIV and AIDS – (DFATD).

## 1.5 Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation adopted a **theory-based approach**. To provide a conceptual framework, a theory of change (ToC) for UN Women's GNP work was reconstructed based on available documentation and inception-phase interviews. The evaluation team used the reconstructed ToC as a framework for data analysis.

The evaluation was conducted in line with gender equality and human rights principles as set out in the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.<sup>12</sup> This involved analysis of gender equality and human rights considerations across all evaluation questions, in addition to having evaluation questions specifically focused on these issues.

The **main data sources** for the evaluation comprised:

- Desk-based review of global strategic documents.
- A portfolio analysis of UN Women's GNP support in 17 focus countries, drawing on documentation

<sup>11</sup> Within the HIV data itself, there is a variance in expenditure reporting between 2011–2017, with UN Women's reporting on UNAIDS UBRAF expenditure showing figures up to 14 per cent higher than those shown on the internal UN Women ATLAS reporting system. It should also be noted that financial, planning and reporting of HIV data is only partially captured under the IA 5. It is therefore the case that additional HIV funding under Global Programmes and UNAIDS is not adequately represented in this analysis due to reporting constraints in the RMS system.

<sup>12</sup> UNEG (2017) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (United Nations Evaluation Group).

sourced from UN Women's document repository systems (Extranet, RMS, COAT, DAMS).

- Five country case studies in Albania, Ecuador, Palestine, Timor-Leste and Uganda, involving primary data collection through a country visit or, in the case of Albania, through remote interviews.
- A global case study focusing on two examples of UN Women's GNP normative work at the global level: UN Women's support to inter-governmental financing for development negotiations from 2015, and UN Women's support to the adoption of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS and to the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, both agreed in 2016.
- A survey of UN Women staff addressing organizational efficiency and learning issues.

For **data analysis**, the evaluation team applied:

- Descriptive and content analysis to assess the background and broader contextual documentation, and to describe UN Women's portfolio of initiatives at different levels and across its tripartite mandate.
- Quantitative and statistical analysis for quantitative data, including financial and monitoring data obtained from the UN Women Results Management System (RMS) and Annual Data Companions, as well as the survey data.
- Contribution analysis to understand the extent and results of UN Women's contribution to GNP changes recorded, using the ToC to understand change pathways.

The evaluation encountered **five main constraints**:

- 1. Clarity and consistency in GNP terminology:** Across documentation and in case study visits, the evaluation team encountered a lack of consistency and clarity in the terminology used to refer to UN Women's work on gender-responsive GNP. This lack of clarity over key terminology and its meaning presented challenges in understanding

the scope of work actually being pursued and the extent to which it fits with UN Women's wider vision for GNP. The intended scope of IA 5 remains consistent across Strategic Plan 2011–2013 and 2014–2017 (see Table 1) but the terminology used to describe it changes slightly. In the Strategic Plan 2011–2013, the term 'national planning and budgeting' tends to be used, while in the Strategic Plan 2014–2017, the term 'governance and national planning' is adopted. In both cases, this terminology includes work to promote gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning. Other key documentation from the Strategic Plan 2011–2013 period uses the term 'gender-responsive budgeting' (GRB) to refer to work that supports the integration of gender analysis into budgets, strategies and plans, i.e. what is presented in the Strategic Plan as national planning and national budgeting.<sup>13</sup> This documentation tends not to look at the specifics of gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning, but does sometimes recognize National AIDS Councils as key actors for national priority setting. Furthermore, during the evaluation, the evaluation team found that Country Offices tend to use the term gender-responsive budgeting rather than governance and national planning, and staff working on gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning would not necessarily see their work as included within the term governance and national planning. The evaluation recommends that UN Women clarify the preferred terminology and its particular meaning. For the purposes of this report, in line with the evaluation's terms of reference (ToR), **we use the term GNP to refer to UN Women's work to promote gender equality through national and sectoral strategies, plans and budgets** (i.e. the full scope of IA 5). Recognizing that UN Women's work to support gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting is in practice largely separate to this, **where findings, conclusions and recommendations relate to HIV/AIDS**

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Implementing policy commitments to gender equality and women's rights: the theory of change of gender responsive budgeting, August 2012, UN Women.

**work, we make this explicit, through the term ‘GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS’.**

- 2. Building a solid evidence base of UN Women’s gender-responsive GNP work in the area of HIV/AIDS:** The evaluation’s evidence base for UN Women’s contribution to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning is thin. To a large extent this results from the country sample including only a small number of countries where UN Women has provided substantive and consistent support to work in this area (see Annex C for country selection process), a consequence of the evaluation design, which had conceptualized UN Women’s support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning as an integrated part, and subset, of its broader GNP. Only four of the 17 focal countries (24 per cent of the country sample), Barbados (multi-country office, MCO), Mozambique, Senegal and Uganda had provided substantive and consistent support (in budget terms) to gender-responsive GNP in HIV/AIDS during the period 2011–2017, and so have been studied as part of this evaluation. Only one of the five country case studies (20 per cent), Uganda, had substantive and consistent UN Women support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning. To ensure the findings related to UN Women’s contribution to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning are robust, the evaluation team triangulated evidence from multiple sources and applied caution in drawing generalized conclusions based on available evidence.
- 3. Evaluation approach:** The absence of a counterfactual or comparator means that the evaluation is not able to attribute results to UN Women’s support. Instead, the evaluation sought to collate evidence that plausibly demonstrates (or refutes) that UN Women has made a contribution to observed changes.
- 4. Data availability and quality for contribution analysis:** The availability of data in some areas was variable and UN Women reporting often does not identify the specific contribution that UN Women, among other actors, has made to

particular reported outcomes. The introduction of new corporate information management systems improved the availability of data from 2015, but prior to this, data was often not systematically available. The evaluation team sought to overcome data gaps by directly sourcing documentation from UN Women’s intranet and Country Offices, but there were differing levels of response to information requests and gaps still remain. Where UN Women reports were available, they often did not identify the specific contribution made by UN Women to a particular reported outcome, or necessarily identify the full set of other actors who had contributed. This made it difficult to apply contribution analysis beyond the five case study countries.

- 5. Sampling and generalization of findings:** The evaluation focused on 17 countries selected to achieve as representative a sample as possible, while prioritizing ‘mature’ GNP programmes considered to offer the most potential for learning (those that have enjoyed UN Women support since 2011 and have participated in at least one global programme). This sampling approach means that the findings are not representative of the whole UN Women portfolio of GNP work. Rather, they reflect what is possible through investment and technical support over several years. While this is important to recognize, the breadth of analysis and triangulation of findings with other corporate reviews and evaluations minimizes concerns over representation and validity.

## 1.6 Findings

In response to 11 evaluation questions structured around four key questions relating to relevance, effectiveness and impact, organizational efficiency and lessons learned, the evaluation identified 22 findings. A summary of findings by key question is provided here.

## Relevance

UN Women has shown exceptional ability to align GNP work, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to partner government priorities, thereby enabling governments to make progress against their global commitments on gender equality. This has required tenacity and flexibility, given the changing national and global contexts, including changes in governments, priorities in different sectors, changes in budgeting contexts and particularly the transition to the SDGs.

At the global level, UN Women has strategically influenced global normative frameworks. These efforts have promoted coherence on gender equality between frameworks, for example between the 2030 Agenda and the AAAA. They have also brought greater alignment between global commitments and partner government priorities, e.g. CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS, sponsored by the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

At both global and national levels, UN Women has created channels for the voices of women and girls to influence priority setting. Long-term partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) have been key. This approach has been particularly consistent and prioritized in UN Women's work to promote gender-responsive HIV/AIDS national planning. However, in most cases these channels have not yet been securely institutionalized and therefore the extent to which CSOs are positioned to hold governments to account for their gender equality commitments remains uncertain.

Over the years, UN Women's pioneering GNP work has given rise to new partnerships. The shift towards working directly with Ministries of Finance is significant. The new partnership with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to build empirical evidence on the links between gender-responsive fiscal policies and improved gender outcomes, and to expand the global application of GNP, is of considerable importance.

## Effectiveness and impact

UN Women has capitalized on its triple mandate (normative and operational work as well as coordination with other UN agencies) to achieve results

for gender-responsive GNP, including in HIV/AIDS. However, there are opportunities for deepening work in all three areas at the country level. This would include extending operational work to more fully cover the whole GNP cycle, especially monitoring budget expenditure and reviewing policy impact.

### The normative function

UN Women's GNP global normative work has contributed to creating an enabling environment for country-level GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. The approach adopted has been based on partnerships with national governments and civil society, which has rooted UN Women's global advocacy in country-level experience of gender-responsive GNP, including in HIV/AIDS. It has contributed to strengthening gender equality commitments in global SDG financing arrangements (as set out in the AAAA) and in international HIV/AIDS normative frameworks, particularly the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 2016.

Advances in the global normative frameworks open up considerable opportunities at country level that, as yet, are not being fully maximized. UN Women needs to be proactive, equipping its Country Offices with the technical guidance specific to GNP that they require to assist national governments and partners to realize the global commitments made in their own contexts.

### The coordination function

At the global level, UN Women's coordination with other UN agencies has been strategic, enabling the entity to strengthen gender in global normative frameworks and create an enabling environment for gender-responsive GNP at the country level, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. It has produced good inter-agency complementarity on specific issues, such as with UNDP and OECD in development of the methodology to measure SDG Indicator 5.c.1 and with UN DESA on financing for development. UN Women's co-sponsorship of UNAIDS provides a unique platform of influence, which UN Women has used to great effect in global normative negotiations, and in influencing UNAIDS' own strategy and operations.

At country level, there are examples of joint action between UN Women and other UN agencies on GNP, but these are relatively few in number. The cross-government nature of GNP, working with central government ministries and a range of sectoral ministries, suggests the possibility of greater UN coordination of the GNP processes, which could be strategic in the context of ongoing UN reform. In the area of HIV/AIDS, due to the limited data available on UN Women's work in the 17 focus countries, the evaluation was not able to confirm the extent to which the advances described at global level have facilitated results at country level.

### The operational function

UN Women's GNP work, including in HIV/AIDS, has achieved significant results—often hard-won gains—in a good number of countries, such as:

- Increasing the capacity of governments to recognize and respond to gender inequality through governance mechanisms such as national policies, national and sectoral plans, fiscal legislation and budgeting systems.
- Increasing budgets for gender equality related policies and programmes and, in some cases, an increased ability to track the expenditure of these budgets.
- Strengthening the role and relevance of women in governance, particularly in holding government to account through budget analysis and advocacy.

The evaluation's analysis suggests that UN Women has made a necessary contribution to these results, but given that partnerships are essential to achieving the results, this contribution is not in itself sufficient to achieve them. This is in line with UN Women's GNP approach, which seeks to enable others to drive gender-responsive GNP. A central strategy has been in building strong, often long-term partnerships with key stakeholders, including Ministries of Finance, women's machineries and CSOs. Through these relationships, other strategies have been put in place, including technical support and policy advice, capacity and skills development, and inputs towards enhancing the evidence base. GNP achievements are

frequently generated when government stakeholders are successfully enabled to establish and use gender-responsive approaches in planning, budgeting and policy making. Essentially, UN Women's role is to enable others to conduct GNP work. Therefore, the less active leadership UN Women is eventually required to take, the more continued improvements in GNP can be deemed a success, as this indicates successful enabling.

In view of this, UN Women's added value could be said to lie in creating or expanding policy or political spaces for gender responsiveness, usually through technical support, and enabling others to capitalize on those spaces. This approach has involved consistent work in creating connections between stakeholders and opportunities for dialogue. It has also relied on building a foundation of trust, often born of long-term relationships combined with a reputation for consistently and reliably carrying the GNP flag. There are a number of examples from case study countries where elements of this added value have combined to catalyse greater gender-responsive GNP.

However, the evaluation also found areas of unfinished work and insecure achievements in GNP. Integration of gender analysis into plans and budgets is a first step, but improvements in gender-responsive outcomes will only result from implementation, monitoring and review so that future GNP cycles are informed by this experience. As yet, UN Women has not strongly or consistently supported these parts of the GNP cycle, meaning that UN Women has not supported the full GNP cycle in most cases.

The evaluation found that UN Women's approach to enabling partners to promote gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning is different to that used for GNP more broadly. The former has had a strong emphasis on working with national government partners to make HIV policy gender-responsive and on involving CSOs (especially WLWHIV) in this process, with less emphasis on budgets. This different approach may, in part, explain the limited integration between UN Women's gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and its GNP work more broadly at country level.

While the reconstructed ToC offers a good foundation for conceptualizing the full array of GNP processes and results, it also reveals weaknesses reflecting the evolution of GNP work. The analysis conducted as part of this evaluation highlighted the complexity of promoting gender-responsive GNP, including in HIV/AIDS, which needs clearer reflection in the GNP conceptual framework. The reconstructed ToC (reconstructed for the evaluation on the basis of prior theory and documentation on GNP strategy) has not kept pace with the experience and activity accumulated at country level. Therefore, at times, UN Women's support to GNP has been insufficiently led from the front by a strong, evolving strategy. In the future, GNP design and monitoring would be better guided by a re-envisaged ToC.

### **Human rights and gender equality approach**

UN Women's human rights and gender equality approach has been well reflected in its GNP work, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, particularly in a global context where working on women's rights continues to require sensitivity, diplomacy and occasional strategic trade-offs. UN Women has made particular efforts to engage women as rights holders in GNP processes, especially in the area of HIV/AIDS, which offers examples of good practice in this area.

UN Women's role in convening diverse partners to establish channels for women's voices to be heard in decision-making has been critical. In some country-level work, limits on the political space available for civil society has constrained opportunities for promoting women as rights holders, and therefore the consistency and effectiveness of this work. In addition, while the language of gender equality has become more acceptable among governments in recent years, the language of women's rights remains, in some cases, controversial. There is moderate evidence that in GNP, UN Women has used the language of gender equality more consistently and the language of women's/human rights less consistently. This is fully aligned with its overall objective to promote gender-responsive governance, with a core human rights approach given the intimate connections between gender equality, women's rights and human rights. It may also be symptomatic of the global experience of how gender

issues gain entry into governance institutions in ways that tend to confirm or align with broader priorities. While this protects important relationships, the possible trade-off is that governments are less clearly engaged as duty bearers in a rights-based approach to GNP. In HIV/AIDS work, a women's/human rights approach has been more consistently applied.

As an organization, UN Women is increasingly recognizing and addressing intersectionality to benefit marginalized women. However, the extent to which this has been applied to its GNP work to facilitate policy and financing that specifically addresses the issues of marginalized groups appears variable (although it is more obvious in HIV/AIDS work, which consistently emphasizes the involvement of WLWHIV). Work to monitor budget expenditure and impact on beneficiaries would provide an opportunity to explore intersectionality, including among WLWHIV, and would ensure marginalized women are not left behind.

### **Organizational efficiency**

Over the course of the two Strategic Plans, UN Women has invested in strengthening its internal systems to achieve enhanced results through the breadth of its work. As part of this, the entity has strengthened its regional architecture, building capacity at regional and country levels and devolving some operational responsibilities; and has put in place a range of information management systems to support results-based management.

Improvements to UN Women's regional architecture have brought some positive dividends for its GNP work, including in HIV/AIDS, primarily in strengthening internal capacity to support partners at country level. Partners confirmed that UN Women's technical support is largely of high quality and there is evidence that the support enables them to make GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, more gender responsive.

However, partner support needs are extensive and meeting these needs is an ongoing challenge. As a whole government endeavour, gender-responsive GNP involves a wide range of actors working across a range of thematic or sectoral areas and varied



geographical locations. Each have their own individual support needs requiring attention to galvanize systemic change. The evolving nature of UN Women's GNP work, moving from a stronger focus on budgeting to one that covers the broader GNP cycle, has further extended the scope of work to be covered. In this context, despite improvements, UN Women offices report large or moderate gaps in their technical capacity to respond to partner needs. An increasing number report budget resources are not sufficient to build, enhance and promote gender-responsive GNP.

Challenges in the financial resourcing of UN Women's GNP work, including in HIV/AIDS, are keenly felt by UN Women Country Offices and headquarters. Not only have available resources reduced in the period 2011–2017 from US\$ 15.4 million in 2015 to US\$ 12.6 million in 2017, but the reliance on non-core funding exposes GNP work to the effects of changing donor priorities and the challenges of short-term funding to support long-term change processes. This risks diluting the focus of UN Women's GNP programming and truncating support when resources cannot be mobilized. As a result, UN Women has kept the scale of support to modest levels and may have inhibited the entity's ability to build on its original foundations and to extend its support more systematically across the wider GNP cycle. It may also inhibit UN Women's ability to support the translation of the strong gender equality commitments in the AAAA at the country level.

RMS is one of the information management systems introduced to strengthen results-based management within UN Women. Analysis of IA 5 documentation held in RMS suggests that the system offers considerable potential, but that this has yet to be realized. Enhancing RMS utility requires that at a minimum it is fully embedded within the organization, with all UN Women offices migrating to the system, and a greater consistency in the core programme documentation held. Its utility could be further enhanced with changes to standard protocols for core programme documentation, requiring the articulation of a programme-level ToC that offices use to situate Annual Workplans and results achieved. Capturing this strategic overview in core programme documentation would enhance the analytic power of evidence held in RMS. This could then be used to drive learning and

decision-making in GNP and other areas, and to provide evidence for future resource mobilization efforts.

## Lessons learned and implications

Systems for learning in GNP have, on the whole, offered good support for refining and sharpening the effectiveness of the programme, including for HIV/AIDS national planning. Learning from evaluations of regional and country-level work relating to governance and budgeting has been widely disseminated and used to inform the design and implementation of ongoing GNP projects at country level. Other learning systems, such as technical guidance notes, on-demand guidance from headquarters and Regional Offices, and regional knowledge networking have been well used. There is good consensus that knowledge gained from these sources is successfully applied.

During the period under evaluation, UN Women's knowledge management strategy was being finalized and passed, but has not yet been implemented. Therefore, the evaluation identified opportunities for application of the strategy to fully support an informed and strategic approach in GNP. First, opportunity exists to ensure that guidance draws systematically on recent experience in an evolving GNP landscape, and includes core overview resources for GNP specifically. In addition, relatively high levels of informal networking as a knowledge-building strategy for GNP suggest a strong potential role for communities of practice in sharing and codifying tacit knowledge of GNP, as proposed by the strategy.

### 1.7

## Conclusions and recommendations

The twin contexts of UN reform, propelling greater coordination and collaboration among agencies, and the 2030 Agenda supported by the AAAA, offer opportunities for UN Women's work on GNP to become a central and essential component of both. Over the last eight years, UN Women has accumulated experience and articulated ambition in how to secure financing and capacity for enhancing gender equality through governance. These contexts therefore offer a potential platform for UN Women's leadership and expertise

to be fully utilized and duly recognized. However, capitalizing on this opportunity would require some collaborative re-thinking and some rearrangement of financial resources so that this core area of work is properly buttressed, receives sufficient focus and is convincingly linked to other thematic areas.

A number of the evaluation's findings highlight an organizational framework that has supported the considerable achievements to date towards the vision for resourcing progress to gender equality. Nevertheless, elements of UN Women's work on GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, remain challenging to describe and communicate. Select findings related to effectiveness, efficiency and learning suggest that UN Women's ongoing work on GNP could be better supported by mechanisms and processes to enable a clearer articulation of GNP achievements for use both within UN Women and beyond.

The following 10 conclusions draw together the evaluation's findings and, through associated recommendations, set out a pathway for UN Women to build on the achievements to date, address the challenges faced and maximize the opportunities presented to further advance gender-responsive GNP. The conclusions and recommendations coalesce around five broad themes:<sup>14</sup>

- Positioning GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, within UN Women (**Conclusions 1 and 2**)
- Positioning GNP in the context of UN reform (**Conclusions 3 and 4**)
- Evolving the GNP ToC and deepening work across the GNP cycle (**Conclusion 5**)
- Capturing GNP results, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to drive accountability and learning (**Conclusions 6, 7, 8 and 9**)
- Enhancing the financial sustainability of UN Women's GNP work (**Conclusion 10**).

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that the conclusions and recommendations relating to UN Women's HIV/AIDS work refer only to its gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting and not to its wider HIV/AIDS work.

## CONCLUSION 1

### **Conceptualizing GNP as a central platform for UN Women's support to national governments.**

Gender-responsive GNP provides the foundation for achieving gender equality, in which UN Women has played a unique role. However, in most countries the GNP process remains incomplete. Cementing GNP work at the country level requires that UN Women strengthen its work in certain areas, including:

- Monitoring and evaluation systems that capture results from policy and budgeting decisions and enable governments to be held to account.
- Continuing to address capacity weaknesses in the partner organizations that UN Women seeks to enable, primarily women's machineries and Ministries of Finance, but also sectoral ministries and local government.

UN Women has established a body of experience in working on GNP with a sectoral focus. UN Women is well positioned to continue this ongoing process and given this foundation, it could conceptualize its GNP programming as a central platform for its support to national governments and seek to link support to government in other areas – including in HIV/AIDS – thereby developing an integrated package of support. This would require that UN Women consider how workstreams in other thematic areas could connect more closely with GNP (particularly at the operational level) potentially modifying, to some degree, the course these areas take to strengthen inter-connectedness.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

### **UN Women to develop an integrated policy and programme package to support national governments with gender-responsive GNP as a central platform.**

This would constitute an important shift in organizational approach, involving changes to several technical areas. By providing integrated support, UN Women would enable national governments to progress their gender-responsive GNP more rapidly, with stronger embedding in thematic or sectoral areas. To deliver on this objective, the following steps could be considered:

- UN Women should identify the thematic areas which support national policy and planning and conceptualize how the various strands can be brought together in an integrated package of policy and programme support with gender-responsive GNP as the central platform.
- Based on this conceptualization, UN Women Policy and Programme Division should develop detailed written guidance for Regional and Country Offices on the new integrated package and its operational implications to enable them to work effectively with national governments. UN Women’s country GNP focal points to lead implementation of this new integrated package of policy and programme support to national governments.
- UN Women’s Leadership and Governance Section of the Policy and Programme Division and Regional Offices should be appropriately resourced to provide on-demand support to this reconfiguration at country level. This is likely to require a blend of GNP and thematic expertise in the sectors/themes where UN Women is providing support. In line with UN Women’s regional architecture, regional adviser positions dedicated to supporting this integration process would be required.
- To secure the full benefits of this integrated package of support, UN Women should seek to support national governments across the full GNP cycle, stepping up its support to monitoring budget expenditure and the gender equality results achieved through policy and budget decisions made.
- Deepening UN Women’s support across the full GNP cycle, and embedding it more strongly in thematic areas where UN Women is already supporting government is likely to require an increased level of financial resources. Senior

management needs to take steps to ensure an appropriate level of financial resources are available to carry out the scope of work agreed (see Recommendation 10 below).

## CONCLUSION 2

### **Resetting UN Women’s vision for its HIV/AIDS work and relationship with GNP.**

Although promoting gender-responsive HIV/AIDS policies, plans and budgets forms a significant component of UN Women’s HIV/AIDS work, its linkages with the entity’s wider GNP work are not strong in any of its normative, operational or coordination work. This underdeveloped relationship is reflected in the reconstructed ToC, which includes HIV/AIDS but does not explicitly state the nature of the linkages with broader GNP processes. Despite the important contributions that UN Women’s HIV/AIDS work has made to advancing gender-responsive HIV/AIDS responses internationally, the entity has not been able to meet Strategic Plan targets, and the decline in its funding for this work is a concern. Focused attention is required to reset UN Women’s vision in the area of HIV/AIDS and to establish operational arrangements to support its realization.

The approach proposed under Conclusion 1, where UN Women’s GNP work becomes a central platform for the entity’s support to national governments, could also help to clarify the relationship between UN Women’s GNP and HIV/AIDS work. In this vision, UN Women would support HIV/AIDS focused stakeholders to apply an approach to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting that aligns with the processes pursued across all government departments and coordinated by central government departments, while also bringing specialist technical gender expertise and the voices of women affected by HIV/AIDS to government HIV/AIDS response planning. In this scenario, HIV/AIDS would be one of several thematic or sectoral areas included in an integrated package of governance support provided by UN Women to national governments, with other areas potentially being violence against women and girls, and economic empowerment. This does not mean

that UN Women should not support work in the area of HIV/AIDS that goes beyond gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning. Rather, that the HIV/AIDS policy and planning support UN Women provides to national governments is fully integrated with its broader gender-responsive GNP support.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2**

**UN Women to determine the intended relationship between UN Women’s GNP work and its support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting and take actions to operationalize it within the proposed central platform/integrated package of support to governments.**

Decision-making on the relationship between UN Women’s GNP and gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting work would logically be handled as part of the process to reposition GNP as a central platform for UN Women’s support to national governments (Recommendation 1). In this scenario:

- UN Women headquarters staff leading the entity’s HIV/AIDS work should contribute to the conceptualization of UN Women’s integrated package of support on gender-responsive governance, ensuring it is informed by achievements and learning in the area of HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting to facilitate further embedding of a gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS response.
- UN Women headquarters staff leading the entity’s HIV/AIDS work should contribute to the preparation of detailed written guidance for Regional and Country Offices on the new integrated package and its operational implications. This should articulate how Country Offices can work with national governments and the National AIDS Coordinating Authorities to achieve an integrated national approach to gender-responsive policy and planning, which facilitates the achievement of gender-responsive GNP in the area of HIV/AIDS. UN Women country HIV/AIDS focal points to support the country GNP

focal point (where they are different personnel) in implementing this new integrated package of policy and programme support to national governments.

- UN Women should retain internal specialist HIV/AIDS human resource capacity at headquarters and in Regional Offices to provide technical support for the effective implementation of an integrated package of support for gender-responsive GNP at the country level, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. This specialist capacity should be adequate to continue UN Women’s agenda setting global normative advocacy in the area of HIV/AIDS and its strategic collaboration with UNAIDS.

## **CONCLUSION 3**

**UN Women’s gender-responsive GNP work to become the entry point to work with other UN entities at country level and become part of a package of coordinated UN support to national government governance systems.**

UN Women has shown strong performance in setting the global agenda for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, in part through its ability to develop and maintain strategic partnerships with other UN agencies, such as UN DESA and UNAIDS. At the country level, however, the strength of UN Women’s coordination with other UN agencies on GNP, including in HIV/AIDS, appears more mixed.

UN Women’s gender-responsive GNP work appears well placed to integrate more closely with coordinated UN support to national governments. The entity’s established partnerships with central government departments, its focus on policy and planning systems that apply across all national government departments, and with the opportunity to link to sectoral ministries and local government, UN Women has the potential to connect with and enable national policy development and implementation supported by other UN entities, thereby drawing together the policy implementation support provided to national governments by the UN family. Operating at the country level in a more integrated way with other UN

entities would bring benefits to UN Women’s GNP work as it deepens opportunities to apply gender-responsive planning and budgeting in government departments and ministries supported by other UN entities, and where UN Women does not have a strong footprint. Such an approach offers the potential for a more integrated UN programme of support to governments, centred on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which strongly aligns with established government processes. It would also extend opportunities for addressing gender considerations in policy areas supported by other UN agencies, further enabling governments and the UN itself to deliver on their gender equality commitments.



### RECOMMENDATION 3

**As part of ongoing UN reform processes, UN Women to leverage coordinated UN support to national governments on governance and national planning, with UN Women providing leadership and expertise in the area of gender-responsive GNP.**

To pursue this opportunity UN Women should:

- Identify the relevant UN Development System working groups where UN Women can table this proposal, the particular focus of these groups, as well as their membership. UN Women should use this information to inform the framing of its proposal in each working group.
- Build a case to support the proposal which reflects UN Women’s expertise, but is also likely to garner support from other UN agencies. To underpin the case, UN Women should, as far as possible, map the interests of other UN agencies in supporting national governments in the development and implementation of national development plans and associated sectoral plans. This process could identify potential allies among other UN agencies and their particular interests in this area of work. The case should articulate how UN Women can contribute to coordinated UN support to national governments on governance and national planning and the benefits such a contribution would bring. It would be appropriate

for UN Women to propose leading UN support for gender-responsive governance and national planning, enabling governments to deliver on SDG 5 and gender-related commitments in the AAAAA.

- Once a body of support for the proposal emerges, identify the human and financial resource implications of UN Women taking up this role at the country, regional and headquarter levels and take active steps to secure the required resources to deliver on this strategic positioning.

### CONCLUSION 4

**Maximizing the opportunities of strengthened GNP global normative frameworks.**

UN Women’s support to global normative agreements like the AAAAA has contributed to impressive advances in international commitments for financing gender equality as part of financing the SDGs. At the country level, the evaluation found that opportunities presented by these advances are only just starting to be taken up, in part because of the relatively short period since the AAAAA was adopted, and as a consequence of the breadth of AAAAA action areas. Promoting gender-responsive GNP is one small element of the AAAAA gender equality commitments. The AAAAA’s broader commitments present UN Women with opportunities to extend its engagement in financing for gender equality at the country level beyond GNP and into other areas such as taxation and international trade.

Pursuing these opportunities would be a strategic move for UN Women, in the context of the SDGs and UN reform. However, developing these new areas of work would require additional and appropriate resources, as well as strengthened linkages between headquarters and field offices to guide the translation of the AAAAA at country level. Engagement in AAAAA action areas beyond the current scope of UN Women’s GNP work is potentially strategic as it positions UN Women action at the heart of SDG implementation at the country level. SDG implementation will inevitably be the focus of support for reformed UN Country Teams (UNCTs). Deepening engagement in financing for gender equality processes at country level and forging a relationship with UNDP, as the

lead UN agency in this area, would help strengthen UN Women's position within the streamlined UNCTs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**UN Women to prepare a strategy paper that sets out how UN Women could support AAAA implementation at country level, alongside the benefits and human and financial capacity required for each scenario.**

Extending support to national governments beyond GNP to implement AAAA gender equality commitments offers UN Women strategic benefits. The opportunity to work with UNDP and other relevant partners to integrate a gender perspective into the Integrated National Financing Framework is a first step. However, much more would need to be done at the country level to support the translation of the AAAA commitments on gender equality into national policy and practice. For UN Women to move in this direction, it should:

- Prepare a paper which sets out how UN Women can build on its country-focused, gender-responsive GNP work to support implementation of the AAAA gender equality commitments at country level. Specifically, the paper would describe: the country level processes UN Women would adopt; the partners involved in these processes; the contribution UN Women would seek to make; the expertise required and how it could be sourced (internally from among UN Women staff, external consultants); and global, regional and country staff time, as well as the financial resources required to support this contribution. Senior management to determine the most appropriate option based on broad consultations internally and with UN partners.
- Give particular consideration to appropriate human and financial resourcing of this extended scope of work. It is likely that dedicated human resources would be needed at regional level and in headquarters to provide the necessary support to UN Women Country Offices to drive this collaboration with national governments and other

development partners. It is essential that new financial resources are identified to support this extended scope of work beyond those required for the continued development of UN Women's core GNP work.

#### **CONCLUSION 5**

**Evolving the ToC for GNP, clarifying the scope of UN Women's GNP work and terminology.**

The reconstructed ToC does not fully capture the complexity of UN Women's approach to supporting gender-responsive GNP as it has evolved during the 2011–2017 period. As such, it offers an inadequate framework for conceptualizing, operationalizing and tracking progress under IA 5. In addition, few countries have developed a tailored ToC or narratives explaining the logic of selected activities, outputs and outcomes in the short or medium term. Therefore, it is challenging to situate GNP plans and work carried out against how medium and long-term objectives might be achieved. It also means there is a weak framework for identifying and describing challenges or obstacles to progress. These weaknesses risk undermining effective medium-term planning and reduce opportunities for learning.

Addressing the weak areas of the reconstructed ToC offers the potential for providing a strong conceptual and programming framework for ongoing work in GNP, and in particular a strong framework for monitoring and reporting to strengthen learning. Areas that would benefit from further elaboration, include:

- How UN Women's global normative support and coordination with other UN agencies is expected to complement and combine with national-level normative and operational work to drive GNP activities at the national level.
- How UN Women's normative, operational and coordination work at country level is expected to combine to advance gender-responsive GNP.
- UN Women's partnership approach and how this is intended to contribute to sustainable and locally owned gender-responsive GNP.

- Sector-focused work and the relationship with gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning (see Conclusion 2).
- The iterative nature of the GNP cycle, which anticipates that results emerging from one cycle inform the next.
- The causal processes anticipated across the ToC, but especially between outputs, outcomes and impact, and the assumptions implicit within this.

As part of this process, UN Women should reflect on and specify the key terminology to be used to refer to its GNP work and the intended meaning. Thereafter, it will be essential to adhere to this terminology across the organization.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**UN Women to lead an inclusive process to prepare an evolved ToC for GNP that captures the complexities of UN Women’s approach and provides a medium to long-term strategic overview of objectives and the envisaged process. Country Offices should use the evolved ToC to prepare ToC narratives tailored to country contexts**

An adapted version of the reconstructed ToC is available in Figure 7 as a starting point for a fuller evolution of the ToC. It seeks to address current gaps as described above and provides a model of how the overall strategic framework for GNP, as it is currently structured, can be strengthened. The ToC does not, however, take account of any re-formulation of GNP taken up on the basis of this evaluation.

- The process should adopt a participatory approach, working with Regional and Country Offices to develop a shared understanding of GNP change processes among UN Women staff and ensuring that the resulting ToC is informed by global and country-level experience. It should include establishing an agreement and understanding of the relationship between the ToC

as a tool for conceptualizing a change process and as a guide to operationalizing it, and the Strategic Plan that sets out the steps to be taken in a specific context, framed so that they align with global-level objectives.

- Country-specific ToC narratives should set out medium-term GNP objectives and the intended pathway to achieve them. Thereafter, Annual Workplans and Reports should be formulated with reference to the ToC.

In facilitating the ToC evolution process, relevant Policy Advisers in the Leadership and Governance Section may wish to draw on the ToCs developed in 2015 for IA 5 related flagship programmes, e.g. Gender-Sensitive Statistics for Localization of the SDGs, and Transformative Financing for GEWE. These may offer a platform and an organizational logic for developing an updated global-level ToC for GNP. The programmes also provide the precedent of a process through which this global ToC could be used and adapted at country level by Country Offices developing GNP work. However, it should be noted that these ToCs do not currently engage explicitly with UN Women’s normative and coordination functions, creating a similar gap as that observed in the GNP reconstructed ToC for expressing and communicating programme drivers.

As part of the ToC development process, relevant Policy Advisers in the Leadership and Governance Section should reflect on the terminology to be used and provide definitions of key terms to staff in headquarters, and Regional and Country Offices. Critical here is to determine whether UN Women’s preferred term is GRB or GNP, what specifically is meant by each term, and whether and how they are substantively different. Furthermore, if UN Women decides to integrate its gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting with its broader GNP work, as proposed in Recommendations 1 and 2, then the terminology that communicates this needs to be agreed and communicated across the organization.

## CONCLUSION 6

### **Promoting government accountability through enhanced CSO participation in the GNP cycle, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.**

UN reform calls for increased UN engagement with civil society as an immediate priority.<sup>15</sup> Among UN agencies, UN Women has a unique depth of experience in this kind of engagement and therefore has an opportunity to draw on this comparative advantage in the reform process.

The evaluation highlighted that more needs to be done to ensure government accountability for the gender equality commitments made. This is an area in which CSOs have a particularly critical role to play and their involvement gives scope and space for a more political approach to improving gender responsiveness in governance.

UN Women's technical support and capacity building with CSOs and governments has helped to strengthen civil society's role in GNP, as well as to facilitate greater government responsiveness. This has been effective but not fully consistent as engaging with CSOs has often been dependent on project-based tasks and on timelines for engagement with international agreements. A deeper focus on the role of CSOs is now required to enable them to play a greater role both in sustaining government accountability to GEWE in general and GNP in particular, and in facilitating an oversight/watchdog role for communities regarding government delivery of services and investments.

## RECOMMENDATION 6

**UN Women to work proactively with Regional and Country Offices to support consistent national civil society roles in monitoring budget expenditure and gender equality results achieved through government policy and budget decisions, feeding findings into future planning cycles.**

- This would involve developing accessible technical guidance and training materials for UN Women Country Offices and partners on ways in which civil society can contribute to promoting gender-responsive GNP and good practice in working towards institutionalization of their role in different contexts. It should draw on learning available from HIV/AIDS work on maintaining a consistent focus on CSOs; country experience in attempting to institutionalize this relationship; and should form part of operationalizing UN Women's knowledge management strategy (See Recommendation 9). It would also involve mobilizing resources to build civil society capacity and more consistently nurturing dialogue between civil society and government partners on monitoring findings and implications for future policy and budget decision-making.
- UN Women should ensure that agreements reached on the approach to civil society involvement in GNP monitoring processes are adequately captured in the evolved ToC and in reporting templates so that further learning on successful practices for institutionalization in different contexts, including from the HIV/AIDS experience, can be consolidated.

## CONCLUSION 7

### **Capturing the benefits of gender-responsive GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to women and especially marginalized women.**

Relatively little emphasis in GNP work, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, has been on monitoring and evaluation in the government policy-budget-review cycle. Therefore, relatively little is known about the links between GNP and gender equality outcomes or how far GNP benefits the most marginalized groups, including WLWHIV. While it was beyond the scope of the evaluation, piecemeal evidence is available suggesting positive impacts. Supporting partners across the full cycle (which includes both budget monitoring, financial auditing and monitoring of the policy-related results that the budget is designed to achieve) would generate evidence on whether targeted planning and budgeting strategies for gender equality can indeed generate benefits to women and girls.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Development System Repositioning, Backgrounder 2017.



However, neither the ToC nor the IA 5 results framework and documentation aim to detail this level of results, partly due to its complexity. While establishing a contribution narrative to results at this degree of distance from UN Women's particular activity would undoubtedly be a challenge, it would provide evidence to strengthen the case for resource mobilization for GNP and HIV/AIDS. It also presents an opportunity for understanding how far intersectionality issues are addressed by interventions in GNP. The evaluation found an awareness of the relevance of intersectionality in the organization; however, establishing that GNP interventions benefit marginalized women will depend on developing finely tuned monitoring that disaggregates categories of women.

