



# UN-SWAP

A plan to improve gender equality and the empowerment of women across the UN system

2014



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women



# WHAT IS THE UN-SWAP?

In 2006, the United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB) endorsed a UN system-wide policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, noting that a UN system-wide action plan was “...essential to make the strategy of gender mainstreaming operational.”

The UN-SWAP (UN system-wide Action Plan) constitutes the first accountability framework for gender mainstreaming in the UN system. It is designed to define, monitor and drive progress towards a common set of standards to which to aspire and adhere for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It applies to all entities, departments and offices of the UN system.

Almost the entire UN system has reported over two consecutive years on a common set of Performance Indicators. 62 entities submitted UN-SWAP reports for 2013.

## GOAL

The UN-SWAP enhances the UN system’s ability to hold itself accountable in a systematic and more harmonized manner for its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Regular and consistent reporting on the implementation of the UN-SWAP is an essential component to strengthen accountability for gender equality.

It establishes:

- A **common understanding** of gender equality and the empowerment of women
- A **common method** to advance towards this goal
- A **common and progressive sliding scale** against which to monitor progress and towards which to aspire at the corporate level



# UN-SWAP REPORTING FRAMEWORK

The UN-SWAP includes a set of 15 common system-wide Performance Indicators, clustered around six broad and functional areas, as shown below.

## UN-SWAP PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



In Resolution E/2014/L.12 the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

“Requests the United Nations system, including its agencies, funds and programmes, within their respective organizational mandates, to continue working collaboratively to enhance and accelerate gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system including by fully implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (...)”

➡ UN entities are to meet all of the UN-SWAP performance standards by 2017. Those with a mainly technical focus may meet them by 2019.

# WHAT HAS THE UN-SWAP ACHIEVED TO DATE?

The UN-SWAP has resulted in several significant and immediate shifts in how the UN system approaches work related to gender equality and women's empowerment. In only its second year of implementation, the UN-SWAP has already demonstrated how a common framework and a coordinated approach can enhance capacity and system-wide performance.

## Pre UN-SWAP

Limited guidance and direction on gender equality and the empowerment of women for the UN system



Lack of accountability, in particular for senior managers



Responsibility for gender equality and the empowerment of women work limited to gender units and focal points



Disparate and fragmented data



## Post UN-SWAP

Agreed standards applied and monitored across all entities, departments and offices of the UN system

Member States mandate reporting and compliance against the UN-SWAP accountability framework

Shared responsibility and revitalized efforts for gender equality and the empowerment of women within and across entities

Harmonized reporting identifying UN-wide strengths and weaknesses

## POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE UN-SWAP:

- Greater senior manager accountability and leadership
- Greater cooperation and healthy competition between entities
- Enhanced clarity as to what gender mainstreaming means for non-gender specialists, and on the differences between equal representation of women and gender mainstreaming
- Enhanced sense of empowerment by focal points for gender mainstreaming, supported also by a broader network of focal points created for different aspects of the UN-SWAP

# KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF REPORTING

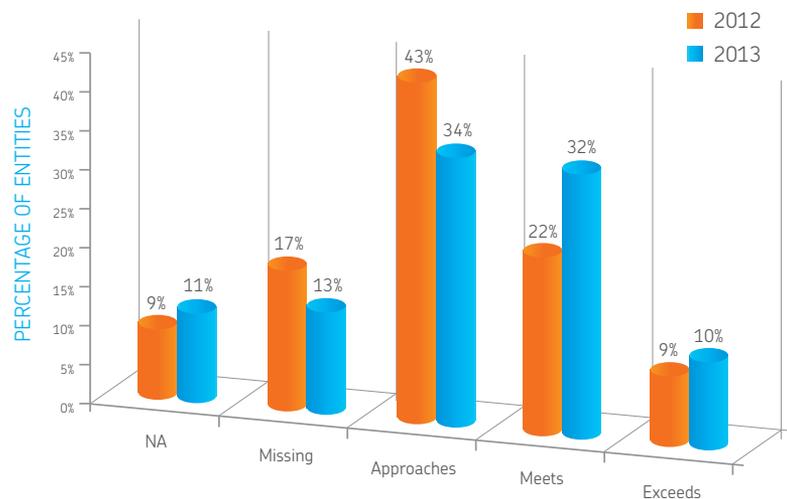
Reporting between 2012 and 2013 evidenced encouraging progress across the UN system.

The second year of UN-SWAP implementation has seen **progress in 14 of 15 Performance Indicators**, including advances of more than 15 percentage points in the cases of audit, performance management, programme review, and knowledge generation.

In 2013, 62 entities reported under the UN-SWAP (**90% of all entities**), compared to 55 entities in 2012.

In 2013, the system **met or exceeded** the 15 UN-SWAP Performance Indicators in 42% of cases, an **increase** from 31% in 2012.

