



23 January 2015

Dear Ms. Peters and Ms. Moreno Fernandez,

On behalf of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality (UN Women), I wish to express my appreciation for the 2014 MOPAN Assessment of UN Women, which was conducted in six countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, DRC, Ecuador, Kenya and Tanzania), as well as through consultation with UN Women staff and stakeholders at Headquarters and in selected Regional Offices.

UN Women welcomes the final assessment report, the first ever for the Entity, which presents a comprehensive, robust and evidence based review of the first three years of our work. We also appreciate the very consultative, constructive and positive approach and interactions with MOPAN and the Universalia team in conducting the assessment.

UN Women believes the assessment presents a broadly accurate picture of our situation over the period addressed and at this point in its establishment. We welcome and reaffirm the conclusions of the assessment that “UN-Women’s clear mandate to promote gender equality is a key strength of the organization”, that the mandate remains relevant, and that, though more remains to be done, “UN-Women has had considerable success in setting up its operational infrastructure”.

We also highly appreciate the frank and constructive discussion held with MOPAN members at UN Women Headquarters on January 12, 2015. The findings of the assessment are consistent with the issues highlighted and reported to the Executive Board, including in UN Women’s 2013 Annual Report and in independent corporate evaluations, and we are confident that UN Women is making positive progress towards addressing them.

Ms. Marianne Peters
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
The Hague

Ms. Maria Pilar Moreno Fernandez
State Secretariat for International Cooperation
for Development
Madrid

UN Women appreciates the efforts made to contextualize the assessment in the realities of UN Women's circumstances as a new organization, and the recognition of the extent to which the Entity's performance has taken place alongside rapid and significant change at all levels. This includes the assessment's acknowledgement that UN Women's newness means that not all partners will be fully familiar with the organization and the changes in mandate from predecessor entities. We also appreciate the efforts made to tailor the methodology, including the indicators, to capture the unique mandate of the Entity, which encompasses normative, operational and coordination roles, as well as to take account of the recent establishment and functioning of some of the country offices reviewed as part of the assessment.

UN Women was very pleased to see that the Entity received strong or adequate ratings on most performance indicators. In particular, we were pleased to see that UN Women is perceived to be strong in its strategic focus on a clear mandate, and on cross-cutting priorities and results at the country level; that the Entity's practices and systems are considered to be adequate to strong in most areas of operational management; adequate to strong in all areas of relationship management; strong in the management of human resources; and strong in evaluating results, while adequate in presenting performance information and disseminating lessons learned. We also welcome the finding that UN Women's relevance is rated as strong, and its progress towards results at the global and country level, and contribution to national goals and priorities, as adequate.

Further, we were very pleased to see the recognition given to the high quality of UN Women's policy advice and support at all levels. We welcome the conclusion that UN Women has a strong evaluation function, which is consistent with the findings of the other two external assessments of the UN Women evaluation function conducted in 2014.

However, UN Women does not agree with observations about its results chain. UN Women consulted extensively with Executive Board members on its revised Development Results Framework, which was recognized by UN Women Executive Board members as one of the stronger examples in the UN system. UN Women does not believe that it is appropriate for Strategic Plans to be exhaustive, rather they should be focused. Given the Entity's unique mandate, including its cross-cutting normative and coordination role, the output level in our results framework needs to be qualitatively different to those of organizations with differing mandates, and closer to the outcome level.

UN Women recognizes that more remains to be done to consolidate the progress made to date and to build a more effective and sustainable organization. We take note of the need to address continuing challenges, most notably, the limited resource base and associated capacity constraints. We also acknowledge the need to continue to strengthen our corporate focus on results and results reporting and budgeting, build our capacity for results based management, strengthen procurement processes and risk management efforts, and improve knowledge management at all levels.

UN Women management as a whole recognizes the need for improvement in these areas, with actions underway or planned to address these issues. Such improvements are undertaken in consultation with our Executive Board and in the overall context of UN Women's ongoing resource constraints. More detail on the key actions the Entity will take in response to the key findings of the MOPAN assessment is included in the attached table.

As MOPAN will be implementing a revised methodology from 2015 onwards, we would like to highlight a number of issues to be taken into account in future assessments. First, we wish to express our appreciation to MOPAN members for agreeing to the use of a common assessment tool. However, we also note that many donors continue to undertake individual reviews and assessments. For a small entity such as UN Women these multiple bilateral assessments represent a significant demand on staff time and resources and our capacity to respond to individual reviews is limited. We strongly encourage donors to use the MOPAN assessment where possible, and to avoid to the extent practical parallel and overlapping bilateral assessments.

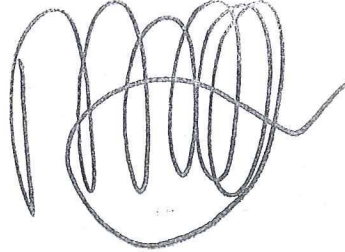
Secondly, we believe that the MOPAN methodology could be more flexible in its approach to assessing organizations with complex mandates such as UN Women, with its normative, operational and coordination role. As the UN system moves to be more "fit for purpose" to support Member States to deliver the new post-2015 development agenda, the normative, coordination and operational roles of the UN system, and inter-linkages between the normative and operational work of individual UN agencies, will only become more important. Assessments such as the MOPAN will need to be adapted to better measure the UN's evolving contribution and support.