### **RECOMMENDATION 7**

**UN Women to work proactively with Regional and Country Offices to assist national GNP partners, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to put in place systems to measure the impact of gender-responsive GNP on the lives of women, including marginalized women.**

This would involve:

- UN Women continuing to support the development of government monitoring and evaluation systems, drawing on work developed through the Gender Equitable Local Development (GELD) programme, so that the results of full GNP cycles on women, including marginalized women, are documented and links established to the impact of policy.
- Given that government monitoring systems aimed at capturing policy impact on marginalized women are likely to take time to achieve, and may not ultimately generate ideal levels of granular data, UN Women should commission small but robust sample studies, potentially drawing on the proposed UN Women/IMF joint work, focused very specifically on building an empirical evidence base on causal links between GRB and gender equality outcomes. These studies would aim to establish the effects of UN Women's GNP interventions at impact level in the lives of women, including marginalized women. They should

also explore the specific contribution UN Women has made in the change process thereby building the evidence base for UN Women's work.

- UN Women should consider making the aspirations of GNP to impact-level results in terms of changes in women's lives more explicit by capturing these in the evolved ToC. Including changes in women's lives as impact-level results draws attention to the fact that this is the ultimate ambition of GNP work, and would invite assessment and acknowledgement of UN Women's contribution.

### **CONCLUSION 8**

**Improving corporate systems to better capture results and processes of change.**

Since 2015, UN Women has made good progress in establishing RMS as a corporate information management system and improving reporting methodologies in line with the Development Results Framework. However, based on analysis of IA 5 documentation, RMS is not yet fully institutionalized as a central document repository for the entire organization, and continues to have some important gaps in the documentation held. Furthermore, corporate planning and reporting formats used do not encourage a strategic overview of how intended objectives are being met, or of the challenges encountered in promoting gender-responsive GNP and what might be done to resolve these. In other words, in the absence of a ToC in which to situate progress from outputs to outcomes, much of the analytic power of reporting is lost.

It is therefore difficult to fully assess GNP programme effectiveness, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. The challenges described undermine UN Women's ability to: gain recognition for achievements; extract learning and use it to inform new work, or share it with others in the role of knowledge broker; and accumulate evidence on the results of GNP work that would facilitate (non-core) resource mobilization.

## **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**UN Women to accelerate the institutionalization of RMS, ensuring all UN Women offices migrate to the system, with the objective of creating a comprehensive documentation repository. The entity to draw upon this to articulate results achieved through UN Women's support and to gain insights into what is working and how.**

To further improve corporate systems to better capture results achieved in impact areas and the processes of change:

- UN Women should ensure all staff are fully acquainted with RMS capacities and are able to confidently manipulate the data stored to access information to build a picture of programme effectiveness in particular areas of work.
- UN Women should ensure the new guidelines currently under preparation on the approach to be taken by UN Women offices in core programme documentation are issued. This guidance would emphasize that Strategic Notes should articulate a programme-level ToC; that Annual Workplans should briefly explain how the identified outcomes, outputs and activities will progress implementation of the ToC; and that Annual Reports should describe the results achieved, how they were achieved, the specific contribution made by UN Women and other stakeholders, and the extent to which the direction of travel has adhered to the ToC.

## **CONCLUSION 9**

**Strengthening systems for GNP knowledge management and learning.**

Creating the conditions in which UN Women can fully flourish in a role as knowledge broker for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, means closing the gaps

in knowledge management. Maximizing internal knowledge brokering is essential to support efficient and effective delivery, and cross-country learning. An external knowledge broker role is also potentially available to UN Women, given its long-standing and specialized contribution.

Good progress has been made towards systematizing learning and knowledge management through effective evaluation cycles, strengthened results-based ways of working, a centralized documentation repository and a recently approved knowledge management strategy. But parts of these remain incomplete. The complexity of skills and process management required in GNP, including specific knowledge for HIV/AIDS related GNP and sector-specific knowledge linking GNP to other sectoral processes, mean that systematic and comprehensive knowledge-based approaches are necessary to support it. Creating these conditions therefore means pursuing and supporting plans already developed for strengthening these assets, continuing to actively take part in implementing the knowledge management strategy and contributing to ensuring its purpose is achieved. The knowledge management strategy offers an opportunity and framework for further pursuing communication and learning that draws on the country-level experience in GNP in aggregated form at global level.

## **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**UN Women to continue the drive for its knowledge management strategy to support knowledge management for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS and sector-related work, and that headquarters technical sections and Regional Offices are enabled to carry through plans agreed.**

Key to delivering the knowledge management strategy is ensuring dedicated human resources with GNP expertise are made available to operationalize the strategy in this technical area, in line with the roles and responsibilities assigned to different parts of UN Women. If GNP is to become a central platform of UN Women's support to government, dedicated positions for knowledge management specific to GNP would be

required, possibly located at regional level to strengthen region-based exchange and learning.

#### CONCLUSION 10

#### **Ensuring GNP financial resourcing facilitates strategic planning.**

The evaluation found that UN Women's GNP relies heavily on non-core resources. While the ratio of core to non-core resources supporting GNP is similar to that in other impact areas, it is a concern for an area of work considered one of UN Women's flagships and one with such strategic potential. It exposes GNP normative and operational programming to the shifting priorities of donors as well as the challenges of short-term funding horizons for processes that take years to embed. This risks undermining UN Women's ability to make strategic decisions about how to progress GNP, in line with its ToC, and potentially diluting the focus.

A number of the evaluation's recommendations highlight the need for additional financial resources. Raising more non-core funding to drive this new phase of UN Women's GNP work is one option, although it is recognized that few donors are particularly active in this area of work. In addition, a reliance on non-core funding is problematic as the short-term nature of most non-core funding does not provide the long-term planning horizons that are needed for systemic change to governance processes to take root.

Therefore, UN Women needs to consider using core funding to secure a base of GNP work at global and national levels. If UN Women is to evolve its GNP work to become a central platform for its support to national governments (Recommendation 1) and a significant part of UN Women's contribution to coordinated UN support for governance and national planning (Recommendation 3) then it needs to commit core resources to protect this centrepiece of its programming.

#### RECOMMENDATION 10

#### **UN Women senior management should review the use of core funding and consider how it can best be used to enable strategic planning and delivery in GNP.**

To allow UN Women to continue pioneering GNP in line with its (revised) ToC, it will be necessary to secure a bedrock of GNP work.

- Senior management should be open to the possibility of allocating core funding to GNP normative and operational work at country level to enable GNP work to evolve to a new level, either by extending work across the full GNP cycle, or by deepening work within sectors or thematic areas, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.
- Relevant Policy Advisers in the Leadership and Governance Section should invest in building a stronger rationale and evidence base for donor investment in gender-responsive GNP, whether through core funding to UN Women, or project-based funding. This would involve evolving the ToC to: more clearly articulate a medium-term strategy; better document results and processes of change, especially evidence of the impact of more gender-responsive planning systems on women and girls; and by using this material to articulate a clear narrative of the benefits of investing in gender-responsive GNP.

# 2. INTRODUCTION

## 2.1

### Background

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) conducts corporate evaluations to assess UN Women's contribution to results in gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). The main findings, conclusions and recommendations emerging from these corporate evaluations are presented to the Executive Board of UN Women.

This evaluation, planned under UN Women's corporate evaluation plan<sup>16</sup>, focuses on UN Women's contribution to Governance and National Planning (GNP) fully reflecting accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities in the period 2011–2017. In line with the scope of IA 5 of the two UN Women Strategic Plans during this period, work on gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning is also included in the scope of the evaluation.

The evaluation was conducted by an evaluation team contracted by Itad, with support and oversight from IES. The evaluation took place over a 12-month period,

December 2017 – December 2018 and involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders both within UN Women and externally. Key stakeholders included UN Women Policy and Programme Divisions, Regional and Country Offices, and government and civil society actors at national level.

This report is the main output from the evaluation, presenting a set of 22 evidenced findings and 10 conclusions and their associated recommendations. The report consists of seven sections. After this introductory section, Section 3 summarizes the evaluation purpose, objectives and scope. Section 4 provides an overview of GNP, the context and normative setting, UN Women's support to GNP (including in the area of HIV/AIDS) and the contours of UN Women's GNP portfolio. Section 5 features the evaluation approach and methodology, including the limitations encountered. The evaluation findings are presented in Section 6, structured around the four key evaluation questions. Section 7 then synthesizes the overarching conclusions and their associated recommendations.

<sup>16</sup> Independent Evaluation Service (2014) 2014–2017 Evaluation Strategy. UN Women, New York.

# 3. EVALUATION RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

This section provides an overview of the evaluation's purpose, objectives and broader scope.

## 3.1

### Purpose and objectives

As set out in the evaluation ToR, and confirmed in the inception report, the purpose of the evaluation is two-fold:

1. To support accountability, learning and knowledge generation by providing evidence of achievements in GNP.
2. To provide a forward-looking platform to inform future decision-making on UN Women's support to GNP.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. Assess current and continued relevance of UN Women's GNP work given the changing global development landscape and priorities at country level (relevance).
2. Document achievements of UN Women's GNP work against anticipated results at country level and identify evidence of progress towards impact in terms of ensuring that gender priorities are reflected in national plans and budgets and that women's voices are heard, thereby ensuring that their perspectives and priorities are included in decision-making processes and reflected in plans and budgets at all levels (effectiveness and impact).
3. Establish whether capacity and arrangements for managing, supporting and implementing GNP at different levels are appropriate and conducive to supporting achievements, in particular at the country level (efficiency).
4. Document the extent to which human rights and gender equality principles and objectives have been integrated in the design and implementation of interventions at the country level (relevance and effectiveness).

5. Identify the extent to which, and how, UN Women has used GNP learning to strengthen policy and programming and to promote accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities.

## 3.2

### Scope

This evaluation covers UN Women's GNP work under IA 5 of UN Women's two Strategic Plans, for the period 2011–2017<sup>17</sup>, almost the entire period since the establishment of UN Women in 2010. While GNP work is cross-government, in that it works with central government ministries and a range of sectoral ministries, IA 5 has particular objectives in relation to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning. This focus on HIV/AIDS is reflected in the evaluation.

As can be seen from Table 1, the main GNP areas of engagement outlined in the Strategic Plans are:

- Promoting gender equality through national development plans and other national sectoral plans.
- Monitoring the implementation of government gender equality commitments and strengthening mechanisms for government accountability.
- Promoting gender-responsive HIV/AIDS strategies, plans and budgets.

<sup>17</sup> UN Women Strategic Plan 2014–2017: Making this the Century for Women and Gender Equality, Executive Board, June 2013; UN Women Strategic Plan 2011–2013, Executive Board, June 2011.

**TABLE 1**

**The scope of GNP as specified in UN Women’s Strategic Plan 2011–2013 and Strategic Plan 2014–2017**

	Strategic Plan 2011–2013	Strategic Plan 2014–2017
<b>IMPACT</b>	National planning and budgeting processes promote stronger institutional accountability to gender equality commitments	Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1 National development strategies and other national sectoral plans with specific commitments to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment adopted and implemented</li> <li>• 5.2: Mechanisms for monitoring implementation of gender equality commitments regularly generate analysis and evidence on gaps and performance</li> <li>• 5.3: Gender equality advocates and their organizations effectively influence decision-making to promote gender equality in national development strategies/plans including those on HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• 5.4: The global normative and policy frameworks that influence development planning and financing contain action for the implementation of gender equality and women’s empowerment goals</li> <li>• 5.5: Adoption and use of a common gender marker across the UN system and UNCTs to track the adequacy of resource allocations related to gender equality<sup>18</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1 National development strategies and other national sectoral plans with specific commitments to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment adopted and implemented</li> <li>• 5.2 Mechanisms are in place to increase accountability of national government toward gender equality and to monitor implementation of gender equality commitments</li> <li>• 5.3 Gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS strategies, plans and budgets adopted and implemented</li> </ul>
<b>OUTPUTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1. Enhanced knowledge and skills of national partners in gender analysis in planning and budgeting</li> <li>• 2. National women’s machineries and other gender equality advocates, including women living with HIV, have the knowledge, skills and tools to effectively participate in decision-making venues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1.1 Key government institutions at national and local levels have the knowledge and tools to analyze, formulate and execute gender-responsive plans and budgets</li> <li>• 5.1.2 Adoption and use of gender markers by UN entities that produce comparable data to track the adequacy of resource allocations to gender equality</li> <li>• 5.2.1 Capacities of governments, gender equality advocates and women’s groups to track budget allocations and expenditures strengthened</li> <li>• 5.2.2 National dialogue mechanisms for promoting the implementation of gender-responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring in place</li> <li>• 5.3.1 Key government institutions at national and local levels have the knowledge and tools to analyze, formulate and execute gender-responsive HIV plans and budgets</li> <li>• 5.3.2 Women living with HIV and women affected by HIV have strengthened capacities to have their priorities included in HIV strategies and budgets</li> </ul>

<sup>18</sup> Although part of IA5, it was agreed during the inception phase that the application of the gender marker within the UN system and UNCTs would not form part of the scope of this evaluation.

In line with its tripartite mandate, UN Women's GNP support, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, comprises normative and operational work, as well as coordination with other UN agencies (Box 1).<sup>19 20</sup>

The evaluation assessed the efforts that UN Women has made in each of these areas and their contribution to achieving gender-responsive GNP.

#### BOX 1

### UN Women's triple mandate

- **Normative work:** supporting inter-governmental bodies in the formulation of global norms and standards to promote gender equality.
- **Operational work:** assisting UN Member States in implementing these standards in their country contexts and forging effective partnerships, particularly with civil society.
- **UN coordination:** leading and coordinating the UN system's approach to gender equality, including through the coordination of the UN System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, providing leadership and advocacy in setting the UN's agenda for gender equality, promoting UN system accountability for its GEWE commitments, and engaging in inter-agency efforts that promote and advance GEWE at global, regional and national levels.

As UN Women's GNP work is directed at enabling gender-responsive GNP at the national level, the focus of the evaluation has been on changes recorded at the country level and the pathways for achieving them. In addition, the evaluation explored some of UN Women's GNP global normative work and assessed the extent to which this global-level work has opened up further opportunities for gender-responsive GNP at country level.

The evaluation is intended to be used primarily by UN Women stakeholders, including the Executive

Board, the Senior Management Team, staff of the Leadership and Governance Section, other staff in headquarters, and Regional and Country Offices. Other stakeholders with an interest in the evaluation are UN Women government and civil society partners at global, regional and country levels, as well as staff of other UN agencies working with UN Women on GNP. As the timing of the evaluation coincides with the first year of implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021,<sup>21</sup> evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations are expected to inform its mid-term review. They are also expected to inform ongoing GNP work at global and country levels, led by UN Women's Leadership and Governance Section in headquarters and Regional and Country Offices.

19 UN Women (undated) UN-SWAP: an accountability framework to mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women across the UN system.

20 Women (2014) Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment.

21 UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–21, Executive Board, August 2017.

# 4. GOVERNANCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING: GLOBAL CONTEXT AND UN WOMEN PROGRAMME

The global operating context of GNP is discussed in this section, alongside UN Women's role and approach to addressing GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.

## 4.1

### Global context and normative setting

In many countries over the last decade, the gender inequality gap has widened.<sup>22</sup> A deteriorating global economic context, shaped by the financial and banking crises of the mid/late 2000s, has in many countries negatively affected public sector investment and

services, and social spending in particular.<sup>23</sup> Women have borne a greater share of the burden associated with these cuts. In some countries, financing gaps for implementing national action plans (NAPs) on gender equality can be as high as 90 per cent.<sup>24</sup> This has increased the need to develop functioning systems to ensure that steps towards gender equality globally are financed and implemented.

Locking gender analysis into governance and national planning systems (the policy-planning-budgeting-monitoring-review cycle) holds the potential to systematically guarantee gender equality targeted finance.

UN Women has long experience in supporting gender-responsive national planning and budgeting and seeks to enable these processes to act as a conduit for making this guarantee a reality. Promoting gender equality is not, however, simply a technocratic exercise, but is a political process that involves changing the perceptions and world view of those who prioritize budgets and make decisions. Therefore, it inevitably involves confronting power. The past decades have seen an ebb and flow of global support for action to achieve gender equality. While some gender

#### BOX 2

#### Beijing Platform for Action: Strategic objectives for strengthening the institutional architecture for the advancement of women

- **Strategic objective H.1.** Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.
- **Strategic objective H.2.** Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programs, and projects.
- **Strategic objective H.3.** Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.
- **Strategic objective C.3:** Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues.

22 World Economic Forum (2018), The Global Gender Gap Report 2017.

23 Fiscal consolidation occurs when a government attempts to reduce its fiscal deficit, i.e. when a government's total expenditure exceeds the revenue that it generates, it reduces overall expenditure to better balance revenues and expenditure.

24 Handbook on Costing Gender Equality (2015), UN Women.



equality achievements have been made, progress has been slow.

The BPfA is a **global agenda for gender equality**. Adopted in 1995, the agreement of the BPfA was a pivotal moment, generating a defining framework for change. The BPfA sets out comprehensive commitments in 12 strategic areas considered critical for gender equality, including strengthening the institutional architecture for the advancement of women and promoting women's health (see Box 2). In addition, the BPfA recognizes inequality in economic structures and policies, all forms of productive activities and access to resources as an area of critical concern, requiring strategic action.<sup>25</sup> National governments have primary responsibility for leading implementation of the BPfA, including raising adequate financial resources to deliver on the commitments made.

Underpinning the BPfA is the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979. This establishes an agenda for national action to protect the rights of women and girls and end discrimination. It has been ratified by or acceded to by 187 countries, the vast majority of UN Member States. As parties to CEDAW, states commit to take actions to end discrimination against women in all its forms. This provides a rights-based focus to interventions for gender equality and women's rights. Countries that have ratified or acceded to CEDAW are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. Countries are also committed to submitting national reports, at least every four years, on measures they have taken to comply with their treaty obligations. While some gender equality achievements have been made in the intervening years, progress has been slow.<sup>26</sup> The BPfA remains relevant today and provides an important framework for global efforts in support of gender equality.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs, adopted in 2015, embed gender equality in a much stronger manner than the MDGs and explicitly recognize the structural barriers faced by women and girls in the realization of their rights. SDG 5 commits global actors to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by 2030, while other goals highlight the need for progress to benefit

women and men. Thus, the SDGs provide a strong framework for action in support of gender equality by global and national actors. Target 5C, on the adoption and strengthening of sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels, reflects the BPfA's strategic objectives for strengthening institutional architecture for the advancement of women. Its associated indicator (5.c.1), which measures the proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, provides the impetus for national governments to use national plans and budgets as the locus for implementing SDG commitments and is a powerful mechanism for holding governments to account for their commitments. SDG 5, together with the BPfA and CEDAW, provide significant leverage at state level for UN Women's work in GNP.

The Third International Conference on Financing for Development was convened in Addis Ababa in July 2015 to discuss the financing of the 2030 Agenda at country level.<sup>27</sup> The Conference outcome document, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), makes strong commitments to promoting gender equality, affirming the need for GEWE for equitable economic growth and sustainable development. It reiterates the importance of gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies and recommits to adopting policies and legislation that promote GEWE at all levels. The AAAA recognizes gender considerations in six of the seven action areas, including domestic and international private business and finance, and international trade.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Global context for gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning

Since 2000, when the MDGs were agreed, significant progress has been made in the prevention and

25 Page 16, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995.

26 UN Women (2015) Summary Report: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20. See [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

27 This conference builds on the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002 and the follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Doha, in 2008.

28 Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, July 2015, United Nations.

treatment of HIV. The MDG 6 target of universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS has been achieved, with more than 15 million people receiving treatment, up from 700,000 in 2000.<sup>29</sup> New HIV infections have also been reduced by 35 per cent in that time, and advances in the coverage of antiretroviral treatment for pregnant women living with HIV has helped reduce mother-to-child transmission of the disease.<sup>30</sup>

Despite these successes, progress in halting and reversing the HIV epidemic varies by region, country, age and key population group. In many contexts, women and girls, especially adolescent girls, remain highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and gender inequality is recognized as a key factor in this vulnerability.<sup>31</sup> In 2016, women and girls constituted 48 per cent of new infections among people 15 years and older.<sup>32</sup> Among 15–24 year olds, 59 per cent of new infections occur in adolescent girls and young women.<sup>33</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is even more severe, with women comprising 56 per cent of new infections among adults (aged 15 years and older), and in the 15–24 year age group the proportion rises to 67 per cent.<sup>34</sup> Adolescent girls are the only group in which AIDS-related deaths are increasing and, in sub-Saharan Africa, AIDS is the leading cause of death among adolescent girls.<sup>35</sup>

SDG 3 seeks to build on the progress made to date by committing Member States to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030 (target 3.3). Although the SDG 3.3 target does not explicitly highlight gender dimensions, the disease's epidemiology shows that gender inequalities cannot be ignored if the goal is to be achieved. Furthermore, SDG 5, with its commitment to achieve gender equality, suggests an international response that addresses gender inequalities is essential.

While global normative frameworks such as the 2001 UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS, the 2006 and 2011 UN Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS, and the Human Rights Council resolution 16/28 recognize the need to address gender inequalities in the global HIV/AIDS response, it is the CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS and the

UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 2016 that articulate the most robust commitments to addressing gender inequalities. In the latter, UN Member States have committed to achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls as part of the efforts to end AIDS by 2030. The Declaration calls upon Member States to: implement gender-responsive national HIV Strategic Plans; encourage women's leadership and participation in the HIV response; address the intersections between HIV/AIDS, violence against women and harmful practices; and promote women's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.<sup>36</sup> The 2016 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS also includes a target to reduce the number of adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 years old who are newly infected with HIV globally to below 100,000 per year by 2020, which Member States are obliged to report against.<sup>37</sup>

UNAIDS monitoring of global financing flows and in-country expenditure indicates an additional US\$ 7.2 billion is needed by 2020 to remain on track to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic by 2030.<sup>38</sup> International resources have remained flat over the past few years after peaking in 2013, leaving domestic resources as the main upward driver, but increases in these resources appear to have slowed in 2015–2016.<sup>39</sup> In this context, UNAIDS proposes allocating resources for populations with the highest need, and where resources are likely to bring the highest impact. Therefore, it is notable that the Global Fund has increased expenditure benefiting women and girls from 42 per cent of its total portfolio in 2013 to approximately 60 per cent in 2015,<sup>40</sup> with much of the increase going to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.1.2 UN reform

Within the UN system, a process of reform is underway to streamline operations, particularly at the country level, to render them more efficient. The reforms recognize each country's primary responsibility

29 Report of the Secretary-General on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS (E/CN.6/2016/9), 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2016.

30 Report of the Secretary-General on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS (E/CN.6/2016/9), 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2016.

31 UNAIDS Strategy 2016–2021.

32 UNAIDS, 2017 estimates from the AIDSinfo online database.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Report of the Secretary-General on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS (E/CN.6/2016/9), 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2016.

36 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast Track to Accelerating the Fight against HIV and to Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030, June 2016, United Nations.

37 Ibid.

38 Resources and financing, UNAIDS website.

39 Ibid.

40 Global Fund (2017) Focus on Women and Girls.

41 Angelika Arutyunova and Cindy Clark, "Watering the leaves, starving the roots: the status of financing for women's rights organizing and gender equality" (Ontario, Canada, Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2013), cited in Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS, Report of the Secretary-General on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS (E/CN.6/2016/9), 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2016.

for its own sustainable development and envisage a coordinated, restructured regional approach, staffed by a new generation of UNCTs, under the leadership of an impartial, independent and empowered Resident Coordinator working in support of the UNDAF. The reforms aim to bring about greater transparency and accountability for results under a new funding compact between Member States and the UN development system.<sup>42</sup> Within this context, UN Women would need to intensify its coordination with other UN agencies as part of UNCTs and become part of ‘funding compacts’ agreed with Member States with the aim of reducing funding fragmentation in the UN system.<sup>43</sup> UN Women will also increasingly be called upon to provide cross-cutting thought leadership on women’s empowerment within the UN system. To respond to this demand, UN Women would need to further strengthen its regional architecture to support country-level engagement, while building up its knowledge management role to enable the UN system to deliver for gender equality.<sup>44</sup>

## 4.2 UN Women’s support to governance and national planning

### 4.2.1 UN Women’s approach to GNP

UN Women and one of its predecessors, UNIFEM, have been at the vanguard of work on gender-responsive GNP for over 20 years. During this period, while there has been some modest nuancing in terms of the intended outcomes, outputs and indicators articulated in the Strategic Plans, overall, the focus of UN Women’s GNP work has been consistent (see Box 3:

*UN Women’s approach to governance and national planning*<sup>45</sup> below and Table 1 above).

#### BOX 3

### UN Women’s approach to governance and national planning

**Definition:** UN Women’s approach to integrating gender equality in GNP is aimed at ensuring that governments take the necessary measures to achieve results in relation to GEWE. The necessary capacities, systems and resources must be established to plan, budget and monitor the functions of public institutions. The approach seeks to strengthen government accountability towards gender equality by ensuring that: gender equality is explicit in governments’ strategic objectives and priorities; is evidenced by the increase in invested resources towards gender-focused programmes and services; and is integrated in accountability frameworks that monitor government performance and effectiveness.

The main areas of engagement, as described in Strategic Plan 2011–2013 and Strategic Plan 2014–2017, are:

- Promoting gender equality through national development plans and other national sectoral plans.
- Monitoring the implementation of government gender equality commitments and strengthening mechanisms for government accountability.
- Promoting gender-responsive HIV/AIDS strategies, plans and budgets.
- Building the capacity of government, gender advocates and civil society partners to analyse, formulate, execute and monitor gender-responsive plans and budgets.
- Enabling mechanisms for the voices of women, including WLWHIV, to influence government policies, plans and budgets and monitor their implementation.

Towards the end of the Strategic Plan 2011–2013, and moving into the Strategic Plan 2014–2017, a shift in terminology occurred, the implications of which are unclear. Up until 2012, UN Women used the term gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) to refer to IA 5, whose

42 Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a health planet, A/72/684-E/2018/7, 2017, United Nations; Preliminary analysis of the financial and other implications of General Assembly resolution 72/279 for UN Women.

43 UN Women (2018) Preliminary analysis of the financial and other implications of General Assembly resolution 72/279 for UN Women

44 Preliminary analysis of the financial and other implications of General Assembly resolution 72/279 for UN Women.

45 UN Women Strategic Plan 2011–2013; UN Women Strategic Plan 2014–2017; Implementing policy commitments to gender equality and women’s rights: the theory of change of gender responsive budgeting, August 2012, UN Women; UN Women’s Contribution to Governance and National Planning, September 2012, UN Women. The first paragraph is an excerpt from UN Women’s Contribution to Governance and National Planning, September 2012, UN Women.

goal was that ‘National planning and budgeting processes promote stronger institutional accountability to gender equality commitments.’<sup>46</sup> In 2012, the term governance and national planning (GNP) was introduced and became more commonly used during the Strategic Plan 2014–2017, where the goal of IA 5 is ‘Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities.’ As can be seen from Table 1 above, the scope of GNP appears broadly similar to that of GRB and the two terms could be used interchangeably.

UN Women’s Strategic Plan 2018–2021 suggests more substantive changes to its GNP work, a number of which came into existence under the previous Strategic Plan. While the core areas of work remain, GNP now forms part of a broader outcome area covering women’s leadership and participation: ‘Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems’ (Outcome Area 2) and linkages with other streams of work under Outcome Area 2 may be anticipated.<sup>47</sup> In relation to GNP, the Strategic Plan highlights an expanding range of partners that strategically position UN Women’s GNP work at national and global levels. For example:

- Ministries of Finance are mentioned as GNP partners, in addition to sectoral ministries and local government. This shift towards closer working with Ministries of Finance reflects efforts to embed gender-responsive GNP within one of the engines of central government, strategically positioned to drive change across all national ministries and government departments, as well as local government.
- The collaboration with the IMF, referenced for the first time in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, provides an opportunity for UN Women to build an empirical evidence base on the links between gender-responsive fiscal policies and improved gender outcomes, and to expand the global application of GRB.
- The IATF on Financing for Development and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation reflect the opportunities for UN Women to continue to evolve its engagement in global financing for gender equality discussions, in follow-up to the AAAA adopted at the

Third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015. Financing for the gender equality agenda includes GNP, but is broader in considering the gender dimensions of international trade, domestic and international private business and finance, among others.

In line with UN Women’s triple mandate, its GNP work includes efforts to: strengthen normative frameworks at global, regional and national levels; operational work in support of national governments and other country-level partners; as well as coordination with other UN agencies at global, regional and national levels. Starting in 2014, the global normative work focused on supporting negotiations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. At the operational level, the focus was on supporting implementation of these frameworks and developing the methodology for SDG Indicator 5.c.1.

This operational work has supported national governments and partners in developing gender-responsive planning and budgeting systems and increasing the financial allocation to promote gender equality; thereby enabling national governments to deliver on their international and national gender equality commitments, using the approach summarized in Box 3. UN Women’s GNP-related coordination with UN agencies has enabled and strengthened normative and operational work, e.g. through coordination with UN DESA to promote gender equality in the AAAA, the outcome document resulting from the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; with the IATF on Financing for Development, (especially the 17 member IATF Gender Working Group, tasked with integrating gender equality analysis into the IATF Annual Reports), the primary substantive input to the inter-governmental Forum on Financing for Development negotiations; and UNDP and OECD, co-custodians of SDG Indicator 5.c.1.

#### **4.2.2 UN Women’s approach to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS national planning**

UN Women’s work on gender and HIV/AIDS began in 1998 with the global programme ‘Gender-Focused Responses to Addressing the Challenges of HIV/AIDS’ implemented in six countries. This programme, supported by UNAIDS, UNFPA and one of UN Women’s predecessors, UNIFEM, piloted small-scale activities intended to be catalytic in addressing gender issues

<sup>46</sup> UN Women Strategic Plan 2011–2013.

<sup>47</sup> UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

within HIV/AIDS work and to develop methodologies and strategies that could be easily replicated and adapted.

Since then, the scope of UN Women's support to address the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS has continued to expand to include: inter-agency activities at the global, regional and national levels; cross-thematic linkages; and the development of larger, regional programmes in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean region, and the CEE/CIS region. Strategies consistently employed to support the empowerment of women and transform gender relations in regard to HIV/AIDS include: advocacy for awareness raising; brokering partnerships; capacity building through research and training; as well as the use of pilot schemes to test the efficacy of innovative approaches and to build a knowledge base of effective strategies and interventions.<sup>48</sup>

In that time, the global context for UN Women's work on gender and HIV/AIDS has evolved significantly and UN Women has played a key role in international dialogue on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. For example, in 2001, UNIFEM played a key role supporting the UN General Assembly Special Session negotiations resulting in the landmark Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which recognizes the importance of taking action on gender equality and empowerment, and women's human rights, as fundamental to addressing the causes and effects of HIV/AIDS at all levels.<sup>49</sup>

The 2003 Rapid Assessment of UNIFEM's involvement in HIV/AIDS highlighted the opportunity for UNIFEM to engage more with governments to effect national-level policy change.<sup>50</sup> Over time, support to gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS planning has become a core part of UN Women's work in the area of HIV/AIDS, and the entity's Strategic Plans 2011–2013 and 2014–2017 outline work in this area as a core part of IA 5, which focuses on promoting gender equality through national planning and budgeting processes (see Section 3.2). The EC-UN Women global programme "Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS" was an important vehicle for driving this programming focus. Implemented between 2009–2013

in five countries (Cambodia, Jamaica, Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Rwanda), it sought to:

- Enhance national commitment to gender equality in the national HIV/AIDS response by mainstreaming gender within National AIDS Coordinating Authorities and creating gender champions.
- Strengthen the capacity of WLWHIV to influence national policy, programmes and resource allocation to increase the gender focus of the national AIDS response.

The approaches used on the programme were found to be effective<sup>51</sup> and programme experience has informed UN Women's ongoing work to promote gender-responsive GNP. While gender-responsive GNP forms a core focus of UN Women's operational work on HIV/AIDS, the overall scope is broader and now includes operational work with national AIDS coordinating bodies, relevant sectoral ministries and women's organizations to:

- Integrate gender equality and women's rights into the **governance of HIV/AIDS responses** including in national HIV/AIDS strategies, policies, laws, institutions, budgets and accountability frameworks.
- Promote and support the **leadership and participation of WLWHIV** and those affected (including unpaid care givers), and their networks in key decision-making processes at local, national, regional and global levels.
- **Promote access to justice** of women living with and affected by HIV, including their access to property and inheritance rights.
- Address **the intersections between HIV/AIDS and violence against women**, specifically the violence faced by WLWHIV.<sup>52</sup>

UN Women's HIV/AIDS normative work at global, regional and country levels has sought to strengthen the gender focus in international efforts to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic, aligning it with CEDAW, the BPfA and

48 Report of Rapid Assessment: UNIFEM Programming on HIV/AIDS, undated, UN Women.

49 Evaluation of UNIFEM's Programming on Gender and HIV/AIDS, Final Consolidated Report, May 2006, Universalia.

50 Report of Rapid Assessment: UNIFEM Programming on HIV/AIDS, undated, UN Women.

51 Universalia (2014) End-of-Programme Evaluation of EC-UN Women's "Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS".

52 UN Women (2018) Background Note: Briefing to the Executive Board, First Regular Session 2018: Briefing on UN Women's follow-up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

other relevant human rights treaties. In follow-up to agreement of the SDGs, this has focused on the agreement of CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS and the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, both of which include stronger gender analysis and commitments for operationalization at the country level.

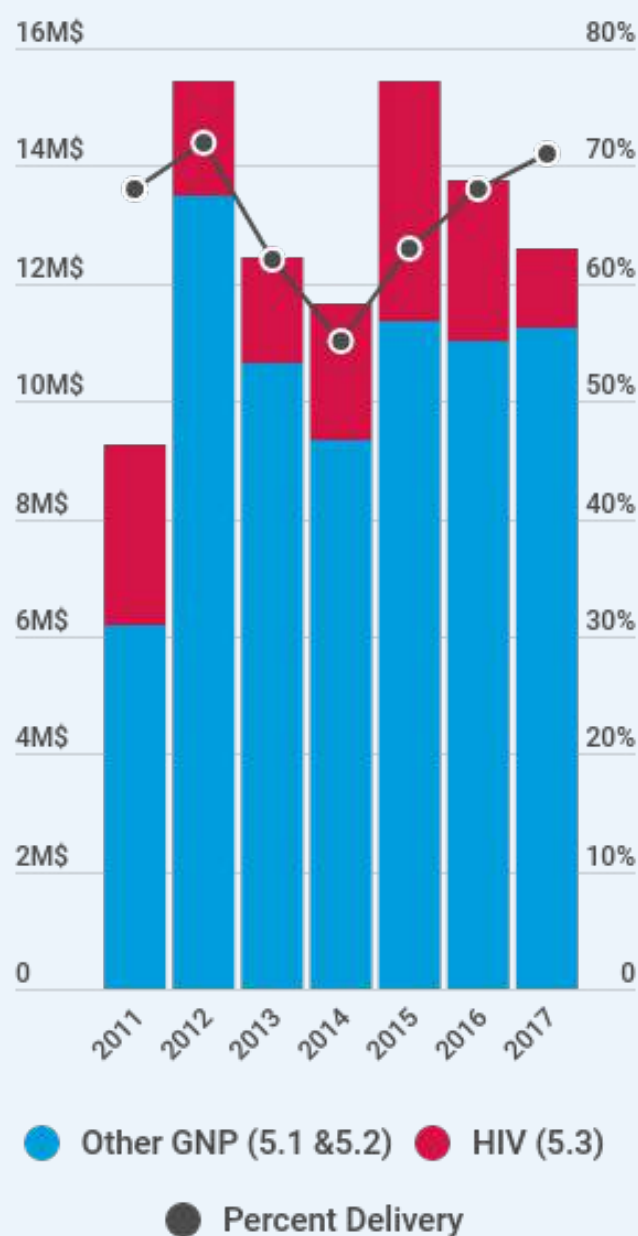
UN Women’s relationship with UNAIDS has been central to its operational and normative support, as well as to its gender coordinating remit. UN Women became the 11th co-sponsor of UNAIDS in 2012, providing an avenue for UN Women to mainstream gender dimensions into normative frameworks, operational work and within the work of UNAIDS and co-sponsors such as UNICEF and UNFPA.<sup>53</sup> As a co-sponsor, and within UNAIDS agreed Division of Labour, UN Women is the convener on gender equality and GBV, coordinating and leading co-sponsor and UNAIDS Secretariat efforts in this area. UN Women has contributed to UNAIDS’ Global Strategy 2016–2021, which, building on the SDGs, includes a gender-focused target and recognizes that gender equality supports and enables people in preventing HIV transmission, a step change compared with UNAIDS’ previous strategy.<sup>54</sup> At the national level, UN Women has engaged through the structure of national AIDS responses. The focus on “one plan, one coordination mechanism and one monitoring framework” and the existence of the UNAIDS theme groups at the country level as well as the joint AIDS team (which is broader than just the UN) have all been important entry points for UN Women to engage, and thus to ensure prioritization of gender issues and gender equality.

### 4.2.3 UN Women’s GNP portfolio

Over the course of 2011–2017, UN Women’s GNP operations took place across 76 countries, 74 of which focused on GNP specifically, while 35 included targeted

HIV/AIDS programmes.<sup>55</sup> Over 2011–2017, the total allocated budget for UN Women’s GNP work, including HIV/AIDS components, amounted to US\$ 125.8 million as per the data companions of UN Women Annual Reports. Collectively, IA 5 represents approximately 8 per cent of allocated budgets across all impact areas.

