Independent Evaluation Service

TRANSFORM

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The Magazine for Gender-Responsive Evaluation



Corporate Evaluation on UN Women's Support to Intergovernmental Processes 2022–2025

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Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 32nd Transform magazine, featuring the Corporate Evaluation on UN Women's Support to Intergovernmental Processes.

Today's challenging multilateral landscape poses significant risks to gender equality, weakening global norms, accountability and commitments to women's and girls' empowerment. In this context, UN Women's active role in intergovernmental spaces is essential to safeguard commitments and sustain progress.

As part of implementing UN Women's Corporate Evaluation Plan, the Independent Evaluation Service conducted a corporate evaluation to assess the support that UN Women provided to key intergovernmental processes between 2022 and 2025 at global, regional and country levels, contributing to strategic decision-making, learning and accountability.

The evaluation found that UN Women's support was highly valued by stakeholders, mainly Member States, and was strategically relevant for advancing the global normative framework on women's rights – although it was constrained by structural and resource limitations. Technical and strategic advisory support, particularly through evidence-based inputs, were consistently identified as some of the most effective contributions, supporting negotiations and consensus outcomes.

Convening and multi-stakeholder engagement also emerged as a central comparative advantage, strengthening coherence among different stakeholders.

UN Women's normative mandate and neutral broker role strengthened its credibility, while new coordination measures improved organizational efficiency despite continued funding, communication, monitoring and implementation challenges. The Entity also showed adaptability and resilience amid growing pushback, using evidence-based messaging, partnerships and political analysis to sustain progress.

We hope you find this new TRANSFORM issue insightful and the information within it useful to increase awareness of the important role UN Women plays to ensure that gender equality and women's rights remain central within the different intergovernmental agendas.



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Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.

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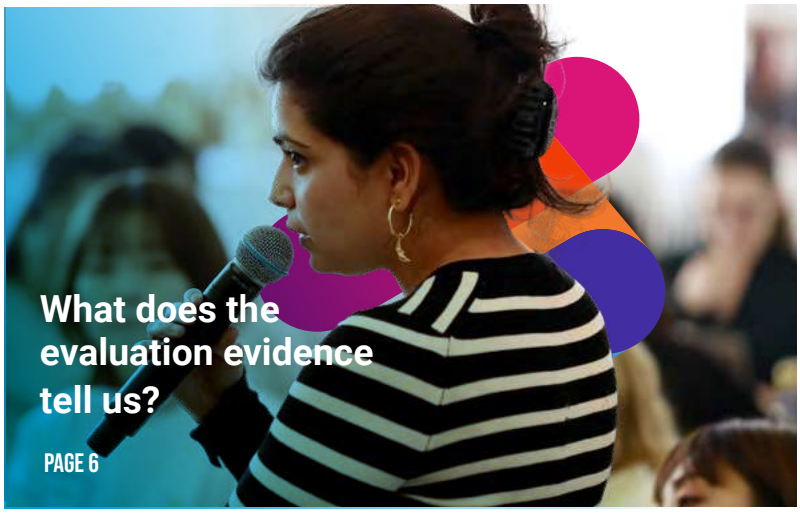
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Cover Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

Scenes from UN Headquarters during the 70th CSW: participants pose in front of a UN Women display that reads "Rights. Justice. Action. For All Women and Girls."



WHY EVALUATE UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES?