The UN system **exceeded** UN-SWAP requirements for all Performance Indicators in only **10% of cases** in 2013, up one percentage point from 2012, demonstrating that much remains to be done for the UN system as a whole to exhibit excellence in gender mainstreaming.



## UN SYSTEM'S OVERALL IMPROVEMENT

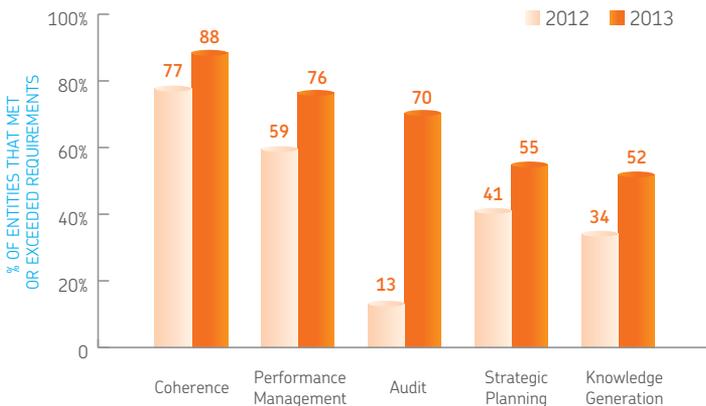
**Notwithstanding the encouraging progress between 2012 and 2013, intensified implementation will be essential if the UN system expects to achieve most UN-SWAP targets by the 2017 deadline set by the CEB.**

# STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- ➔ Much system-wide progress was made for the gender responsive audit Performance Indicator: 70% of entities met or exceeded requirements in 2013 vs. 13% in 2012.
- ➔ Significant progress also was made for the gender-sensitive performance management Indicator: 100% of the UN Secretariat now meets requirements for this Indicator. The Funds and Programmes also improved their performance from 50 to 64% meeting/exceeding requirements.
- ➔ Suboptimal progress was made for the gender architecture and parity Performance Indicator: 77% of reporting entities have not achieved parity at the P-4 levels and above.
- ➔ Limited growth has been made in the resource tracking Performance Indicator: Only 11 entities use gender marker systems to track resources for gender equality and women's empowerment.

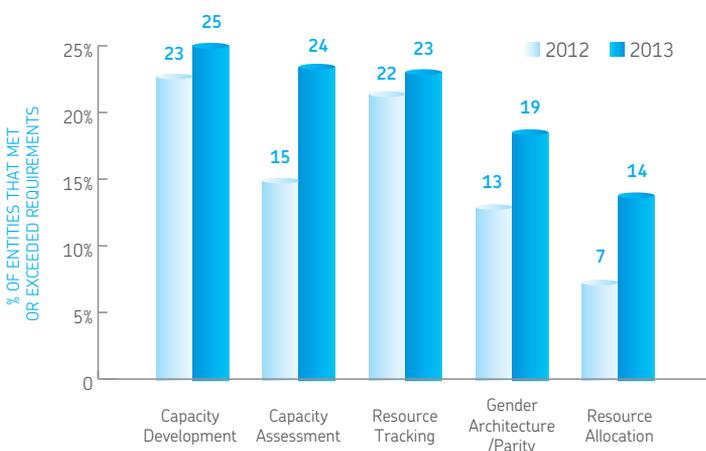
## Strengths

Performance Indicators rating the strongest were:



## Weaknesses

Performance Indicators rating the lowest were:



# REMEDIAL ACTION PLANS

These outline how entities plan to improve performance in terms of timelines, responsibility for follow-up, and resources required. Where indicators are not met, UN-SWAP reporting requires the submission of remedial action plans. The performance areas that received the most entity attention included **gender equality policy** development, **capacity assessment and development**, and financial **resource tracking** and **allocation** were the performance areas that received the most attention in these plans.

While UN Women will continue to do its best to support the system in its efforts to meet all performance requirements by 2017, particular support and encouragement from the highest levels is needed in certain identified areas that may significantly impede progress. These include:

- **Gender policies** - More than half of reporting entities still do not have gender policies. Targeted assistance is required to develop and implement policies.
- **Allocation of resources** - A notional target of 15% of all resources allocated for work on gender equality and women's empowerment would greatly propel progress.
- **Tracking resources** - Implementation of gender marker systems requires targeted assistance and capacity building.
- **Equal representation of women** - Performance on gender architecture and parity was among the worst in 2013. Enhanced leadership support, accountability, and policies are required to obtain parity.
- **Organizational culture** - Promotion and use of flexible work arrangements should continue to be a priority. Regular organizational surveys are needed to identify and address impediments to progress.
- **Capacity assessment and development** - The UN system requires adequate capacity to fulfill its gender equality and empowerment of women mandates. This remains an area of serious concern.