**FIGURE 1**  
Budget and delivery figures for UN Women GNP work (2011–2017) per RMS data



53 UNAIDS co-sponsors are: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), The World Bank, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

54 On the Fast Track to End AIDS: UNAIDS 2016–2021 Global Strategy, UNAIDS.

55 Countries tagged as having engagements on GNP or HIV (Impact Area 5) according to UN RMS, across period 2011–2017.

**BOX 4****List of global programmes supporting GNP objectives 2011–2017**

- Gender Equitable Local Development (GELD) Programme (2008–2012)
- Integrating GRB into the Aid Effectiveness Agenda (2009–2012)
- GRB Phase III: Upscaling Gender-responsive Budgeting for Accelerated Action toward GE (2009–2011)
- Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality (F4GE) (2011–2015)
- Local Level Governance and Leadership – part of the broader Women’s Political and Economic Empowerment and Governance (2014–2017)
- Action to promote the legal empowerment of women in the context of HIV/AIDS (2010–2013)
- Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS (2009–2013)

The proportion of HIV/AIDS work within this constituted 19 per cent (US\$ 19.7 million), having reduced from 33 per cent in 2011 to 10 per cent in 2017 (see Figure 1: Budget and delivery figures for UN Women GNP work (2011–2017))<sup>56</sup>, although these figures may be marginally higher on average.<sup>57</sup> It should also be noted that UN Women conducted a separate financial review of its HIV related work across all impact areas which provided a summary total of US\$ 86.5 million expenditure, although the proportion of work relating to gender-responsive HIV planning and budgeting (IA 5) could not be disaggregated from this data.<sup>58</sup>

56 The distinction between GNP and HIV work is based on UN Women RMS data that differentiates between subimpact areas 5.1 and 5.2 (GNP) and subimpact area 5.3 (HIV).

57 Within the HIV financial data itself, there is a variance in UN Women’s expenditure reporting between 2011–2017, with its reporting on UNAIDS UBRAF expenditure showing figures up to 14 per cent higher than those shown on the internal UN Women ATLAS reporting system.

58 The GNP-specific funding within the separate financial review of the HIV related work could not be validated by the UN Women Finance Team.

In the period under evaluation, the GNP portfolio included seven global programmes (see Box 4) representing a combined budget of US\$ 33.5 million, of which US\$ 4.4 million was for global programmes Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS (EC), and action to promote the legal empowerment of women in the context of HIV and AIDS (DFATD).<sup>59</sup>

59 In practice, these two HIV focused global programmes began in 2009 and 2010 respectively, so the US\$ 4.4 million figure is partially reduced with respect to the evaluation focus period (2011–2017). Moreover, UNAIDS funding is excluded on the basis that GNP-related streams are not discretely highlighted in the literature, although figures for the 2011–2017 period are likely to be significant.

# 5. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the evaluation approach and methodology. It provides an overview of the evaluation methods and instruments for data collection. Further detail is provided in annexes to this report.

## 5.1 Approach

### 5.1.1 Concepts and principles

In line with the approach agreed in the inception report, the evaluation applied a theory-based approach as it was considered most appropriate. A counterfactual evaluation approach was felt to be challenging as it would be difficult to identify a valid counterfactual or comparison for UN Women's GNP work, which engages at the national level with the whole government system. This would have resulted in reduced coverage of countries where UN Women is supporting GNP and it would have been difficult to remain within the available resource envelope for this evaluation. Other evaluation approaches, like theory-based evaluations, which focus on establishing causal mechanisms contributing to change, are accepted as valid.<sup>60</sup>

A number of other principles underpin the evaluation approach. These include a commitment to maintaining a utilization focus throughout the evaluation (emphasizing end-user needs and application across global, regional and national levels), and streamlining an awareness of human rights and gender equality aspects throughout by drawing on United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines.<sup>61</sup> The evaluation approach also includes both a summative and

formative component, thereby covering aspects of both accountability and learning.

### 5.1.2 Reconstructed theory of change

As a theory-based evaluation, the enquiry was guided by the theory behind UN Women's strategy. In the absence of a detailed ToC focused specifically on GNP work, the evaluation team reconstructed a ToC (see Figure 2) drawing on documentation reviewed and interviews conducted during the inception phase, and capturing how inputs are expected to translate into outputs and outcomes and, ultimately, into impact.<sup>62</sup> For the purposes of this evaluation, which is summative in nature and focused on complex environments where control sites are not manageable, a theory-based approach was considered optimal.

The reconstructed ToC considers UN Women's tripartite mandate (i.e. working across normative, operational and coordination areas) and makes explicit how UN Women's interventions are expected to contribute to observed results and outcomes. The ToC thereby acts as a guiding conceptual framework for the evaluation as it reflects how IA 5 is situated in a wider results framework. The ToC allowed the evaluation to critically assess the validity of the intervention

<sup>60</sup> Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluations, Working Paper 38, April 2012, Elliott Stern et al., Department for International Development.

<sup>61</sup> UNEG (2014) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality In Evaluations (United Nations Evaluation Group).

<sup>62</sup> See UN Women (August 2012) The Theory of Change of Gender Responsive Budgeting; UN Women (September 2012) UN Women's Contribution to Governance and National Planning; UN Women (2015) Flagships Programming Booklet and UN Women (2017) Theories of Change for UN Women Thematic Priorities.



logic that has guided UN Women's work and provides a framework to guide contribution analysis to understand UN Women's contribution to outcomes.

Figure 2 illustrates the key elements of the reconstructed ToC for GNP. Starting from the right-hand side of the ToC, the diagram shows that the overall envisioned impact of UN Women's work on GNP is to:

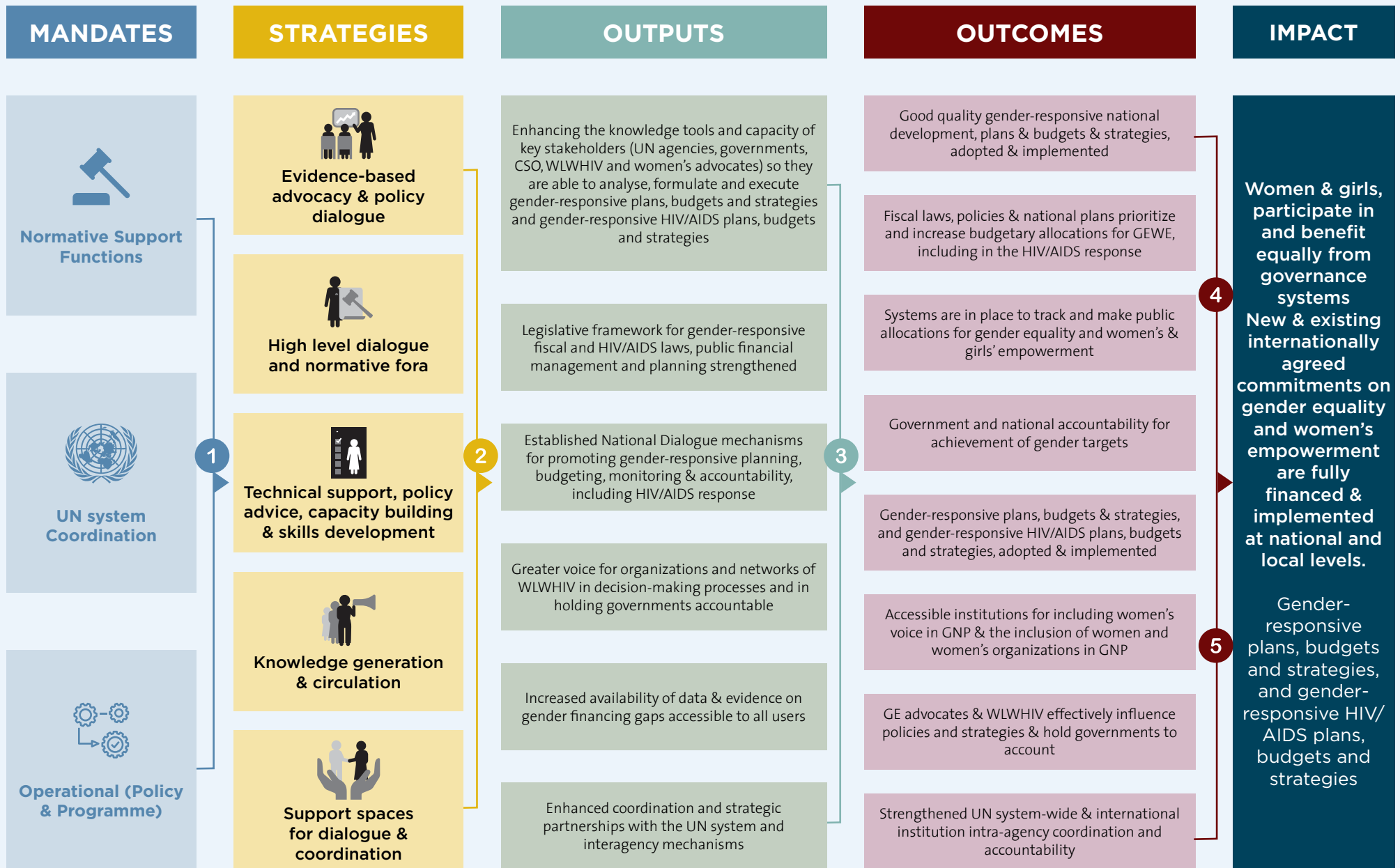
- Enable women and girls to participate and benefit equally from governance systems.
- Ensure that new and existing internationally agreed commitments on GEWE are fully financed and implemented at national and local levels.
- Ensure HIV/AIDS responses are gender-responsive.

This is to be achieved by working with key partners and stakeholders, including Ministries of Finance, planning ministries, line ministries, women's machineries, local governments, and national and local AIDS coordinating bodies at global, regional and country levels. To achieve the eight inter-related outcomes, UN Women needs to ensure that:

1. Gender-responsive national development plans, budgets and strategies are adopted and implemented.
2. Fiscal laws, policies and national plans prioritize and increase budgetary allocations for GEWE and HIV/AIDS.
3. Systems are in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women and girls' empowerment, in line with SDG Indicator 5.c.1.
4. Government and national authorities are accountable for the achievement of gender targets.
5. Good quality gender-responsive HIV/AIDS plans, budgets and strategies are adopted and implemented.
6. Accessible institutions for including women's voice in GNP and the inclusion of women and women's organizations in planning and budgeting processes are implemented. Gender equality advocates and WLWHIV effectively influence policies and strategies and hold governments to account.
7. UN system-wide and international organization intra-agency coordination and accountability are strengthened.

The reconstructed ToC is supported by a series of assumptions that are located between its various levels. For instance, the assumptions referring to the stage between strategies and outputs are focused firstly on the availability of financial and human resources within UN Women and its key partners, and secondly the active participation of the target groups in all activities (shown in Table 2). The ToC is also supported by a schematic commentary on the anticipated nature of the causal connections between each stage from mandates to impact, as a preliminary guide for contribution analysis. Reflecting the documentation from which this ToC is reconstructed (which is not explicit on the anticipated pathways of causation for specific GNP-related activities or interventions) causal pathways are broadly expressed in the expectation that the evaluation analysis would reveal more detail of this process. This is reflected in Conclusion 5.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Reconstructed Theory of Change**



**TABLE 2**  
**Key assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change**

ToC Component	Evaluation Question	Main Assumptions	Nature of Causal Connections
Mandates to Strategies	1, 4, 6, 8, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normative, coordination and operational roles complement and reinforce one another</li> </ul>	<b>Attribution</b> (direct causal linkage)
Strategies to output	1, 4, 6, 8, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability of financial and human resources within UN Women and its key partners</li> <li>Active participation of the target groups in activities</li> </ul>	<b>Attribution</b> (direct causal linkage)
Outputs to outcomes	2, 3, 4, 5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willingness and resources among key stakeholders to use new or strengthened skills, knowledge, data and tools</li> <li>Political will to support commitments towards gender equality and HIV/AIDS in national development priorities, economic policies, legislation and governance structures among national governments, civil society and donors</li> <li>Political consensus can be reached through data and evidence</li> <li>Gender advocates and organizations, and networks of WLWHIV have the capacity to influence national financing decisions</li> <li>Adequate capacity of the various actors to plan, budget, deliver and monitor performance in terms of gender equality and HIV/AIDS obligations</li> <li>Planning and budgeting systems and overarching macro-economic frameworks are coherent with gender equality objectives</li> </ul>	<b>Significant/plausible contribution</b> (main contributing factor)
Outcomes to impact	5, 8, 9, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate funds are allocated to implement gender equality commitments as evidenced by increased benefit to women and girls from public services and resources</li> <li>Social norms and gender roles allow women and girls to use services, and to participate in economic decision-making activities</li> <li>Supportive political, cultural, social and economic contexts</li> </ul>	<b>Remote contribution</b> (influencing factor)

### 5.1.3 Evaluation questions

A process of consultation conducted during the inception phase led to the identification of 11 evaluation questions, organized under four key questions. They apply four OECD-DAC criteria: relevance, effectiveness, emerging impact and efficiency, as well as results related to integrated human rights and gender equality principles. Annex B provides an overview of the key questions, OECD-DAC criteria, and sub-questions which underpinned the evaluation.

## 5.2

### Methodology

#### 5.2.1 Data collection process and data sources

The main data sources for the evaluation comprise:

- Review of global strategic documents, underpinned by an evaluability assessment to understand the availability and quality of GNP data.
- A portfolio analysis of 17 focus countries where UN Women provides GNP support.
- Five country case studies involving primary data collection through a country visit (in four countries) and remote data collection (in one country).
- A global case study.
- A survey of UN Women staff (Figure 3)<sup>63</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> A total of 46 Country Offices responded (10 Regional Offices and MCOs, and 36 Country Offices). Of the 46 responses, 30 declared engagement on gender-responsive HIV budgets and plans.

**FIGURE 3**

**Data sources and coverage used for the evaluation**



**DESK-BASED REVIEW**

Desk review of 17 focus countries, including financial analysis



**6 CASE STUDIES**

6 in-depth case studies: 5 countries & headquarters office



**SURVEY**

Survey sent to all UN Women offices (33% response rate)



Evaluability assessment, stakeholder mapping & **GLOBAL DOCUMENT REVIEW** (ToC, strategic documents & financial data)



**5 COUNTRY VISITS** & headquarters inception meetings, with approx. 170 people at all levels (with a ratio of 3:5 in favour of women)



Four UN Women **SYSTEMS SCANNED**

1. Extranet
2. RMS
3. COAT
4. DAMS

During the inception stage, a detailed evaluability assessment mapped the depth and quantity of available data, alongside broader stakeholder mapping (see Annex F). The findings of these assessments informed a gap analysis and guided subsequent engagements with UN Women offices to address these gaps. Following this, UN Women internal and external strategic documents, guidelines, mid-term and final evaluation reports were analysed in relation to each of the evaluation questions (see Annex M for a reference list).

The process for selecting the 17 focus countries for the portfolio analysis, and the five country case studies, sought to achieve as representative a sample as possible, while ensuring coverage of all UN Women’s regions and prioritizing those countries where GNP programming was most mature, and therefore offered good learning potential (see Annex C for full details

of the selection process).<sup>64</sup> Other critical considerations in the selection process included the presence of UN Women support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and ‘unique features’ such as strong engagement with sectoral ministries, or support to local government. The initial sample population was 101 countries. Over several phases of analysis, and applying seven criteria, these were narrowed down to 17 focus countries. From these, five countries were selected for in-depth analysis through a country case study (Table 3). The evaluation was required to reflect a regional spread for the case study countries. Thereafter, the main criterion in the selection was the willingness to participate in the evaluation through hosting a country visit by evaluation team members.

<sup>64</sup> Maturity was defined as support having been provided consistently since 2011, as well as frequency of involvement in GNP global programmes.

**TABLE 3**  
**Geographic spread of selected countries for portfolio and case study analysis**

UN Women region	Asia Pacific	Arab States	Europe and Central Asia	East and Southern Africa / West and Central Africa	Latin America and Caribbean
Case study country	Timor-Leste	State of Palestine	Albania	Uganda	Ecuador
Portfolio country	India, Nepal	Morocco	Serbia, Ukraine	Tanzania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Mozambique	Barbados, Honduras, Mexico

The portfolio analysis was a desk-based exercise, extracting relevant data against the evaluation questions from documentation available in UN Women's RMS, extranet, or from the Country Offices. In some cases, interviews with key UN Women staff were held to supplement this data.

The country case studies comprised a desk-based review of relevant documentation, applying the same process used in the portfolio analysis, and a country visit of four to five days involving one evaluation team member, a representative from UN Women's Evaluation Office and a national consultant. During the country visit, the evaluation team collected primary data through a series of key interviews and focus group discussions (see Annex D for a list of tools and questionnaires, and Annex E for a full list of respondents). Each country case study resulted in an aide-memoire providing the Country Office with a real-time snapshot of GNP work to inform country strategic planning.

The global case study followed the same approach as the country case studies, but focused on two examples of UN Women's GNP normative work at the global level: UN Women's support to inter-governmental financing for development negotiations from 2015 onwards and UN Women's support to the adoption of CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS and to the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, both agreed in 2016. The aim of this enquiry was to understand how opportunities for promoting the integration of gender equality in global normative frameworks have been identified, what UN Women has sought to achieve, and to what extent these strategies have been effective in terms of global-level influencing of other stakeholders and partners.

The survey of UN Women staff focused primarily on issues of organizational efficiency and learning. All UN Women Regional and Country Offices supporting GNP work in the period 2011–2017 were invited to participate.

The evaluation was conducted in line with gender equality and human rights principles as set out in the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.<sup>65</sup> This involved analysis of gender equality and human rights considerations across all evaluation questions, in addition to having

evaluation questions specifically focused on these issues.

### 5.2.2 Data analysis

The evaluation team used a number of analytical approaches to understand the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of UN Women's support to GNP. The approaches included:

- Descriptive and content analysis to assess the background and broader contextual documentation of the evaluation, and to describe UN Women's portfolio of initiatives at different levels and across its tripartite mandate. This focused on analysing documents and interview notes to identify common issues, trends and patterns for each of the evaluation questions. Analysis thereby identified outliers, data gaps and contrasting views.
- Quantitative and statistical analysis applied to quantitative data, including the financial and monitoring data obtained via UN Women's RMS and Annual Data Companions, as well as the survey data.
- Contribution analysis to understand the extent and results of UN Women's contribution to GNP changes recorded, using the ToC to understand change pathways.

### 5.2.3 Constraints and limitations

The evaluation encountered five main constraints, which are described below.

1. **GNP terminology:** Across documentation and in case study visits, the evaluation team encountered a lack of consistency and clarity in terminology used to refer to UN Women's work on gender-responsive GNP. This lack of clarity over key terminology and its meaning presented challenges for the evaluation in understanding the scope of work actually being pursued and the extent to which it fits with UN Women's wider vision for GNP. As Table 1 in Section 3.2 demonstrates, the intended scope of IA 5 remains consistent across Strategic Plan 2011–2013 and 2014–2017, but the terminology used to describe it changes slightly. In the Strategic Plan 2011–2013, the term 'national planning and budgeting' tends to be used, while in the Strategic Plan 2014–2017, the term 'governance and national planning' is

<sup>65</sup> UNEG (2017) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (United Nations Evaluation Group).

adopted. In both cases, the terminology includes work to promote gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning. Other key documentation from the Strategic Plan 2011–2013 period uses the term ‘gender-responsive budgeting’ to refer to work that supports the integration of gender analysis into budgets, strategies and plans – that is, what is presented in the Strategic Plan as national planning and national budgeting.<sup>66</sup> This documentation tends not to look at the specifics of gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning, but does sometimes recognize National AIDS Councils as key actors for national priority setting. Furthermore, during the evaluation, the evaluation team found that Country Offices tend to use the term gender-responsive budgeting rather than governance and national planning, and that staff working on gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning would not necessarily see their work as included within the term governance and national planning. The evaluation recommends that UN Women clarify the preferred terminology and its particular meaning. For the purposes of this report, in line with the evaluation’s ToR, the term GNP is used to refer to UN Women’s work to promote gender equality through national and sectoral strategies, plans and budgets (i.e. the full scope of IA 5). Recognizing that UN Women’s work to support gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting is in practice largely separate to this, where findings, conclusions and recommendations relate to HIV/AIDS work, this is made explicit, normally through the term ‘GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS’.

2. **Building a solid evidence base of UN Women’s gender-responsive GNP work in the area of HIV/AIDS:** The evaluation’s evidence base for UN Women’s contribution to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning is thin. To a large extent, this results from the country sample including only a small number of countries where UN Women has provided substantive and consistent support to work in this area, a consequence of the evaluation design which conceptualized UN Women’s support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning as an integrated part, and subset, of its broader GNP. Only four of the 17 focal countries

(24 per cent of the country sample), Barbados (MCO), Mozambique, Senegal and Uganda have provided substantive and consistent support (in budget terms) to gender-responsive GNP in HIV/AIDS work in the period 2011–2017, and have been studied as part of this evaluation. Only one of the five country case studies (20 per cent), Uganda, had substantive and consistent UN Women support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning. To ensure the findings related to UN Women’s contribution to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning are robust, the evaluation team triangulated the evidence from multiple sources and applied caution in drawing generalized conclusions based on available evidence.

3. **Evaluation approach:** The absence of a counterfactual or a comparator means that the evaluation is not able to attribute results to UN Women’s support. Instead, the evaluation approach sought to collate evidence which plausibly demonstrates (or refutes) that UN Women has made a contribution to observed changes.
4. **Data availability and quality for contribution analysis:** The availability of data in some areas was variable and UN Women reporting often does not identify the specific contribution UN Women – among other actors – has made to particular reported outcomes. UN Women has put in place new corporate information management systems, including RMS, during the period under evaluation. For the period prior to their establishment, data was often not systematically available, affecting the evaluation’s analysis of the achievements under the Strategic Plan 2011–2013. Some UN Women offices have yet to migrate data from the previous Atlas system to new systems (RMS) and the availability of core programme documentation for these offices is more constrained. The evaluation team sought to overcome data gaps by directly sourcing documentation from Country Offices, but there were differing levels of response to information requests and gaps still remain. The evaluation team sourced additional documentation through UN Women’s intranet. Where UN Women reports are available, they often do not identify the specific contribution made by the entity to a particular reported outcome, or necessarily identify the full set of other actors who have contributed. This made it difficult to apply contribution analysis,

66 See, for example, *Implementing policy commitments to gender equality and women’s rights: the theory of change of gender responsive budgeting*, August 2012, UN Women.

beyond the five case study countries. To mitigate any over-claiming of results, the evaluation team exercised caution in concluding UN Women had made a contribution, and sought to draw on multiple sources when doing so.

- 5. Sampling and generalization of findings:** The evaluation focused on 17 countries, which represent approximately one quarter of countries where UN Women supports GNP work, as reported in RMS, and which delivered 45 per cent of UN Women's total GNP work 2014–2017. The countries were selected to achieve as representative a sample as possible, while prioritizing 'mature' GNP programmes (those that have enjoyed UN

Women support since 2011 and have participated in at least one global programme) considered to offer the most potential for learning (see Annex C for details of the country selection process). This sampling approach means that the findings are not representative of the whole UN Women portfolio of GNP work. Rather, they reflect what is possible through investment and technical support over several years. While this is important to recognize, the breadth of analysis and triangulation of findings with other corporate reviews and evaluations minimizes concerns over representation and validity.

# 6

## FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation under each of the four Key Questions. The specific evaluation question to which each finding relates is also referenced as a guide to the reader.

### 6.1

#### Key Question 1 – Relevance

**How appropriate and unique was UN Women’s approach to GNP at the design stage to partner government priorities and national contexts and how did it adapt to changes in context?**

##### FINDING 1:

There is strong alignment of UN Women’s GNP work, including HIV/AIDS, to partner government priorities, national and global contexts.

The evaluation found strong evidence from stakeholders and documentation that **UN Women’s GNP work, including work in the area of HIV/AIDS, is closely aligned with partner priorities, national and global contexts.**<sup>67</sup> This is consistent with other UN Women corporate evaluations and evaluations of GNP and HIV/AIDS global programmes specifically, which all found that alignment of UN Women priorities to national needs has been a key strength since tracking began in 2013.<sup>68</sup>

67 Itad (2018) Case studies; portfolio analyses.

68 UN Women (2017) What can we learn from UN Women Evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016; UN Women (2016) Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on “Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality” (Reference No. UNWHQRF18) Prepared by International Solutions Group, August; Universalia (2014) End-of-Programme Evaluation of EC-UN Women’s “Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS”.

During the period under evaluation, agreement and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been a central focus of global development efforts. UN Women has been fully engaged in this process.<sup>69</sup> In the area of GNP, UN Women made a significant contribution to ensuring the AAAA contained strong commitments to promote gender equality, in line with SDG 5.<sup>70</sup> In the words of one partner involved in the AAAA negotiation, “Without UN Women [we] wouldn’t have had as good an agreement”.<sup>71</sup> UN Women’s contribution has been made in partnership with national-level partners, such as Ministries of Finance and national civil society, to promote alignment between national and global development priorities (see Finding 4).<sup>72</sup> UN Women has also strategically supported implementation of the SDGs by leading the development of a robust methodology for the measurement of SDG Indicator 5.c.1 “Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and

69 Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015; UN Women (2018) Background Note: Briefing to the Executive Board, First Regular Session 2018: Briefing on UN Women’s follow up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board; UN Women Corporate evaluation of its work on Governance and National Planning: HIV/AIDS (Varughese 2018).

70 Interviews for the global case study, 2018, Interviews with Member States and UN agencies.

71 Interview with UN agency, Interviews for the global case study, 2018.

72 Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015.



women's empowerment".<sup>73</sup> UN Women has engaged national government partners in the methodology development process, ensuring national priorities underpin global monitoring (see Finding 4).<sup>74</sup>

In the area of HIV/AIDS, UN Women's global advocacy efforts have supported and bolstered SDG commitments by bringing strong gender analysis to global HIV/AIDS discussions. Through its work with UNAIDS co-sponsors, the SADC and international and national civil society stakeholders, UN Women has strategically highlighted the gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, supporting the agreement of CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child, and HIV/AIDS and the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, which together articulate critical actions for Member States to address high levels of HIV infection among women, especially young women, and promote gender equality more broadly.<sup>75</sup> These agreements map out an agenda for action to reduce HIV prevalence among women and girls, making progress towards SDG target 3.3 and contributing towards SDG 5 on achieving gender equality. As with the broader GNP work, national governments have been key drivers of these processes, with UN Women supporting and enabling, thereby aligning its global advocacy with national priorities.<sup>76</sup>

**There is extensive evidence of UN Women's country-level GNP support, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, aligning with national priorities and enabling governments to better deliver on their global and national commitments.** Based on feedback from governments, civil society and other development partners, all five case studies undertaken for this evaluation concluded that UN Women's support responds to national government commitments.<sup>77</sup> For example, in Timor-Leste, UN Women's GNP work has supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to work towards carrying out the national commitments established by

the 2015 inter-ministerial Maubisse Declaration for rural women's economic empowerment, which commits to 36 concrete targets to improve rural women's economic conditions by 2017. In Albania, in 2015, the UN Women Gender Equality Facility in Albania (GEF) Project was established and supported the alignment of NSDI II (2016–2020) with normative human rights policies. In Uganda, key government stakeholders see UN Women as a crucial partner in helping the government to meet its national obligations under the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (2015) and its global commitments to the SDGs and CEDAW.<sup>78</sup>

This is further corroborated through independent evaluations of UN Women's GNP<sup>79</sup> and HIV/AIDS work,<sup>80</sup> as well as this evaluation's portfolio analysis, where UN Women reporting from at least 10 of the 17 countries highlights how their GNP and/or HIV/AIDS support aligns with government priorities and global normative commitments.<sup>81</sup> Alignment of country-level GNP work with government policies and UN Women priorities has generally been driven by government commitments to global normative frameworks such as CEDAW and the SDGs, for example in Albania and Ecuador,<sup>82</sup> while in humanitarian and post-conflict contexts, such as Palestine and Sierra Leone, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 is a key reference point.

Regional frameworks, such as the European Union Acquis in Albania, are also influential.<sup>83</sup> In addition, the evaluation found GNP alignment is often supported by UN Women's long-term and consistent engagement with governments on GEWE, which has been key to building good relationships with governments and maintaining momentum for GNP (See

73 SDG Indicator 5.c.1: Methodological Note for the IAEG-SDGs, undated, UN Women, OECD, UNDP.

74 Report of Expert Group Meeting, Sustainable Development Goal 5.c.1: 'proportion of countries with systems in place to track and make public gender equality allocations', 27–28 March, UN Women.

75 Interviews for the global case study, 2018, interviews with Member States, UN partners, civil society and UN Women staff.

76 SADC Technical Meeting to review the SADC sponsored United Nations Resolution on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS, 27–30 July 2015, South Africa.

77 Case studies for Albania, Ecuador, Palestine, Timor-Leste and Uganda, 2018.

78 Case studies for Timor-Leste, Albania and Uganda, 2018.

79 Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda Evaluation, September 2012, Universalia; Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on 'Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality' (Reference No. UNWHQRF18) Prepared by International Solutions Group, August.

80 End-of-Programme Evaluation of EC-UN Women's "Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS"; End of Programme Evaluation of the Project "Action to promote the legal empowerment of women in the context of HIV and AIDS 03/2010–11/2013, May 2014, IFI; Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda Evaluation, September 2012.

81 Portfolio analysis for five case studies, in addition to Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mozambique, Nepal and Morocco.

82 Albania case study 2018; Ecuador case study 2018.

83 Albania case study, 2018.

Findings 12 and 13).<sup>84</sup> Detailed cases from Palestine and Mozambique on UN Women's alignment with national and global contexts are presented in Box 5 below, which show alignment entry points relating to national planning ministries, sectoral ministries and civil society engagement respectively.

#### BOX 5

### The variety of entry points demonstrated by UN Women offices to build alignment

In Palestine, the evidence suggests strong alignment of UN Women GNP objectives by drawing on entry points into the national apparatus, despite ongoing capacity constraints within government. For example, at the request of the Ministry of Planning and Development, UN Women provided technical support to the Ministry of Planning & Administrative Development (MoPAD)<sup>85</sup> for the development of the 2014–2017 National Development Plan; and enabled the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) to include GEWE in the most recent National Development Plan and to develop the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategies. MoPAD's endorsement of CEDAW, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy (CSNGS) (2014–16; 2017–2022) are all consistent with UN Women's normative mandate and approach to GNP (UN Women Palestine, 2017 Annual Report, p. 3).

In the case of Mozambique, the entry point to build alignment was civil society engagement. Due to resonance with national HIV/AIDS planning, UN Women supported the participation of a broad platform of women's groups across civil society to inform the Government of Mozambique's National Strategic Plan — HIV/AIDS component (Plano Estratégico Nacional de Resposta ao HIV e SIDA-PEN IV). The Country Office conducted three preparatory working sessions reaching out to 30 women's associations across all provinces. These were co-facilitated by staff from the Ministry of Planning and Development with a view to raising awareness of national planning processes and identification of strategic entry points for responses to their needs. (UN Women Mozambique, Annual Report)

84 Timor-Leste case study, 2018; Uganda case study, 2018; Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda Evaluation, September 2012, Universalia.

85 During 2016/17 MoPAD merged with the Ministry of Finance which became the Ministry of Finance and Planning, allegedly resulting in the loss of status of many MoPAD officials (Key Stakeholder Interviews, 2018).

Where countries have prioritized HIV/AIDS, UN Women's work in promoting gender-responsive HIV responses is well aligned to those priorities. HIV/AIDS programmes were of varying importance at country level, depending on the extent of funding, the significance of HIV/AIDS and perceptions of its importance.<sup>86</sup> As HIV prevalence rates were not a criteria for selection of case study and focus countries, this variation is to be expected in the evaluation sample. Among some countries without a dedicated HIV/AIDS programme, there has nevertheless been a degree of coordination with agencies working directly on HIV/AIDS (e.g. Albania, Palestine, Sierra Leone) and/or incorporating HIV/AIDS in GBV programmes (Ecuador, Sierra Leone). In other countries where HIV is not a government priority, UN Women Country Offices do not address HIV/AIDS in relation to GNP (e.g. Nepal).

#### FINDING 2:

UN Women, in partnership primarily with civil society organizations (CSOs) but also with governments, has supported the establishment of channels for women and girls' voices to influence GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. However, the extent of institutionalization at this stage is uncertain.

**At country level, fostering long-term partnerships with women's organizations with strong links to women and girls at the grassroots is a unique UN Women strength<sup>87</sup> and part of its overall strategy in GNP and HIV/AIDS work. UN Women's long track record in GNP and the value placed on country-level collaboration helps this process, making long-term partnerships feasible. In all the case study countries UN Women has gained important footholds in establishing channels for women and girls' voices to influence GNP through CSOs (and in at least five of the 12 other focal countries).<sup>88</sup>**

86 For example, the Palestine case study found that incidence of HIV/AIDS was estimated to be less than 100 people and Ministry of Health has not prioritized HIV/AIDS in its strategy.

87 UN Women (2017) Corporate evaluation of UN Women's Strategic Partnerships for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Final Synthesis Report, January 2017, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office.

88 Portfolio analyses for Tanzania, India, Mozambique and Senegal, and for Haiti, see UN Final Evaluation on Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality (Reference No. UNWHQRF18).

**BOX 6****UN Women support to CSOs to influence national and local planning processes**

In Uganda, UN Women enabled CSOs to sit on the advisory team to the National Planning Authority during the design stage of National Development Plan II (NDP II). This was possible because of the prior relationships established with seven of the planning sectors, which were the focus of capacity building by UN Women together with UNDP. CSO and government stakeholders also attributed this to UN Women's advocacy and ability to bring stakeholders, including CSOs, together.<sup>89</sup> Stand-alone provisions on GEWE were subsequently included in NDP II, and gender provisions specific to each of the 10 different sectors. Progress has also been made in translating these provisions into sector policy, but challenges are implied in the compliance rate for gender responsiveness in MDA budget submissions, which were rated as 'fair' (2016).<sup>90</sup>

Through the global programme 'Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality', UN Women provided grants to CSOs in Cameroon, Haiti, India and Serbia to enable them to engage in planning processes and research the implementation of government gender equality commitments.<sup>91</sup> For example:

- In Serbia, UN Women supported Association Fenomena to assist 10 women's NGOs in eight towns in central, western and southern Serbia to engage in local planning and budgeting processes. The Association provided training and guidance materials to assist the NGOs in engaging with their local authorities. As a result of the project, the NGOs have strengthened their relationships with local authorities. One of the groups succeeded in obtaining local authority agreement to allocate funding for agricultural production for rural women in their municipality.<sup>92</sup>
- In India, UN Women supported the CSO Sangini Mahila Kalyan Samiti to research implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in Madhya Pradesh. The research revealed a lack of awareness among women about the Act, and considerable resource and funding gaps in its implementation.<sup>93</sup>

89 Uganda case study, 2018. At the request of government, UN Women helped to support the coordination mechanism on GEWE with the government, including: the Gender Statistics Committee at UBOS, Gender Working Group at MFPED, seven sector gender planning committees at the National Planning Authority (NPA), and National Gender Coordination Mechanism by Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). UN Women Uganda, 2013 Annual Report, p. 3.

In Ecuador, UN Women has supported the establishment of channels for women and girls to influence GNP, through dialogue with the National Assembly. As such, women's organizations were able to influence the National Assembly's agenda by raising their concerns on GEWE with senior members of the National Assembly (president, two vice presidents) and representatives from the Parliamentary Group on Women's Rights and other powerful government offices, including the Secretariat for Political Management from the Presidency of the Republic.<sup>94</sup> In Haiti, UN Women has supported the reactivation of the National Gender Coordinating Group, with CSOs invited to participate. This has consolidated the participation of a group of feminist economists within the Group, in line with one of the strategies in the Global Programme Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality, which sought to support feminist economists and gender equality advocates in contributing to stronger policy coherence on gender equality in economic and development policy forums.<sup>95</sup>

The channels supported have at specific moments enabled women and girls' voices, through CSOs, to influence policy design (as in Uganda, Palestine, Timor-Leste, Ecuador, Mozambique and Haiti) and the budget review process (Timor-Leste and Uganda).<sup>96</sup> In some cases, UN Women has helped to enable direct channels of influence where CSOs representing women and girls call on governments and elected bodies to account for their GEWE commitments, as in Senegal's Gender Hygiene and Sanitation programme; the Commission of Transition toward the Council of Women and Gender Equality in Ecuador; the Community Scorecard initiative in Albania; and

90 Uganda Equal Opportunities Commission 2016, Assessment Report on Compliance of Ministerial Policy Statements with Gender and Equity Requirements.

91 Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality (Reference No. UNWHQRF18) Prepared by International Solutions Group, August.

92 Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality, Civil Society Grant, Association Fenomena Final Narrative Report, undated.

93 Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality, Programme Brief, 2016

94 UN Women Ecuador Annual Report, 2015:4.

95 Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality (Reference No. UNWHQRF18) Prepared by International Solutions Group, August.

96 Case studies for Albania, Ecuador, Palestine, Timor-Leste and Uganda, 2018.

the engagement of women's associations in the HIV/AIDS component of the Mozambique National Plan.<sup>97</sup>

### BOX 7

#### Involvement of WLWHIV in Uganda

In Uganda, CSOs have been highly involved, including those representing WLWHIV. UN Women successfully advocated for the inclusion of CSOs in key government advisory/decision-making bodies (advisory team to the National Planning Authority; National Planning Authority for HIV/AIDS; and technical working groups of the Uganda AIDS Commission), to provide inputs to policy design and policy guidance and oversight to the NPA for HIV/AIDS. This has had a direct influence on strategic planning and budgets of select ministries; and contributed to improved gender-responsive approaches and support to the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) and the Global Fund.