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

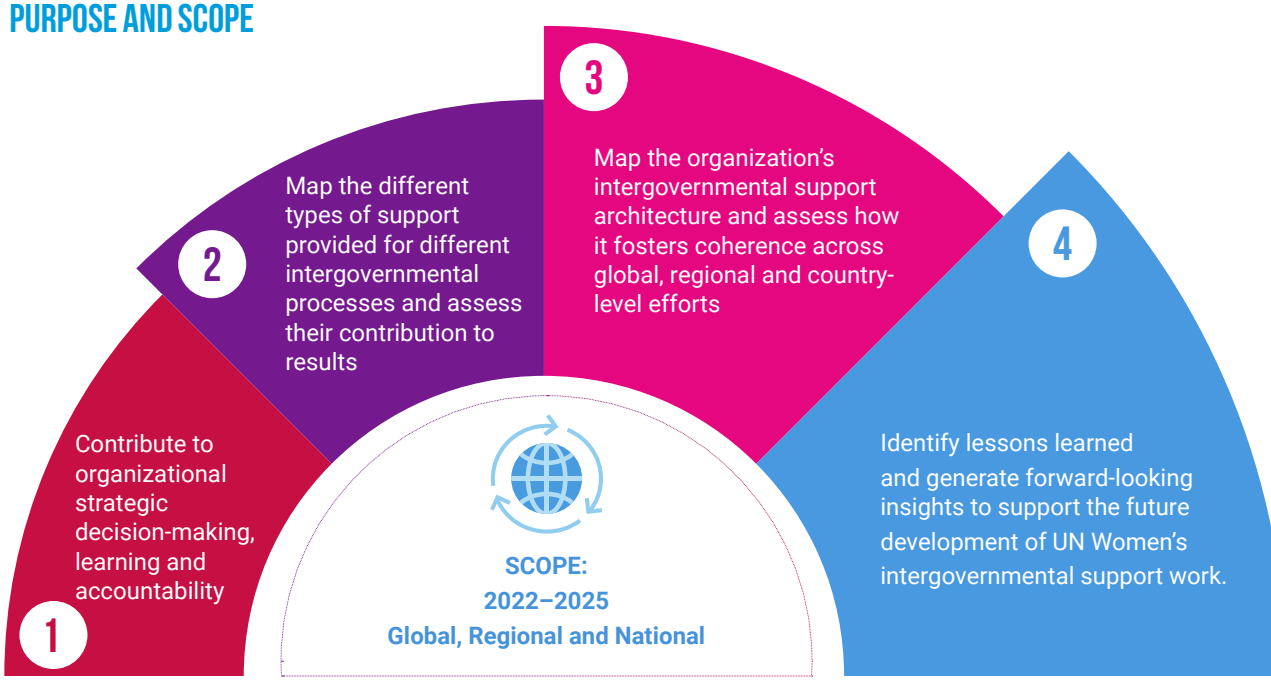
Between 2022 and 2025, UN Women engaged with a total of 29 intergovernmental processes: 14 global and 15 regional processes, including Commission for the Status of Women (CSW), High Level Political Forum (HLPF), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference on the Parties (COPs), Multilateral Environmental Agreements, the Financing for Development Forum, Human Rights Council and many more.

Intergovernmental forums provide a space for Member States to discuss and agree on global and regional norms and standards, including those related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These norms and standards guide actions by governments and stakeholders at global, regional and national levels, influencing the development and improvement of laws, policies and programmes that directly or indirectly promote gender equality, rights and women's empowerment. As part of its mandate, UN Women plays a critical role in supporting Member States in the adoption of intergovernmental decisions by providing technical support, conducting research and sharing best practices and lessons learned to inform such decisions. UN Women also supports policy advocacy; brokers dialogue among key stakeholders; and facilitates the participation of civil society to ensure the integration of women's perspectives in intergovernmental spaces.

Today's global context – characterized by multiple intersecting crises, political polarization and shrinking civic space, as well as growing backlash on long-standing commitments on gender equality and women's rights – adds to the challenge of building consensus within intergovernmental spaces for advancing women's rights and gender equality. Such context underscores the relevance of UN Women's intergovernmental support work.

The purpose of the corporate evaluation was to inform UN Women on progress related to its support to intergovernmental work and to recommend possible actions for improving accountability, learning and decision-making.The evaluation was presented to the UN Women Executive Board at its Annual Session in 2026. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN Women Executive Board, senior management and programme personnel directly working on, or with an interest in, UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1 RELEVANCE/COHERENCE/ EFFECTIVENESS/LNOB

What were UN Women's key contributions to intergovernmental processes?

→ What types of support does UN Women provide across various intergovernmental processes?

→ How does UN Women coordinate with partners, including Member States, UN agencies and civil society, to support intergovernmental processes? How does support align with the goals of partners?

