



# PROMISING PRACTICES AND ENTITY EXAMPLES

Annex: Highlights from the Gender  
Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP)  
Progress Report 2025



**GENDER  
EQUALITY**  
Acceleration Plan

## IMPRINT

### GENDER EQUALITY ACCELERATION PLAN

The United Nations System-Wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) was launched on 8 March 2024 by the United Nations Secretary-General to accelerate progress on gender equality across the United Nations system. It sets out the commitment to **accelerate ongoing efforts to achieve much needed internal United Nations transformation**. Fully implemented, the GEAP will enable all United Nations entities, no matter their mandate, to support all 193 United Nations Member States and other stakeholders to advance the rights of women and girls. This ambitious plan is rooted in Our Common Agenda Report and commits to placing women and girls at the centre of renewed, inclusive multilateralism.

The GEAP follows an independent review of the United Nations system's capacity to deliver on gender equality, which identified key areas for improvement.

The plan calls for a principled, strategic and norms-based approach to advance the rights of women and girls and prevent any rollback of existing gains. It seeks to transform power dynamics within the United Nations, change leadership approaches, reshape strategies and structures, unlock resources, and enhance accountability so that the United Nations delivers for women and girls globally.

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# PROMISING PRACTICES AND ENTITY EXAMPLES

## Annex: Highlights from the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) Progress Report 2025

*This annex complements the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) Progress Report 2024 and highlights advancements made across various UN entities, showcasing scalable solutions, promising practices at interagency level, and specific examples from entities. It also identifies key challenges and areas for further improvement. The insights presented are drawn from qualitative interviews conducted with different United Nations entities. Ultimately, the goal is to advance gender equality and contribute to a just, peaceful, and sustainable future for all.*



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## PILLAR 1

# GENDER EQUALITY CLARION CALL

### Entity example: UNESCO reduces the gender digital divide through cross-cutting normative and operational work

UNESCO plays a leading role in reducing the gender digital divide through its normative work. In particular, it provides technical assistance to implement the Gender Policy Action Area of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021). In 2024, UNESCO organized the Women 4 Ethical Artificial Intelligence Conference to address the complex impact of this technology on gender equality and women's rights. It explored real-world solutions to achieve a more ethical artificial intelligence ecosystem, and conducted a first Red Teaming exercise with simulated scenarios and hands-on activities to assess the capabilities, limitations and ethical implications of artificial intelligence systems in addressing gender-based violence.

UNESCO's Women4Ethical AI platform expanded its reach to 25 leading women experts and has recently published the *Outlook Study on Artificial Intelligence and Gender* to inform policy action.

### INTERAGENCY PROMISING PRACTICE: A new Human Rights Council President's Advisory Board on Gender Equality

At the Human Rights Council in Geneva, more than 100 resolutions are approved every year, and according to [UN Women](#) analysis, 79 per cent had a gender perspective in 2023.<sup>1</sup> However, the council lacked high-level coordination on gender equality issues.

Following the launch of the GEAP, the 2024 President of the council established an Advisory Board on Gender Equality for informal dialogue around gender equality and women's human rights.

With representatives from Member States, ten UN entities, and chairs of relevant committees, the Council's Advisory Board has agreed to: (1) collaborate on key upcoming milestone commemorations related to gender equality, (2) map available data on gender equality produced in Geneva to foster synergies and assess the status of efforts; and (3) develop a Geneva-focused strategy to push forward gender equality and human rights and address backlash.

*"I think an important part of the value of this exercise is that this will dynamize the participation of institutions in Geneva and I think this has a value in deepening and strengthening the networks of the UN itself."* - Advisory Board member Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

<sup>1</sup> Compared to 46 per cent of General Assembly resolutions and 55 per cent of Security Council resolutions. See the [UN Women Executive Board report for its 2024 Annual session](#), para. 44.

### INTERAGENCY PROMISING PRACTICE: Defending the defenders

In 2023, the UN Secretary-General asked UN Women and OHCHR for recommending actions to enhance UN protection of women human rights defenders in conflict-affected countries. Following through consultation and collaboration with several UN entities<sup>2</sup> priority actions were proposed.

The corresponding recommendations are now an integrated part of GEAP and expected to be adopted and operationalized across the UN system in 2025 to increase advocacy, coordinate actions and improve accountability to protect women human rights defenders at risk.

*"I think it's a promising practice that is very oriented towards ensuring that the UN system has a more agile, more effective response, and more accountability vis-à-vis women human rights defenders. I really think that if we work well, this policy should have strong impact."* - Maria Luisa Bascur, team leader of the Women's Equal Participation and Women Defenders Cluster in the Women's Human Rights and Gender Section at OHCHR.



Photo credit: UN Women/Ryan Brown

<sup>2</sup> Including Development Coordination Office (DCO), Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), DPO, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

## PILLAR 2

# GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP

### INTERAGENCY PROMISING PRACTICE: Aligning the UN-SWAP with the GEAP

The UN-SWAP, established in 2012, is a landmark UN system-wide accountability framework that applies to all UN entities, departments and offices. It measures, monitor and drive progress towards a common set of standards for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

Embracing a participatory and consultative approach, the UN-SWAP Secretariat together with a dedicated working group comprising of 60 representatives from 50 distinct entities, developed the SWAP 3.0 aligned with GEAP indicators.