(Source: Uganda case study: donor and CSO interviews)

#### **In the area of HIV/AIDS, UN Women's work at country level offers good examples of establishing effective channels for women's voices to be heard in policy forums.**

Uganda offers a promising example where UN Women, in collaboration with other agencies (e.g. Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, UNAIDS), has begun to institutionalize the channels for women and girls' voices to influence country responses to HIV/AIDS (see Box 7). This involves CSO representatives having a regular role in policy dialogue and in holding government to account for its response to HIV/AIDS.<sup>98</sup> The approach consists of a dedicated person having regular engagement with the Country Coordinating Mechanism for HIV. With support from UN Women, Uganda secured a grant from the Global Fund which covers the cost of a position on the UAC/Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanism. This has enabled their partner, International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa, to work through the representative to contribute to the Country Coordination Mechanism's regular dialogues. In Mozambique, UN Women, with support from funding from the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF), supported opportunities for

<sup>97</sup> Case studies for Albania and Ecuador, 2018.

<sup>98</sup> Itad (2018) Uganda case study.

organizations of WLWHIV (Organizations of Positive Women) to have input in debates. For the first time, these organizations were able to voice their concerns in the forum for the formulation of the fourth National Strategic Plan on HIV and AIDS (PEN IV) which took place in July and December 2014 in Maputo and Beira respectively.<sup>99</sup>

#### **While there is good evidence of these channels influencing GNP processes at specific times, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, the extent to which they are sustained and institutionalized by governments is uncertain.**

Opportunities for dialogue and influence of women and girls tend to be driven by UN Women and/or CSO partners with links to grassroots organizations (as in the cases of Albania, Ecuador and Uganda).<sup>100</sup> The evaluation of UN Women's Global Programme 'Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS' found that the programme had created opportunities for dialogue among WLWHIV, CSOs and government officials at national and local levels, but these opportunities did not largely result in many institutionalized channels for dialogue.<sup>101</sup> An exception was in Cambodia, where the programme management team evolved into the inter-agency gender working group, a forum for discussing how to better integrate gender at the policy/institutional level of the HIV/AIDS response.<sup>102</sup> In virtually all countries, CSOs have been supported to engage with governments through training, facilitation and coaching in their engagement with budgets, and in some countries in the evaluation's sample, with national HIV/AIDS plans. However, it is unclear how far these engagements will evolve into self-sustaining groups that governments regularly consult.

Reporting does not often go into depth on institutionalizing communication channels. For example, reports overwhelmingly refer to the existence of dialogue mechanisms in GNP, rather than development of longer-term structures that underpin the interaction between stakeholders. Where structures are initiated, these appear, in the absence of reporting to the contrary, to depend on the strength of UN Women partnerships (with government and CSOs) and

<sup>99</sup> UN Women, Mozambique, 2014. Annual Report.

<sup>100</sup> Case studies for Albania, Ecuador and Uganda; portfolio analysis for Mozambique, 2018.

<sup>101</sup> Universalia (2014) End-of-Programme Evaluation of EC-UN Women's "Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS".

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

sustained facilitation by UN Women, as in Albania, Palestine and Timor-Leste. This suggests challenges in institutionalizing channels of influence on GNP for women and girls.

**At the global level, UN Women’s normative support has actively sought to ensure women’s voices inform inter-governmental negotiations through collaboration with women’s organizations.**<sup>103</sup> While international women’s organizations already have well-established access to and influence over negotiation participants, collaboration with UN Women enhances their ability to influence inter-governmental negotiations.<sup>104</sup> As highlighted in the UN Women Strategic Partnerships corporate evaluation, such partnerships have proved beneficial to UN Women in terms of widening their grassroots legitimacy, while women’s groups simultaneously gain increased profile, prestige, access and political support from the UN Women apparatus.<sup>105</sup>

This process is managed in various ways, e.g. through UN Women lending its support to proposals for civil society side events to negotiation processes, like the Women’s Forum, which preceded the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;<sup>106</sup> or through UN Women providing CSOs with regular updates on progress in inter-governmental negotiations, which helps CSOs to orient their “in the corridor” influencing and provides UN Women with important feedback from national and international CSOs.<sup>107</sup> However, collaboration is often associated with particular events and some CSOs report that the intensity of their engagement with UN Women reduces once a negotiation culminates,

despite the issues remaining current.<sup>108</sup> This point is echoed in the Strategic Partnerships corporate evaluation, which makes a recommendation for improved partnership considerations in the day-to-day workflow and tools used by leaders, managers and staff at all levels of UN Women.

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### FINDING 3:

**UN Women has shown sufficient flexibility to be able to respond to important emerging opportunities and partners and to new actors and programmes.**

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The shift from the MDGs to the SDGs and, most notably, a much strengthened stand-alone goal on the achievement of gender equality, has opened up new opportunities for UN Women in GNP, including in HIV/AIDS, which the entity has been responsive to. At the global level, UN Women recognized the importance of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development for buttressing SDG gender equality commitments and engaged intensively and extensively to influence these inter-governmental negotiations. Policy proposals included measures to cement national action for gender-responsive GNP, but they covered much broader ground, including domestic and international private finance and trade, areas not part of UN Women’s GNP work at the time.<sup>109</sup> In taking this broader approach, UN Women has maximized the potential of the Third International Conference, and has opened up new areas for possible engagement with national governments. This was managed without any additional core funds, but instead UN Women sought the agreement of the European Commission to reallocate resources from the Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality (F4GE) Global Programme to support these critical normative support activities.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Interviews with CSOs and UN Women staff, interviews for the global case study, 2018; Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015; UN Women (2018) Background Note: Briefing to the Executive Board, First Regular Session 2018: Briefing on UN Women’s follow up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

<sup>104</sup>Interviews with CSOs and UN Women staff, interviews for the global case study 2018.

<sup>105</sup>UN Women (2017) Corporate Evaluation on Strategic Partnerships for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

<sup>106</sup>UN Women steers three high-level side events at the Financing for Development Conference July 14, 2015. Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015.

<sup>107</sup>Interviews with CSOs and UN Women staff, interviews for the global case study, 2018.

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<sup>108</sup>Interviews with CSOs, interviews for the global case study 2018.

<sup>109</sup> Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015.

<sup>110</sup>Interviews for the global case study; UN Women, F4GE Prodoc Revised 20 March 2013; UN Women August 2016, Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality, Synthesis Report. Despite the AAAA being a priority for UN Women influencing, no additional financial support was made available from core resources.

In the area of HIV/AIDS, SDG 5 on gender equality has increased opportunities for bringing gender analysis into global and national discussions on HIV/AIDS. UN Women has been successful in understanding and responding to these opportunities to enhance international commitments to gender-responsive HIV programming. This is demonstrated in its collaboration with SADC and UNAIDS to secure a new resolution on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS at the CSW60 in 2016. Negotiation of similar resolutions tabled at CSW56 and CSW58 had collapsed. Partners' preparations for the new resolution focused on identifying and addressing the contentious issues in previous resolutions which had contributed to their failure and on agreeing a process for securing support for the resolution from the African Union and key Member States.<sup>111</sup> Stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation's global case study confirmed that UN Women and partners' politically aware planning and advocacy contributed to the agreement of the Resolution 60/2 in 2016.<sup>112</sup>

**UN Women's GNP work at global and country levels has given rise to new partnership opportunities, which UN Women has been keen to engage with.**

One very significant partnership opportunity recently established is with the IMF. This relationship was initiated with the IMF's global survey of gender budgeting, with one of UN Women's GNP staff members on the advisory committee. The IMF's increasing interest in GNP, combined with UN Women's reputation in this field, have contributed to the two organizations partnering to build empirical evidence on the links between gender-responsive fiscal policies and improved gender outcomes, and to expand the global application of GRB.<sup>113</sup>

**At country level, UN Women has demonstrated a strong degree of adaptability in GNP work, responding well to changing contexts and the emerging needs of government and civil society.** The ability to tailor programmes to national contexts is evident even when country-level activity is supported through global programmes, such as Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality. Flexibility has been demonstrated in varying degrees in relation to

changes in political leadership (e.g. Albania); working incrementally to build needs-based partnerships with governments, CSOs, UN agencies and donors (e.g. Timor-Leste, Uganda); and calibrating GNP in wider donor programmes (e.g. Palestine, Timor-Leste).<sup>114</sup>

In relation to responses to changes in the policy and budgeting environment (e.g. elections, PFM reforms, alignment with SDGs, changes in capacity and resources) **UN Women has demonstrated a good degree of flexibility.** Some countries have been able to take up the opportunities presented by Public Financial Management (PFM) reforms (Timor-Leste, Uganda, Albania) including micro-level flexibility such as adapting monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators to account for changes in policy frameworks associated with the transforming PFM agenda (Ecuador, Timor-Leste, Uganda). GNP work has been adapted to take advantage of emerging opportunities in government as governance mechanisms evolve, and work has been tailored to specific needs within ministries (e.g. Timor-Leste, Uganda). In some cases, responses are strategic and planned (e.g. Ecuador, Timor-Leste, Uganda). For example, in a context of changing government priorities, resourcing issues and new partners, UN Women has demonstrated the flexibility to adapt long-term approaches and strategically placed technical support (e.g. Nepal, Timor-Leste, Uganda). In other cases, responses are more opportunistic and ad hoc, which can be more effective in fragile settings (e.g. Palestine) yet may shift emphasis away from GNP programming (e.g. Sierra Leone where the Ebola crisis and other humanitarian efforts shifted the focus substantially away from GNP after 2014).<sup>115</sup>

111 SADC Technical Meeting to review the SADC sponsored United Nations Resolution on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS, 27–30 July 2015, South Africa.

112 Interviews for the global case study.

113 International Monetary Fund/UN-Women Joint Proposal: Fiscal Policies and Gender Equality, 2018.

114 Case studies for Palestine and Timor-Leste, 2018.

115 Evaluation synthesis report Commissioned by UN Women/UNDP, 2012. Joint evaluation: UN Women/UNDP support to women's political participation in sub-Saharan Africa.

## 6.2

### Key Question 2 – Effectiveness and impact

#### To what extent has UN Women’s GNP work resulted in changes in policies and legislation, inclusion of gender equality in national plans and sectoral strategies, in budgets and in greater participation and engagement by women?

Key Question 2 references the three core functions of UN Women: normative (Finding 4), coordination (Findings 5 and 6), and operational (Findings 7–13). In addition, each of these are informed by human rights and gender equality perspectives (Findings 14–16) which provide a fourth lens through which to interpret the effectiveness and impact of the findings below.

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#### FINDING 4:

UN Women’s influencing of global normative frameworks both builds on its country-level GNP experience and contributes to creating an enabling environment for further national-level action to promote gender-responsive GNP. This is also true of UN Women’s HIV-focused work.

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**Global and regional frameworks, such as the EU Acquis, are clear levers for change at country level, though some frameworks have greater influence than others.** Documentary and case study evidence for the 17 countries studied as part of this evaluation suggests that CEDAW and the SDGs are the most common references during country-level action, but the BPfA and the CSW are also important reference points. References to UN resolutions 1325 and 1820 do occur, but are less commonplace. From 2015, the SDGs have been particularly influential at country level and UN Women’s role in including a stand-alone goal on gender equality and gender-sensitive targets for other goals is considered to be one of UN Women’s most significant normative support results.<sup>116</sup> The SDGs are also important for UN Women’s work in GNP, including

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<sup>116</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 25 March 2015, Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/AC.51/2015/9.

in the area of HIV/AIDS, as they have triggered new processes, i.e. the development of the methodology to measure SDG Indicator 5.c.1 (see Box 8), which provide opportunities for strengthening gender-responsive GNP in relevant global normative frameworks.<sup>117</sup>

The evaluation found that good linkages exist between UN Women’s GNP global normative work and its country-focused normative and operational work, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. There is **strong evidence to demonstrate that UN Women’s influencing of global normative frameworks is underpinned by its country-level experience** and the experience of country-level partners.<sup>118</sup> For example, UN Women’s work to develop the methodology for measurement of SDG Indicator 5.c.1, described by one stakeholder as a “game changer”,<sup>119</sup> is founded on the GNP experience of UN Women and its partners at country level (see Box 8). Representatives from Ministries of Finance working with UN Women to promote gender-responsive GNP were members of the Expert Group convened to inform the methodology development process led by UN Women with support from OECD, UNDP, World Bank, IMF and the Ministry of Finance of Austria. The resulting methodology drew on their country GNP experience and on country-level results from a pilot to test the measurement approach methodology. In its final form, the measurement approach provides a strengthened framework for UN Women engagement with national governments to promote gender-responsive GNP. It also has the potential to influence the national governments which UN Women does not support directly on GNP, as they will reflect on this in their SDG reporting. The criteria used in the measurement approach assess the presence of gender equality commitments in policies and public financial systems for the promotion of gender equality through the full GNP cycle, and for making budget allocations public, in line with UN Women’s GNP vision.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Interviews for the global case study; SDG Indicator 5.c.1: Methodological Note for the IAEG-SDGs, undated, UN Women, OECD, UNDP.

<sup>118</sup> Report of Expert Group Meeting, Sustainable Development Goal 5.c.1: “proportion of countries with systems in place to track and make public gender equality allocations”, 27–28 March, UN Women. Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015; interviews with UN Women staff, interviews for the global case study.

<sup>119</sup> Interview with UN agency, Inception phase.

<sup>120</sup> UN Women’s Contribution to Governance and National Planning, September 2012, UN Women.

## BOX 8

### Developing the methodology for SDG Indicator 5.c.1, an example of the linkages between UN Women's global and country-level GNP support

Following its successful influencing of the 2030 Agenda,<sup>121</sup> UN Women has worked with co-custodians of Indicator 5.c.1, OECD and UNDP, to develop the methodology for its measurement “Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment”. This work has allowed the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG) to reclassify the Indicator from Tier III to Tier II. The methodology builds on that used for Indicator 8 of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). Key features of the methodology that can help drive gender-responsive GNP at the country level include:

- The criteria used to measure the Indicator cover three areas, linking policies, financial management systems and budgets:
  - » Promotion of gender equality in national policies or programmes.
  - » Promotion of gender equality through the public financial management system.
  - » Publication of gender equality budget allocations.
- The use of tiered scoring to record the maturity of countries’ systems, scoring them as either fully meeting requirements, approaching requirements or does not meet requirements.

The process for agreeing these improvements, led by UN Women, has ensured that they are informed by evidence and experience and are readily applicable at country level. The Expert Group convened to lead the methodological improvement involved some Member States, particularly Ministry of Finance representatives from national governments working with UN Women on gender-responsive GNP, such as Ecuador, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal and Uganda and drew extensively from their experience.<sup>121</sup> A discussion paper enabled the Expert Group to take account of wider experience, including from research conducted by the IMF and OECD.<sup>122</sup> UN Women and partners piloted the revised methodology in 15 countries, including Albania, Ecuador, Mexico, Nepal and Uganda, and used the experience to inform finalization of the methodology.<sup>124</sup>

The tiered scoring of the maturity of countries’ systems encourages ongoing improvements and for governments to engage in long-term national system

strengthening for the promotion of gender equality in policy, planning and budgeting systems.

UN Women’s support to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the resulting AAAA (see Box 9) provides another example of the synergies between its global normative support and country-level work. The entity’s policy proposals built on its GNP country-level experience and called for: national action plans on gender equality to be costed and resourced; the systematic integration of gender perspectives into public financial management systems; and for spending allocations to gender equality to be made public.<sup>125</sup> UN Women also mobilized the support of key country-level partners from, for example, Ministries of Finance and national civil society to prioritize financing for gender equality in

121 Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 25 March 2015, Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/AC.51/2015/9.

122 Report of Expert Group Meeting, Sustainable Development Goal 5.c.1: ‘proportion of countries with systems in place to track and make public gender equality allocations’, 27–28 March, UN Women.

123 Measuring Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 5.c.1: Discussion Paper for Expert Group Meeting, March 2017, Professor Diane Elson, UN Women

124 Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 5.c.1 “Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment”: Methodological Refinement, PowerPoint presentation, undated, UN Women, OECD and UNDP.

125 Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015.



the AAAA negotiations.<sup>126</sup> The commitments to gender equality in the AAAA represent a watershed (see Box 9) that opens up new areas of work, complementary but distinct from GNP, for UN Women Country Offices to engage with national partners.

In the area of HIV/AIDS, UN Women's work to support the adoption of the CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS in 2016 (see Box 11, Finding 6), demonstrates how its global normative work and country-level work have been mutually supportive, although more is still to be done to realize the benefits of a stronger global normative framework at the country-level. UN Women's country-level partnerships were central to the Resolution 60/2. The entity supported SADC Member States to sponsor the CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS and helped them in preparing a draft resolution, which took account of learning from the earlier CSW 2014 process, when negotiation of a revised resolution collapsed.<sup>127</sup> Some of the SADC countries had already taken steps to move forward with a gender-responsive HIV/AIDS national strategy, in response to the dynamics of the epidemic in their context and in collaboration with UN Women. For example, the Government of Mozambique worked with women's organizations and UN Women to strengthen the attention given to gender and human rights in its National HIV Strategy IV (2015–2019), allocating US\$ 7.9 million to implement these commitments.<sup>128</sup>

**Evidence of how countries are taking up opportunities presented by advances in the global normative framework is limited to a few examples, but with time and consistent investment from UN Women, it is plausible that dividends can be realized more systematically.** The full dividends of UN Women's support to developing the methodology for assessing SDG Indicator 5.c.1 will only start to become apparent in 2018, when countries begin reporting against

the indicator.<sup>129</sup> However, stakeholder feedback from Albania, Ecuador and Mexico indicates that in these countries, at the least, reporting obligations against Indicator 5.c.1 are creating space for dialogue with UN Women on gender-responsive GNP. Some UN Women Country Offices have taken early steps to engage with national governments on implementation of AAAA commitments, e.g. the Country Office in Mexico, which has had initial discussions with government; and the office in Timor-Leste, which has supported work on taxation.<sup>130</sup> However, these examples remain few in number among the 17 countries studied in the evaluation. Working with UNDP to bring a gender perspective to the Integrated National Financing Framework (being used to translate AAAA commitments into financing plans at the country level) may be one way of stepping up progress in this direction (see Finding 5). The limited examples of CSW Resolution 60/2 or the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS having contributed to the achievement of results at the country level may, in part, be due to the small number of countries with sizeable HIV/AIDS programming supported by UN Women among the evaluation's 17 focal countries. Considering the wider context, with the global target to reduce HIV infection among adolescent girls agreed as part of the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 2016, and the greater emphasis on gender issues in UNAIDS Global Strategy 2016–2021 and the associated UBRAF<sup>131</sup> (both of which UN Women has contributed to (See Finding 6)), it is plausible to expect a more conducive enabling environment at the country level for gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Interviews for the global case study; SADC Technical Meeting to review the SADC sponsored United Nations Resolution on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS, 27–30 July 2015, South Africa

<sup>128</sup> GoM (2014) National Strategic HIV and AIDS Response Plan 2014–2019 (Government of Mozambique).

<sup>129</sup> Country reporting against the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) Indicator 8, upon which the measurement methodology for SDG Indicator 5.c.1 is based, suggests that there may be room for cautious optimism: country reporting against GPEDC Indicator 8 shows that between 2014 and 2016, the number of countries with transparent tracking systems for budget allocations to gender equality increased from 9 to 15 countries (of 31 countries reporting). Country reporting does highlight the challenging nature of this work. For example, countries find it challenging to mainstream a gender perspective across the entire budget and 35 per cent of the 51 countries reporting an official government statement on tracking gender equality allocations report lacking systematic tracking in practice. OECD/UNDP (2016), Making Development Co-operation More Effective: 2016 Progress Report, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<sup>130</sup> Tax reform for Timor-Leste: A New Value Added Tax? Briefing Note, March 2016, Prof Kathleen A. Lahey, UN Women Timor-Leste.

<sup>131</sup> UNAIDS Global Strategy 2016–2021.

**The opportunities presented at country level by UN Women’s global normative support are considerable as the evidence above suggests. UN Women needs to be proactive in maximizing this potential by equipping its Country Offices with the technical guidance they require, specific to GNP, to assist national governments and partners in realizing the global commitments made in their own contexts.**

The evaluation of UN Women’s normative work confirmed that UN Women has been more successful in developing normative frameworks than in supporting their implementation. The evaluation identified limited human capacity as well as inadequate linkages between UN Women headquarters and field offices to guide the translation of global frameworks at country level as two challenges limiting results to date.<sup>132</sup> Although UN Women has been somewhat more successful in promoting national legislation and policies on GRB, evidence from the evaluation suggests that these corporate-wide findings apply to some degree to UN Women’s GNP work. The evaluation’s data does not however adequately explain the factors affecting implementation of global normative frameworks at country level. The evaluation’s country case studies and portfolio analysis suggest that the AAAA and SDG Target 5.c.1 are only just starting to become a focus for UN Women country-level GNP engagement in most countries.<sup>133</sup> Written guidance materials on these changes and the implications for UN Women country programming are limited<sup>134</sup> – although it is recognized that some of this support is provided through on-demand support – and some Country Offices have expressed the desire for more guidance from UN Women headquarters on these issues. In some countries, national governments already have strong ownership of the agenda (e.g. Albania, Ecuador and Mexico in relation to SDG Indicator 5.c.1, and Mozambique and Uganda for gender-sensitive

<sup>132</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 25 March 2015, Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/AC.51/2015/9.

<sup>133</sup> Country case studies for Albania, Ecuador, Palestine, Timor-Leste and Uganda; Portfolio analyses for 17 countries.

<sup>134</sup> Available materials include Gender, Taxation and Equality in Development Countries (2018), K. Lahey, UN Women; Discussion Paper on Measuring Sustainable Development Indicator 5c1, (2017), Diane Elson, UN Women and internal notes and presentations such as the PowerPoint presentation Changing global context and GRB Innovations in GRB: sharing experiences for Asia Pacific, 23 January 2017, Zohra Khan.

HIV/AIDS planning) and will drive work forward, but they would benefit from UN Women’s active technical support to guide the transition from normative framework to operational reality in GNP. The UN Women staff survey also highlighted that UN Women Country Offices would benefit from further technical guidance on the GNP global normative framework and how it can be translated at the country level, which suggests that guidance made available to date only partially addresses the need.<sup>135</sup>

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### **FINDING 5:**

**UN Women’s coordination with other UN agencies on GNP has been strategic. There are new opportunities for UN coordination at global and national levels on GNP, which could enhance country-level results and contribute to improved UN coordination.**

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**At the global level, UN Women’s coordination with other UN agencies has been strategic, enabling the entity to strengthen the place of gender in global normative frameworks and create an enabling environment for gender-responsive GNP at the country level.** UN Women’s work to develop SDG Indicator 5.c.1 described under Finding 4 was conducted in collaboration with UNDP and OECD as co-custodians of the indicator. This collaboration, which has drawn extensively on UN Women’s technical gender expertise and country-level experience, has resulted in a grounded methodology, which will guide and influence GNP globally (see Finding 4).

UN Women’s collaboration with UN DESA, the Secretariat to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, has had similarly profound effects (see Box 9) and is an excellent example of inter-agency complementarity. UN Women has been able to provide technical gender expertise,

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<sup>135</sup> In the UN Women staff survey, 45 per cent of respondents reported requesting guidance on the GNP global normative framework and how it can be translated at country level and 56 per cent of respondents reported requesting similar guidance on the HIV global normative framework. These respondents had mixed views on the quality of technical guidance provided (technical guidance provided overall, not just that focused on global normative frameworks) with approximately 35 per cent reporting being dissatisfied or neutral towards the technical support received.

## BOX 9

### UN Women's support to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and its follow-up

UN Women's support to the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which discussed financing of the 2030 Agenda, contributed to achieving strong commitments to gender equality. Paragraph 6 of the Conference's outcome document, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, affirms that GEWE is essential for equitable economic growth and sustainable development; reiterates the need for gender mainstreaming, including targeted actions and investments in the formulation and implementation of all financial, economic, environmental and social policies; and recommits to adopting policies and legislation, which promote GEWE at all levels. Furthermore, the AAAA recognizes gender considerations in six of the seven action areas, including domestic and international private business and finance, as well as international trade. In the words of one stakeholder interviewed during the evaluation *"No outcome document in Sustainable Development integrated gender in the way the [AAAA] did"*.<sup>139</sup>

The evaluation identified several features of UN Women's approach to the Conference which contributed to achieving such strong commitments, including:

- Direct and early engagement with supportive facilitators of the negotiation process.
- Close and consistent collaboration with UN DESA, the Secretariat for the Conference, throughout the process.
- Assisted multiple constituencies, including like-minded Member States, national governments and country-level civil society partners through UN Women Country Offices and international civil society, to advance the agenda in the same direction through sharing information and quality technical briefing.
- A readiness and ability to engage with resistant Member States in a diplomatic and balanced way.
- High-quality technical briefing, used effectively to support like-minded Member States and to inform more resistant Member States.
- Actively understanding and navigating the political dynamics of inter-governmental negotiations.<sup>140</sup>

The strong gender equality commitments in the AAAA and ongoing demand from Member States to see this maintained and strengthened has resulted in UN Women leading the IATF for Financing for Development Working Group on Gender, involving 17 UN agencies, tasked with ensuring gender issues are given appropriate attention in the IATF Annual Report, which summarizes country progress in implementing the AAAA at country level and identifies critical emerging issues; and with advising the inter-governmental Financing for Development Forum.

<sup>141</sup>

which UN DESA was lacking but recognized was needed in the negotiation process.<sup>136</sup> Collectively, they have identified strategic entry points to influence negotiations and, with the assistance of other partners, such as like-minded Member States and civil society, have ensured gender is incorporated into the outcome document.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Interviews for the global case study.

<sup>137</sup> Financing for Development and Gender, undated, UN Women.

<sup>138</sup> Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, July 2015, United Nations.

<sup>139</sup> Interviews for the global case study.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. Financing for Development: UN Women's strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015; Financing for Development and Gender, UN Women, undated

<sup>141</sup> 'About the IATF' (undated).

UN Women's collaboration with UN DESA in support of the AAAA has given rise to other opportunities for UN Women to coordinate with a wider range of UN agencies on processes that bolster the normative frameworks for gender equality at global and country levels. Since 2017, with UN DESA UN Women has co-chaired the IATF Gender Working Group, a 17-member group, including the IMF, UNDP and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), tasked with integrating gender equality into IATF Annual Reports, which are referenced by the inter-governmental Financing for Development Forum in their annual AAAA implementation review process. By providing leadership, technical guidance and coordinating inputs from group members – for example UNCTAD leads on gender and trade – UN Women has ensured that the IATF reports draw upon the specialist technical capacity offered by members to continue pushing the debate on gender equality in financing for development. This coordination is contributing to increased attention given to gender in the reports. The third IATF report, published in 2018, has 152 mentions of gender compared with 85 and 47 in the IATF 2016 and 2017 reports respectively,<sup>142</sup> and includes substantive sections on gender and tax, GRB, women in trade and women's entrepreneurship.<sup>143</sup> Another very recent opportunity for collaboration is with UNDP, which is supporting national governments to put in place Integrated National Financing Frameworks to facilitate the translation of AAAA commitments at the country level. To date, little attention has been given to gender considerations in the Integrated National Financing Frameworks, and there is now the possibility that UN Women could work with UNDP to address this.

<sup>142</sup> Addis Ababa Action Agenda Monitoring commitments and actions, Inaugural Report, 2016, Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, United Nations; Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2017, Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, United Nations.

<sup>143</sup> Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018, Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, United Nations.

#### BOX 10

### Examples of UN joint action on country-level GNP

In Albania, UN Women, UNDP and UNICEF supported the drafting and approval of the new National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016–2020.

In Timor-Leste, UN Women worked with UNICEF to apply GNP approaches to increase public investment in young people. In addition, as co-Chair of the Gender Theme Group, UN Women coordinated efforts to localize the Joint UN Essential Service Package (ESP) and Prevention Framework. This was established through building relationships with UNFPA, WHO and through the development of a Joint UN Proposal in support of the second NAP GBV. This approach facilitated a joint delegation from Timor-Leste participating in a regional meeting on the ESP and initial roll-out of the ESP via a national consultation on the NAP GBV with support from the Secretary of State for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion.

In Uganda, UN Women undertook a joint programme in 2012–2013 with UNDP to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Gender and several line ministries to conduct gender audits. The exercise supported ministries to meet GNP requirements and develop priority indicators.

The Tanzania Country Office also reported a significant series of UN joint programmes, although the 2014 Annual Report noted that the office encountered difficulty in managing the operational side of their strategic partnerships due to engagement with many small partners rather than a selected number of larger strategic partnerships.

In the Joint Programme on GELD (2009-2012), UN Women, UNCDF and UNDP sought to blend their expertise in local level performance budgeting and GRB to pilot a system of GRB at the local level in five countries: Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. GELD was credited with bringing gender onto the local agenda in these countries by offering a new approach to local government planning. However, the UN partners lacked a joined-up approach to programme delivery, which meant that the opportunity to blend their expertise and available tools was under-exploited.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Final Evaluation Gender Equitable Local Development, October 2013, UNCDF.

There are examples of joint action between UN Women and other UN agencies on GNP at country level but, based on the evidence collected for the evaluation, these are relatively few (see Box 10).<sup>145</sup> However, the cross-government nature of GNP, working with central government ministries and a range of sectoral ministries, and the increasing sectoral focus of UN Women's work suggests that there could, in future, be increasing opportunities for UN coordination on GNP at the country level. In the context of ongoing UN reform, where UN operations at the country level are expected to be streamlined, forging this kind of coordination could be exceptionally strategic.

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### FINDING 6:

UN Women has effectively coordinated with other UN partners through the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS to strengthen the normative framework for gender and HIV/AIDS and to enhance the enabling environment for gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS strategies.

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UN Women became the 11th co-sponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in June 2012. As a formal inter-agency coordination mechanism, **co-sponsorship of UNAIDS provides a structure and legitimacy for coordination efforts and as such is a unique platform for UN Women to collaborate with other UNAIDS co-sponsors<sup>146</sup> on HIV/AIDS.** The corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to UN system coordination on GEWE describes UN Women's co-sponsorship of UNAIDS as one of UN

Women's "key assets" in the context of UN system-wide coordination of gender equality.<sup>147</sup>

**UN Women has capitalized on the UNAIDS platform to contribute to setting the global agenda on gender and HIV/AIDS.** CSW Resolution 60/2 on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS and the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS 2016 are two key global normative frameworks that UN Women has influenced, in collaboration with UNAIDS co-sponsors, to carry through the SDG commitments on gender (Goal 5) and HIV/AIDS (Goal 3) and to strengthen the prominence of gender issues in national HIV/AIDS responses (see Box 11). UNAIDS led the provision of technical support and policy advice to Member States when negotiating Resolution 60/2 and the UN Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, but UN partners, Member States and civil society partners confirmed that UN Women's contribution was instrumental in the gender advances achieved. UN Women's contribution was described as having well-evidenced technical briefings and effective diplomacy skills when encountering resistance, and that solid engagement with negotiation facilitators and like-minded Member States made important differences.<sup>148</sup> Stakeholders confirmed the importance of the collaboration with UNAIDS and its co-sponsors for the results achieved.

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<sup>145</sup> Timor-Leste case study: UN Women and UN Family interviews; Albania case study.

<sup>146</sup> UNAIDS co-sponsors are: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), The World Bank, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

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<sup>147</sup> UN Women (2016) Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to UN System Coordination on Gender Equality and The Empowerment Of Women.

<sup>148</sup> Interviews for the global case study/global portfolio analysis; UN Women Corporate evaluation of its work on Governance and National Planning: HIV/AIDS, UN Women Corporate evaluation of its work on Governance and National Planning: HIV/AIDS (Varughese 2018).

**BOX 11****UN Women’s efforts to strengthen the gender focus of global normative HIV/AIDS frameworks in collaboration with UNAIDS**

In 2016, Member States adopted Resolution 60/2 on “Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS” at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and a UN Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, both of which enhanced the normative framework for gender-responsive approaches to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The CSW Resolution went beyond previous agreements by including intentions to address harmful masculinities, giving greater attention to GBV and harmful practices, and by including stronger language on comprehensive sexuality education.<sup>149</sup> The UN Political Declaration committed to reduce the number of adolescent girls and young women, aged 15–24 years old, newly infected with HIV/AIDS globally each year to below 100,000 by 2020 (paragraph 61 (f)), and included stronger language on: addressing intimate partner violence and ensuring comprehensive services; attention to addressing violence against WLWHIV in health settings; commitments on comprehensive sexuality education; and language on the need to address power relationships.<sup>150</sup>

UN Women made an important contribution to advances in both of these documents working closely with UNAIDS and other co-sponsor UN agencies to develop and execute a shared influencing strategy.<sup>151</sup> This collaboration with UNAIDS and other co-sponsors was important for two reasons. First, it leveraged the influence of UNAIDS, the lead UN agency in HIV/AIDS, for the benefit of a gendered HIV/AIDS response. Second, it enabled an efficient division of labour between supporting agencies, allowing them to focus on their particular strengths or comparative advantage both in preparation and during the negotiations. The coordination and collaboration between UNAIDS co-sponsors in this period is reported to be quite unique. One stakeholder involved in the CSW negotiations reflected on the trust built between staff from the UNAIDS co-sponsors commenting “we put competitiveness aside and acted as one”.<sup>152</sup>

**UN Women has leveraged the UNAIDS platform to contribute to strengthening and promoting gender equality in UNAIDS’ 2016–2021 Strategy.**

UN Women provided “extensive technical support”<sup>153</sup> to the development of the Strategy. Through Results Area 5,<sup>154</sup> the Strategy recognizes the need for action to promote gender equality as an essential part of a global

response to HIV/AIDS. This is in contrast to the previous strategy which had the more modest ambition “To ensure that national HIV strategies address the needs and rights of women and girls in the context of HIV”.<sup>155</sup> The two indicators in the UBRAF to measure performance in Results Area 5 provide hooks for UN Women to hold the UNAIDS Secretariat and co-sponsors accountable for progress in this area:

- **Indicator 5.1:** Percentage of countries with national HIV policies and strategies that promote gender equality and transform unequal gender norms.
- **Indicator 5.2:** Percentage of countries with laws and/or policies and services to prevent and address gender-based violence.<sup>156</sup>

In addition, during its chairing of the UNAIDS Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations in 2017, UN Women facilitated agreement among co-sponsors on the use of a gender marker to track financial

149 Report of the Secretary-General on Women, the Girl Child and HIV and AIDS (E/CN.6/2016/9), 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 2016.

150 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast Track to Accelerating the Fight against HIV and to Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030; Interviews for the global case study.

151 Global portfolio analysis/case study; UN Women Corporate evaluation of its work on Governance and National Planning: HIV/AIDS (Varughese 2018); UN Women Output Reporting, 2016 (Data compendium).

152 Interviews for the global case study, interview with UN organization.

153 UN Women Corporate Evaluation of its work on Governance and National Planning: HIV/AIDS (Varughese 2018).

154 Results Area 5: Women and men practice and promote healthy gender norms and work together to end gender-based, sexual and intimate partner violence to mitigate risk and impact of HIV, On the Fast Track to End AIDS: UNAIDS 2016–2021 Global Strategy, UNAIDS.

155 UN Women Corporate Evaluation of its work on Governance and National Planning: HIV/AIDS (Varughese 2018).

156 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework Performance Reporting, June 2018, UNAIDS/PCB (42)/18.8.

allocations to gender within UNAIDS country UBRAF allocations. This was undertaken at a particularly challenging time, when UBRAF funds had been cut substantially and a new approach to country-level funding allocation was being negotiated.<sup>157</sup>

The limited data available on UN Women's HIV/AIDS work at country level within the scope of this evaluation means that the evaluation is unable to confirm the extent to which the advances described at global level have facilitated results at country level. Rather, available data suggests that the prioritization of gender issues in the national HIV/AIDS response in some countries like Uganda<sup>158</sup> and Mozambique preceded (and likely informed) the shifts at global level (see Finding 4 above). Given the importance of global normative frameworks for national governments described under Finding 4, it is plausible that the advances in the attention given to gender in HIV/AIDS-focused global normative frameworks, combined with the explicit focus on gender issues within UNAIDS' Global Strategy and UBRAF funding, and UN Women's country-level support, have contributed to an enabling environment for gender-responsive HIV/AIDS national responses.

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## FINDING 7:

Output and outcome level results at country level have been significant and striking in several countries. But achievements against targets reveal only a small part of the geographical scope of IA 5.

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As shown in Figure 4, at the programme level, **two targets have been achieved and exceeded under outcome indicators covering both Strategic Plan (2011–13 and 2014–17) periods.**<sup>159</sup> Under a third indicator related to HIV/AIDS work for the 2014–17 period, 54 per cent of

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<sup>157</sup> Interviews for the global case study: UN Family interviews.

<sup>158</sup> In Uganda, a joint review of the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2011–2015) in 2014 was used to draw out critical gender issues, which then informed the National AIDS Council Strategic Plan 2015/16 as well as the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS.

<sup>159</sup> Data Companions 2013; 2016; Progress made on the UN Women Strategic Plan 2011–2013; Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017; Strategic Plans 2011–13 and 2014–17; Strategic Plan Progress Reports; RMS outcome targets data.

the target was reached. Achievements against these indicators are confirmed by numerous examples of results across all case study countries and the majority of other countries under review, often extending beyond the range of these targets into sector-based and district-level plans and policies, and into quantifiable increases in budget allocations for GEWE.<sup>160</sup>

**Good achievements were also made against sub-indicators 5.1 and 5.2 related to the 2014–17 Strategic Plan.** Although, despite exceeding overall targets for the indicator, some sub-indicator targets were not quite met: the target number of agencies that track and report on allocations and expenditure using gender markers validated by a quality assurance process (Indicator 5.1.2B) was 96 per cent met; the target number of countries supported by UN Women where multi-stakeholder forums and dialogue mechanisms involving government institutions, CSOs and donors take place (Indicator 5.2.2A) was 8 per cent met.

