

Remarks by Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the Dialogue with Executive Heads of the UN development system on Joint Results, at the Economic and Social Council Operational Activities for Development Segment
23 May 2019

[As delivered]

I want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to join you remotely and apologize that I could not be there in person with my colleagues.

UN Women is a small entity with a very large mandate and a very big ambition. We see these reforms as an important opportunity to partner in a more effective way with agencies within - and beyond - the UN.

We rely on partnerships to support our efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment and we know that without these partnerships we could never be a fully effective agency. We recognize that right now we are all in a situation where we are not only grappling with the reforms, we are also expected to deliver on our work and our mandate and to achieve results as we go. So we are building the train as we are driving it and riding it.

As Achim Steiner noted, this is a difficult process because there are many parts of it that we still need to stabilize. But in our best fashion of learning to collaborate, we are doing our best to make sure that the work continues. Working in a coherent manner with the rest of the UN system, and in particular with the entities represented here today, is for us as UN Women, very important and very significant.

At this point, partnerships are at the core of our Strategic Plan in UN Women. Our aim is not just to implement our mandate but also help others achieve theirs, in a way that delivers results for women and girls. So, we collaborate and we consult a lot with our sister agencies.

And this is why we as UN Women are particularly supportive of reforms. That enables us to hear each other and to take the points of view of other agencies because, as already has been said, there is not a 'one size fits all' solution, but we do have to find a way of delivering together for the same constituencies. The woman and girl that UN Women wants to support is the same girl that UNICEF is reaching out to, is the same woman that UNDP is reaching out to, and so forth. So, we have to find a plan that works for this one girl and this one woman, whoever they are and wherever they are.

We see reform as an opportunity to leverage the entire UNDS system to provide more coherent support to Member States to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in the areas that are also a priority for Member States. Our aim is to make sure that these reforms support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, both in terms of development results, and by addressing the gender gaps that we face in the UN system itself.

Because if we are not fit for purpose ourselves, we will not be the best fit for the communities we aim to support and to serve.

A key focus has been on positioning gender equality strategically in the new guidance for the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. This is key to make progress at country level.

I am therefore pleased that Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment are guiding principles for Cooperation Frameworks. Today, 68 per cent of all UNDAFs (now Cooperation Frameworks) feature a gender specific result. Because, as we know, no country has achieved gender equality, so we need more, not fewer, countries to add to this 68 per cent. We therefore need gender equality to be an entrenched priority across the board.

In addition to the Cooperation Frameworks, we have a set of tools to help us strengthen UN commitments and accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment. This year, we launched the new generation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which we sometimes call UN-SWAP 2.0. The framework is aligned with the SDGs and will give us a clearer picture of complementarity and gaps in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda from a gender perspective.

We also launched the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard, a common set of gender equality performance indicators for UNCTs. This allows us to better address gaps in UNCTs in delivering gender equality results.

The Cooperation Framework, the UN-SWAP and the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard can be seen together as a package that the UNDS can leverage to better support Member States and national partners to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. The point here that I would like to stress is that we have developed tools that are enabling us to deliver in a coherent way and that also to give us the ability to track the impact of the work that we are going to be doing together.

I would like to say something about resources. It is critical to see greater financial investments for gender equality at all levels because we all know that there is underinvestment in the work of gender equality. For UN Women, it is therefore a key priority to see a higher level of ambition to earmark dedicated resources for gender equality in all new financing tools, be it the Funding Compact, the SDG fund or other tools.

We co-chair the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality, established by the Secretary-General. The Task Force will produce recommendations to improve the tracking of resources and help improve estimates of how much is spent on gender equality work, the allocation of dedicated resources in all entities' budgets, and the attraction of new resources, including through innovative financing instruments and greater donor engagement.

I look forward to a combination of the tools to deliver and the resources that will enable us to achieve the best impact and scale of the work that we do, while we also accelerate the outreach to the communities that we intend to reach.

Thank you.

Questions

Question 1:

- *What measures will you put in place to ensure that the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework is positioned as **the most important instrument for planning and implementation of UNCT support**?*
- *What measures are expected from the Member States and the UNDS to ensure that the Cooperation Framework **is fully responsive and accountable to national needs and priorities**?*

Today, UN-Women already has a strong alignment with UNDAFs at country level. All our country strategies are required to be aligned and reflect the priorities of the UNDAF. But we will be strengthening this alignment with the new Cooperation Frameworks even more. We are strengthening the capacity of our regional offices and HQ to support the development of Cooperation Frameworks, already at the step of the CCA, to ensure they take gender perspectives into account.

We have updated our programming guidance so that UN Women offices demonstrate full alignment with Cooperation Frameworks but also coherence with the work of the rest of the UNCT.

The Cooperation Framework will become our main planning and implementation instrument at the country level.

We are fully committed to national leadership and ownership.

Independent evaluations and assessments have rated UN Women highly on alignment with national priorities.

In this process, it is essential to support the involvement of all key stakeholders, especially those that are at the risk of being left behind.

It is important that the Cooperation Frameworks are used as an instrument for supporting countries in their efforts to meet global norms and standards, particularly human rights standards.

Question 2:

*How will the **System-wide Strategic Document encourage specific, concrete and targeted action** is taken in addressing gaps and overlaps?*

We see the System-wide Strategic Document as a high-level instrument that sets the strategic intent of the UNDS at the global, regional and country level.

It provides an opportunity to bring greater clarity about who we are and what we do best as a system. Together we are more than the sum of our parts.

We believe that the System-wide Strategic Document will be useful to facilitate partnership and collaboration.

It will help us clarify our collective transformative ambition, our comparative advantages, the gaps that need to be addressed, the capacities and resources that will be needed and the ways in which the UNDS will collectively measure its progress.

It will provide a strong impetus for ongoing initiatives that foster coherence.

For example, we will build on the experience in implementing the common chapter with UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA where we are already looking at complementarity and coherence. We are also working this out in a bilateral manner. Just yesterday, UNDP and UN Women had a workshop to discuss gaps and synergies in our work, building on our MOU and ongoing collaboration.

Question 3:

*What **changes will your entity make in its global and regional strategic planning to support the SWSD and its implementation down to the country level?***

UN Women has undertaken a change process to align the organization with the UNDS repositioning. It also builds on lessons learned from the last eight years.

We are reviewing our structure to ensure that it has the right capacity at global, regional and country level.

As part of this process, UN Women will strengthen its capacity in key areas that support the implementation of the System Wide Strategic Document, such as data, coordination, partnerships, integrated policy support and the linkage between global normative and policy agenda with regional and country level work.

We have prioritized the strengthening of capacity at regional and country level to systematically engage in CCA/UNSDCF processes and ensure that gender perspectives are embedded in UNSDCFs.

We are also looking at ways to support UNCTs in countries where UN Women does not have a presence, to the extent resources allow.

Finally, at the global level, we see the midterm review of the strategic plan in 2020 as a key opportunity to embed the System Wide Strategic Document into our plan.

This will align with a year of major milestones for UN Women:

- The 25 year anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action
- The 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325
- The 10th anniversary of UN Women

It will be critical to leverage these processes to drive greater action by the entire UN system and by Member States in support of gender equality and women's empowerment.