*"The aligning of UN-SWAP with GEAP creates an impetus and it should help to avoid the duplication of reporting or creation of additional tasks."* - UNESCO Programme Specialist Aylin Taftali

UN-SWAP 3.0 and its country-team equivalent, the UNCT-SWAP, now encompass 60 per cent of GEAP actions. Two new indicators focus on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and stakeholder engagement, with a heightened emphasis on collaboration with women-led and civil society organizations, in alignment with the GEAP. Full reporting against the UN-SWAP 3.0 will be made in 2026.

### Entity example: Senior leaders get a boost

The new Gender-Responsive Leadership Boost Programme created by the Development Coordination Office (DCO) in partnership with Sweden's Folke Bernadotte Academy, is helping UN Resident Coordinators to promote gender equality in their daily work. The first, voluntary, pilot Gender-Responsive Leadership Boost Programme took place with the participation of 30 male and female resident coordinators from different regions and contexts.

*"This is a model for the UN system on how to [work with] senior leaders, equipping them with skills to foster gender-responsive leadership and address pushback."* - Natia Cherkezishvili, DCO Gender Advisor



### **Entity example: The UNDP Leadership for Gender Equality Certificate**

As part of its standard senior management training offer, UNDP has been implementing a “Leadership for Gender Equality Certificate” in line with its own Gender Equality Strategy and GEAP Accelerator 2.4. The training was designed and facilitated jointly by SOAS-University of London/Kings College London and Gender@Work.

With 49 top leaders trained between 2022 and 2024, the initiative targeted Resident Representatives, Deputy Resident Representatives and Regional hub managers but will expand to other senior leaders at headquarters and in regional hubs in 2025. Since the launch of GEAP, it has helped to define standards on the meaning of transformation and learning activities.

### **Entity example: The World Health Organization prevents and responds to sexual misconduct in its Three-Year Strategy 2023–2025**

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) strategy 2023–2025 for preventing and responding to sexual misconduct is a framework for institutionalizing zero tolerance for all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence. It aims to ensure that WHO personnel and implementing partners do no harm to the people served or the people they serve alongside, while shifting the organization to a stronger victim- and survivor-centered approach. Alongside other actions, the strategy includes a specific action on behavioral/cultural change across the organization.

As of 2024, prevention of and response to sexual misconduct is a standing agenda item in WHO reporting to its governing bodies.



Photo credit: UNOPS/John Rae

## PILLAR 3

# ACCOUNTABILITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS

### INTERAGENCY PROMISING PRACTICE: Ensuring accountability through the new Gender Steering Group

Led by the Secretary-General and comprised of the heads of 43 different UN entities, the Gender Steering Group (GSG) serves as the most senior accountability mechanism to elevate gender equality across the UN system by transforming institutions, improving development results and boosting gender-responsive expenditures. GSG meetings will be held annually to discuss progress on implementing the GEAP as well as overall challenges and commitments for forward-looking action. An Advisory Group, led by the Deputy Secretary-General also brings together United Nations entities, Member States and other stakeholders.

*“This is the first time, in all the years of UN history, that there is such a body led and convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. So, it’s also time for the highest levels of the UN system to not just signal their commitment...but to ensure that such a body is looking at practical and concrete results,”* explains Sarah Hendriks, head of the GEAP Secretariat at UN Women. *“The Gender Steering Group creates the conditions for a system-wide lift, and to increase the level of political will, accountability and visibility at the highest levels on gender equality.”*



Photo credit: UN Women/Radhika Chalasani



## Entity examples: Senior-level gender steering and implementation committees

Institutional mechanisms for gender equality play a crucial role in driving progress, fostering learning, and ensuring accountability for gender-related commitments across the UN system. These committees help take gender issues outside of the gender units and make them a corporate responsibility, overseen by top management. They provide strategic oversight on corporate performance related to gender equality and facilitate knowledge-sharing and institutional learning.

### ESCAP

Gender Equality Steering Committee, established to oversee the implementation of the imperatives of the GEAP and SWAP 3.0 to the ESCAP context.

### UNCTAD

SG Grynspan's Director-level Gender Committee to discuss gender deliverables, coherence, co-creation and resource allocation.

### UNICEF

Global Gender Equality Steering Committee led by DED-Programmes since the establishment of the first Gender Action Plan in 2014.

### UNESCO

Gender Equality Coordination Group established led by the Director of the Division for GE (DIR/GE) where Programme Sectors and FOs participate at the senior level. DIR/GE is member of UNESCO's Senior Management Team, chaired by the Director-General and setting the strategic direction of the entity. Further steps are taken to create a Gender Steering Committee aligned with GEAP.

### UNFPA

Established a Gender Equality and Inclusion Steering Committee at the Executive Committee level.

### OCHA

The OCHA Gender Steering Group was established (reconfiguration of an existing Gender Board) chaired by the USC to oversee the implementation of GEAP in alignment with implementation of the entity's Gender Policy and commitments.