For Indicator 5.3 on HIV/AIDS, achievements against sub-indicator targets were higher than achievements against the overall indicator target, but were also not fully met: the target number of countries where UN Women trained partners on gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS (Indicator 5.3.1A) was 75 per cent met; and the target number of countries where UN Women supported organizations of WLWHIV to engage in policy dialogue (Indicator 5.3.2A) was 68 per cent met.<sup>161</sup>

The full geographical scope of work in IA 5 is not covered by these targets: at some point during 2014–17, 101 countries reported against IA 5.<sup>162</sup> The number of countries covered by targets set during 2014–17 cover variously from 28 to 57, or an average of 46 per cent. This means that while achievements have been very good against targets in two of three outcome areas, and moderate in the third, this target-related overview does not reflect the full scope of work under IA 5, nor does it give an indication of levels of achievement, or gaps in achievement, in several reporting countries (See Figure 4).

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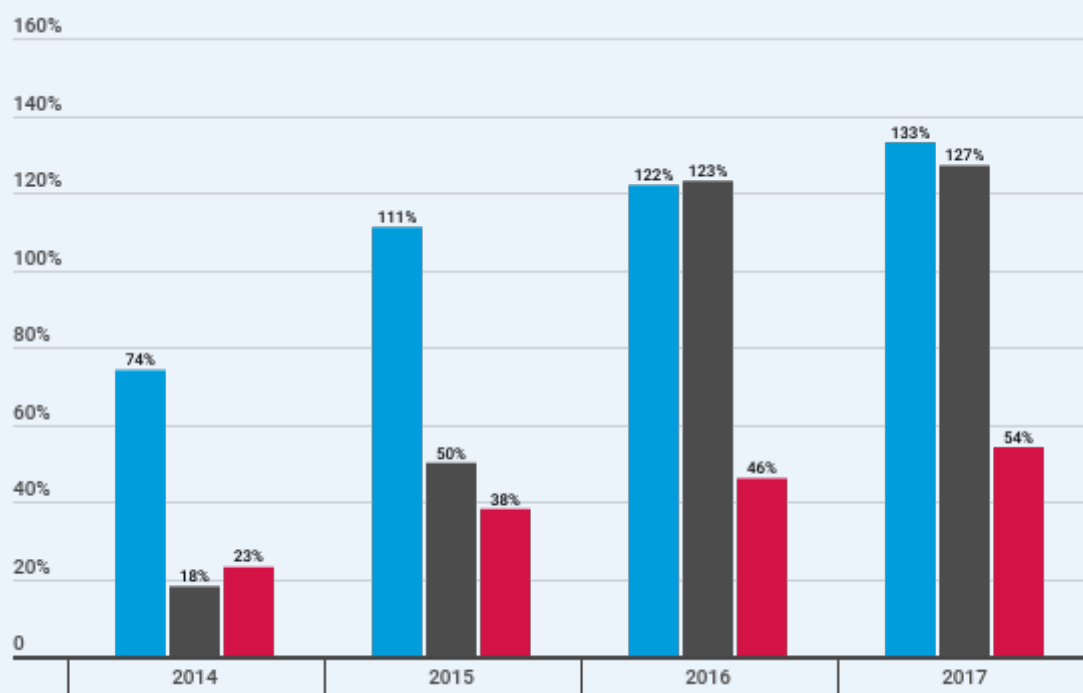
<sup>160</sup> Results mapping, case studies countries: Albania, Ecuador, Palestine, Timor-Leste, Uganda; PAs Barbados, India, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Mozambique; Itad GNP Survey data.

<sup>161</sup> Data sourced from Data Companion 2017.

<sup>162</sup> UN Women 2017, Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017 (UNW/2018/2).

FIGURE 4

Achievement of key IA 5 outcome targets per year 2014–2017<sup>163</sup>



**5.1:** Number of countries where national action plans on gender equality are developed and implemented in alignment with the National Development Strategies

**5.2:** Number of countries where systems are in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment

**5.3:** Number of countries whose national strategic plans for HIV/AIDS incorporate gender-responsive actions with budgets for implementation

**FINDING 8:**

Significant progress has been made in building the architecture to sustain gender responsiveness in GNP. In most cases, this progress does not completely cover a full cycle of policy-plan-budget-execution-M&E and displays vulnerable areas.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>163</sup> The indicator for 5.2 was an optional indicator in the monitoring framework until 2015 when it became obligatory. This explains the rapid increase between 2015 and 2016.

<sup>164</sup> Finding 8 addresses analysis covering GNP without HIV-related activity. Analysis of HIV related material is presented in Finding 9.

**Outputs and focus work areas**

**Case study analysis of areas of work and outcomes under IA 5 using the reconstructed ToC as a framework reveals a rich picture of achievements.**<sup>165</sup> These include a complex array of activities across all the outputs identified by the ToC:

- Capacity building for budget analysis among women’s machineries, CSOs, Ministries of Finance and members of parliament through training and technical support; creating permanent

<sup>165</sup> Full analysis was possible only for case study countries, as for other reviewed countries, limited documentation, especially for 2011 and 2013 alongside earlier reporting formats that do not consistently connect activities to results, constrained mapping a clear chronology of GNP-related activity and the results of these. Where commentary on UN Women’s connection to achievements, and/or challenges to achievements was available, this was included in the analysis.



context-specific learning tools for GNP; strategies to increase gender responsiveness particularly in Ministries of Finance, but also in a wide range of line ministries.

- Technical support to strengthen the legal framework for GRB at national and district levels, and subsequent capacity support to enable government and CSO stakeholders to be aware of and use these strengthened frameworks.
- Advocacy and technical support to strengthen implementation of budget review mechanisms and to create spaces in these processes for the participation of women's machineries and CSOs; support, including technical assistance, to policy development groups to provide a basis for national and sectoral planning.
- Measures to engage civil society in budget analysis through supporting the creation of GNP/GRB working groups, and carrying out social audits and scorecard exercises.
- Engagement with strengthening and disseminating data and evidence on gender financing gaps not only through the publication of situation analysis material, but also through partnerships with statistics offices to provide capacity support for improved data quality.
- Inclusion of GNP issues in UN coordination mechanisms such as gender theme groups; gender coordination groups; involvement in some joint programmes relevant to GNP.

**Insights revealed by output/focus work area mapping**<sup>166</sup> of reported activity using case study material concluded that, as depicted in Figure 5, **most case study countries have moved from a primary but continuing focus on budget mechanisms and capacity support to women's machinery, towards core areas of national planning and working with Ministries of Finance.** While Palestine and Albania initiated

<sup>166</sup> The work area mapping grouped activity reported in Annual Reports, supporting documents, and case study interviews to generate insights into emphasis and sequencing at Country Office level. It aimed to be a 'bottom up' exercise from the data, and did not presuppose the outputs as stated in the ToC. Part of the purpose was to generate insight into how far the ToC represented outputs as they were actually carried out – hence there are some differences between the results of this mapping and what might be expected from the ToC. These were used to develop the analysis presented in Finding 11.

GNP-focused activity about five years prior to the period under evaluation, Uganda, Timor-Leste and Ecuador had prior experience of GNP-focused work spanning around a decade. The focus, specifically on national plans, took place during the middle years of the evaluation period, and for all countries this has involved building a relationship with Ministries of Finance, but in some countries this has proved a more central and fruitful relationship than others (Uganda, Albania). While focused GNP work is generally associated with the existence of specific (funded) projects through which it is carried out (Timor-Leste, Albania), attention to particular sectors, district-level work and engagement with M&E issues appears driven mainly by political opportunity framed by government-led policy development and review cycles or developments in decentralization.

This work has generally included, as reflected in the results framework, **a focus on enabling CSOs to participate in dialogue with governments** and sometimes to take steps towards institutionalizing these processes. In Uganda, CSOs sit on the advisory team to the NPA; in Ecuador, spaces have been created for women's organizations to respond to GNP processes; and in Timor-Leste, the women's machinery has established the opportunity for dialogue during the budget review process coordinated by the Ministry of Finance.<sup>167</sup> It is not clear at this point how secure these institutional footholds will prove to be.

## Evolving areas of work

**Several countries have also begun developing ministry-specific sector plans** (Uganda, Ecuador, Timor-Leste, Albania). Following on from a sector-specific focus, some countries have moved on to focus on gender-responsive policy and the programmes these produce. **However, monitoring policy and plans for implementation and results has received less emphasis.** This area clearly requires the GNP programme to be at a more mature stage, as it takes place at the 'end' of the budget review cycle. This pattern of emphasis is confirmed by survey results: while 87 per cent of respondents reported having promoted GRB, 44 per cent reported working on monitoring the implementation of plans and budgets, and 36 per cent reported working on district-level planning and budgeting.<sup>168</sup> Case study analysis suggests that for work at district

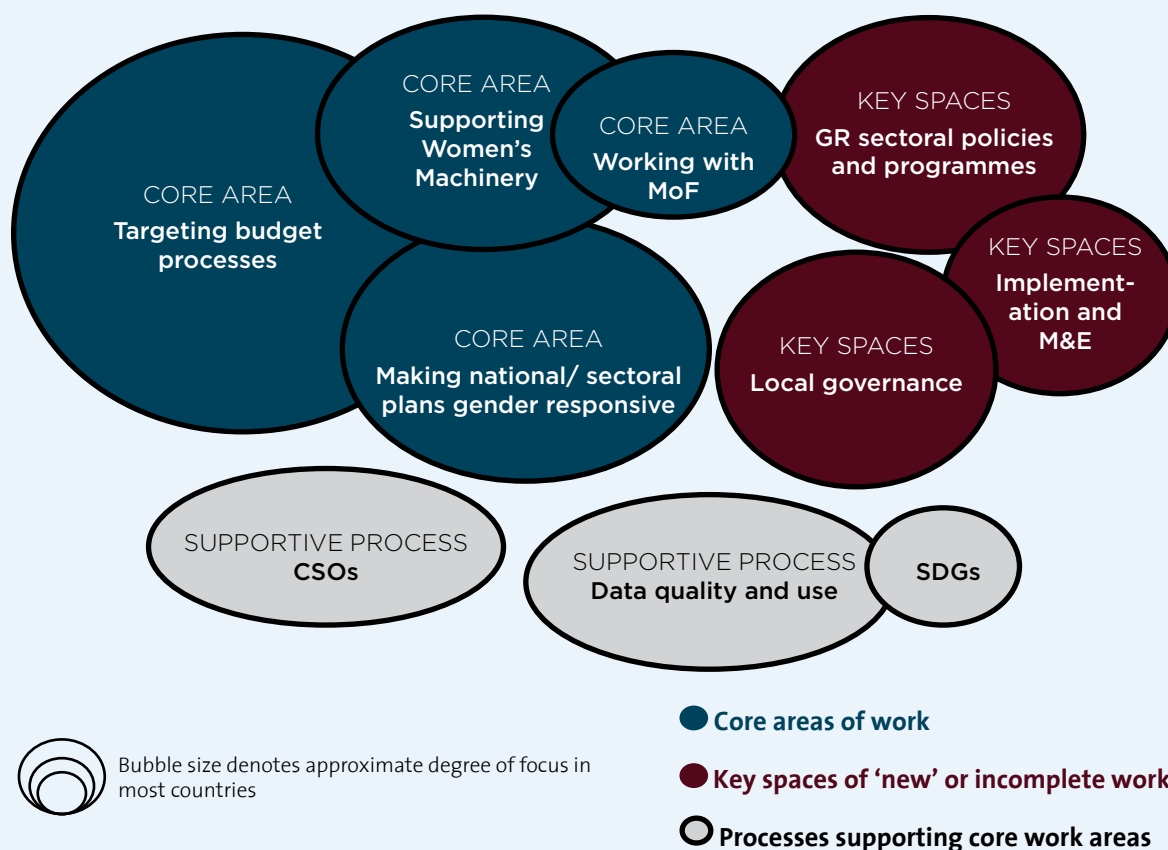
<sup>167</sup> Case studies: Ecuador, Timor-Leste, Uganda.

<sup>168</sup> Itad GNP Survey data.

**FIGURE 5**

**Focus areas of work derived through outcome and activity mapping, case study countries**

Approximate sequencing of focus areas of work followed in most countries



level, countries have emphasized local governance where opportunity exists for work at this level to gain traction, i.e. when governments are indicating steps towards strengthened district governance (Uganda, Albania, Timor-Leste).

Mapping revealed that recently there has been a **consistent emphasis on improving data quality to support the embedding of work towards the SDGs**, and data has been more detailed to support policy development, implementation and monitoring more generally for the GNP process. All case study Country Offices report work on data quality enhancements or data products in relation to GNP work: Albania has produced the Women and Men publication; Uganda has conducted extensive work with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS); Timor-Leste has worked with the General Directorate of Statistics, in particular on

methodology for the Labor Force Survey; Ecuador has contributed to production of the Atlas of Inequalities; and Palestine has provided financial support to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to generate sectoral gender gap knowledge products highlighting key gender statistics for women.<sup>169</sup>

**Outcome level achievements**

Outcome mapping against the ToC reveals a **similar array of achievements** in: gender-responsive national plans; fiscal laws; budget allocations; tracking systems; opportunities for the inclusion of women's organizations in GNP and some cases of their influencing. The Government of Albania approved a costed National

<sup>169</sup> Case study interviews and portfolio analyses: Albania, Ecuador, Palestine, Timor-Leste, Uganda; (Palestine 2017 Annual Report, p. 7–8).

Strategy on Gender Equality in 2016 and gender action plans were developed and adopted at municipal level;<sup>170</sup> Ecuador passed an Organic Code of Planning and Public Finance in 2010, just prior to the evaluation period, which included obligatory accountability for closing equality gaps;<sup>171</sup> Timor-Leste established National Action Plans on GBV and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) following the Government of Timor-Leste's Strategic Development Plan 2011–2030;<sup>172</sup> and Palestine saw the development of a National Policy Agenda and a resulting National Development Plan (2017–22).<sup>173</sup>

In several cases, these plans have also translated into budget allocations for GEWE across an increasing number of sectors: in Uganda, budget allocations have been made in seven ministries;<sup>174</sup> in Timor-Leste, 13 ministries have dedicated budgets for gender equality and total allocations increased to US\$ 9.1 million from US\$ 4.4 million between 2016 and 2017.<sup>175</sup> In Albania, allocations for GEWE represent 2.3 per cent of the Medium-Term Budgeting Programme;<sup>176</sup> in Ecuador these averaged 1–2 per cent of GDP in 2012–15, and represented a 178.3 per cent growth in relation to 2010.<sup>177</sup> In focus countries beyond the case studies, Nepal stands out with 22 per cent of budgets directly gender responsive and 48 per cent indirectly gender responsive in the financial year 2015–16.<sup>178</sup> It should be noted that different types of tracking systems in different countries generate wide variation in the budget proportion marked as gender responsive. Therefore the proportion of budget identified here is

of less significance than the fact that it can now be measured.<sup>179</sup><sup>180</sup>

Several countries are able to aggregate and track budget allocations: Ecuador has been a pioneer in establishing and refining the use of 'Function K' and its second avatar, the 'Catálogo Orientador de Gasto en Políticas de Igualdad de Género' classifiers guiding gender equality expenses and policies, a budget/expenditure gender marker with seven components and 76 options;<sup>181</sup> Timor-Leste has established a gender marker although UN Women's contribution to this achievement was complex.<sup>182</sup> Albania can track all public allocations for GEWE and the GoA's MTBP 2016–18, including the section on GRB, is published on the Ministry of Finance's website.<sup>183</sup>

Mapping of reported outcomes also suggests that progress has been made in establishing the legitimacy of CSO voices in these processes in some countries, and footholds in institutional systems for their participation have been established. As mentioned, these include gaining spaces on the NDP advisory committee (Uganda); creating opportunities for the NGO-GRB Working Group to advocate with Parliament (Timor-Leste); and enabling CSOs to participate in dialogue with the National Assembly (Ecuador) (See also Finding 2).

### Areas for further development

However, alongside a broad scope of achievements, **all case studies reveal areas for further development in GNP** above and beyond the partial attention to monitoring and evaluation. For instance, in Timor-Leste, the recently established gender marker for tracking allocations has not been in place long enough to fully track expenditure in a complete budget cycle.<sup>184</sup> In most countries, the extent of implementation of national

170 UN Women 2015 and 2016 Annual Reports narrative, region: Europe and Central Asia, Albania office.

171 Ecuador case study: Almeida, 2012:3.

172 Timor-Leste case study: UN Women Draft GNP Chronology Document; RMS 2016.

173 Palestine case study: government interviews.

174 Uganda case study: CSO and UN Women interviews

175 Timor-Leste case study: RMS 2016.

176 Albania case study: GRB in Albania Presentation, Genti Opre, Ministry of Finance, Government of Albania, 2018; Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012–2016, Progress Report(S) 2016.

177 Ecuador case study: Almeida, 2013: 57–8; Almeida, 2015: 25.

178 Nepal portfolio analysis; RAR 2015, P. 11–12; UN Women 2017, Changing Global Context and GRB Innovations in GRB: Sharing Experiences from Asia Pacific Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

179 For this reason, longitudinal data tracing increases or decreases in gender responsive budget proportion would give better indication of progress than simple proportion, but was not consistently available at the time of this evaluation

180 As budget data harmonization improves in the context of implementing international standards expressed in SDG Indicator 5.c.1, the comparability of gender-responsive allocations is likely to improve.

181 These include gender, disabilities, human mobility, generational, young people and older adults (Almeida, 2015).

182 Timor-Leste case study, Donor stakeholder and UN Women interviews; UN Women Draft GNP Chronology Document; RMS 2016.

183 UN Women Albania 2017 Annual Workplan Report Impact Area 5.

184 Timor-Leste Aide Memoire.

plan commitments into sector policies and budgets is uneven: in Uganda, ministries met only 50 per cent of their gender equality budgeting requirements in 2017/18 and the Country Office voiced concerns over little buy-in from some ministries and weak capacity at local levels; in Albania, (only) 29 per cent of budget programmes within the Medium-Term Budgeting Programme included GNP-related objectives/outputs. In Timor-Leste, by the end of 2016, 13 of 21 ministries included dedicated gender equality budgets. Requests for technical assistance from UN Women in Timor-Leste far outweigh the office's ability to supply it, indicating a lack of consistently reliable capacity in all line ministries, in part due to staff turnover which can generate a need for sustained/repeated capacity building.<sup>185</sup> In Ecuador, the Country Office expressed a lack of confidence that the improved data sources are used consistently to inform budget decisions.<sup>186</sup>

In a very challenging operating environment, and as a less mature GNP programme, Palestine shows a number of weak areas: the gender dimensions of the National Development Plan are somewhat limited and have not yet translated into budget allocations and therefore are not being implemented (Outcome 5.1).<sup>187</sup> There is no government M&E system through which accountability to gender equality commitments could be maintained, and the women's machinery has limited institutional leverage to promote accountability.<sup>188</sup>

In summary, RAG progress ratings on ToC outputs and outcomes are given in Table 4. Mixed or moderate ratings are given against most outputs and all outcomes, since all dimensions display unfinished or weaker areas in some cases. 'Good' ratings are given in the areas of stakeholder capacity building and legislative frameworks for fiscal laws, as these have been the subject of intensive focus in most cases, even when some gaps remain between establishing capacity and successful outcomes.

185 Timor-Leste case study: UN Women and Government interviews.

186 Ecuador case study: Almeida, 2015: 33.

187 Palestine case study: Government and CSO interviews

188 Palestine case study: Government, CSO and UN Women interviews; UN Women Annual Report 2017, p. ix.

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## FINDING 9:

Progress towards enabling partners to make the national HIV/AIDS response more gender-responsive shows a different approach than that used to promote gender-responsive GNP more broadly.<sup>189</sup>

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Analysis of focus work areas using data from case study countries, portfolio analysis for countries under review, as well as information available for additional countries from other UN Women and UNAIDS multi-country reporting,<sup>190</sup> indicates that the approach to gender-responsive governance for HIV/AIDS has been somewhat different to that taken in broader GNP work (See Annex J). The portfolio analysis, country and global case studies suggest little operational linkage between UN Women's HIV/AIDS work and broader GNP work, although it is recognized that the evaluation's sample of countries where UN Women supports gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and gender-responsive GNP more broadly is small (four countries only).<sup>191</sup> Broader GNP work has had a greater emphasis on budgets. For example, in the survey, while 32 per cent of 28 responding UN Women offices said their office had ensured allocation of budget resources to interventions that mitigate the impact of HIV on women, 87 per cent of GNP respondents said their office had promoted gender-responsive budgets among national government ministries. In contrast, HIV/AIDS work has focused on:

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189 This finding derives exclusively from HIV-related material.

190 Evidence of these outputs and outcomes has been sourced from UN Women and other reports and it has mainly not been possible to triangulate this information. Sources: JPMS 2012–2013 Organizational report: UN Women; Organization Report for UN Women 2012–2013; Organization Report for UN Women 2015; UNAIDS Performance Monitoring 2016; UNAIDS Performance Monitoring Report 2012–2013 synthesis; UNAIDS Performance Monitoring Report 2016 synthesis; UNAIDS Performance Monitoring Synthesis 2012–2013; UNAIDS Performance Monitoring Synthesis 2016. SN Outcomes (2014–2016), UN Women; Cueva, Ana Cordero and Reyes Juan José Montero, 2012; case study: Uganda; email communication: HIV team.

191 The Uganda case study may be an exception. Here there are some linkages between UN Women supported work on gender responsive HIV/AIDS planning and gender responsive GNP more broadly, although the HIV/AIDS work is not yet engaging in budgeting, a core focus for the broader GNP work.

- **Bringing WLWHIV into policy dialogue including by strengthening the institutional capacity of networks of WLWHIV** (e.g. Uganda, Mozambique, Rwanda, Barbados, Ecuador, Honduras, India, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Ukraine).
- **Strengthening the evidence base on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and communicating this to partners through training** (e.g. Uganda, Vietnam, Thailand).<sup>192</sup> In some cases later in the evaluation period, there was also a focus on strengthening gender indicators and making these accessible, e.g. the National AIDS Commission in Uganda, where UN Women policy support drew on the Compendium of Gender Equality and HIV Indicators to develop a gender indicators dashboard to improve monitoring and tracking of gender-responsive results within the national HIV strategy.<sup>193</sup>
- **Integrating gender into national HIV/AIDS strategies**, but with modest attention given to securing budget allocation (e.g. Uganda, Mozambique, Barbados, Morocco, Tanzania and Ukraine).
- **Integrating HIV/AIDS into sector-focused national plans** to address violence against women and girls has also been a strong focus (e.g. India, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Honduras, Senegal and Sierra Leone).

Survey results confirmed that supporting WLWHIV has been the most significant focus area, with 71 per cent of 28 responding UN Women offices stating that their office supported WLWHIV to participate in policy dialogue. Integrating gender in national strategies has also had significant emphasis: 68 per cent said their office supports work to integrate gender into the national HIV/AIDS strategy. As in broader GNP work, less emphasis has been placed on M&E, with 46 per cent of UN Women offices saying their office supported promoting gender-specific indicators in the national HIV/AIDS monitoring framework. However, it should be noted that UN Women did support publication of the Compendium of Gender Equality and

HIV Indicators,<sup>194</sup> an important resource for national governments and partners; and, through a workshop, familiarized national stakeholders from 15 countries, including Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uganda, with the M&E guidance. Several of the participating countries are reported to have applied their knowledge by putting in place a more gender-sensitive M&E framework to support their national HIV/AIDS strategy, including Uganda.<sup>195</sup> Funding constraints appear to have been a larger factor constraining HIV/AIDS work, with 45 per cent of respondents stating that there was a 'large gap' between the need and actual supply of financial support to country-level partners for gender-responsive HIV/AIDS activities, compared to 30 per cent for GNP activities.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Applying Gender Responsive Budgeting to the HIV response. A case study of Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand, 2017, UN Women; Organization Report for UN Women, 2014.

<sup>193</sup> UN Women's work on Gender Equality and HIV Indicators, undated, unpublished (UN Women internal document).



<sup>194</sup> Compendium of Gender Equality and HIV Indicators, Bloom, S and Negroustoeva, S., MEASURE Evaluation, November 2013

<sup>195</sup> UN Women's work on Gender Equality and HIV Indicators, undated, unpublished (internal UN Women document).

<sup>196</sup> The UN Women staff survey did not ask about support to HIV/AIDS plan implementation and monitoring. The evaluation therefore does not have any information on the extent to which this forms part of UN Women's support.

**TABLE 4**  
**Progress rating for outputs and outcomes in the reconstructed Theory of Change<sup>197</sup>**

OUTPUT RATING	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	OUTCOME RATING (RAG)
Good progress and attention to capacity of stakeholders. Capacity remains weaker for execution	Enhancing the knowledge tools and capacity of key stakeholders (UN agencies, governments, CSO, WLWHIV and women's advocates) so they are able to analyse, formulate and execute gender-responsive plans, budgets and strategies and gender-responsive HIV/AIDS plans, budgets and strategies	Good quality gender-responsive national development, plans & budgets & strategies, adopted & implemented	Good progress on adoption of plans but implementation needs further work
Good progress on budget legislation but further opportunities in sectoral legislation	Legislative framework for gender-responsive fiscal and HIV/AIDS laws, public financial management and planning strengthened	Fiscal laws, policies and national plans prioritize and increase budgetary allocations for GEWE and HIV/AIDS	Many examples of increased allocations, but size of increase and proportion is variable; not all sectors covered
Good progress for planning and budgeting but less for monitoring	Established National Dialogue mechanisms for promoting gender-responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring & accountability, including HIV/AIDS response	Systems are in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's & girls' empowerment	Tracking systems incomplete in most cases
Mixed progress and emphasis across countries and some inconsistency	Greater voice for organizations and networks of WLWHIV in decision-making processes and in holding governments accountable	Government and national accountability for achievement of gender targets	Accountability mechanisms, e.g. budget legislation and guidelines still not fully followed
Good progress on generating gender data, but linking to financing is incomplete and transparency with finance information is variable	Increased availability of data & evidence on gender financing gaps accessible to all users	Gender-responsive plans, budgets & strategies, and gender-responsive HIV/AIDS plans, budgets and strategies, adopted & implemented	Good progress on adoption of plans and budgets, but several challenges with full implementation
Currently limited progress, but growing through opportunities in SDG context	Enhanced coordination and strategic partnerships with the UN system and interagency mechanisms	Accessible institutions for including women's voice in GNP & the inclusion of women and women's organizations in GNP	Good progress on including women's voices, but limited examples of sustained accessibility of institutions
		GE advocates & WLWHIV effectively influence policies and strategies & hold governments to account	Good examples of government responsiveness to GE advocates, opportunities are generally narrow
		Strengthened UN system-wide & international institution intra-agency coordination and accountability	Increasing work visible, but further focus needed

 Good progress although some further steps may be required.  Mixed or moderate progress

**BOX 12****A selection of significant HIV/AIDS outputs and outcomes achieved with UN Women support**

In the Asia Pacific Region, UN Women's support has focused on influencing HIV/AIDS strategies through the use of better evidence on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. In **Vietnam**, UN Women supported the AIDS Control Authority to conduct a gender assessment of the national HIV/AIDS response. This resulted in the integration of gender equality commitments into HIV/AIDS national planning guidelines for 2017. In **Thailand**, UN Women supported publication of a policy brief, *Women and HIV in Thailand: The State of Knowledge and Policy Gaps*, which examines the role of gender in Thai society, the risk factors associated with HIV/AIDS for women and girls, and the extent to which Thailand's gender equality framework has been incorporated into national HIV/AIDS policies. The brief is intended to inform policy makers about gender transformative policies and interventions when preparing the national HIV/AIDS strategy and programmes.

UN Women supported the Government of **Kenya** to strengthen the attention given to gender issues in its AIDS Strategic Framework for 2014/15–2018/19. As a result, the Strategic Framework is reported to have a chapter specifically focusing on these issues and gender considerations are mainstreamed across the entire document. In addition, the Government has allocated 13 per cent of the budget to support gender specific commitments, using key indicators to cost and track progress.

In **Mozambique**, UN Women worked with partners to integrate gender analysis into the National Strategic Plan against HIV/AIDS 2010–2014 (PEN III), but it did not link this to budget allocations. In addition, UN Women has galvanized organizations of WLWHIV to engage in national policy dialogue.

In **Rwanda**, in 2015, UN Women provided training to 226 WLWHIV in policy analysis, leadership and advocacy, adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART), localization of SDGs, and on the M&E tool to collect data on GBV among WLWHIV women at district level. UN Women's support to the network of WLWHIV/AIDS continued in 2016 with a focus on fighting stigma and advocating for all sectors in the national development framework to fully address the gender dimensions of WLWHIV.

In bringing WLWHIV into policy dialogue as a central focus, results show better progress against targets (68 per cent for supporting women's organizations in policy dialogue) than those concerning national plans and budgets (54 per cent)<sup>198</sup>. Results concerning enabling partners also show good progress against targets (75 per cent for training partners on gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS). However, progress in HIV-related work in general has been slower than anticipated by targets.

UN Women reporting does not explain the specific reasons for these shortfalls, but reporting suggests for all Strategic Plan (SP) targets not met a mix of factors are at play, including: over-ambitious target-setting, funding constraints, imprecise indicator formulation

that compromised reporting, data gaps, and lack of prioritization of specific outputs by field offices.<sup>199</sup>

Specific reasons offered for slower achievement of SP 2014–17 targets under Outcome 5.3 include: opportunities for developing gender-responsive National HIV Strategies/Plans and corresponding budgets depend on 1) multi-year government cycles for review of existing strategies; and 2) UN Women's presence in countries where these reviews are taking place, which has in turn been limited by significantly reduced UNAIDS funds from 2016–17.<sup>200</sup>

Despite target shortfalls, the work has demonstrated strong results in some cases, particularly in bringing women affected by HIV/AIDS into policy dialogue, described in Box 6 and under Finding 14, and in examples of data strengthening and integration into national planning, described in Box 12.

197 In line with Finding 8, this progress rating does not include evidence relating to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning processes. HIV/AIDS references are included in Output and Outcome statements as these are statements from the ToC, which does include HIV/AIDS.

198 UN Women 2017, Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017. (UNW/2018/2).

199 UN Women 2017, Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017. (UNW/2018/2); Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 21 May 2018.

200 Communication, HIV Team.

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## FINDING 10:

UN Women's technical support to partners is largely of high quality and there is evidence of it enabling partners to make GNP, including HIV/AIDS, more gender-responsive.

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The provision of technical gender support is one key approach UN Women uses to build partner capacity for promoting gender-responsive GNP and HIV/AIDS planning. Overall, this **technical support has been well targeted and has benefited government and civil society partners, particularly in setting targets, financing and implementing arrangements in national action plans for gender equality and aligning these with national planning and budgeting processes.**<sup>201</sup> National partner governments, international and national CSOs and Member State missions to the UN interviewed for the evaluation confirmed the high quality of UN Women's GNP support, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. Specifically, partners appreciated UN Women's strong technical skills in subject areas;<sup>202</sup> the opportunity afforded them to draw from international expertise;<sup>203</sup> the high level of international and national expertise provided;<sup>204</sup> and the tailoring of expertise to their needs,<sup>205</sup> including through mentoring and on the job coaching, while maintaining a high level of collaboration.<sup>206</sup>

The extent to which UN Women's technical support enables partners to drive gender-responsive GNP is difficult to assess with the available data, but it is found to be most effective when grounded in a thorough knowledge of the recipient organization,

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201 UN Women (2017) What can we learn from UN Women Evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016, UN Women, September 2017; Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on 'Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality' Synthesis Report, August 2016, International Solutions Group; End of Programme Evaluation of EC-UN Women's 'Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS' Final Report, Universalia, March 2014.

202 Interviews for the global case study.

203 Timor-Leste case study.

204 Ecuador case study.

205 Timor-Leste case study.

206 Regional UN Women Project (first phase) Final Programme Evaluation (2013) Project Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe (PGPR-SEE).

its sector, structure and processes.<sup>207</sup> There are many examples of partners making stronger gender equality commitments in global normative frameworks, as well as national policies, plans and budgets. In many cases, partners recognize the contribution UN Women has made to this process. For example, at the global level like-minded Member States point to UN Women's high-quality technical briefing and support, including sharing possible wording to include in negotiation agreements, as critical to their ability to secure major advances in attention given to promoting gender equality in both the AAAA and in the UN Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS.<sup>208</sup>

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## BOX 13

### Strategic use of technical support in Timor-Leste

The 'Timor-Leste model' for GNP has included the long-term embedding of individuals in key locations such as UPMA (Unit of Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation) when it was established in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in 2015. This ensured long-term technical support at the highest available levels for gender responsiveness in the state budget cycle and in the transition to programme budgeting.

Alongside this, direct, often short-term technical support to ministries and other government institutions (such as the General Directorate of Statistics) on specific issues and/or for the duration of key processes, such as policy development, has proved to be an effective approach.

In combination, these strategies contribute to building technical skills as well as supporting sustainability and wider dissemination of skills and knowledge. Building long-term allies and champions both within and outside government – especially in the women's machinery and in a CSO umbrella organization where the relationship with UN Women has been maintained for over a decade and in the PMO where long-term (two years +) technical assistance has been placed – has helped to create (further) spaces for the establishment of institutional mechanisms, such as formal involvement of the women's machinery in the budget review process.

*(Source: Timor-Leste case study)*

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207 Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda Evaluation, September 2012, Universalia.

208 Interviews for the global case study.



At the country level, in many countries technical support has contributed to more gender-responsive GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS (including Bolivia, Jordan, Nepal and Senegal) although results vary from country to country, in line with the maturity of their GNP systems;<sup>209</sup> and has at times been long-term and strategic, as described in Box 13 for Timor-Leste. Case study data reveals the degree of effectiveness of this technical support: in Albania, UN Women's Gender Equality Facility found that gender mainstreaming is reflected only in specific national strategies where this had been supported by UN Women.<sup>210</sup>

Under the "Institutional Strengthening for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" project in Timor-Leste, the evaluation found that the target for seven ministries to incorporate gender equality in their annual action plans was surpassed.<sup>211</sup>

Box 14 captures a further example of how UN Women's technical support has contributed to the Government of Mozambique making stronger gender equality commitments in its national HIV/AIDS response, in line with proposals from women's organizations.<sup>212</sup>

#### BOX 14

### Technical support assists partners to strengthen gender equality commitments in the national HIV/AIDS response in Mozambique

In Mozambique, UN Women provided technical support to women's organizations and to government to enable strong gender equality commitments in the National HIV/AIDS Strategy 2015–2019 (PEN IV). This support enabled women's organizations to identify priorities for the Strategy and to influence government to secure a commitment to gender justice in the Strategy as well as an associated budget allocation of US\$ 7.9 million. These commitments are a significant step forward compared to the previous National HIV/AIDS Strategy, which included some gender analysis but did not set out a strategy for addressing the gender dimensions of the epidemic in a consistent way, nor allocated a budget for this.

209 UN Women 2015 and 2016 Annual Reports Narrative (not triangulated).

210 UN Women 2015 and 2016 Annual Reports Narrative (not triangulated).

211 Timor-Leste case study.

212 Portfolio analysis.

UN Women's technical support to the Uganda AIDS Commission and partners has also been instrumental in catalyzing national action for a gender-responsive approach to HIV/AIDS (see Box 16).

There are isolated cases where resource constraints and/or contextual factors have affected either UN Women's ability to provide the required technical support to partners or the results achieved through the technical support.<sup>213</sup> For example, in Palestine, GNP work has not advanced as intended because of limited in-house capacity and changes in the operating environment. In Kyrgyzstan, UN Women provided technical support to partners to mainstream gender equality in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and costed the accompanying action plan. However, the lack of government commitment for gender equality, as well as inadequate capacity to implement gender policies limited the results of this technical support.<sup>214</sup> Evaluations have also found that the sustainability of results is often linked to the continued availability of technical gender support.<sup>215</sup>

#### FINDING 11:

While the reconstructed ToC offers a good foundation for conceptualizing the full array of GNP processes and results, it also reveals weaknesses reflecting the evolution of GNP work. This suggests that in the future GNP design and monitoring would be better guided by a re-envisioned ToC.

The reconstructed ToC was developed on the basis of UN Women's theory of change of GRB,<sup>216</sup> UN Women's thinking on GNP<sup>217</sup> and drawing on key interviews conducted during the inception phase of this

213 Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on 'Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality' Synthesis Report, August 2016, International Solutions Group; Palestine case study; Albania case study; portfolio analysis.

214 Final Evaluation of the Global Programme on 'Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality' Synthesis Report, August 2016, International Solutions Group.

215 Ibid; Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda Evaluation, September 2012, Universalia.

216 Implementing policy commitments to gender equality and women's rights: the theory of change of gender responsive budgeting, August 2012, UN Women.

217 Particularly that described in UN Women's Contribution to Governance and National Planning, September 2012, UN Women.

evaluation. Collectively, these suggest an evolution in UN Women's GNP operational strategy, from the budget being a primary, though not unique entry point, to national development plans also now being considered a central entry point. As this evolution has occurred in Country Offices, opportunities have been taken to extend the scope of UN Women's GNP work. Experience has also been acquired on aspects of the causal process. Weak dimensions of the ToC point to areas where further clarity on strategy, guidance and scope for IA 5 would enhance ongoing results.