→ What is the perceived value of UN Women in this space? How do partners see UN Women's role evolving in the coming years?

→ How does UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes advance the agenda of leaving no one behind? (Equity/Gender Equality /Disability Inclusion)

2 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

How does UN Women's organizational structure drive coherence and alignment in its support to intergovernmental processes across global, regional and country levels?

→ What internal systems and mechanisms does UN Women use to track initiatives/results, and what are the roles of regional sherpas and regional/global coordination mechanisms in this process?

→ To what extent have UN Women's country offices engaged with or leveraged intergovernmental processes to design country strategies and tailor country level support?

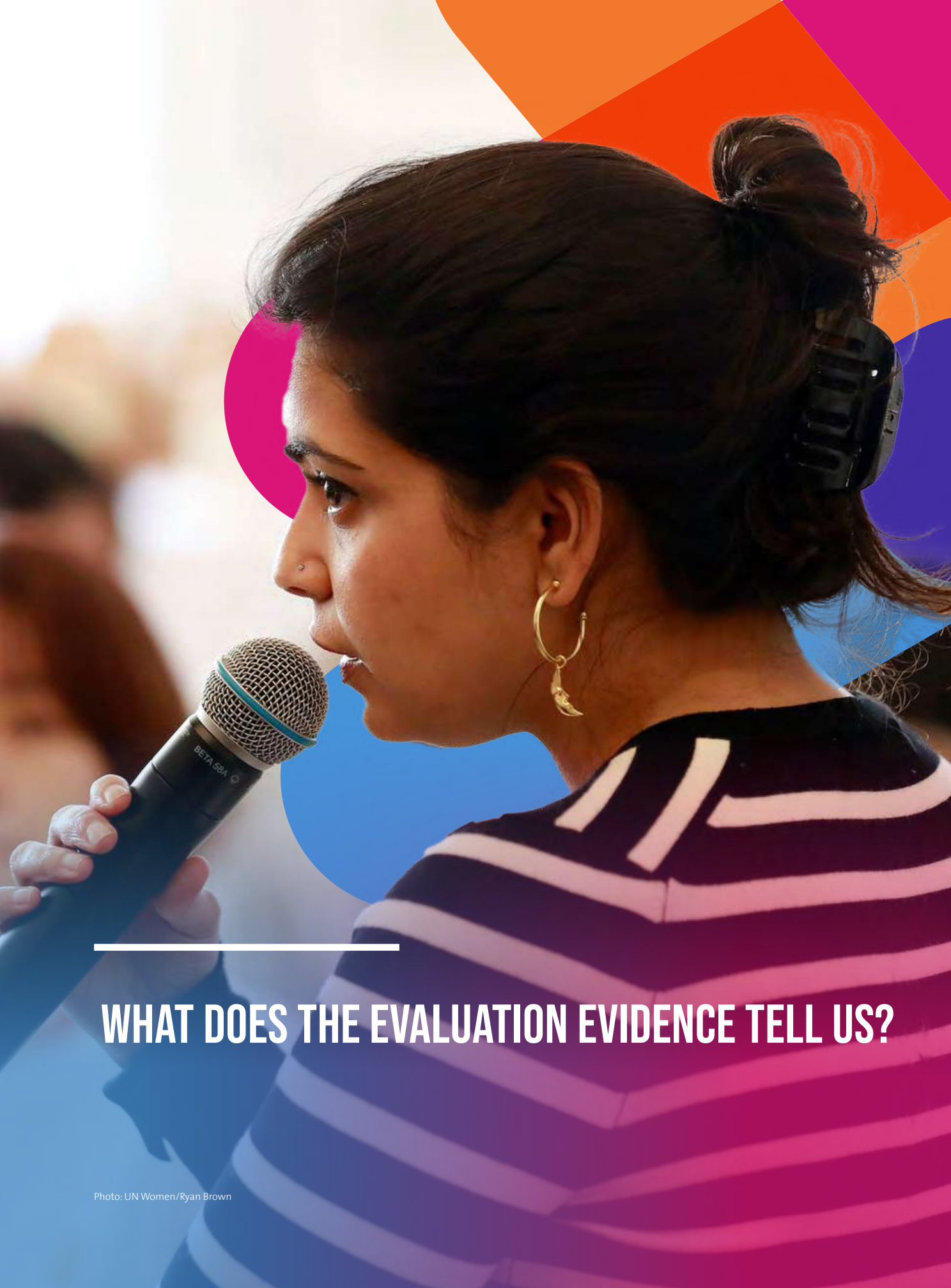
→ What types of organizational support are provided to translate global and regional normative frameworks into outcomes at the country level? What are the good practices and what gaps exist?