## RESOURCES

### PROMISING PRACTICE: Raising USD 300 million for women's organizations in crises and conflict settings

According to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development cited in the [2024 Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security](#), bilateral aid supporting women's organizations and movements in conflict-affected countries was a low USD 142 million (0.3 per cent of all bilateral aid to conflict-affected contexts) on average per year from 2021 to 2022, a decrease from USD 191 million from 2019 to 2020. The gap between pledges and actual funding reaching women's and civil society organizations in conflict and crisis settings has decreased for three years in a row.

Established in 2016 to fill such a void, the [United Nations Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund WPHF](#)<sup>3</sup> has supported more than 1,400 local and grass-roots women civil society leaders and their organizations in conflict and crisis settings worldwide, including through dedicated funding windows for women human rights defenders. Aligned with GEAP Accelerator 4.3 the fund launched in 2023 its [#InvestInWomen](#) Global Campaign to mobilize USD 300 million by the end of 2025 - a commitment focused on, but not limited to, resources for the WPHF and a positive example to build on. Since 2023, the WPHF has raised just over USD 100 million.



Photo credit: UNODC/Pareet Shah

<sup>3</sup> The WPHF Funding Board is composed of four UN entities (currently, UN Women, UNHCR, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Peacebuilding Support Office) as well as four civil society organizations and the fund's four largest donors from the previous year.

## INTERAGENCY PROMISING PRACTICE: Transforming partnerships with women's organizations

Amid rising global backlash, feminist activists have called for an end to the fragmented, underfunded and piecemeal nature of international development and humanitarian efforts to achieve gender equality. They emphasize the urgent need to remove institutional barriers that limit access to UN resources and improve support for women's and civil society organizations amid rising crises and shrinking civic spaces.

Created in line with the GEAP, the Inter-agency Initiative to Advance a UN-wide Funding Framework for women's and civil society organizations is a strategic collaboration among 11 UN funders and entities<sup>4</sup> co-chaired by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (secretariat within UN Women) and the European Union-UN Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence against Women and Girls, two inter-agency funds that resource civil society.

*"This isn't just about increasing funding - it's about fostering equitable and trust-based partnerships and ensuring the UN system is fit for purpose in how we engage with and support civil society.... and now it's about translating that into practical action."* - Abigail Erikson, chief of the UN Trust Fund

The inter-agency initiative's Task Force has created a unified UN approach with clear and consistent principles and guidelines for quality funding to women's organizations; standardize grant processes to reduce administrative barriers; developed a common risk management approach that balances oversight with capacity-building and support; and improved tracking systems to better monitor funding of women's organizations.

*"We see the GEAP as critical for the Task Force, serving as the mechanism to advance system-wide practices for partnering with and resourcing civil society, directly aligned with the Clarion Call. Ultimately, it's a mechanism of accountability to drive meaningful change."* - Erin Kenny, Task Force co-chair and Global Coordinator of the European Union-UN Spotlight Initiative

In December, the initiative published a [rapid analysis and discussion paper](#) on exemplary UN funding practices and models that respond to the needs of women's and civil society organizations, highlighting the flexibility of pooled funding in particular.

Next steps for 2025 will include co-creating a UN Funding Framework in consultation with CSO and UN partners at the sixty-ninth Commission on the Status of Women and Beijing+30 meetings in March 2025, with the goal of being formally launched at the UN General Assembly in September.

<sup>4</sup> UN Trust Fund, Spotlight Initiative, DCO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Women and WPHF.

## PILLAR 5

# ACTION FOR GENDER EQUALITY EVERYWHERE

### **INTERAGENCY PROMISING PRACTICE: Revitalizing the Commission on the Status of Women**

Since its creation as a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council in 1946, the Commission on the Status of Women has been the main global intergovernmental body for promoting gender equality, rights and the empowerment of women and girls. Its yearly two-week session convenes Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities at UN headquarters in New York to discuss progress and gaps and adopt forward-looking actions to implement the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

As recognized by Member States in the Pact for the Future, the revitalization of the Commission on the Status of Women will be essential to promote the full and effective implementation of the Platform for Action.

Under the Canadian Presidency of the Economic and Social Council, and led by co-facilitators Ireland and Botswana, discussions are advancing to strengthen the commission's role in global gender equality governance.

### **Entity example: Women from DPPA serve as UN lead mediators**

DPPA's provides advisory, financial and logistical support to peace processes; works to strengthen the mediation capacity of regional and subregional organizations; and serves as a repository of mediation knowledge, policy and guidance, lessons learned and best practices.

DPPA manages the UN Standby Team of Mediation Experts – an “on call” group of experts who can be deployed to assist mediators in the field. Team members have provided support in dozens of negotiations, and hold expertise on power-sharing, natural resources and conflict, constitution-making, ceasefires and other security arrangements, and gender issues as they relate to conflict.

In 2024, the UN-SWAP reported that women served as UN lead mediators in four of the five United Nations-led or co-led peace processes. Women represented 42 per cent of staff within UN mediation teams.







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