"It is with deep satisfaction and indeed great enthusiasm that I can say that the System Wide Action Plan, that has been developed under the auspices of UN Women... represents an enormous step forward... and is an example of how an institution could facilitate and convene a whole system of funds, agencies and programmes to develop this common framework... I think that it has provided all of us with a common agenda and above all a common framework in which we can work in the years that lie ahead."

Achim Steiner, Under-Secretary-General, UNEP, Special Message, November 2012

# UN-SWAP RATING SYSTEM

The UN-SWAP's sliding scale of standards consists of five levels of gradation or rating for each Performance Indicator:

- Exceeds requirements
- Meets requirements
- Approaches requirements
- Missing
- Not applicable

The 'meets requirements' rating is set as a minimum for UN entity performance, based on UN inter-governmental mandates on gender equality and women's empowerment.

'Missing' is applied when the Performance Indicator is relevant to an entity, but the 'approaches requirements' rating is not met.

'Not applicable' is applied where the Performance Indicator is not relevant to an entity.

These ratings allow the entity to self-assess and report on their standing with respect to the indicator.

The components of the reporting framework are illustrated in the below graph.



“This unprecedented and tangible advancement towards thinking as One has benefitted countless UN entities including OHCHR. By volunteering to be one of the pilot entities in developing and implementing the UN-SWAP, the Human Rights Office has gained substantive expertise and recognition in the field of gender integration while supporting other entities meet their commitments.”

Saori Terada, Human Rights Officer and Gender Advisor, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, June 2014.



“The UN-SWAP provides a common roadmap for the entire UN system to follow as we enter the post-2015 era. For WFP, this framework makes it easier to meet our commitment to address gender inequalities in all fields. The UN-SWAP has also led to much increased collaboration and information sharing with sister agencies as, together, we strive to reach a common goal.”

Sonsoles Ruedas, Director, Gender Office, World Food Programme, June 2014



“The UN-SWAP is making a tremendous impact. Many of the commitments made in UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 are taken from the UN-SWAP framework, thereby committing the entire organization to their achievement. The UN-SWAP is so impactful because it has clear targets and indicators and has been adopted by the CEB.”

Randi Davis, Director a.i. of the UNDP Gender Team

# ORIGIN OF THE UN-SWAP

**1997** - The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1997/2 concluded that “all entities of the United Nations system should institutionalize mainstreaming of a gender perspective at all levels through specific steps” including “the establishment of instruments and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation” and “the creation of accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming.”

**2006** - In response to the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2, the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in October 2006, endorsed a UN system-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (CEB/2006/2).

**2011-2012** - UN Women took up the matter and coordinated the development of the UN-SWAP framework, involving an extensive consultative process with over 50 entities, Secretariat Departments, Offices and Commissions and piloted by 8 entities – ESCWA, IAEA, IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF.

**April 2012** - On 13 April 2012, the CEB endorsed the UN-SWAP for application throughout the UN system.

**July 2012** - In its resolution E/RES/2012/24 of 27 July 2012, the ECOSOC welcomed the UN-SWAP and called upon the UN system to actively engage in its roll-out and report on the implementation of the resolution at its substantive session in 2013.

**December 2012** - The quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) resolution A/RES/67/226 was adopted by the General Assembly and welcomes the development of the UN-SWAP.

**July 2013** - ECOSOC resolution E/RES/2013/16 requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on progress made in the implementation of the UN-SWAP.

**February 2014** - QCPR “...requests those entities of the UN development system that have not already done so to accelerate efforts to implement the Action Plan...”

**June 2014** - ECOSOC, in its resolution E/2014/L.12, requests the UN System to fully implement the UN-SWAP.

# NEXT STEPS

The evidence from UN-SWAP baseline reporting provides clear direction for next steps, both commonly for the UN system and for individual entities:

- Continued **development** of UN-SWAP aligned **policies**.
- Significant **financial and staff investment** in promoting equal representation of women, including through strengthened organizational culture.
- Dissemination of an introductory, interactive and self-paced **e-course** on gender equality and the empowerment of women to be offered to all staff across the UN system.
- Focused **technical support** for parts of the UN system that lag behind UN system averages in many of the UN-SWAP Performance Indicators.
- Ongoing **inter-agency workshops** on specific Performance Indicators where the UN system as a whole is not performing as well.
- Promotion and support for UN-SWAP **peer reviews**, which will increase accountability, coherence, and cross-entity learning.
- Implementation of the **communication plan** to ensure production and dissemination of fact sheets and **good practices** outlined for each Performance Indicator. Creation of knowledge sharing platform.
- Increased **entity partnerships** for the creation of Centres of Good Practices for the implementation of Performance Indicators.
- Establishment of a **strategic plan** for each Performance Indicator, in association with relevant UN inter-agency networks.



For any queries please contact the UN-SWAP Help Desk:

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