3 FORWARD LOOKING/ SUSTAINABILITY

How does UN Women adapt its support to intergovernmental processes to changing priorities, constraints and opportunities within this space?

→ How is UN Women responding to emerging challenges such as global crises, growing pushback and financial shifts?

→ What is UN Women's approach to strengthening sustainability of its support to intergovernmental processes?



WHAT DOES THE EVALUATION EVIDENCE TELL US?

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

CONCLUSION 1.

UN Women successfully contributed to raising awareness, delivered technical support and strengthened collaboration among various stakeholders in intergovernmental processes by effectively using its unique normative role; leading global agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and as the substantive secretariat of the CSW, alongside its reputation as a trusted and knowledgeable broker.

UN Women's strategic technical and advisory support (coupled with evidence and data) and its roles as convener and trusted broker have been an effective contribution towards supporting intergovernmental processes that advance norms and standards for gender equality, rights and women and girls' empowerment. UN Women's technical expertise contributed to the stronger integration of gender perspectives in recommendations and resolutions arising from intergovernmental processes. This support was underpinned by robust evidence, such as the flagship publication the "Gender Snapshot," which was repeatedly mentioned as a main source of credible data and evidence for negotiations.

The strengthening of institutional and individual capacities was directly linked to UN Women's provision of knowledge, evidence and data. Stakeholders highly rated UN Women's ability to act as a strategic convener and trusted broker, and to lead multi-stakeholder dialogues. This convening role was crucial for intergovernmental coherence and translating national priorities into shared normative consensus. UN Women's work has been essential in this regard and was perceived as relevant to advance the women's rights agenda.



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Photo: ©UN Women/Ryan Brown

CONCLUSION 2.

UN Women's approach to partnerships was found to be comprehensive and valuable in supporting intergovernmental work. UN Women's multi-stakeholder approach ensured that gender equality expertise and women's perspectives were integrated into diverse intergovernmental support processes. UN Women was perceived to have successfully cultivated trusting, close working relationships with Member States, acting as a constructive partner which provides specialized expertise, often supporting Member States to ensure that governments maintain ownership of strong and forward-looking outcomes that advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

UN Women's recognized authority on gender equality and its coordination mandate has enabled systematic collaboration within the UN system. This is exemplified by coordination meetings with agencies such as UNICEF, UNFPA and OHCHR at the Human Rights Council to respond collectively to pushback on long-standing commitments to gender equality, alongside UN Women's crucial function in coordinating UN engagement with the CEDAW working group. Another example was UN system coordination through the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality in preparation for and during CSW sessions. These successes extended to UN Women's work at the regional level in terms of its partnerships with UN Regional Economic Commissions, where UN Women's normative leadership has also proven to be a convening power, acting as a central bridge connecting Member States, the UN system and civil society organizations (CSOs). UN Women's engagement with CSOs has been valuable, mostly in facilitating participation and including the voices of women's rights organizations and CSOs in side events, briefings and providing logistical support during global forums such as CSW, Human Rights Council and regional processes.

However, some internal organizational challenges have limited internal coherence. The evaluation found cases of internal fragmentation where intergovernmental-related coordination between Global, Liaison, Regional and Country Offices limited a fully effective and coherent approach with all partners undertaking this work. The lack of an overall partnership approach to effectively engage with each partner also resulted in some inefficiencies. Finally, engagement with potentially vital stakeholders, particularly the private sector and academia, is recognized as needing much more work and has often focused narrowly on resource mobilization rather than establishing the strategic partnerships necessary for holistic and sustainable impact.