**Weak dimensions of the current ToC include:**

- The considerable emphasis in some countries on sector-level work, in planning, budgeting and in some cases policy and M&E, particularly during the later stages of the evaluation period. This sector focus is not given sufficient emphasis in the ToC. Sector-relevant legislative change, such as GBV legal reforms (which supports sectoral policy) has also been relevant and has been taken up when opportunity has emerged, but is not covered.
- The chronological causal process is imprecisely formulated. In particular, for national and sectoral plans, adoption and implementation are presented as a single-level outcome, although there are clearly many steps to be established between adoption of the plan; having the skills and understanding for effective implementation, i.e. so that gender-responsive components retain their gender equality intent; as well as monitoring results. In addition, specific pathways from outputs to outcomes are not specified, e.g. the relation between generating greater voice for women (Output 4); making institutions receptive to women's voices (Outcome 5) and women effectively influencing policy (Outcome 6) is not clear. Similarly, the relation between establishing dialogue mechanisms and actually establishing consistent and reliable accountability to gender targets in government is not elaborated (such as in the implementation of Uganda's Gender Equality Certificate which attempts to institutionalize standards).
- The role of national dialogue mechanisms is identified in the ToC, but the role of both national and international commitments as frameworks for dialogue is not present, and linkages with UN Women's normative function are therefore not explicit. Similarly, the role of high-level decisions

and commitments as expressions of political will and therefore drivers of gender-responsive GNP is not captured.<sup>218</sup>

- While monitoring is included in the ToC in terms of tracking the expenditure of budget allocations, the development of indicators to identify progress on the policy/plan commitments underlying the budgets is not captured. Despite this, Country Offices identify the development of indicators as important steps, for instance: the National Priority Gender Equality Indicators (NPGEIs) in Uganda; indicators for new policies and EU Acquis in Albania; and an M&E framework supporting the NAP-GBV and NAP-WPS in Timor-Leste.
- The role and expectations of partnerships are not clearly articulated, partly through insufficient elaboration of the causal process. As partnerships with women's machineries, Ministries of Finance, CSOs, and to some extent line ministries and other UN agencies are core dimensions of UN Women's approach, this oversight represents a challenge to assessing progress at country level.

A re-envisioned ToC that takes account of this evolving situation and becomes embedded in programming processes would offer better support to both planning/decision-making for GNP at country level and reporting/knowledge generating for GNP at the aggregate/headquarters level.

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**FINDING 12:**

UN Women's work is necessary, but – as is implicit in a partnership approach – it is not sufficient alone to progress establishing gender-responsive GNP, and its contribution is complex because many stakeholders are involved.

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**Without UN Women's GNP work, it is unlikely that a number of countries would be at the level and stage of gender-responsive governance that they have reached, and in others that they would have made progress at all. However, UN Women's contribution is complex and varied because the nature of partnerships means that the actions of a number of other**

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<sup>218</sup> Such as the Maubisse Declaration on WEE in Timor-Leste; the 2012 Council of Minister's Decision in 2012; and commitments from MOFPED in Uganda.

stakeholders are usually required to achieve an outcome level result.

A contribution analysis was conducted using case study data as the core, and portfolio analysis data as supporting evidence where reports included sufficient information to be able to connect a UN Women activity with a reported result. This included data from Mozambique, Tanzania, India, Mexico, Morocco, Honduras, Nepal, Senegal and Sierra Leone.<sup>219</sup> The analysis demonstrated the degree of contribution that can be attributed to UN Women is associated with the level of action or tasks required between an activity and a result; and the degree to which partners and other stakeholders led those actions (see Annex K).

Specifically, it was found that:

- Capacity building, training, developing learning tools, some types of high-level advocacy, and activities focused on inserting gender language/analysis into documents generally have a strong association with UN Women's input – except where UN Women facilitates others to lead the activity, i.e. when it is indirect. In these cases, **the primary role of partnerships in GNP work means that UN Women's contribution, though essential and significant, is often made invisible when others are successfully supported into leadership on GNP issues.** UN Women's approach enables partners to advocate and work within government to embed gender responsiveness. This approach is essential for sustainability and establishing ownership.
- **Frequently this means that the less visible UN Women's association with a result (i.e. the less active leadership UN Women is required to take), the more it can be deemed a success, as**

<sup>219</sup>The analysis primarily used evidence from case study countries. Only one of these included substantial HIV-related material, so the analysis is skewed towards non-HIV focused GNP work. Supporting evidence was used from Portfolio Analysis/other focus countries, which included some HIV-related material. Reporting on activities, apart from through direct interviews, is only consistently available through RMS since 2016; previous data are available through some annual reports, although these do not report directly against activities. This makes the pathways of causation sometimes invisible prior to 2016. However, available activity, results and evaluation data mapped into focus work areas for the Contribution Analysis was sample triangulated with the post-2016 RMS activity narrative (Status Activities Report) and good levels of consistency were found, therefore corroborating the robustness of the Contribution Analysis.

**this indicates successful enabling.** Ultimately, gender-responsive governance will have been achieved when it is maintained and further progressed by governments in dialogue with civil society, and when further progress is therefore associated with CSOs in particular.

- In achieving improvements in gender-responsive plans and policies, UN Women's contribution is often indirect (with steps in between UN Women's support and the final document, and with several other stakeholders involved). However, **this does not imply that the contribution is limited:** most often it appears to be essential for achieving gender responsiveness, especially of high quality.

Other factors influencing the strength of contribution that can be attributed to UN Women include:

- **Most current GNP results have been achieved through a continuum from the foundation of long-standing budgeting work through UNIFEM and other actors.** Many countries therefore had some level of awareness of GRB, and some capacity and mechanisms established prior to the evaluation period. UNIFEM/UN Women have made a long-term commitment in this area, dating from 1998. Case study countries' start dates range from the late 1990s (Uganda) to 2009 (Palestine). Other focus countries with mature foundations include Mozambique, Tanzania, India and Mexico, with GNP experience dating from the late 1990s, and Morocco (since 2002). Honduras, Nepal, Senegal and Sierra Leone also had extensive GNP interventions under UNIFEM. Serbia and at least 25 other countries began GNP under UNIFEM prior to 2009.<sup>220</sup>
- **Other organizations have been involved in GNP-related work in countries where UNIFEM and UN Women have carried out work.** The Commonwealth Secretariat and International Development Research Centre were strong actors in the 1990s and 2000s. Currently, several donor organizations engaging with PFM reform processes (Albania), including transitions to programme budgeting (Uganda, Timor-Leste), influence GNP outcomes alongside UN Women. In these situations, important contextual inputs are made by others, such as OECD and the EU. In other cases, the interventions made by others clearly

<sup>220</sup> UN Women 2012, Theory of Change for gender responsive budgeting; UN Women, Approach Paper for GNP Corporate Thematic Evaluation.

contributed to targets under IA 5. In Timor-Leste, for example, DFAT made a major contribution to the establishment of the gender marker on the foundations of UN Women's initial discussions.<sup>221</sup>

- Donors of non-core funds to UN Women Country Offices for GNP-related projects also influence outcomes. At least 13 of the 17 focus countries have received project-based funds for GNP work from bilateral and multilateral donor arrangements involving governments of: Austria; UK; EU; Canada; Denmark; Grenada; Iceland; Ireland; Netherlands; Norway; Spain; Sweden; and Switzerland, as well as national organizations such as the Mexican Institute Estadist Geografia; other UN entities; and non-government entities such as the Ford Foundation.<sup>222</sup>

### FINDING 13:

There are four key dimensions of UN Women's added value in GNP: creating spaces; creating connections; creating trust; and carrying the GNP flag.

**Creating spaces:** A key strategy for adding value has been in creating or expanding policy or political space for gender responsiveness through strategic long or short-term technical assistance and/or technical advocacy around targeted outputs. All 17 countries reviewed highlight long or short-term technical support or advocacy around targeted outputs and the resulting opportunities in policy space. Technical support has included inputs into the formulation of international commitments at global level, and at country level into national plans, sectoral policies, legislation development and review, data quality enhancement, budget and PFM reforms. **UN Women is generally well-known for good quality technical inputs**, mentioned by respondents in all case study countries, and for being able to source specialized international expertise.<sup>223</sup>

221 Case study for Timor-Leste; UN Women and donor stakeholder interviews.

222 Data derived from donor agreement management system DAMS.

223 Case studies for Albania, Ecuador, Palestine and Timor-Leste; Uganda and interviews for the global case studies; Regional UN Women Project (first phase) Final Programme Evaluation (2013) Project Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe (PGPR-SEE).

While quality technical skills and technical advocacy underpin UN Women's role, their added value lies in the effects of these inputs in creating political and policy space **and supporting others – often with further carefully selected technical inputs – to occupy/pursue these spaces**. This is the case for all inputs into documents, commitments, strategies and plans that are put to use by others. UN Women has achieved this very successfully at times among both government and civil society stakeholders (see Box 15). In Uganda, UN Women's strong partnership with the Uganda AIDS Commission, UNAIDS and women's organizations (including organizations of WLWHIV) has facilitated the use of evidence on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS in the new National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2016–2020) and a stronger role for civil society in the national policy dialogue (see Box 16).

### BOX 15

#### Creating spaces through technical support in Timor-Leste and at global level

In Timor-Leste, long-term technical assistance in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to develop a gender policy for agriculture, on which a planning process could then build, has enabled, albeit slowly and somewhat tentatively, a new engagement with women's work in agriculture and with attracting young women into agricultural schools.

At the global level, UN Women's ability to create spaces to be used by others was well demonstrated with the country's work towards the AAAA, which would have been unlikely to progress so far without UN Women's technical inputs.

*(Sources: Timor-Leste case study: government interviews; interviews for the global case study: UN Women interviews)*

In addition to direct capacity building and technical inputs, enabling others appears to rely on two further dimensions: creating connections and creating trust.

**Creating Connections:** As with previous evaluations<sup>224</sup>, this evaluation found that **UN Women has a strong role in convening and connecting diverse partners for dialogue**, often creating new forms of dialogue between women's CSOs and government in particular. Of the 17 countries under review, 16 refer to this

224 UN Women (2017) What can we learn from UN Women Evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016

**BOX 16****UN Women's added value: creating spaces, connections, trust and carrying the flag for a gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS response in Uganda**

UN Women's HIV/AIDS work in Uganda is indicative of how the entity **can catalyse an enabling environment for a gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS response**. In Uganda, UN Women's strong partnership with the Uganda AIDS Commission, UNAIDS and women's organizations (including organizations of WLWHIV), has facilitated the use of evidence on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS in the new National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2016–2020) and a stronger role for civil society in the national policy dialogue. UN Women's added value has therefore “[brought] a different dimension to our programming and showed us key priority areas to be addressed by government” (key interviewee).

The Uganda experience shows how UN Women has created space for gender responsiveness, created connections between stakeholders to push for an enhanced gender focus in the national HIV/AIDS response and has consistently maintained a unique gender focus. The initial catalyst was UN Women's partnership with UNAIDS and the Uganda AIDS Commission (UAC) and their joint review of the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS (2011–2015) in 2014. UN Women highlighted the gendered nature of HIV/AIDS, by analysing the gendered differences in the ability to access treatment. Using this information and analysis, UN Women provided capacity building to the UAC and Global Fund to influence the National AIDS Council Strategic Plan 2015/16 as well as the subsequent Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (JUPSA).

UN Women has also emphasized the inclusion of women's organizations, especially of WLWHIV, in policy dialogue. The entity has supported the International Community of Women Living with HIV Eastern Africa (ICWEA) to develop their leadership skills which has helped women to advocate more effectively and take a seat alongside policy makers.

*(Source: Uganda case study; Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) (2016–2020), Uganda, 2016; UAC, 2015, Review of the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS)*

role in positive terms. For GNP, creating connections has focused on creating channels for accountability to national and international gender equality commitments, including through budget review processes, local and national planning, and the monitoring of international commitments. These engagements have involved technical support and capacity building as well as simply convening events and meetings. Where these channels have been established, it appears to be associated with good progress on GNP. For instance, in Ecuador where the women's movement has limited capacity, UN Women supported the development of several women's agendas to be included in the plans of autonomous local government or to be adopted by local political candidates.<sup>225</sup> In Timor-Leste, UN Women's role in convening different stakeholders, alongside its strong links with CSOs, put the entity in the rare position of being able to facilitate linkages

and dialogue from local through to the highest government levels.<sup>226</sup>

**Creating connections such as these enables women's voices to be heard and opens up information flows and channels for engagement**, such as budget analysis, that were previously inaccessible to CSOs. Some cases have also resulted in lending UN leverage and weight to CSO voices, as well as adding a certain legitimacy to UN Women's position.<sup>227</sup> In Uganda, UN Women has acted as a “friendly broker” to enable dialogue on GEWE across different levels. Its advocacy successfully pitched GEWE at the highest levels of government and won UN Women and CSO partners places on the advisory team to the National Planning Authority (NPA) during the development of the National Development Plan II.<sup>228</sup>

<sup>225</sup>Ecuador case study: CSO interviews.

<sup>226</sup>Timor-Leste case study: CSO, UN Family and UN Women interviews.

<sup>227</sup>Timor-Leste case study: Booklet “Gender Champions” p.21; CSO interviews.

<sup>228</sup>Uganda case study: Donor and CSO interviews.

**In global-level work, UN Women’s relationship with civil society, unusually strong among UN agencies, is highly valued.** This relationship contributes to bringing women’s perspectives into top-level negotiations and enables CSOs to keep updated on progress in negotiations and therefore better target their advocacy. In addition, it strengthens the hand of UN Women as it advocates for gender analysis to be integrated into documents such as the AAAA.<sup>229</sup> UN Women’s normative role also comes into play in the act of convening, often among government and other stakeholders as in the case of the entity’s role in embedding the SDG agenda, and among CSOs especially relating to CEDAW (see Finding 4).

**Creating Trust:** Case study evidence strongly **suggests an important role for long-term relationships of trust and allegiance in successfully enabling others to use gender-responsive policy spaces in GNP.** Five of the six case studies highlight the positive role of trust and the remaining case study highlights the negative effects of lack of trust. The role of trust is not documented in country reporting, so it has not been possible to explore its role beyond the case studies.

Relationships of trust have been established with gender equality advocates within governments, such as the sector-based gender champions, women’s machineries, within the Ministries of Finance, and with CSOs. In Uganda and Timor-Leste, UN Women has established long-term, consistently supportive relationships with key stakeholders that are highly valued.<sup>230</sup> In Ecuador, CSOs refer to UN Women as their main ally in all their struggles.<sup>231</sup> In Albania, the central relationship with the Ministry of Finance has acted as a catalyst, enabling it to be instrumental in training and coaching national and local governments and CSOs to plan and allocate public resources that promote further equality between women and men.<sup>232</sup>

**Long-term relationships have: a) allowed incremental working to establish sustainable and strong capacity in key locations; b) gained legitimacy on both sides of**

229 Interviews for the global case study: UN Women interviews.

230 Timor-Leste case study: Government and CSO interviews. Uganda case study: Government, CSO and donor stakeholder interviews.

231 Ecuador case study.

232 Albania case study: UN Women 2016 Annual Reports Narrative, Europe and Central Asia, Albania Office; P 31; Evaluation of UN Women’s Contribution to UN System Coordination on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Europe and Central Asia (ECA), Final Report, 2016; Government and UN Women interviews.

#### BOX 17

### Carrying the GNP Flag in Uganda and Albania

In Uganda, UN Women was at the forefront of national discussions around GNP (one of the biggest areas in which UN Women wielded influence either in its own efforts or efforts under the umbrella of the UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality). The entity has been “persistent and consistent”; “UN Women have walked the journey, been patient, they understand the process and they stay the course”. In Albania, UN Women is the only organization working with a direct and targeted focus on GNP in all the PRGP-SEE countries. Stakeholders in all three countries of Albania’s regional programme consistently stated that without UN Women’s pioneer work on GNP in the region and in each country, the topic would not be as widely discussed or accepted.

*(Source: Uganda and Albania case studies)*

**the partnership to use gender-responsive governance mechanisms in parts of the government structure; and c) created a level of mutuality which has brought access to new spaces to embed GNP more precisely.**

<sup>233</sup> An absence of trust, either with CSOs or key government institutions such as Ministries of Finance, conversely restricts the spaces available to engage on GNP, illustrated by the difficulties of establishing these spaces in the challenging political environment of Palestine, where MOWA and UN Women have struggled to gain spaces in which to engage on GNP.<sup>234</sup>

**Carrying the Flag:** Carrying the GNP flag consistently and acting as a knowledge base to support it **has contributed to legitimacy and leverage, and has played a role in establishing trust.** UN Women has a well-established historical investment in GNP,<sup>235</sup> and is known in most case study countries for having played a primary role in laying the foundations for the evolving GNP process and the government structures and relationships that underpin it (see Box 17).<sup>236</sup>

233 Timor-Leste case study; UN Women, donor stakeholder and UN Family interviews.

234 Palestine case study; Government and CSO interviews.

235 Theory of Change for gender responsive budgeting, UN Women 2012; Approach Paper for GNP Corporate Thematic Evaluation.

236 E.g. Timor-Leste case study UN Women, Donor Stakeholder, Government, UN Family interviews; Ecuador case study: Johansen 2012:27.

This early investment in GNP, with a primary focus on the budget as the entry point, and **recognition of the accumulation of knowledge and expertise it has entailed, has been a foundation for legitimacy in carrying out later and broader GNP work.** It has been an important factor for leverage to open up (further) spaces for engagement in country situations giving UN Women a “clear strategic advantage” and to communicate global learning.<sup>237</sup> In Timor-Leste, the global knowledge base has enabled the Country Office to highlight elements of global learning on GRB, for example in the model used to build Gender Working Groups, which drew on experience from Cambodia and elsewhere.

Beyond GNP, UN Women is recognized as a knowledge base for GEWE more generally, and for being the only organization with a targeted and direct focus on gender equality which is consistently its “central purpose”.<sup>238</sup> For GNP, this translates into being recognized in-country for high-quality knowledge and skills, referenced in 12 of 17 portfolios, five of six case studies and in survey responses.

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#### FINDING 14:

Engaging women as rights holders and creating channels for their voices to be heard in decision-making is a core dimension of promoting gender equality and human rights, operationalized by UN Women in GNP processes, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.

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CSOs have been involved in specific activities in GNP in most reviewed global and country-level GNP interventions. **Through activities at local government level, in communities, or at national level in budget review processes, women have been addressed as rights holders.** The large majority of Country Offices under review have undertaken specific activities to work with civil society on GNP at some level and at some points in time whether at local government level, in communities, or at national level in budget review processes.<sup>239</sup> Survey responses confirmed the priority given to this, with 74.4 per cent of respondents reporting that their office had engaged with women’s

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237 Albania case study: Gender Responsive Budgeting. Regional UN Women Project (First Phase) Final Programme Evaluation (2013); Ecuador case study: Johansen 2012:27.

238 Uganda case study: donor stakeholder interviews.

239 Portfolio analysis.

organizations on policy, planning and budgeting work. In global-level work, collaboration with women’s organizations has formed an explicit part of UN Women’s influencing strategy (see Box 18).<sup>240</sup> UN Women convened a series of meetings with women’s organizations during the preparatory phases to the AAAA and HIV/AIDS High-Level Meeting to share strategies, key messages and to coordinate efforts. The women’s organizations consulted viewed these meetings as a place where they could engage with UN Women on an equal footing, negotiating and agreeing principles of engagement.<sup>241</sup>

However, this engagement is not fully consistent over time. **Case study evidence suggests that political context and levels of advocacy/activist space available to civil society influence the opportunity for, and the effectiveness of this approach.** In Ecuador, UN Women has experienced a decline in engagement by CSOs as a consequence of political disruption in 2015.<sup>242</sup>

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#### BOX 18

##### Global-level engagement with women as rights holders

With the support of UN Women, organizations of WLWHIV pushed the international agenda to integrate their specific needs by developing and lobbying for the CSW 2016 Resolution on Women, the Girl Child and HIV/AIDS. Early in 2016, UN Women convened meetings with women’s organizations to prepare for the CSW and the General Assembly. UN Women worked with the HIV/AIDS regional adviser and collaborated with SADC Member States who initiated the resolution, and prepared a draft and a strategy for achieving objectives. This process strengthened women’s organizations and gave them more legitimacy to demand their rights in their respective countries. Women’s organizations were also consulted in the preparations for the AAAA, and viewed these meetings as enabling engagement with UN Women on an equal footing, giving opportunity for negotiating and agreeing principles of engagement.

*(Source: Interviews for global case study)*

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240 Financing for Development: UN Women’s strategy for engagement, Working Document, March 6, 2015; Financing for Development and Gender, UN Women, undated; Background Note: Briefing to the Executive Board, First Regular Session 2018, “Briefing on UN Women’s follow up to recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.”

241 CSO interviews; interviews for the global case study.

242 Ecuador case study.

In Palestine, UN Women has struggled to build relationships with CSOs to support this process, partly due to an extremely complex contextual environment: the 2017 Country Programme Evaluation found that Country Office interventions could have had stronger inclusion of CSOs and community-based organizations so that a broader range of women's voices were represented in policy design and dialogue (see also Box 19 for detail on the Timor-Leste experience).<sup>243</sup>

In most countries, involvement of CSOs has been associated with particular events or activities, time bound either by project frameworks, or by the political timeframe of key events. Financial data showing fluctuations in resources for GNP (See Annex H) depending on the availability of non-core funds using project frameworks suggest that Country Offices are more able to engage with CSOs when project resources are available. In general, the limited budgets available to women's organizations constrain them from engaging consistently in the absence of specific support from UN Women.<sup>244</sup>

Reports that the intensity and consistency of UN Women's collaboration with women's organizations have reduced in the aftermath of the AAAA negotiation process, despite efforts by UN Women to include civil society and women's organizations in the AAAA follow-up mechanisms, suggest these drivers also exist at global level.

Analysis from reviewed countries and survey evidence suggests that **work on HIV/AIDS**, on the other hand, **has more consistently prioritized engagement with CSOs**, including networks of WLWHIV than in broader GNP work (See Finding 9; Box 6, Finding 2).<sup>245</sup> In these cases, working with women as rights holders has been central to the HIV/AIDS approach to strengthening the institutional capacity of women's organizations and facilitating their inclusion in the preparation of national plans/strategies for HIV/AIDS. This is a result of the somewhat different approach to GNP taken in the context of HIV/AIDS work signalled in Finding 9, and suggests some learning may be available to broader GNP approaches from the GNP-related HIV/AIDS work.

<sup>243</sup>Palestine case study; 2017 Palestine Country Programme Evaluation.

<sup>244</sup> See for example declining support for women's groups since 2011, from already proportionately very low levels: AWID, 2016.

<sup>245</sup>Evidence from Uganda, Mozambique, Rwanda, Barbados, Ecuador, Honduras, India, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Ukraine.

#### BOX 19

### Engaging women as rights holders at country level around key activities in Timor-Leste

In Timor-Leste, UN Women has established a long-term relationship with Rede Feto, an umbrella organization of over 30 (15 active) CSOs working on women's rights and gender issues. This relationship has included building capacity for analysis of GRB (2011 and 2015) through the establishment of a GRB working group led by Rede Feto, and by building channels for CSO perspectives on GRB to reach government. In 2016, UN Women and Rede Feto jointly articulated a critique of the State Budgets prepared for 2017 and submitted these together. Rede Feto, supported by UN Women, also developed a monitoring tool for tracking progress against the CEDAW Concluding Observations.

*(Source: Timor-Leste case study)*

#### FINDING 15:

Global-level GNP work, including in HIV/AIDS, reflects substantive human rights and gender equality approaches. At country level, the language of women's human rights is more strongly evident in UN Women's interaction with CSOs than with government stakeholders.

**At the global level, UN Women's normative work in Financing for Development and HIV/AIDS gives strong attention to gender equality and, to a lesser extent, women's rights.** Significant gains have been made in the language of gender equality of global commitments at key moments.<sup>246</sup> UN Women's policy proposals on financing for development give a high level of attention to promoting gender equality, advocating for an analysis of tax policies to ensure their contribution to the realization of gender equality and to address their explicit and implicit gender biases.<sup>247</sup> These policy proposals and the AAAA on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment also include references to women's rights, but marginally less consistently than

<sup>246</sup> For example, the AAAA refers to gender equality eight times, women's empowerment five times, human rights generally seven times and with direct reference to women and girls twice (Action Plan 2015).

<sup>247</sup> UN Women 2015, Financing for Development and Gender.



the promotion of a gender equality approach (there are small, more equality-focused policy and financing actions than there are rights-focused actions).

UN Women and other stakeholders at global level are divided on the appropriate emphasis UN Women should give to rights. Some stakeholders propose that in some scenarios, other non-rights focused narratives, such as those that promote the economic benefits to all of women's full economic participation, may be more convincing for some Member States.<sup>248</sup> Civil society representatives are inclined to raise concerns if more instrumentalist narratives to women's economic participation are used. In the area of HIV, UN Women's strong focus on gender equality and rights has been important in highlighting core controversial issues such as adolescent girls' sexuality and in generating an understanding of social determinants and social dynamics, making the HIV/AIDS response less medicalized.<sup>249</sup>

These different approaches are reflected in some distinction at country level between work with CSOs and work with governments. In most countries, using CEDAW principles (with its foundational articulation of women's rights) to determine when government and donor financing can be considered gender responsive has been an important tool for UN Women's GNP work, born out of early work that articulated a rights-based approach to budgeting.<sup>250</sup> GNP work essentially seeks to create an enabling environment for rights to be realized, using principles of transparency, accountability, non-discrimination and participation to guide approaches to planning and budgeting. Therefore, it is fundamentally driven by a rights-based approach.

**A range of sources confirmed that UN Women's interactions with CSOs and women stakeholders concerning issues of planning and budgeting uphold a human rights and gender equality analysis and perspective.** Bringing CEDAW to bear on budgets has been a central modality through which UN Women has facilitated the engagement of CSOs and their dialogue with governments. This has been operationalized through applying gender budget analysis with CSOs

<sup>248</sup> Interviews for the global case study: Member State Mission and UN Family interviews.

<sup>249</sup> Interviews for the global case study: CSO and UN Women interviews.

<sup>250</sup> UNIFEM (2010) Budgeting for Women's Rights: Monitoring Government Budgets for Compliance with CEDAW, May 2006, Diane Elson; UN Women's contribution to GNP – Governance and National Planning, UN Women, Sept 2012.

in the monitoring of compliance with CEDAW, and by using CEDAW principles to analyse budgets using scorecards, gender audits and others, at local level.<sup>251</sup> Wider evaluations, including the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) evaluation and the regional architecture evaluation, also confirm that human rights approaches have been successfully applied more generally in programme design and implementation, especially in relation to UN Women's value-added ability to bring women's voices into interaction with governments.<sup>252</sup> In the 2017 corporate evaluation of WEE, 72 per cent of UN Women respondents regarded the entity's ability to apply a human rights-based approach as one of its core strengths.<sup>253</sup>

**There is moderate evidence that in GNP, UN Women has used the language of gender equality more consistently and the language of women's/human rights less consistently.** Four of five case studies include a number of government representatives with good levels of awareness, commitment and ability to analyse gender equality. Government action plans, strategies and national commitments consistently and fluently refer to gender equality. This language is consistent with UN Women's overall objective to promote gender-responsive governance with a core human rights approach, given the intimate connections between gender equality, women's rights and human rights. It may also be symptomatic of global experience of how gender issues gain entry into governance institutions in ways that tend to confirm or align with broader priorities. While the evaluation found no clear evidence of any consequence of this approach, there is sufficient evidence to warrant awareness of possible consequences and monitoring. The trade-off in opting for this tactical strategy may be that governments are less clearly engaged as duty bearers in a rights-based approach to GNP. In HIV/AIDS work, a women's/human rights approach has been more consistently applied (see Finding 14).

<sup>251</sup> Case studies: Uganda; Timor-Leste; Ecuador; Palestine Country Programme Evaluation 2017; Portfolio Analysis: Senegal (GELD).

<sup>252</sup> UN Women (2016) Regional Architecture Evaluation: 2016 Strengthening Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results; "Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services". 55th Session, E/AC.51/2015/9 UN Women. February 2016.

<sup>253</sup> UN Women (2016) Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to United Nations System Coordination on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW); Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017.

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## FINDING 16:

There are good levels of recognition of intersectionality issues in UN Women approaches, but it is variable how far these perspectives have been applied through GNP interventions, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.

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Attention has been paid to including disadvantaged groups of women in select activities in GNP. However, it remains unclear how far these groups are benefiting from this work, while the process of inserting gender responsiveness into M&E systems tracking the effects of budget allocations is incomplete.

Upholding human rights alongside a gender perspective has been embedded in UN Women's programming **through increasing attention to intersectionality issues as a way to reach the most disadvantaged.** As women differ from each other depending on a number of social characteristics such as wealth group, ethnicity, sexuality and rural-urban location, this perspective is important for progress in GNP to include benefits to groups of women disadvantaged by multiple dimensions. UN Women's reporting documentation displays an awareness of the need to reach groups disadvantaged by multiple structures and provides examples of taking steps towards reaching them through UN Women approaches, including GNP: indigenous women (Honduras); Dalit and tribal women (India, Nepal); pastoralist women (Tanzania); extremely poor women (Mozambique); LGBTI (Timor-Leste); and vulnerable and excluded women (Serbia).

However, the degree to which this intersectionality perspective has been applied to GNP work to facilitate policy and financing that specifically addresses the issues of marginalized groups is variable. The HIV/AIDS-related work reviewed has more consistently included substantive involvement of WLWHIV. In the GNP work more broadly, while CSO partners have worked with excluded groups in several cases, the evaluation did not find information in Country Office reports on how consistently the selection of CSO partners for GNP work takes into account the issue of reaching marginalized groups. Evaluations of other work areas have sometimes found weaknesses in UN Women's ability to support the inclusion and

participation of rural and marginalized groups,<sup>254</sup> suggesting that this is an ongoing area for development.

With progress still to be made in integrating gender-responsive M&E and policy review processes to audit budgets (see Finding 9), **it is not possible to have a clear and consistent picture of how far GNP work is successfully reaching or benefiting women and girls. Therefore, it is not clear whether it benefits the most marginalized groups within these categories, including within the category of WLWHIV.** Attention should be given to a consistent disaggregation of monitoring data within UN Women's own data collection systems, as well as within government systems monitoring the outcomes of budget allocations, not only by sex but also by age, ethnicity, income group and other relevant axes contributing to vulnerability.

## 6.3

### Key Question 3 – Effectiveness and impact

**How have UN Women's organizational structures, systems and processes at global, regional and country levels enabled efficient implementation of country-level priorities and actions?**

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## FINDING 17:

Although the human and financial capacity supporting UN Women's GNP work, including HIV/AIDS, has shown some improvement, meeting partner needs is an ongoing challenge, especially in the face of financing gaps.

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**To drive gender-responsive GNP, partner support needs are extensive, deep and long term.**<sup>255</sup> As a whole-of-government endeavour, gender-responsive GNP potentially involves a wide range of actors from central government, line ministries and their subordinate agencies or departments, national parliaments, local governments and civil society working across a range of thematic or sectoral areas and varied geographical locations. Each stakeholder has its own individual support needs, all requiring attention to galvanize systemic change. For example, even

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<sup>254</sup>UN Women (2014) Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment.

<sup>255</sup>Case studies for Albania, Palestine, Timor-Leste and Uganda.

with UN Women's technical support, government women's machineries often have ongoing capacity weaknesses that constrain their role in promoting gender-responsive GNP (Albania, Nepal, Palestine and Peru).<sup>256</sup> Within governments, staff turnover (particularly in senior positions) is a common problem that erodes existent capacity. This can mean that UN Women and its partners have to repeat capacity building efforts just to maintain ground.<sup>257</sup> While dependent on partners to drive action, UN Women staff are aware that partner capacity gaps in, for example, planning and monitoring, hinder effective implementation and UN Women's own efficiency, particularly at the subnational level.<sup>258</sup>

In the period under evaluation, UN Women prioritized building its own human and financial capacity, aiming to bring capacity closer to the field. It designated headquarters as providing technical leadership and oversight and leading global inter-agency coordination, and the six Regional Offices as providing programme oversight and policy advice to Country Offices.<sup>259</sup> **Resulting organizational improvements have brought some positive dividends for GNP, including HIV/AIDS, primarily in internal capacity to support partners at the country level. However, challenges still remain, especially in providing adequate support to Country Offices.**

**The main improvement is a reported increase in UN Women in-house GNP capacity at the country level.** This is in line with findings from the Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Regional Architecture, which confirmed increases in country national capacity.<sup>260</sup> Comparing the situation in 2011–2013 with 2014–2017, more UN Women offices report staff dedicated to GNP and HIV/AIDS (spending between

80–100 per cent of their time supporting GNP work)<sup>261</sup> and more staff report feeling confident in the adequacy of their skills to support partners. For example, 44 per cent of UN Women offices report their skills to support GNP partners as highly adequate or mostly adequate, up from 35 per cent in the previous period. While for HIV/AIDS work, 90 per cent of UN Women offices report their skills to support HIV/AIDS partners as highly adequate or mostly adequate, up from 50 per cent in the previous period.<sup>262</sup>

While this improvement is encouraging, **UN Women offices still identify large or moderate gaps in technical capacity to respond to partner needs,**<sup>263</sup> which are likely to be exacerbated by common staffing gaps.<sup>264</sup> As one survey respondent commented *“Due to the highly diverse portfolio under planning and budgeting area, the skills of the office staff would not satisfy the demand for technical support.”*<sup>265</sup>

While there are examples of Regional Offices alleviating capacity gaps in Country Offices to some extent, UN Women's GNP work has not consistently had dedicated staff at regional level, as one might have

256 Albania and Palestine portfolio analyses; Regional UN Women Project (first phase) Final Programme Evaluation (2013) Project Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe (PGPR-SEE).

257 Albania case study; Portfolio analysis for Jordan, Senegal and Nepal.

258 Albania case study; Palestine case study; India portfolio analysis; UN Women Senegal, Annual Report 2015.

259 UN Women Strategic Plan, 2011–2013; UN Women Strategic Plan 2014–2017; UN Women (2016) Regional Architecture Evaluation: 2016 Strengthening Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results.

260 UN Women (2016) Regional Architecture Evaluation: Strengthening Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results.

261 Just over 44 per cent of UN Women offices reported staff in their office working 80–100 per cent of their time on GNP specifically in 2014–2017, compared to just over 30 per cent in 2011–2013 (UN Women staff survey, 2018); 20 per cent of UN Women offices reported staff in their office working 80–100 per cent of their time on HIV work in 2014–2017, compared to 4 per cent in the period 2011–2013. More UN Women offices also report staff spending up to 20 per cent of their time on HIV work, increasing from 25 per cent in 2011–2013 to 57 per cent in 2014–2017.

262 Itad GNP survey 2018.

263 For example, 65 per cent of UN Women offices reported a large or moderate gap in GNP technical support from their office to country level partners in 2014–2017, up from 50 per cent for the 2011–2013 period; in the area of HIV/AIDS, 56 per cent of UN Women offices reported large or moderate gaps in their office's technical support to country partners in 2014–2017, compared to 57 per cent, staying largely unchanged from the earlier period (UN Women survey). Other evidence of these significant technical capacity gaps were found in the Palestine case study, India Portfolio Analysis (2013 Annual Report, p. 9; Final evaluation of UN Women MCO's Work on Expanding the Scope of Gender Responsive Budgeting in India, 2012–2014, February 2015, Milind Bokil), Nepal Portfolio Analysis (Annual Report 2011 and 2012) and Ukraine Portfolio Analysis (Annual Report 2016).

264 UN Women offices in Albania (UN Women 2014 and 2015 Annual Reports Narrative, Region: Europe and Central Asia, Albania Office) Ecuador case study (Johansen, 2012: 59), Palestine case study, Senegal Portfolio Analysis (Annual Report 2015) and Uganda case study (Annual Reports 2011, 2012) all reported encountering gaps in staffing in the period 2011–2017.

265 UN Women staff survey, 2018.

anticipated in the regional architecture. Since 2014, UN Women’s GNP work has benefited from the support of one regional specialist, but in 2017 this post ceased leaving no dedicated capacity for this technical area at the regional level.<sup>266</sup> For HIV/AIDS work, two regional specialists have been in place in Asia and the Pacific and in East and Southern Africa for almost all of the period 2013–2018.<sup>267</sup> Where regional specialist support is lacking, the Policy Division team has sought to fill the gap, providing programme and policy support direct to Country Offices. However, its capacity for doing so is limited and within the regional architecture, which is expected to be strengthened further as part of UN reform processes, this is not the Policy Division team’s anticipated role.<sup>268</sup> These reported capacity gaps may, in part, be affecting UN Women’s ability to ensure global normative frameworks are implemented at the country level, a challenge highlighted in the evaluation of UN Women’s normative work (see Finding 4).<sup>269</sup>

UN Women has enhanced the efficiency of its GNP work during the life of Strategic Plan 2014–2017 in a context of increasing financial constraints as resources available for both GNP and HIV/AIDS decline. In 2017, IA 5 (GNP and HIV/AIDS) achieved a project delivery rate of 71 per cent of available resources, in line with the delivery rate of other impact areas, and up from 55 per cent in 2014. However, trajectories are different in the area of HIV/AIDS, where the highest project delivery rate achieved in the period 2014–2017 was 44 per cent of available resources.<sup>270</sup> This potentially offers a partial explanation for UN Women’s performance against Strategic Plan 2014–2017 HIV/AIDS outcome targets, which have not been fully met. During this period, the overall GNP annual budget envelope has decreased, from a total of US\$ 15.4 million in 2015 to US\$ 12.6 million in 2017.

<sup>266</sup> UN Women human resource data.