CONCLUSION 3.

During 2025, UN Women introduced a series of innovations to strengthen internal coordination towards a more integrated and cohesive approach. However, there is a need to improve under-leveraged reporting practices and connections between the different offices providing intergovernmental support to maximize UN Women's offer in this area.

Some evidence shows UN Women needs stronger internal coordination to provide intergovernmental support efficiently. Duplication of efforts, requests and external communication not only created inefficiencies, but also some confusion among stakeholders about who to turn to for support. The measures UN Women introduced to foster internal alignment, such as appointing intergovernmental focal points (called "sherpas") at regional level and creating a new section on Human Rights and Non-Discrimination within the Geneva Office, have great potential to ensure that the Entity enhances internal coherence.

Structural challenges – such as reliance on limited funding from the UN regular budget and limited personnel – pose a risk for UN Women in terms of the number of processes it can support and the types of support it can provide to partners. While the relevance of UN Women's support is not questioned, rationalization of internal resources and the introduction of resource mobilization efforts for offices supporting intergovernmental processes that are not exclusively dependent on regular budget might counterbalance current UN system challenges. Ensuring efficient and strategic reporting and measurement of results would support the organization in these efforts; however, evidence shows that UN Women will need to improve its reporting systems and practices to ensure the significance of its intergovernmental work is effectively captured.

CONCLUSION 4.

The sustainability of UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes is characterized by effective adaptation and resilience in the face of growing backlash against long-standing commitments on gender equality and declining resources.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of UN Women's intergovernmental support work there is a need for enhanced coordination across the UN system; increased organizational effectiveness in this area, especially in terms of maximizing available financial and human resources; and streamlining of the Entity's approach to this type of work. Investing in institutional memory; documenting results and good practices; continuous engagement with Member States; and inclusive participation will also be important to sustain progress and navigate future uncertainties against the backdrop of an increasingly challenging multilateral landscape.



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UN WOMEN'S EVALUATION HANDBOOK

How to manage gender-responsive evaluation

(2022 Edition)



Download the interactive PDF here



LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

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LESSON LEARNED

Leveraging the value of constant engagement

UN Women's technical expertise and ability to provide language guidance have been instrumental in securing strong Member State commitments to resolutions and in supporting consensus in politically polarized environments. Such achievements demonstrate the value of constant engagement and preparatory work with Member States and regional bodies, which happens well in advance of global intergovernmental processes such as CSW, HLPF and HRC. However, much of UN Women's contribution is in support of Member States' work, making it difficult to make UN Women's contribution visible or attribute outcomes directly to UN Women. This limits recognition of the Entity's role and reduces opportunities to leverage achievements. In the context of reduced funding, finding ways to advocate for this area of work becomes crucial.

LESSON LEARNED

Ensuring CSOs maintain an important role

UN Women has a long-standing record of strong partnerships with CSOs, which are critical actors in advancing gender equality. However, in intergovernmental processes – where decision-making is dependent on Member States – and with the current shrinking of civic space, the role of CSOs risks being further diminished. At the same time, the nature of civil mobilization is evolving, e.g. young women are part of larger movements of activism which are not United Nations Economic and Social Council accredited. UN Women's ability to act as a bridge and convening power at CSW in bringing together governments, civil society and other stakeholders is essential to maintain ambition and accountability. Similarly, UN Women requires flexibility to engage with emerging, less structured forms of activism and to identify innovative mechanisms for amplifying their voices. Facilitating civil society's presence in intergovernmental processes is essential. By reinforcing the Entity's role as a connector and advocate, UN Women fulfils an important political function, demonstrating that civil society is a key partner in delivering transformative change.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Balancing support and ownership in intergovernmental processes

Member States increasingly seek recommendations, technical guidance and support from UN agencies to advance intergovernmental processes. At the same time, UN entities maintain a neutral supportive role, respecting Member States' leadership and ownership over these processes. UN Women exemplifies a constructive approach by providing tailored technical support such as during negotiations of CSW outcome documents or the revitalization process. This balanced approach fosters trust and enables Member States to achieve ambitious goals without compromising the integrity, legitimacy and ownership of intergovernmental decision-making processes.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Translating global commitments into national actions

UN Women's leadership in advancing global norms has been instrumental in shaping international commitments on gender equality. However, experience shows that the real impact occurs when these commitments are translated (and implemented) into national laws, policies and/or programmes. Many countries still face challenges in creating structured pathways for implementation, which can limit the transformative potential of global agreements. Successful examples, such as the adoption of care policy frameworks in Latin America, demonstrate that proactive and sustained engagement makes a difference. When UN Women provides governments with practical tools – such as cost analyses, policy models and technical guidance – countries are better equipped to move from aspiration to action. To this end, the role of Regional and Country Offices has proven essential in connecting global priorities with tailored support to national and regional realities.



Photo: ©UN Women/Ryan Brown



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND THE WAY FORWARD.

Photo: ©UN Women/Ryan Brown

The following recommendations are based on the evaluation findings and conclusions (see the full evaluation report for steps to be taken, timelines and the key actors responsible for implementation of the recommendations).

RECOMMENDATION 1.

UN Women should lead an inclusive process to develop a strategy for its support to intergovernmental processes that articulates a clear vision, defines roles and responsibilities, and includes the intergovernmental support offer at country, regional and global levels. This would help strengthen clarity and coherence on how UN Women operates at intergovernmental level across substantive teams. The strategy should be aligned with UN Women's Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 2.

UN Women should strengthen its overall engagement with partners by developing a systematic approach to its partnership ecosystem based on existing political engagement strategies. This recommendation emphasizes leveraging UN Women's coordination and convening roles to further enhance use of existing mechanisms (at global, regional and local levels) to formalize joint knowledge products, co-lead joint briefings and co-produce policy papers to promote a unified and integrated approach to gender equality in key intergovernmental processes and spaces. Closer and more systematic partnerships with CSOs should also be developed in the context of intergovernmental work, including through more structured and consistent engagement.



PERSPECTIVES FROM MANAGEMENT

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

At a time of increasing strain on multilateralism, shrinking civic space and sustained backlash against long-standing commitments on gender equality, women and girls' rights and their empowerment, the corporate evaluation of UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes comes at a critical moment.

Covering the period 2022–2025, the evaluation offers a reflective lens on how UN Women has supported Member States across global, regional and country-level intergovernmental forums and how the Entity is positioning itself to respond more strategically in an evolving political landscape.

From management's perspective, the evaluation is both timely and reassuring. It confirms that UN Women's engagement in intergovernmental processes is highly valued by stakeholders, particularly Member States, and that its contributions, despite persistent resource constraints, have been strategically important in advancing the global normative framework on gender equality, rights and the empowerment of women and girls. At the same time, the evaluation highlights the need for greater institutional coherence, clarity of roles and systematic approaches if UN Women is to sustain and strengthen its impact in increasingly complex multilateral settings.

Management underscores that responsibility for intergovernmental processes and the implementation of their outcomes rests primarily with Member States.

UN Women's role is intentionally supportive, grounded in its universal normative mandate and designed to reinforce, not substitute, national ownership. Within this space, the evaluation identifies six interrelated areas where UN Women has provided support: technical and strategic advice; convening and multi-stakeholder engagement; advocacy and political engagement with governments; implementation support; capacity-building and knowledge-sharing; and the amplification of women's voices, including through support to women's rights organizations participating in intergovernmental processes.

Management agrees with both the evaluation's conclusions and its recommendations, viewing them as aligned with ongoing organizational reforms and the current Strategic Plan 2026–2029. Importantly, the response emphasizes that implementation will need to be phased and pragmatic, taking into account operating realities and the availability of resources.

One of the evaluation's central recommendations is the development of a dedicated strategy for UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes. From a management standpoint, such a strategy is not only about articulation, but internal alignment and coordination: clarifying roles and responsibilities across Global, Regional, Liaison and Country Offices; strengthening coordination; and ensuring that UN Women's added value is both understood internally and communicated externally.