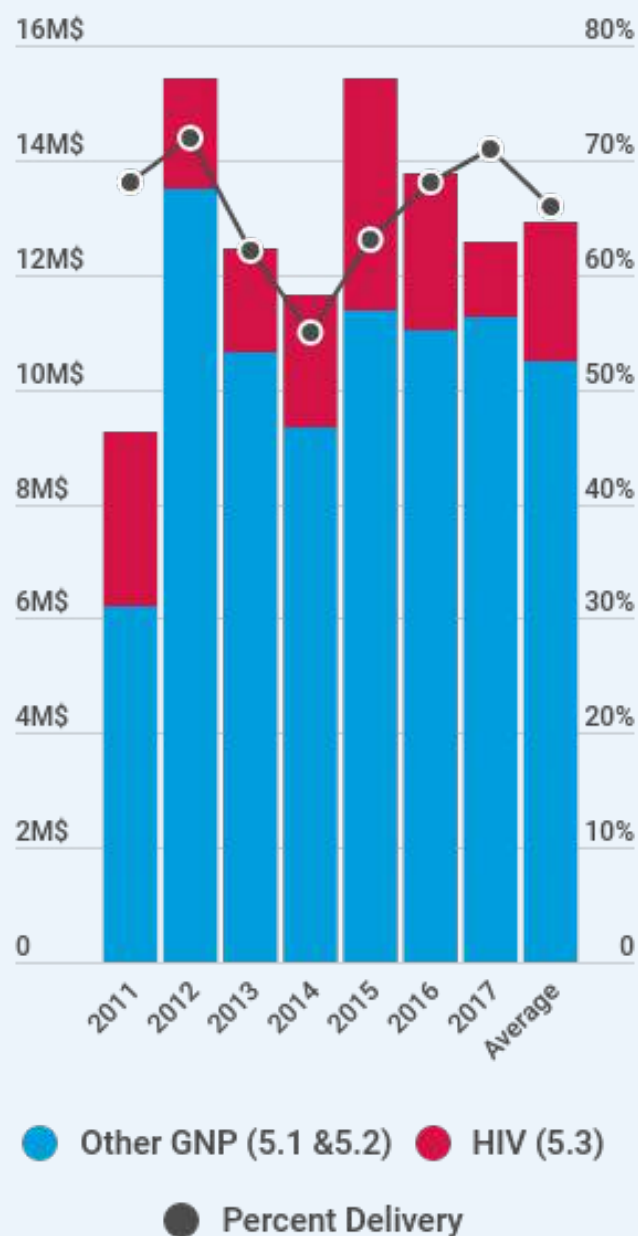
<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Strengthening Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results, Corporate Evaluation of the Regional Architecture of UN Women, September 2016, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office.

<sup>269</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 25 March 2015, Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/AC.51/2015/9.

<sup>270</sup> UN Women RMS data – with HIV figures subject to marginal variance (up to an increase of 14 per cent) in relation to UNAIDS UBRAF reporting versus internal ATLAS reporting figures.

**FIGURE 6**  
GNP delivery rates 2011–2017<sup>271</sup>



The closure of the EC funded Financing for Gender Equality Global Programme (2011–2016) and the Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality (F4GE) Global Programme, as well as the 55 per cent reduction in UN Women’s reported resources from the UNAIDS UBRAF in 2016 are contributory

<sup>271</sup> Results Management System.

factors to this shrinking resource envelope.<sup>272</sup> **Several Country Offices have also reported increasing difficulties in mobilizing resources.**<sup>273</sup> The reduced profile of GNP in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, where it forms part of the broader Outcome 2 “Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems” is likely to be part of this picture. In this context, and **as the scope of GNP work has extended from using the budget as the primary entry point to covering the broader GNP cycle, an increasing number of UN Women offices report budget resources being insufficient to build, enhance and promote gender-responsive GNP in 2014–2017, compared to the earlier Strategic Plan period.**<sup>274</sup> The survey findings showed that 20 per cent more respondents considered there to be large or moderate gaps in financing for GNP work in the 2014–2017 phase, compared to the 2011–2013 phase. Other survey findings can be triangulated with a similar finding that budget resources for GNP were relatively constrained in the 2014–2017 period.<sup>275</sup> Finance gaps at the country level are more acute in the area of HIV/AIDS, with 56 per cent of UN Women offices reporting insufficient budget resources allocated to build, enhance and promote gender-responsive HIV/AIDS work in 2014–2017, compared to 21 per cent in 2011–2013.<sup>276</sup> However, given the reported project delivery rates, the availability of financial resources would not seem to be the critical blockage.

Some UN Women offices, such as Ukraine, are conscious of the capacity constraints they face and scope their support in terms of how to achieve results with the limited human and financial resources available. Others, such as Albania and Ecuador, have found

themselves overstretched and then sought to scale back the scope of their support to enhance results.<sup>277</sup> The need to keep the scale of support to modest levels may have inhibited UN Women’s ability to build on its original foundations and to extend its work more systematically across the wider GNP cycle. It may also inhibit the entity’s ability to support the translation of the strong gender equality commitments in the AAAA at the country level.

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#### **FINDING 18:**

**UN Women’s GNP work, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, is reliant on non-core funding, making its future uncertain.**

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**UN Women’s GNP work, including in HIV/AIDS, in the 2011–2017 period has been heavily reliant on non-core funding.** Of the total IA 5 budget over the course of 2011–2017, 82 per cent came from non-core resources; and for the HIV/AIDS budget, 2011–2017 specifically, 87 per cent came from non-core funding.<sup>278</sup> This situation is common across all UN Women impact areas, where non-core funding makes up an average of 83 per cent of budget resources. Of the 17 countries included in the portfolio analysis, six (35 per cent) funded their GNP work through non-core resources alone: Ecuador, Honduras, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Ukraine. Only Albania, Barbados MCO and India MCO invested more than US\$ 500,000 core funds in GNP during 2014–2017. Of the eight countries that recorded HIV/AIDS expenditure in 2014–2017, only one, India, allocated core funding.<sup>279</sup>

This reliance on non-core funding makes UN Women’s GNP work vulnerable by overly exposing it to the effects of donor funding priorities and the challenges of short-term funding horizons for processes that take years to embed. The corporate evaluation of UN Women’s contribution to increasing women’s leadership and participation in peace and security and humanitarian response found that the lack of core funding was perceived to undermine the capacity of offices to meet expectations; and that project-based funding made strategic planning extremely difficult as programme choices were heavily influenced by the

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272 In 2016, UN Women spent US\$ 1,627,880 from UNAIDS UBRAF, dropping from US\$ 3,616,687 in the previous year, UN Women reported expenditure data (these figures are subject to a variance of up to 14 per cent higher than internal ATLAS reporting figures).

273 Uganda case study (Uganda SN Narrative Report, p. 17; SN 2018–2022 Narrative Report, p. 15); India Portfolio Analysis; UN Women 2012 Annual Report Narrative, Region: Europe and Central Asia, Albania Office; Nepal Portfolio Analysis (2015 AR, p. 12), Honduras Portfolio Analysis.

274 58 per cent of UN Women offices reported budget resources were insufficient to build, enhance and promote gender responsive GNP in 2014–2017, compared with 26 per cent of offices for the 2011–2013 period. 36 per cent of UN Women offices reported budget resources were about right to build, enhance and promote gender responsive GNP in 2014–2017, compared with 39 per cent in 2011–2013 (UN Women survey).

275 32 per cent more respondents suggested that budget was ‘too little’ in the 2014–2017 stage, compared with the 2011–2013 phase (Itad GNP survey, 2018).

276 Itad GNP survey, 2018.

277 For example, Ukraine, Annual Report, 2015; Itad GNP survey 2018 (Bosnia and Herzegovina response); Case studies for Albania and Ecuador, 2018.

278 UN Women Results Management System.

279 Ibid.

priorities of funding organizations. This limited the ability of Country Offices to translate global strategic objectives into appropriate medium to long-term objectives.<sup>280</sup> Evidence collected for the evaluation confirmed this analysis. In the words of one UN Women staff member: *“The governance portfolio is not very well defined since the portfolio has been driven by non-core resources and the investment made through core has been minimal. This has affected the long-term vision and strategy to take forward the portfolio.”*<sup>281</sup> Though limited, the evaluation identified examples of UN Women offices scaling back or putting GNP and HIV/AIDS programming on hold when insufficient resources are mobilized. For example, the Honduras Country Office has ceased supporting GNP due to lack of non-core funds.<sup>282</sup> Another Country Office reported *“When we withdrew the Swedish funds for the Program for the implementation of the regulatory framework, we could not respond to the demands made against our partners.”*<sup>283</sup> The fact that many UN Women GNP funding agreements are short in duration (55 per cent of the GNP funding agreements live between 2011–2017 were for programmes of two years’ duration or shorter with an average agreement duration of 2.2 years)<sup>284</sup> further increases programming vulnerability and risks diluting the focus of programming to fit donor priorities.<sup>285</sup> It is also likely to contribute to the increased use of short-term contracts for staff, something reported by several UN Women offices,<sup>286</sup> which can undermine institutional memory and learning and makes forging strong, long-term partnerships more difficult.<sup>287</sup>

280 UN Women (2014) Corporate Evaluation of the Contribution of UN Women to Increasing Women’s Leadership and Participation in Peace and Security and in Humanitarian Response.

281 Itad GNP survey, 2018.

282 Honduras Portfolio Analysis.

283 Itad GNP survey, 2018.

284 UN Women Donor Agreement Management System. These figures exclude global programmes.

285 Itad GNP survey, 2018.

286 Albania (UN Women 2014 and 2015 Annual Reports Narrative, Region: Europe and Central Asia, Albania Office), India (Annual Report 2014), Nepal (Annual Reports 2014, 2015), Palestine (Annual Report 2016, Narrative Report, p. 12), Uganda (Annual Report 2012).

287 UN Women (2017) Corporate Evaluation on Strategic Partnerships for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

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## FINDING 19:

The Results Management System offers considerable potential as a management information tool, but its utility could be enhanced by ensuring core programme documentation is consistently available and gives greater attention to programme strategy, the pathways used to achieve outcomes and outputs and UN Women’s contribution.<sup>288</sup>

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Over the 2011–2017 period, UN Women has made strengthening results-based management and reporting an organizational priority.<sup>289</sup> Starting from a modest base, UN Women has made good progress, putting in place a number of new corporate systems and processes.<sup>290</sup> These have included RMS, intended to be a “central hub”<sup>291</sup> for all Country Office plans, monitoring and reporting data, and to link financial data held in Atlas with workplans and reports.

RMS has considerable potential as a corporate management information system, but achieving that potential would require greater consistency in the core programme documentation held (see Box 20)<sup>292</sup> as well as the improved quality of documentation. RMS offers UN Women the possibility of conducting cross-country analysis of results achieved and, using the link to Atlas financial data, the relative cost of achieving these results. This kind of analysis is powerful for maintaining a global picture of UN Women’s GNP programming and its significant achievements. However, the evaluation found that while the

288 This finding is based on analysis of IA 5 documentation held in RMS. The scope of the finding goes does however go beyond IA 5.

289 UN Women Strategic Plan 2011–2013; UN Women Strategic Plan 2014–2017.

290 Corporate Evaluation of UN Women’s Contribution to Women’s Political Participation and Leadership: Synthesis Report, April 2018, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office; Strengthening Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results: Corporate Evaluation of the Regional Architecture of UN Women, September 2016, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office; UN Women (2017) What can we learn from UN Women Evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016.

291 Step by Step Guidance for Planning SN-AWP in RMS, 2017 Guidance Note, UN Women.

292 As identified in UN Women’s internal ‘Programme and Operations Manual’, 2018.

availability of core programme documentation held in RMS is improving over time, it remains variable, limiting the opportunities for cross-country and longitudinal analysis. Country Strategic Notes, Annual Workplans and Annual Reports are the most common programme documents available in RMS, but none of the 17 countries reviewed in the portfolio analysis had a full set of these documents for 2014–2017 available in RMS.<sup>293</sup> Some UN Women offices, such as the Barbados MCO, have not yet migrated to RMS and core programme documentation for these offices is sparser.

#### BOX 20

#### UN Women’s core programme documentation

- Strategic Note for programmes, e.g. country programme, covering a two-year period
- Annual Workplans
- Performance Monitoring Framework
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan
- Project Documentation for component projects (i.e. projects under a country programme)
- Standard Progress Reports for each component programme/project
- Annual Reports (narrative and against the Development Results Framework)
- Evaluations

The potential of RMS could be further enhanced with improvements to the quality of programme documentation retained, particularly giving greater attention to implementation strategy, outcomes achieved and the pathways for achieving them, as well as UN Women’s contribution to the process.<sup>294</sup> UN Women could reasonably rely upon core programme documentation held in RMS as a primary source for extracting learning about effective strategies for promoting gender-responsive GNP, including HIV/AIDS; to inform internal policy and programme guidance and decision-making; to support resource mobilization; and to drive external knowledge sharing.

<sup>293</sup> Portfolio analysis for 17 countries, 2018; as of February–March 2018, when the evaluation collated programme documentation from RMS.

<sup>294</sup> Strengthening Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results: Corporate Evaluation of the Regional Architecture of UN Women, September 2016, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office.

However, the evaluation found that IA 5 entries in Annual Reports from the 17 focal countries 2011–2017, focus narrowly on progress against the outcomes and outputs identified in Annual Workplans and rarely seek to situate the reported changes in a broader change process.<sup>295</sup> The Strategic Notes reviewed tend not to provide an overarching framework with which to situate reported achievements and activities, as few present an explicit strategy for IA 5 specifically. Annex L presents two examples of Country Office annual reporting to demonstrate typical reporting practices and how they might be strengthened to enhance the utility of available data. These examples, from Albania and Morocco, have been selected as they were found to be some of the most comprehensive reports among the 17 countries reviewed. The analysis showed that while reporting provides evidence of progress against outcomes and outputs, more detail is needed to understand how UN Women is contributing to achieving more gender-responsive GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, and effective strategies for delivering on this objective.

The reporting approach promoted under the Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality Global Programme is a notable exception to the above trends. It has encouraged the elaboration of a tailored ToC as an overarching framework for country-level activity and has emphasized results-focused, rather than activity-focused, reporting.<sup>296</sup> Similarly, the GELD, Financing for Gender Equality and Integrating GRB global programmes also provide detailed management and monitoring guidelines, including suggested indicators and means for data verification. A review of the available Global Programme country reporting documents indicate that this is measurably stronger than UN Women corporate annual reporting, although further attention to UN Women’s specific contribution to changes recorded would be beneficial. This highlights that greater attention to results and implementation strategy in UN Women’s reporting is feasible with appropriate guidance, which could be provided through adjustments to corporate reporting guidance in UN Women’s Programme and Operations Manual and support to ensure UN Women offices respond appropriately.

<sup>295</sup> Portfolio analysis for 17 focal countries.

<sup>296</sup> UN Women, ITC/ILO, and European Commission (n.d.) Results-oriented Monitoring and Reporting: A Guidance Note. Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality (F4GE).

## 6.4

### Key Question 4 – Lessons learned and implications

#### To what extent have systems for learning supported relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in GNP?

##### FINDING 20:

Evaluation has formed an important foundation for learning in GNP, including in HIV/AIDS related work, and more widely in UN Women. The evaluation findings dissemination system has been used effectively to inform ongoing programming.

Evidence from GNP programming shows that governance and budgeting-related regional and country evaluations have been used to inform the design and implementation of specific GNP projects at country level. Evaluations of UN Women's contribution to GRB/GNP in the Europe and Central Asia Region in 2013 and 2016 set out to inform strategic policy and programmatic decision-making and management, organizational learning and accountability, and to contribute to regional knowledge on what works in GNP.<sup>297</sup> Analysis of later programme documents, such as planning and financing documents for the second phase of the PGPR-SEE, confirmed that these evaluations did inform subsequent programming.<sup>298</sup> The Gender and Governance Mid-Term Evaluation, Malawi, included identifying and validating lessons learned, good practice and innovations supported by UN Women in the programme. These lessons learned were considered vital to the formulation of a gender-sensitive Malawi

Growth and Development Strategy II.<sup>299</sup> Timor-Leste Country Office was part of two evaluations used to inform discussions with donors and future programme design. The evaluations noted the value of building on UN Women's past programming efforts and the need for continued resourcing for sustaining impact.<sup>300</sup> The Country Office had also sought to bring elements of global learning on GNP into effect; for example, Gender Working Groups drew on experience from Cambodia and elsewhere.<sup>301</sup> In Uganda, both country-based and corporate evaluations informed the development of the Country Office Strategic Note (2016–2020) on thematic issues. Analysis of the approach taken to GNP for HIV/AIDS presented in Finding 9 suggests that recommendations of the evaluation 'Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS' (including, for example, "ensuring that women living with HIV are part of the decision-making process") have informed the emphasis of subsequent HIV/AIDS programming.

**Corporate and decentralized evaluations have been used to inform the development of related areas,** such as UN Women's normative function at country level, and in developing the Uganda Country Office's funding proposal on GEWE normative support.<sup>302</sup> The interviews for the global case study suggest that findings of evaluations of global programmes, including: 'GRB in Aid Evaluation' (2012); 'Gender Equitable Local Development (GELD) Final Evaluation' (2013); 'Gender Responsive Budgeting Phase III Review' (2014); 'Supporting Gender Equality in the Context of HIV/AIDS' (2014); and 'Increasing Accountability for Financing for Gender Equality Evaluation' (2016) are informing stakeholders involved in UN Women's gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning work and UN Women's GNP programming more broadly.<sup>303</sup> Global Programme design, strategy and ToC development have also drawn on the findings of evaluations.

297 UN Women Evaluation Report, Final Evaluation of the UN Women Project, Promoting Gender Responsive Budgeting in South East Europe, UN Women Sub-Regional Office for Central and South Eastern Europe, 2013; UN Women Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to UN System Coordination on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Europe and Central Asia (ECA), Final Report, 2016.

298 Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Regional UN Women Project (second phase) 2013–2016, Project Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe (PGPR-SEE) Project Document; Financing Agreement between Austria Development Agency and UN Women, Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe, 2017–2019.

299 UN Women, August 2017, Mid Term Review of Gender and Governance, pg. 41.

300 Timor-Leste 2016 Annual Report, pp. 16 and 17.

301 Timor-Leste case study: government and UN Women interviews.

302 Uganda case study: UN Women, 2015 Annual Report, pg. 6.

303 Interviews for the global case study: UN Women interviews.



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## FINDING 21:

Other learning systems to support GNP are also used extensively and have clearly supported Country Offices in GNP programming, including in HIV/AIDS.

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Survey results show that **technical guidance notes are the most widely used source of learning about GNP** (72 per cent of respondents; 62 per cent for HIV). On-demand specific guidance is also a frequently sought source of learning. This is provided remotely, face to face and in written feedback, for example, following the review of project proposals and reports etc. An online Community of Practice on gender responsive budgeting and financing for gender equality was initiated in November 2017 and includes members/ focal points in 46 UN Women offices. The CoP sets out to provide an interactive platform for UN Women staff to discuss and share current developments, knowledge, experiences and strategies. It also collates a body of knowledge based on UN Women experiences in GNP and supports strengthening of connections between normative work and country programming.

In line with wider efforts to consolidate UN Women's regional architecture, technical guidance is increasingly sought at Regional and Country Office levels as well as continuing to be sourced directly from headquarters. The survey found that since 2014, **guidance has been sought more frequently from Regional Offices** (49 per cent – up from 32 per cent in the 2011–2013 period; and 32 per cent – up from 11 per cent in the 2011–2013 period for HIV/AIDS)<sup>304</sup> than at headquarters (17 per cent; 27 per cent for HIV/AIDS), and also from Country Offices (32 per cent – compared to 12 per cent before 2014), although less so for HIV/AIDS (4 per cent down from 7 per cent before 2014). Efforts to make horizontal linkages (connecting Country Offices) and to strengthen the regional architecture in the role of supporting Country Offices appear to be bearing fruit, although for HIV/AIDS the evidence only confirms this for the role of Regional Offices. Conversely, for HIV/AIDS, technical support has increasingly been sought from headquarters, with a rise from 11 per cent of respondents in 2011–13 to 28 per cent in 2014–17. Nevertheless, headquarters still plays a strong role in technical support for both broader GNP and HIV/AIDS related work, including:

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304 Positive responses on referring to the regional architecture were mainly from ECA and AP.

producing learning resources such as programme briefs;<sup>305</sup> convening events and workshops for global knowledge exchange on financing for gender equality and HIV/AIDS;<sup>306</sup> and managing the Financing for Gender Equality web portal, the Gender and HIV/AIDS web portal, and other online guidance that was cited as used by 51 per cent of survey respondents and 38 per cent for HIV/AIDS.<sup>307</sup> However, the survey revealed overall moderate levels of satisfaction with the guidance available on GNP, with 28 per cent of respondents 'very satisfied', 25 per cent 'somewhat satisfied', 15 per cent neutral, 2 per cent 'somewhat dissatisfied', and 17 per cent 'very dissatisfied'.

**Regional knowledge networking and south-south cooperation has been used productively** to share and exchange on specific approaches. Examples include: cross-regional technical workshops on costing and sectoral GNP under the F4GE Global Programme and others; the recent south-south cooperation on GRB between Afghanistan and Indonesia (2018)<sup>308</sup> as well as much earlier meetings such as that on increasing accountability and development effectiveness through gender-responsive planning and budgeting in Rwanda in 2011<sup>309</sup>; an exchange of GRB experiences between Rwanda and Nepal; and regional knowledge management workshops held in the context of the GELD programme.<sup>310 311</sup> Regional knowledge sharing meetings have also taken place, e.g. Ecuador held regional meetings but noted that there are limited possibilities to share with other regions;<sup>312</sup> and Albania attended regional meetings and shared learning about the expansion of the Local Governance programme

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305 Increasing Accountability in Financing for Gender Equality - Programme Brief, UN Women, 2015.

306 Such as the 2015 UN Women, International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO) and European Commission (EC) collaboration in convening the workshop "Increasing Financing for Gender Equality: Lessons Learned and the Way Forward," from 3–5 June 2015, Brussels, and the 2015 (Report of the Global UN Women HIV Focal Points Retreat, 26–27 March 2015, Panama City, Panama.

307 'Workshop stresses the importance of financing for gender equality, post-2015'; UN Women web article, accessed Dec 2018.

308 Afghanistan and Indonesia: south-south cooperation on GRB, UN Women 2018.

309 PeaceWomen (2011) Global High-Level Meeting on Increasing Accountability and Development Effectiveness Through Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting.

310 Integrating Gender Responsive Budgeting in the Aid Effectiveness Agenda Evaluation, Universalia 2012.

311 Final Evaluation – Gender Equitable Local Development (GELD), October 2013.

312 Ecuador case study: CSO and UN Women interviews, Johansen, 2012.

and a Community-Based Scorecards approach.<sup>313</sup> In Uganda, south-south cooperation was highlighted as one of three main sources of learning.<sup>314</sup> GNP-related HIV/AIDS initiatives from Ukraine have been shared in the region with Tajikistan, Moldova and Kazakhstan.<sup>315</sup>

There is good consensus **that knowledge gained from these sources is successfully applied to programming activities.** In the survey, 79 per cent of respondents confirmed that their office applies knowledge gained to inform GNP/GRB, and 64 per cent in the case of HIV/AIDS. Learning was applied in a range of activities in both broader and HIV/AIDS specific GNP including: the development of concept notes and proposals;<sup>316</sup> to inform the 2018–2021 Strategic Notes and Annual Workplans; to design capacity building training; understanding the global normative framework and how it could be applied at country level; and to further disseminate local knowledge products with partners including among the UN family. For example, Ecuador Country Office used guidance, alongside the Ministry of Finance, to update the Gender Budget Classifier; to prepare training to local governments; and to provide technical assistance to line ministries.<sup>317</sup> In Malawi lessons from the GNP programme also benefited other related, non-UN Women projects and were applied to the preparation of an EU programme.<sup>318</sup>

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## FINDING 22:

Though progress is underway, gaps remain in generating a knowledge management system for GNP, including for HIV/AIDS, that can fully support an informed and strategic approach.

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**Various evidence streams suggest that knowledge management and learning for GNP has not yet been fully operationalized.** Given the long history of GNP through both UN Women and UNIFEM, much of the material available for guidance and programming was developed prior to the period under evaluation

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313 Albania case study: UN Women 2015 and 2016 Annual Reports.

314 This is likely to include learning for HIV/AIDS, but the evidence was not specific.

315 Survey responses, untriangulated.

316 E.g. UN Women Bangladesh office used the knowledge to develop a joint project with Ministry of Women and Children Affairs for a three-year gender responsive budgeting project.

317 Ecuador case study: UN Women, 2016 Annual Report, pg.12.

318 UN Women, August 2017, Mid Term Review of Gender and Governance, pg. 41.

and therefore does not bring together learning from more recent experience. Some later material, developed for example in follow-up to the F4GE Global Programme, offers knowledge on financing for gender equality more broadly, rather than offering guidance on the specific scope and strategies available to advance GNP as conceived by the two Strategic Plans (2011–2013 and 2014–2017). While technical guidance on several areas of GNP has been developed, there is scope for the establishment of core overview resources for GNP learning. To some extent, a more recent emphasis on regionally-focused guidance offers to bring together recent experience: Macedonia intends to develop regional guidance on applying GRB to other sectors, and Uganda has already done so with sectoral compacts in gender and equity planning and budgeting; and in 2017 the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific recently developed a Guidance Note on Applying Gender Responsive Budgeting to HIV Policies and Programmes. The scope of these more recent synthesis documents does not yet appear to be comprehensive for GNP specifically.<sup>319</sup>

**Levels of informal networking as a knowledge-build strategy remain quite high** (used by 64 per cent of survey respondents, the second highest category after ‘technical guidance’; 42 per cent for HIV/AIDS, the fourth highest after learning events by other organizations; guidance notes by UN Women and external guidance), implying fairly substantial gaps in systematized knowledge flows. Some, though insufficient, detail on the nature of these gaps is available from case study data. Gaps were experienced, for example, when seeking clarity and regional-level support to End Violence Against Women (EVAW) related GNP, which tended to be filled by ad hoc and informal connections.<sup>320</sup> Prior evaluations also identified a reliance on horizontal communication that draws on personal relationships, as opposed to more systematic strategic communities of learning.<sup>321</sup>

These indications of continued areas for improvement in knowledge management fit with a picture from previous evaluations and wider UN literature of challenges to knowledge management, which, despite efforts to rise to this challenge, do not yet appear to

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319 Analysis based on review of material available as UN Women resources; and on the Gender Equality and HIV/AIDS and Financing for Gender Equality web portals.

320 Timor-Leste case study: UN Women interviews.

321 IES, September 2016, Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results, Corporate Evaluation of the Regional Architecture of UN Women pp. 11, 51.

have been fully operationalized. The evaluation of organizational structure in 2016, for example, found that the prescribed robust knowledge management and internal communication functions had not been adequately developed and that knowledge management was not prioritized in the regional architecture.<sup>322</sup> Weak knowledge management was also evidenced earlier, in 2015: the lack of a knowledge management strategy in translating and communicating strategies, policies and learning between headquarters and the field and across offices was noted by an evaluation undertaken by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services.<sup>323</sup> The first assessment of UN Women in 2014 by the Multilateral Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)<sup>324</sup> identified UN Women as strong in evaluating results but less effective (adequate) in presenting performance information and lessons learned.<sup>325</sup> In the wider UN system, knowledge management has recently been acknowledged as an ongoing challenge: a 2017 process by the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) concluded that knowledge management is a work in progress in the UN system and has not been systematized.<sup>326</sup>

UN Women responded to these insights, producing a detailed knowledge management strategy, passed on 31 October 2018, with implementation to be coordinated by a knowledge management specialist, and led by the Divisional Director, supported by a task force to be developed.<sup>327</sup> The strategy proposes a key role for communities of practice in sharing and codifying tacit knowledge, in particular linking Country Offices to regional level and regional level to headquarters for knowledge generation. Country Office-level data from the evaluation suggests that this strategy is timely and implementation should specifically include the sharing of GNP-related knowledge to be codified into GNP specific guidance.

<sup>322</sup>IES, September 2016, Organizational Structure for Delivering Gender Equality Results, Corporate Evaluation of the Regional Architecture of UN Women, pp. 11, 51.

<sup>323</sup>United Nations. February 2015. "Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services", 55th Session, E/AC.51/2015/9. p. 18).

<sup>324</sup>MOPAN provides an assessment of four dimensions of organizational effectiveness including knowledge management.

<sup>325</sup>MOPAN, 2014, UN Women GEEW Synthesis Report.

<sup>326</sup>Joint Inspection Unit, 2017, Knowledge Management in the United Nations System.

<sup>327</sup>UN Women, Knowledge Management Strategy 2018–21, 31 October 2018.

## 6.5

### Areas for further exploration

**There are as yet unexplored signs of a potentially large set of benefits to women and girls resulting from budget allocations to gender-responsive policy and plans through a number of further causal steps.**

This set of changes is taking place beyond the impact areas identified by the ToC. It is plausible, even likely in some cases, that UN Women's work in GNP has contributed to many of these changes, even while the causal steps between UN Women's contribution and results in changes in GEWE are likely to be numerous and complex, and often hard to detect. **These steps need further elaboration and verification for a robust understanding of the causal process to be established and an understanding of UN Women's contribution to any changes in women's lives to emerge, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.** Evidence from the evaluation suggests that UN Women has made an essential contribution to GNP progress at outcome level, even though this is complex and partners also play an essential role in many steps. It also suggests that important characteristics of UN Women's added value in GNP are long-term relationships involving establishing trust, which are often founded on a reputation for being consistent and persistent in advocating gender equality as a central purpose (see Finding 13). It would be surprising if this persistence in establishing the stepping stones of GNP did not, in fact, bear any relation to changes in women's lives that appear to be connected to changes in policy frameworks and budgets. Yet few attempts have so far been made to verify this hypothesized relationship.<sup>328</sup> Further study to map this level of outcome/impact and to robustly establish the nature of this contribution, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, would significantly strengthen the case for sustaining the GNP process.

<sup>328</sup>The Gender Equitable Local Development programme (2009–13) did set out to connect local governance reform, which included gender-responsive budgeting, with service access as a result of reforms. However, the evaluation of the programme is only able to assess 'likely impact' given the timeframe of the project and the evaluation (p11).

It was beyond the scope of the evaluation to investigate or verify these kinds of results. Therefore they have not been systematically sought or investigated, but are presented here as worthy of further exploration.

Most are triangulated only relatively weakly, by one or two respondents in similar positions, or by single reports. Results of this kind appear to be more visible/frequently reported at district levels.

#### **BOX 21**

### **Tangible outcomes of increased attention to GEWE and budgeting processes in Albania and Timor-Leste**

#### **Examples from Albania**

- In 2016, a Competitive Fund for Women Entrepreneurs to an amount of ALL 6 million was established and operationalized by the Municipality of Tirana as a result of a local GRB consultation exercise. For the first time in Albania, 11 private companies that contribute to the capital's economic development signed the Women's Empowerment Principles. It seems likely from reporting that UN Women contributed to this outcome through both GNP and WEE workstreams. No further details were identified concerning the functioning or benefits of this new fund (Albania case study: Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012–2016, Progress Report(s) 2016 p.16).
- Participatory planning and gender budgeting has led to supportive municipality decisions in individual cases. The municipality of Berat proposed a special budget line to support shelter for women victims of domestic violence and to provide economic support and social housing to vulnerable families. In an example of implementation of this decision, a woman suddenly responsible for two orphan children following the death of her sister has been provided with housing and financial support by the municipality (UN Women 2015, Annual Report Narrative, Region: Europe and Central Asia, Albania Office). While this result is clearly associated with the GRB process, the implementation of gender-responsive decisions at the municipality level is a further step that is only indirectly attributable to UN Women.

#### **Examples from Timor-Leste**

- In Timor-Leste increasing proportions of women are employed in government departments and in management and leadership positions. These changes are most directly linked to the 2017 National Employment Strategy, the recent ratification of ILO Conventions 100 and 101, and the Council of Ministers' 2017 approval of a General Resolution on Equal Salary. However, UN Women's work in GNP is part of a context in which awareness of gender issues in governance is increasing. It is also possible that there has been a direct role of planning and budgeting in setting measures for equal salary. Establishing the nature of this role would require further exploration.
- Gender policy development in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, which was supported by UN Women long-term technical assistance, is now at the point of being approved. Alongside national-level commitment to the inter-ministerial Maubisse Declaration on the empowerment of rural women and high-level pressure to work towards gender balance in government projects, this has resulted in tangible changes. Progress has been made towards achieving the 30 per cent target for women's admission to agricultural technical schools (involving first the establishment of infrastructure (girls' hostels) so that girls could be accommodated in the schools) and taking up youth scholarships for studying horticulture and agribusiness. There have also been observed changes in the work roles available to women in coffee plantations as they become more involved in harvesting. These changes were reported as if they were associated with changes supported by UN Women's technical assistance, which had contributed to increasing appreciation of gender concerns in the Ministry, among other factors such as high-level political prioritization of gender equality. Further investigation would be needed into the roles of these different streams of influence (Timor-Leste case study: government interviews).

**BOX 21 (continued)**

**Tangible outcomes of increased attention to GEWE and budgeting processes in Albania and Timor-Leste**

**Examples from Timor-Leste**

- Steps towards better targeting of women for recruitment into the police force and military forces have been taken in the context of GNP work on the implementation of the NAP on WPS. Among other changes, steps towards improved gender balance in internal managerial and leadership positions have been taken. The 2017 National Employment Strategy is likely to be a significant influence in this, alongside the NAP on WPS in which UN Women has played a role (Timor-Leste Case study: government interviews).

**Sector-based work which has secured budget allocations related to gender-responsive budgeting processes**

- In Timor-Leste, effects of implementation of the NAP on GBV include some services for GBV survivors via support from UN Women through the women's machinery. Loans are provided to survivors of GBV in a rehabilitation/reintegration process following the legal process; training is provided to loan managers — members of the Municipal Women's Association (Timor-Leste Case study: District-level interviews). UN Women's contribution to the establishment of these services has taken place alongside influencing activities by the women's machinery, district government and possibly the involvement of local CSOs. Attribution is therefore complex. However, this contribution has most likely taken place through GNP-related support to the NAP on GBV, earlier work on GBV legislation and through the ERAW workstream.
- Leadership training delivered through the NAP on WSP: skills-building at district level for advocacy and lobbying in the context of incremental moves towards more decentralized budget management has produced examples of tangible results in infrastructure. One particularly active trainee lobbied for and secured solar panels, electricity and sanitation in her village (Timor-Leste Case study: District-level interviews).

# 7

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides an overall reflection on UN Women’s GNP work before presenting 10 conclusions based on the evaluation findings. Each conclusion has an accompanying recommendation that sets out a pathway of action for UN Women to build on achievements to date, overcome challenges faced and maximize the opportunities available. The conclusions and recommendations relating to UN Women’s HIV/AIDS work refer only to its gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting and not its wider HIV/AIDS work.

UN Women and one of its predecessors, UNIFEM, have long experience in GNP, an area of work that has contributed to UN Women’s identity and framed a specialism for which it is recognized and valued. Over the seven years 2011–2017, GNP has evolved its operational strategy from budgets being a primary, though not unique, entry point, to one where national development plans are a central entry point into the full policy-planning-budgeting-review cycle.

This evolution has yielded a range of results in a large number of countries. It has initiated fundamental changes in the degree to which government machineries in those countries are capable of perceiving gender inequalities and using the tools of governance to rectify these. Outcomes discussed under Key Question 2 are testament to many of the achievements of this foundational, practical work in scaling up efforts to achieve gender equality. This work potentially goes well beyond the relatively piecemeal scope of project-based and often geographically limited development frameworks. It enters a governance structure with national reach by definition. Setting out to make governance and national planning gender-responsive and to commit finance to policies that might change gender inequality at scale was an act of vision and courage from the outset. Pursuing gender equality through governance is essentially a political process, requiring commitment, endurance, strategic thinking, analytical skills, diplomacy and grit. Gains thus far have been achieved through countless acts of persistence. Sustaining the work in the future will equally require both strategy and tenacity.

The evaluation revealed a good number of examples of excellent work in GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, such as:

- Hard-won gains in stimulating more gender-responsive GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS (**Findings 7, 8**).
- Asserting gender-responsive GNP, including in HIV/AIDS, at the highest global levels (**Findings 4, 5**).
- UN Women’s ability to work sensitively and strategically with a wide range of governments (**Finding 1**).
- UN Women’s ability to create trust and build long-term key relationships and harness these for progress in gender-responsive GNP at the country level (**Finding 13**).
- Asserting the role and relevance of women in governance (**Findings 2, 14**).
- UN Women’s ability, in many cases, to persist with the often slow and unpredictable steps in the GNP process (**Findings 3, 12**).

However, the evaluation also revealed that, given the complexity and long-term nature of the GNP project, there are areas in which the work could be better institutionally supported. While improvements have been made in supporting and increasing staff expertise in GNP at country level (**Finding 17**), programmatically its conceptual framework has not kept pace with the experience accumulated, and therefore operationally it is inadequately supported by a strong, clear strategy (**Finding 11**). Learning is hard-won in a context of information and knowledge management systems

that are not yet not fully realized (**Findings 19 and 22**), making it challenging to describe and communicate UN Women’s work in GNP, including in HIV/AIDS. Financing for this work has generally been project driven in short-term frameworks, insecure in the medium term and therefore at times the work has been insufficiently led from the front by a strong overall strategy (**Finding 18**).

The current twin contexts of UN reform propelling greater coordination and collaboration among agencies, and the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supported by the AAAA, offer an opportunity for UN Women’s work in GNP to become a central and essential component of both. UN Women has experience and ambition in how to secure financing and capacity for enhancing gender equality through governance. Therefore, these contexts offer a potential platform for UN Women’s leadership and expertise to be fully utilized and duly recognized. However, capitalizing on this opportunity will require some collaborative re-thinking and some rearrangement of human and financial resources so that this core area of work is properly buttressed, receives sufficient focus and is convincingly linked to UN Women’s other thematic areas.

The following 10 conclusions draw together the evaluation’s findings and through associated recommendations set out a pathway for UN Women to build on the achievements to date, address the challenges faced and maximize the opportunities currently presented to further advance gender-responsive GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. The conclusions and recommendations coalesce around five broad themes:

- Positioning GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, within UN Women (**Conclusions 1 and 2**).
- Positioning GNP in the context of UN reform (**Conclusions 3 and 4**).
- Evolving the GNP ToC and deepening work across the GNP cycle (**Conclusion 5**).
- Capturing GNP results, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to drive accountability and learning (**Conclusions 6, 7, 8 and 9**).
- Enhancing the financial position of UN Women’s GNP work (**Conclusion 10**).

## CONCLUSION 1

### Conceptualizing GNP as a central platform for UN Women’s support to national governments.

Based on Finding 1, Finding 5, Finding 8, Finding 12, Finding 13, Finding 17

Gender-responsive GNP, in which UN Women has played a unique role, is foundational work for achieving gender equality. With an enhanced focus on supporting central government policy and planning processes, it has the potential to drive the promotion of gender equality across all national government policy and planning, and into local government planning, enabling national governments to progress the implementation of their SDG commitments.

UN Women is uniquely positioned to continue this ongoing process. The entity has an excellent track record of succeeding, despite the potential for disagreement and conflict over gender issues, in aligning with government priorities as discussed in Finding 1. This was also affirmed in a meta-evaluation that found “strong” (94 per cent) endorsement across 36 previous evaluations for “programmes and projects align with national development goals”.<sup>329</sup> UN Women also benefits from the legitimacy accorded to the UN in general as government partners, and from the normative function entailed by the UN’s role in supporting accountability to international commitments. In addition, as presented in Findings 7 and 13, UN Women has established specific ways to make a complex contribution to GNP processes. This has involved playing a catalytic role in opening policy spaces and enabling others to use them through a partnership approach.

Cementing GNP work at the country level requires UN Women to strengthen its work in certain areas, as described in Finding 8, including:

- Monitoring and evaluation systems that capture results from policy and budgeting decisions and enable governments to be held to account.
- Continuing to address capacity weaknesses in the partner organizations that UN Women seeks to enable, primarily women’s machineries and

329 UN Women (2017) What can we learn from UN Women Evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016.

Ministries of Finance, but also sectoral ministries and local government.

UN Women has established a body of experience in working in GNP with a sector focus (Finding 8). Given this foundation, UN Women could conceptualize its GNP programming as a central platform for its support to national governments and seek to link support to government in other areas, including in HIV/AIDS (see Conclusion 2), thereby developing an integrated package of support. Doing so would require UN Women to think through how workstreams in other thematic areas could connect more closely with GNP, particularly at the operational level, potentially modifying the course these areas take to strengthen inter-connectedness.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

**UN Women to develop an integrated policy and programme package to support national governments with gender-responsive GNP as a central platform.**

Conceptualizing UN Women's GNP work as a central platform for the entity's support to government would constitute an important shift in organizational approach, involving changes to several technical areas. The intention is that by providing integrated support, UN Women would enable national governments to progress their gender-responsive GNP more rapidly, with stronger embedding in thematic or sectoral areas. To deliver on this objective, the following steps could be considered:

- UN Women should identify the thematic areas which support national policy and planning and conceptualize how the various strands can be brought together in an integrated package of policy and programme support with gender-responsive GNP as the central platform.
- Based on this conceptualization, UN Women Policy and Programme Division should develop detailed written guidance for Regional and Country Offices on the new integrated package and its operational implications to enable them to work effectively with national governments. UN Women's country GNP focal points to lead

implementation of this new integrated package of policy and programme support to national governments.

- UN Women's Leadership and Governance Section of the Policy and Programme Division and Regional Offices should be appropriately resourced to provide on-demand support to this reconfiguration at country level. This is likely to require a blend of GNP and thematic expertise in the sectors/themes where UN Women is providing support. In line with UN Women's regional architecture, regional adviser positions dedicated to supporting this integration process would be required.
- To secure the full benefits of this integrated package of support, UN Women should seek to support national governments across the full GNP cycle, stepping up its support to monitoring budget expenditure and the gender equality results achieved through policy and budget decisions made.
- Deepening UN Women's support across the full GNP cycle, and embedding it more strongly in thematic areas where UN Women is already supporting government is likely to require an increased level of financial resources. Senior management needs to take steps to ensure an appropriate level of financial resources are available to carry out the scope of work agreed (see Recommendation 10 below).

### **CONCLUSION 2**

**Resetting UN Women's vision for its HIV/AIDS work and relationship with GNP.**

*Based on Finding 4, Finding 6, Finding 7, Finding 9, Finding 11, Finding 14, Finding 15*

Although promoting gender-responsive HIV/AIDS policies, plans and budgets forms a significant component of UN Women's HIV/AIDS work, the linkages between it and the entity's wider GNP work are not strong in any of its normative, operational or coordination work. This underdeveloped relationship is reflected in the reconstructed ToC, which includes HIV/AIDS, but does not spell out the nature of the linkages with broader GNP processes.



Findings 4, 6, 14 and 15 highlight the important contribution UN Women's HIV/AIDS work has made to advancing gender-responsive HIV/AIDS responses internationally. Despite this, UN Women has not been able to meet Strategic Plan targets, and the decline in the entity's funding for this work is concerning. The situation calls for focused attention to reset UN Women's vision in the area of HIV/AIDS and to put in place operational arrangements to support its realization.

The approach proposed under Conclusion 1, where UN Women's GNP work becomes a central platform for the entity's support to national governments, would help clarify the relationship between UN Women's GNP and HIV/AIDS work. In this vision, UN Women would support HIV/AIDS focused stakeholders to apply an approach to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting that aligns with the processes pursued across all government departments and coordinated by central government departments; while also bringing specialist technical gender expertise and the voices of women affected by HIV/AIDS to government HIV/AIDS response planning. In this scenario, HIV/AIDS would be one of several thematic or sectoral areas included in an integrated package of governance support provided by UN Women to national government, with other areas potentially being violence against women and girls, and economic development. This does not mean that UN Women should not support work in the area of HIV/AIDS that goes beyond gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning. Rather, that the HIV/AIDS policy and planning support that UN Women provides to national governments should be fully integrated with its broader gender-responsive GNP support.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**UN Women to determine the intended relationship between UN Women's GNP work and its support to gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting and take actions to operationalize it within the proposed central platform/ integrated package of support to governments.**

Decision-making on the relationship between UN Women's GNP and gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting work would logically be handled as part of the process to reposition GNP as a central platform for UN Women's support to national governments (Recommendation 1). In this scenario:

- UN Women headquarters staff leading the entity's HIV/AIDS work should contribute to the conceptualization of UN Women's integrated package of support on gender-responsive governance, ensuring it is informed by achievements and learning in the area of HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting to facilitate further embedding of a gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS response.
- UN Women headquarters staff leading the entity's HIV/AIDS work should contribute to the preparation of detailed written guidance for Regional and Country Offices on the new integrated package and its operational implications. This should articulate how Country Offices can work with national governments and the National AIDS Coordinating Authorities to achieve an integrated national approach to gender-responsive policy and planning, which facilitates the achievement of gender-responsive GNP in the area of HIV/AIDS. UN Women country HIV/AIDS focal points to support the country GNP focal point (where they are different personnel) in implementing this new integrated package of policy and programme support to national governments.
- UN Women should retain internal specialist HIV/AIDS human resource capacity at headquarters and in Regional Offices to provide technical support for the effective implementation of an integrated package of support for gender-responsive GNP at the country level, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. This specialist capacity should be adequate to continue UN Women's agenda setting global normative advocacy in the area of HIV/AIDS and its strategic collaboration with UNAIDS.

### CONCLUSION 3

**UN Women's gender-responsive GNP work to become the entry point to work of other UN entities at country level and become part of a package of coordinated UN support to national government governance systems.**

Based on Finding 4, Finding 5, Finding 6, Finding 13

UN Women has shown strong performance in setting the global agenda for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, through effective advocacy influencing critical inter-governmental negotiations of normative frameworks (Findings 4 and 6). As Findings 5 and 6 demonstrate, part of UN Women's success lies in its ability to develop and maintain strategic partnerships with other UN agencies, e.g. UN DESA for financing for development inter-governmental process, and UNAIDS for enhancing the international response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These partnerships not only enabled UN Women to deliver on its coordination mandate, but have helped position UN Women more strategically, enhancing its influence and ultimately strengthening its reputation as a flag-bearer for gender equality.

At the country level, the strength of UN Women's coordination with other UN agencies in GNP appears more mixed and weaker in places (Finding 5). Yet, UN Women's work to support gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting, undertaken in collaboration with UNAIDS co-sponsors, suggests that there are more opportunities for collaborating with other UN entities at the country level, linking gender-responsive GNP work more closely with the support these other UN entities provide to the development and implementation of national policy and broader governance systems. In the context of UN reform, which anticipates a streamlined UN presence converging into a UNCT under the leadership of a Resident Coordinator, it is essential for UN Women to forge stronger collaboration and linkages between its own work and the work of other UN entities at the country level.

UN Women's gender-responsive GNP work appears well placed to integrate more closely with coordinated UN support to national governments. Due to

its established partnerships with central government departments, its focus on policy and planning systems that apply across all national government departments, and with the opportunity to link to sectoral ministries and local government, UN Women has the potential to connect with and enable national policy development and implementation supported by other UN entities, thereby drawing together the policy implementation support provided to national governments by the UN family. Operating at the country level in a more integrated way with other UN entities would bring benefits to UN Women's GNP work as it deepens opportunities to apply gender-responsive planning and budgeting in government departments and ministries supported by other UN entities, and where UN Women does not have a strong footprint.

Such an approach, which forges connections between national governance and planning systems, supported by UN Women and other UN agencies, offers the potential for a more integrated UN programme of support to governments, centred on the UNDAF, which strongly aligns with established government processes. It would extend opportunities for addressing gender considerations in policy areas supported by other UN agencies, further enabling governments and the UN itself to deliver on their gender equality commitments. Evolving UN Women's GNP support in this way provides an exciting role for UN Women at the heart of reformed UNCTs, providing UNCT leadership on gender.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

**As part of ongoing UN reform processes, UN Women to leverage coordinated UN support to national governments on governance and national planning, with UN Women providing leadership and expertise in the area of gender-responsive GNP.**

There is considerable momentum behind UN reform and UN Women is involved in the repositioning process through its participation in the UN Sustainable Development Group Core Group and associated working groups. Several UN agencies support national governments in the development and implementation of their national development plan and associated

sectoral plans. Support to policy and planning could therefore form a potential area of coordinated UN support to national governments.

To pursue this opportunity UN Women should:

- Identify the relevant UN Development System working groups where UN Women can table this proposal, the particular focus of these groups, as well as their membership. UN Women should use this information to inform the framing of its proposal in each working group.
- Build a case to support the proposal which reflects UN Women's expertise, but is also likely to garner support from other UN agencies. To underpin the case, UN Women should, as far as possible, map the interests of other UN agencies in supporting national governments in the development and implementation of national development plans and associated sectoral plans. This process could identify potential allies among other UN agencies and their particular interests in this area of work. The case should articulate how UN Women can contribute to coordinated UN support to national governments on governance and national planning and the benefits such a contribution would bring. It would be appropriate for UN Women to propose leading UN support for gender-responsive governance and national planning, enabling governments to deliver on SDG 5 and gender-related commitments in the AAAA.
- Once a body of support for the proposal emerges, identify the human and financial resource implications of UN Women taking up this role at the country, regional and headquarter levels and take active steps to secure the required resources to deliver on this strategic positioning.

#### CONCLUSION 4

##### **Maximizing the opportunities of strengthened GNP global normative frameworks.**

Based on Finding 1, Finding 3, Finding 4, Finding 5, Finding 18, Finding 22

UN Women's support to global normative agreements such as the AAAA has contributed to impressive

advances in international commitments for financing for gender equality as part of financing the SDGs. These commitments not only relate to the use of domestic public resources (the focus of UN Women's GNP work) but also to domestic and international private business and finance, international trade and international development cooperation.<sup>330</sup>

At the country level, the evaluation found that opportunities presented by these advances are only just starting to be taken up. This may be partly explained by the relatively short period since the AAAA was agreed, in July 2015. However, the challenges UN Women faces in moving from supporting the development of normative frameworks to supporting their implementation need to be recognized, i.e. ensuring adequate human capacity and strengthening linkages between UN Women headquarters and field offices to guide the translation of global frameworks at country level.<sup>331</sup> Equally, the breadth of the AAAA action areas may be a factor. Promoting gender-responsive GNP is one small part of the AAAA gender equality commitments, with other action areas extending way beyond this scope.

The strong commitments to gender equality across the AAAA present UN Women with opportunities to extend its engagement in financing for gender equality at the country level beyond GNP and into other areas such as taxation or international trade. Pursuing these opportunities would be a strategic move for UN Women, in the context of the SDGs and UN reform. However, developing these new areas of work would require additional and appropriate resources, and the strengthening of linkages between headquarters and field offices to guide the translation of the AAAA at the country level. Engagement in AAAA action areas beyond the current scope of UN Women's GNP work is potentially strategic as it positions UN Women action at the heart of SDG implementation at the country level, working with influential central government ministries such as the Ministry of Finance. SDG implementation will inevitably be the focus of support for reformed UNCTs. Deepening engagement in financing for gender equality processes at country level and forging a relationship with UNDP, the UN agency

<sup>330</sup> Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, July 2015, United Nations.

<sup>331</sup> Evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 25 March 2015, Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, United Nations Economic and Social Council, E/AC.51/2015/9.

which leads in this area, would help strengthen UN Women's position within the streamlined UNCTs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4**

**UN Women to prepare a strategy paper that sets out how UN Women could support AAAA implementation at country level, alongside the benefits and human and financial capacity required for each scenario.**

Extending support to national governments beyond GNP to implement AAAA gender equality commitments offers UN Women strategic benefits. The opportunity to work with UNDP and other relevant partners to integrate a gender perspective into the Integrated National Financing Framework is a first step. However, much more would need to be done at the country level to support the translation of the AAAA commitments on gender equality into national policy and practice. For UN Women to move in this direction, it should:

- Prepare a paper which sets out how UN Women can build on its country-focused, gender-responsive GNP work to support implementation of the AAAA gender equality commitments at country level. Specifically, the paper would describe: the country level processes UN Women would adopt; the partners involved in these processes; the contribution UN Women would seek to make; the expertise required and how it could be sourced (internally from among UN Women staff, external consultants); and global, regional and country staff time, as well as the financial resources required to support this contribution. Senior management to determine the most appropriate option based on broad consultations internally and with UN partners.
- In determining the approach, UN Women needs to give particular consideration to appropriate human and financial resourcing of this extended scope of work. It is likely that dedicated human resources would be needed at regional level and in headquarters to provide the necessary support to UN Women Country Offices to drive the work in collaboration with national governments and other development partners. It is also essential

that new financial resources are identified to support this extended scope of work, beyond those required for the continued development of UN Women's core GNP work. .

#### **CONCLUSION 5**

**Evolving the ToC for GNP, clarifying the scope of UN Women's GNP work and terminology.**

Based on Finding 4, Finding 5, Finding 7, Finding 8, Finding 9, Finding 11, Finding 12, Finding 13

As detailed in Findings 8 and 11, the reconstructed ToC does not fully capture the complexity of UN Women's approach to supporting gender-responsive GNP as it has evolved during the 2011–17 period. As such, it offers an inadequate framework for conceptualizing, operationalizing and tracking progress under IA 5. In addition, few countries have developed a tailored ToC or narratives explaining the logic of selected activities, outputs and outcomes in the short or medium term. Therefore, it is challenging to situate GNP plans and work undertaken against a picture of how medium and long-term objectives might be achieved. It also means there is a weak framework for identifying and describing challenges or obstacles to progress, which risk undermining effective medium-term planning and reduce opportunities for learning.

Addressing the weak areas of the reconstructed ToC offers the potential for providing a strong conceptual and programming framework for ongoing work in GNP, and in particular a strong framework for monitoring and reporting that can strengthen learning. Areas that would benefit from further elaboration, include:

- How UN Women's global normative support and coordination with other UN agencies is expected to complement and combine with national-level normative and operational work to drive GNP activities at the national level.
- How UN Women's normative, operational and coordination work at country level is expected to combine to advance gender-responsive GNP.

- UN Women’s partnership approach and how this is intended to contribute to sustainable and locally owned gender-responsive GNP.
- Sector-focused work and the relationship with gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning (see Conclusion 2).
- The iterative nature of the GNP cycle, which anticipates that results emerging from one cycle inform the next.
- The causal processes anticipated across the ToC, but especially between outputs, outcomes and impact, and the assumptions implicit within this.

As part of this process, to resolve the confusion around the GNP terminology currently used (see section 5.2.3, UN Women should reflect on and specify the key terminology to be used to refer to its GNP work and the intended meaning. Thereafter, it will be essential to adhere to this terminology across the organization.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5**

**UN Women to lead an inclusive process to prepare an evolved ToC for GNP that captures the complexities of UN Women’s approach and provides a medium to long-term strategic overview of objectives and the envisaged process. Country Offices should use the evolved ToC to prepare ToC narratives tailored to country contexts.**

An adapted version of the reconstructed ToC is available in Figure 7 as a starting point for a fuller evolution of the ToC. It seeks to address current gaps as described above and provides a model of how the overall strategic framework for GNP, as it is currently structured, can be strengthened. The ToC does not, however, take account of any re-formulation of GNP taken up on the basis of this evaluation.

- The process should adopt a participatory approach, working with Regional and Country Offices to develop a shared understanding of GNP change processes among UN Women staff and ensuring that the resulting ToC is informed by global and country-level experience. It should

include establishing an agreement and understanding of the relationship between the ToC as a tool for conceptualizing a change process and as a guide to operationalizing it, and the Strategic Plan that sets out the steps to be taken in a specific context, framed so that they align with global-level objectives.

- Country-specific ToC narratives should set out medium-term GNP objectives and the intended pathway to achieve them. Thereafter, Annual Workplans and Reports should be formulated with reference to the ToC.

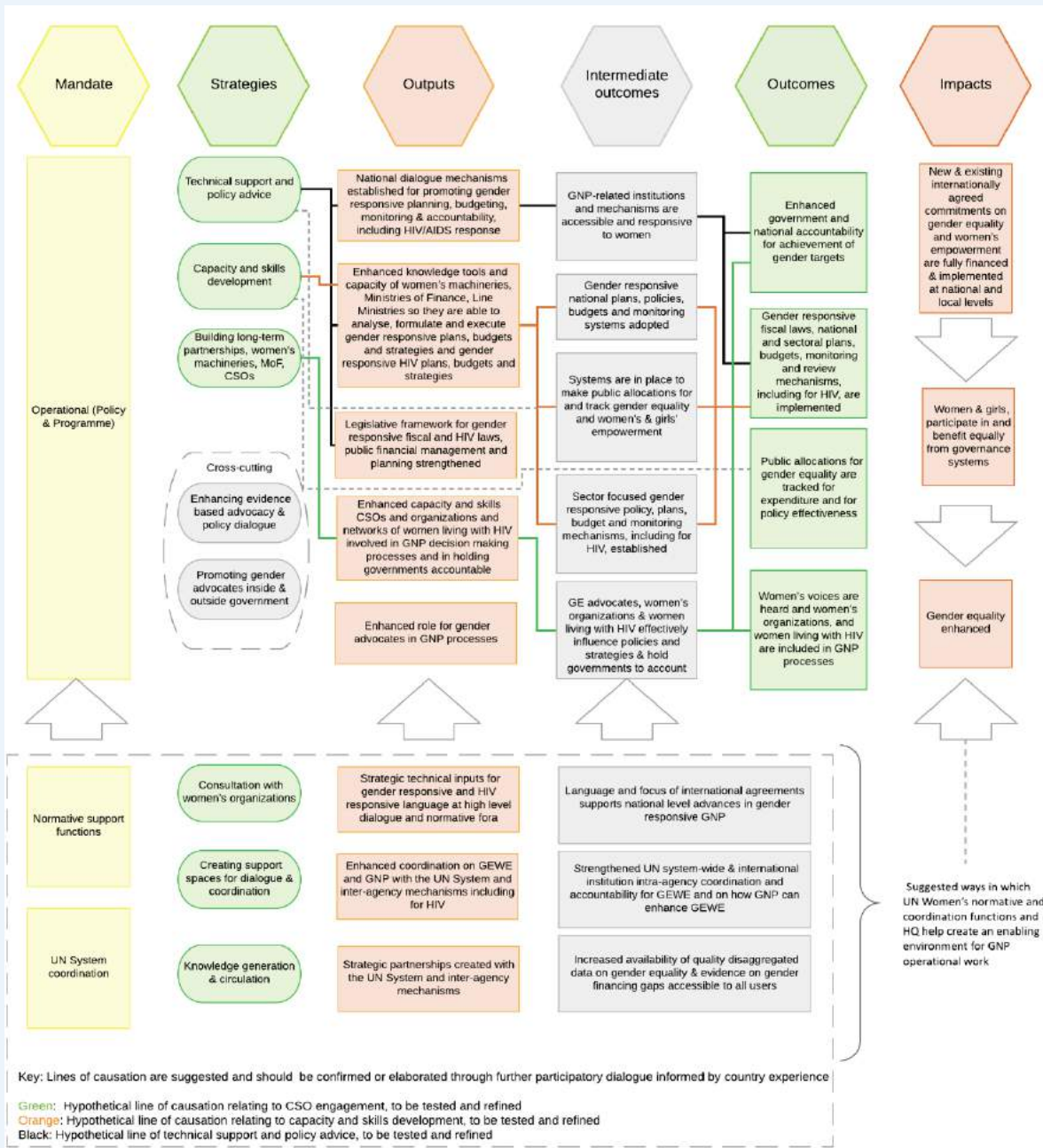
In facilitating the ToC evolution process, relevant Policy Advisers in the Leadership and Governance Section may wish to draw on the ToC developed in 2015 for IA 5 related flagship programmes, Gender-Sensitive Statistics for Localization of the SDGs, and Transformative Financing for GEWE. These ToC may offer a platform and an organizational logic for developing an updated global-level ToC for GNP.

They also provide the precedent of a process through which a global ToC could be used and adapted at country level by Country Offices developing GNP work. However, it should be noted that these ToC do not currently engage explicitly with UN Women’s normative and coordination functions, creating a similar gap as that observed in the GNP reconstructed ToC for expressing and communicating programme drivers.

As part of the ToC development process, relevant Policy Advisers in the Leadership and Governance Section should reflect on the terminology to be used and make definitions of key terms available to staff in headquarters, Regional and Country Offices. Critical here is to specify whether UN Women’s preferred term is GRB or GNP, what specifically is meant by these terms, and whether and how they are substantively different. Furthermore, if UN Women decides to integrate its gender-responsive HIV/AIDS planning and budgeting with its broader GNP work (as proposed in Recommendations 1 and 2) then terminology that communicates this needs to be agreed and communicated across the organization.

**FIGURE 7**

**Suggested foundation for evolving the ToC for GNP**



## CONCLUSION 6

### **Promoting government accountability through enhanced CSO participation in the GNP cycle, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.**

Based on Finding 2, Finding 7, Finding 8, Finding 9, Finding 13, Finding 14

UN reform calls for stepping up the UN's engagement with civil society as an immediate priority: "strengthening the capacity of UN country teams ... to step up the organization's engagement with civil society [among others]".<sup>332</sup> Among UN agencies, UN Women has a unique depth of experience in this kind of engagement and therefore has an opportunity to draw on this comparative advantage in the reform process.

Previous evaluations, including the 2016 meta-evaluation, have highlighted UN Women's defining strength in facilitating meaningful dialogue and evidence-based policy-making processes among multiple groups of stakeholders.<sup>333</sup> Findings 2, 13 and 14 detail how partnerships with CSOs for GNP and HIV/AIDS-related work have been effective in creating accountability and policy dialogue mechanisms for GNP with governments, and how these partnerships have been successful in engaging and promoting women as rights holders. This corroboration across evaluation findings strongly suggests that working to strengths means involving CSOs consistently as core partners and bringing them into dialogue with governments. This is a key component of the "creating connections" identified in Finding 13 as a feature of UN Women's added value.

At the same time, Finding 8 shows that more needs to be done to ensure government accountability for the gender equality commitments made. This is an area in which CSOs have a particularly critical role to play and their involvement gives the scope and space for a more political approach to improving gender responsiveness in governance. The evaluation details examples of how UN Women's specialized technical support and capacity building with CSOs and

governments has helped to strengthen civil society's role in GNP, as well as facilitating greater government responsiveness to it. Although this work has been effective, it has not always been fully consistent, as engaging with CSOs has often been dependent on project-based tasks and on timelines for engagement with international agreements. Stakeholders in several countries observed that a deeper focus on the role of CSOs is required to enable them to play a greater role both in sustaining government accountability to GEWE in general and GNP in particular. This is also required to facilitate an oversight/watchdog role for communities regarding government delivery of services/investments, including how these roles can become 'institutionalized' or sustainable and normalized. In view of this, and in the context of UN reform, there is a strong case to be made for prioritizing civil society participation in holding governments to account for their gender equality commitments, and for consolidating experience and learning from the GNP process on how this role might be institutionalized in a variety of circumstances, and therefore normalized and made sustainable.

## RECOMMENDATION 6

### **UN Women to work proactively with Regional and Country Offices to support consistent national civil society roles in monitoring budget expenditure and gender equality results achieved through government policy and budget decisions, feeding findings into future planning cycles.**

- This would involve developing accessible technical guidance and training materials for UN Women Country Offices and partners on ways in which civil society can contribute to promoting gender-responsive GNP and good practice in working towards institutionalization of their role in different contexts. It should draw on learning available from HIV/AIDS work on maintaining a consistent focus on CSOs; country experience in attempting to institutionalize this relationship; and should form part of operationalizing UN Women's knowledge management strategy (See Recommendation 9). It would also involve

<sup>332</sup>United Nations Development System Repositioning, 'Backgrounder' 2017.

<sup>333</sup>What can we learn from UN Women evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2014 and 2015, June 2016, UN Women

mobilizing resources to build civil society capacity and more consistently nurturing dialogue between civil society and government partners on monitoring findings and implications for future policy and budget decision-making.

- UN Women should ensure that agreements reached on the approach to civil society involvement in GNP monitoring processes are adequately captured in the evolved ToC and in reporting templates so that further learning on successful practices for institutionalization in different contexts, including from the HIV/AIDS experience, can be consolidated.

## CONCLUSION 7

### **Capturing the benefits of gender-responsive GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to women and especially marginalized women.**

Based on Finding 7, Finding 8, Finding 11, Finding 16

Relatively little emphasis in GNP work, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, has been on monitoring and evaluation of the government policy-budget-review cycle. Therefore, relatively little is known about the links between GNP and gender equality outcomes or how far GNP benefits the most marginalized groups, such as WLWHIV and especially marginalized groups within this group. While this was beyond the scope of the evaluation, piecemeal evidence is available suggesting positive impacts (see Section 6.5). Building robust sample evidence of UN Women's contribution to this level of potential results, which would also involve developing a picture of the contributions of other actors, would strengthen the case for resource mobilization for GNP and for HIV/AIDS.

Gender mainstreaming efforts have periodically been accused of failing to deliver results in terms of clear benefits to women and girls. These efforts, according to some analysis, have had the perverse result of focusing the efforts of gender advocates on technical details of inserting "gender" into the mainstream, and away from the business of seeking truly gender

transformative approaches to advocacy and resistance.<sup>334</sup> A decade on from this analysis, UN Women, having persisted with the application of practical tools crafted to focus on specific areas of gender mainstreaming (budgeting and planning) finds itself in a unique position. This uniqueness comes from some UN Women GNP efforts working towards completion of the policy-planning-budgeting-implementation-monitoring and evaluation cycle conceptualized by early GNP frameworks.<sup>335</sup> Supporting partners across this full cycle, which includes both budget monitoring/financial auditing and monitoring of the policy-related results stands to generate evidence of whether targeted planning and budgeting strategies for gender equality can indeed generate benefits to women and girls.

However, UN Women has yet to capitalize on this unique position in a substantive way and, as a result, the IA 5 framework and documentation do not yet reveal the level of results story. First, as shown in Finding 8, there has been relatively little focus on monitoring and evaluation in the policy-budget cycle. Second, in deference to the complexity of a results story of this kind, and of establishing a contribution story to results at the degree of distance from UN Women's particular activity that this would require (Finding 12), both the results framework and the current/reconstructed ToC stop before this level. Both outcome and impact-level objectives do not reach beyond results in national plans and financial auditing/tracking (Finding 7; Finding 8; Areas for further exploration, Section 6.5).

Section 6.5 on areas for further exploration outlines potential result areas that require elaboration and verification. These include results in: changes to gender segregation/segmentation of agricultural labour; changes to the level of recognition and support accorded to women's businesses; and changes in service provision to survivors of violence against women and girls. Robust systems for monitoring these kinds of results, alongside a detailed understanding of UN

<sup>334</sup>See Meier, Petra and Karen Celis (2011) 'Sowing the Seeds of Its Own Failure: Implementing the Concept of Gender Mainstreaming', *Social Politics* 2011 18 (4), pp. 469–489; Brouwers, Ria 2013 'Revisiting gender mainstreaming in international development: Goodbye to an illusionary strategy' Working Paper No. 556, Institute of Social Studies, Netherlands; Harcourt, W. (2006) *The Global Women's Rights Movement: Power Politics Around the United Nations and World Social Forum*. Civil Society and Social Movements. Programme Paper 25. UNRISD.

<sup>335</sup>See Diane Elson; 'UN Women's contribution to GNP – Governance and National Planning' UN Women, Sept 2012.



Women's contribution and the contribution of others, would be necessary if UN Women is to fully present its results story in GNP.

As discussed in Finding 16, the degree to which intersectionality issues are addressed by interventions in gender-responsive policy and planning also cannot be fully verified without this layer of results, which documents changes in women's lives. UN Women has previously noted a need for concerted efforts to better understand intersectionalities and how GNP can respond to those most marginalized.<sup>336</sup> While part of responding to the most marginalized demands awareness to include a concept of stratification among women on the basis of ethnicity, sexuality, economic status, etc., and in this there are signs of good progress, verification that policy built with this awareness can succeed in reaching marginalized groups cannot be achieved without finely tuned monitoring that disaggregates categories of women.

### RECOMMENDATION 7

**UN Women to work proactively with Regional and Country Offices to assist national GNP partners, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, to put in place systems to measure the impact of gender-responsive GNP on the lives of women, including marginalized women.**

This would involve:

- UN Women continuing to support the development of government monitoring and evaluation systems, drawing on work developed through the Gender Equitable Local Development (GELD) programme, so that the results of full GNP cycles on women, including marginalized women, are documented and links established to the impact of policy.
- Given that government monitoring systems aimed at capturing policy impact on marginalized women are likely to take time to achieve, and may not ultimately generate ideal levels of granular data, UN Women should commission small

<sup>336</sup> UN Women 2017, Changing Global Context and GRB: Innovations in GRB: Sharing Experiences from Asia Pacific Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

but robust sample studies, potentially drawing on the proposed UN Women/IMF joint work, focused very specifically on building an empirical evidence base on causal links between GRB and gender equality outcomes. These studies would aim to establish the effects of UN Women's GNP interventions at impact level in the lives of women, including marginalized women. They should also explore the specific contribution UN Women has made in the change process thereby building the evidence base for UN Women's work.

- UN Women should consider making the aspirations of GNP to impact-level results in terms of changes in women's lives more explicit by capturing these in the evolved ToC. Including changes in women's lives as impact-level results draws attention to the fact that these are the ultimate ambitions of GNP work, and would invite assessment and acknowledgement of UN Women's contribution to achieving them.

### CONCLUSION 8

**Improving corporate systems to better capture results and processes of change.<sup>337</sup>**

Based on Finding 8, Finding 11, Finding 12, Finding 19, Finding 21, Finding 22

Since 2015, UN Women has made good progress in establishing RMS as a corporate information management system and improving reporting methodologies in line with the Development Results Framework. However, RMS is not as yet fully institutionalized as a central document repository for the entire entity, and continues to have some important gaps in the documentation held. Furthermore, planning and reporting formats used do not encourage a strategic overview of how intended objectives are being met and the challenges encountered in promoting gender-responsive GNP, or how these might be resolved. In other words, in the absence of a ToC in which to situate progress

<sup>337</sup>In line with Finding 19, the evidence underpinning this conclusion is IA 5 focused, but the conclusion and recommendation go beyond IA 5. The finding, conclusion and recommendation assumes that UN Women documentation in IA 5 is not different to documentation in other impact areas.

from outputs to outcomes, much of the analytic power of reporting is lost.

Therefore, it is difficult to comprehensively assess GNP programme effectiveness, including effectiveness in the area of HIV/AIDS. The challenges described undermine UN Women's ability to: gain recognition for achievements; extract learning and use it to inform new work, or share it with others in the role of knowledge broker; and to accumulate evidence on the results of GNP work that would facilitate (non-core) resource mobilization.

### **RECOMMENDATION 8**

**UN Women to accelerate the institutionalization of RMS, ensuring all UN Women offices migrate to the system, with the objective of creating a comprehensive documentation repository. The entity to draw upon this to articulate results achieved through UN Women's support and to gain insights into what is working and how.**

- UN Women should ensure all staff are fully acquainted with RMS capacities and are able to confidently manipulate the data stored to access information to build a picture of programme effectiveness in particular areas of work.
- UN Women should ensure the new guidelines currently under preparation on the approach to be taken by UN Women offices in core programme documentation are issued. This guidance would emphasize that Strategic Notes should articulate a programme-level ToC; that Annual Workplans should briefly explain how the identified outcomes, outputs and activities will progress implementation of the ToC; and that Annual Reports should describe the results achieved, how they were achieved, the specific contribution made by UN Women and other stakeholders, and the extent to which the direction of travel has adhered to the ToC.

### **CONCLUSION 9**

#### **Strengthening systems for GNP knowledge management and learning.**

Based on Finding 10, Finding 17, Finding 20, Finding 21, Finding 22

Creating the conditions in which UN Women can fully flourish in a role as knowledge broker for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS, means closing the gaps in knowledge management. Maximizing internal knowledge brokering is essential to support efficient and effective delivery, and cross-country learning. An external knowledge broker role is potentially available to UN Women, given its long-standing and specialized contribution. As the 2016 meta-evaluation noted, "UN Women's role as a knowledge hub is the centerpiece of its global effectiveness".<sup>338</sup>

As detailed in Finding 20, good progress has been made towards systematizing learning and knowledge management. Evaluation cycles have been established and there is evidence that these are used to learn and to apply learning in the design of developing programming for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS. A Community of Practice on financing for gender equality was initiated in 2017 and offers a good foundation for further consolidating knowledge on GNP. An ambitious project to strengthen results-based ways of working has been relatively rapidly established and yielded insights at the close of the last Strategic Plan period in 2017 into how this promises to build in coherence over global programmes and accountability to identifiable results with the potential to guide programme focus and strategy. The sister project to create the architecture to centralize information generated at country level in the form of an RMS has been established and has made rapid progress since 2015. However, it is not yet completely institutionalized, as noted in this and other evaluations.

The complexity of skills and process management required in GNP, including specific knowledge for HIV/AIDS related GNP and sector-specific knowledge linking GNP into other sectoral processes, means that systematic and comprehensive knowledge-based approaches are necessary to support it. Creating

<sup>338</sup>UN Women (2017) What can we learn from UN Women Evaluations? A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016

these conditions therefore means pursuing and supporting plans already developed for strengthening these assets, actively taking part in implementing the knowledge management strategy passed at the end of October 2018, and contributing to ensuring that its purpose is achieved. The strategy offers the opportunity and a framework for further pursuing communication and learning that draws on country-level experience in GNP in aggregated form at global level.

### **RECOMMENDATION 9**

**UN Women to continue the drive for its knowledge management strategy to support knowledge management for GNP, including in the area of HIV/AIDS and sector-related work, and that headquarters technical sections and Regional Offices are enabled to carry through plans agreed.**

Key to delivering the knowledge management strategy is ensuring dedicated human resources with GNP expertise are made available to operationalize the strategy in this technical area, in line with the roles and responsibilities assigned to different parts of UN Women. If GNP is to become a central platform of UN Women's support to government, dedicated positions for knowledge management specific to GNP would be required, possibly located at regional level to strengthen region-based exchange and learning.

### **CONCLUSION 10**

**Ensuring GNP financial resourcing facilitates strategic planning.**

Based on Finding 8, Finding 11, Finding 18, Finding 19

The evaluation found that UN Women's GNP relies heavily on non-core resources. While the ratio of core to non-core resources supporting GNP is similar to that in other impact areas, it is a concern for an area of work considered one of UN Women's flagships and one with such strategic potential. The implication of this reliance on non-core resources is that it exposes GNP normative and operational programming to the shifting priorities of donors and the challenges of short-term funding horizons for processes that take years to embed. This risks undermining UN Women's ability to make strategic decisions about how to progress GNP, in line with its ToC and potentially diluting the focus.

A number of the evaluation's recommendations (including Recommendations 1, 3 and 4) highlight the need for additional financial resources. Raising more non-core funding to drive this new phase of UN Women's GNP work is one option, although it is recognized that few donors are particularly active in this area of work. A reliance on non-core funding is problematic for other reasons, as the short-term nature of most non-core funding does not provide the long-term planning horizons required for systemic change to governance processes to take root.

UN Women therefore needs to consider using core funding to secure a base of GNP work at global and national levels. If UN Women is to evolve its GNP work to become a central platform for its support to national governments (Recommendation 1) and a significant part of UN Women's contribution to coordinated UN support for governance and national planning (Recommendation 3) then it needs to commit core resources to protect this centrepiece of its programming.

 **RECOMMENDATION 10**

**UN Women senior management should review the use of core funding and consider how it can best be used to enable strategic planning and delivery in GNP.**

To allow UN Women to continue pioneering GNP in line with its (revised) ToC, it will be necessary to secure a bedrock of GNP work:

- UN Women should allocate core funding to GNP normative and operational work at country level, to enable GNP work to evolve to a new level, either by extending work across the full GNP cycle, or by deepening work within sectors or thematic areas, including in the area of HIV/AIDS.
- UN Women should invest in building a stronger rationale and evidence base for donor investment in gender-responsive GNP, whether through core funding to UN Women, or project-based funding. This would involve evolving the ToC to: more clearly articulate a medium-term strategy (Recommendation 5); better document results and processes of change (Recommendation 8); evidence the impact of more gender-responsive planning systems on women and girls (Recommendation 7); and use this material to articulate a clear narrative of the benefits of investing in gender-responsive GNP.

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**Produced by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service of UN Women (IEAS)**

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit Service under the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

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