The management response signals a commitment to an inclusive, consultative process to develop this strategy, while acknowledging that progress will depend on staff capacity and financial sustainability in a constrained funding environment.

The evaluation also highlights the need for a more systematic approach to UN Women's partnership ecosystem. Management concurs, emphasizing that effective engagement with Member States, UN system partners and civil society is foundational to successful intergovernmental support.

Building on existing political engagement strategies, UN Women plans to strengthen coordination mechanisms, including through joint knowledge products, co-led briefings and collaborative policy work with UN system partners, much of which is already being advanced through inter-agency platforms. A more structured mapping of partners, alongside efforts to institutionalize civil society engagement at regional and country levels, is envisioned as part of a longer-term effort to sustain partnerships in a volatile political environment.

LOOKING AHEAD

As UN Women moves into the next strategic cycle, the insights from this corporate evaluation provide an important reference point. They reaffirm the relevance of UN Women's normative role; the value placed on its support by Member States; and the necessity of continued institutional strengthening to meet rising expectations.

For management, the path forward is clear but demanding: to translate evaluative learning into concrete institutional shifts; sustain engagement in difficult political terrain; and ensure that women and girls' rights and gender equality remain firmly anchored in intergovernmental processes.



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UN WOMEN COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATIONS (CPE)

CPE REVISED GUIDELINES

(2022 Edition)



Download the interactive PDF here

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation employed a theory-informed, mixed methods and "utilization-focused" approach designed to maximize the usefulness of the findings and the process itself for UN Women personnel and their work in this area. A combination of theory-based and utilization-focused evaluation methodologies were employed including contribution analysis and mapping, appreciative inquiry and thematic analysis.

An analytical framework was developed to provide a comprehensive structure for assessing UN Women's contributions to advancing gender equality through intergovernmental processes. This framework integrates UN Women's thematic priorities with systemic outcomes that focus on institutional accountability, normative advancement and equitable access to services, based on the UN Women Strategic Plan Development Results Framework 2026–2029.

The analytical framework and evaluation matrix guided the team in identifying, collecting and analysing the necessary evidence to understand which of and how UN Women's outputs contributed to outcomes, as well as their connection to the Strategic Plan's systemic outcomes.

The evaluation relied on a mix of primary and secondary data. Primary data collection included direct observation of events related to intergovernmental processes organized by UN Women in New York and Geneva, key informant interviews and three online surveys. Primary data were collected through a combination of remote and in-person data. The evaluation also conducted seven case reviews reflecting relevant processes within the global and regional spectrum of UN Women's work. To ensure efficiency in data collection, the evaluation also leveraged primary data from recently undertaken and ongoing relevant regional evaluations and case studies. Data analysis also included an in-depth desk review of secondary data, including relevant key internal and external documents.

A gender-responsive and human rights-based approach was applied throughout the evaluation process, in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group Guidance for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality Perspectives in Evaluations in the UN System. To that effect, the evaluation included an analysis of the contribution of UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes to advance the leave no one behind agenda, looking at intersectionality and inclusion; and the evaluation process itself was participatory and inclusive of different stakeholder groups.

MIXED METHODS



data collection –
Quantitative and qualitative data triangulated, observation, NVIVO coding, Contribution analysis, appreciative inquiry.

100+



documents reviewed –
Desk review, portfolio analysis, CPE analysis, DRF workplans analysis, evaluations, project documents etc.

73



stakeholders interviews–
Key Informant Interviews with 32 internal stakeholders (4 male, 28 female) and 41 external stakeholders (4 male, 37 female)

7



case reviews–
4 global processes (CSW, HRC, HLPF, COPs); 3 regional processes (AU, ECLAC and ECA)

3



online surveys –
UN Women personnel at HQ, ROs and LOs; UN Women Country Offices; Member States

ON SITE OBSERVATION



Observed Human Rights Council process (Geneva)

Observed HLPF process (NYC)

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