Finally, we welcome the efforts made to better capture and understand UN Women's coordination role, including at the country level. However, UN Women's efforts are only part of the necessary inputs for effective joint action on gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women strongly advocates for all donor assessments to include assessment of the extent to which UN agencies are working in a coherent way across the UN system. Already more countries are adopting the Delivering as One approach and UN system coordination and working "as one" is

becoming the modus operandi in many country contexts. The MOPAN assessment also needs to evolve to capture these joint contributions.

On behalf of my whole team, I wish to thank the MOPAN and Universalialia team for the very positive experience of participating in the 2014 assessment. We look forward to continuing to work together in future to further improve our performance and impact.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director

| KPI | <i>UN Women Response</i> | <i>Key Actions</i> |
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| I. UN-Women's organisational effectiveness | | |
| KPI 1: Providing direction for results | Agree | UN Women's Planning and Programme Guidance Unit will continue to lead on this issue. Resources will be maintained to enable the Unit to build capacity to manage results. |
| KPI 2: Corporate strategy and mandate | Agree | UN Women will make efforts to provide greater clarity with regard to its operational role in its official board document (such as the Annual Report on the Strategic Plan) and its communication materials. |
| KPI 3: Corporate focus on results | Partly Agree | UN Women recognises that the Strategic Plan results chains and performance indicators do not present a complete picture of UN Women's work. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan in 2016 will be an opportunity to review this issue. However, UN Women does not believe that it is appropriate for the Strategic Plan to cover every facet of UN Women's work in relation to its outcomes. UN Women understands strategic plans to reflect the strategic focus of work, and not to be comprehensive. This is particularly the case since UN Women, like other organisations, seeks to reconcile country level planning based on nationally guided inter-agency processes with the Strategic Plan, noting that on occasion these processes may generate demands which, while consistent with the Strategic Plan, may not be explicitly referenced within it. |
| KPI 4: Focus on cross-cutting thematic areas | Agree | UN Women's work in the environment sector will be reviewed during the mid-term review process in 2016. UN Women will continue to operate based on its designated mandate and other guidance provided through the QCPR and the decisions of its own Executive Board. |
| KPI 5: Country focus on results | Agree | UN Women will continue to build the RBM capacity of its offices. 2015 will be the first year in which UN Women will have a Planning and Coordination Specialist in place for every Regional Office. Together with ongoing support from the Planning and Programme Guidance Unit, this will provide the foundational capacity in 2015 and 2016 to further strengthen the results focus and culture within the organization, focusing particularly on offices and regions that need support. |
| KPI 6: Resource allocation decisions | Agree | UN Women stands ready to work with our Executive Board to review and revise the allocation methodology for core programmable resources, with the aim of ensuring |

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| | | fairness and sufficient resource availability for field offices, should they wish to do so. |
| KPI 7: Results-based budgeting | Agree | As UN Women's ongoing development of its Results Based Budgeting process continues, it will also improve its ability to track and monitor results. |
| KPI 8: Financial accountability | Partly Agree | <p>UN Women does not agree with the finding that the "conduct of external financial audits at programme/project levels" is one of the weakest areas in financial accountability. The MOPAN assessment acknowledges that UN Women has met the criteria that audits are performed at regional, country, or project levels in line with recognized international standards. It is in part through the independent and thorough conduct of audits that the assessment was able to take note of the weaknesses and issues raised in the audit reports.</p> <p>To date, a manual process has been in place to monitor and follow-up implementation of audit recommendations relating to project audits. Subject to availability of resources, a more efficient and effective computerized system will be developed to support the whole project audit activity from planning to monitoring and follow-up for timely implementation actions by project partners to audit recommendations.</p> <p>UN-Women HQ has been receiving completed Risk Registers from several UN-Women field offices. The data gathered from these completed Risk Registers will be accordingly aggregated, analysed and reported.</p> <p>The Procurement Function of UN Women was audited by UNBoA and UNDP-Office of Audit and Investigation (OAI) in 2013 and 2014. During the audit period, both UBoA and UNDP-OAI observed that UN-Women HQ Procurement Section was inadequately staffed. The understaffing of the section led to limited participation of procurement staff in procurement activities, contributing to weak management of the procurement function at UN-Women.</p> <p>In response to these observations, UN-Women's Division of Management and Administration (DMA) re-examined the procurement function to identify and address the issue of limited resources in the HQ Procurement Section. A new structure (proposing an adequate number of posts with specialized job profiles) was developed and presented to UN Women's senior management. Meanwhile, as an interim solution, UN Women has hired a procurement specialist at P3 level and the recruitment of 3 additional support staff is ongoing. These additional resources will enable the section to centralize the procurement function at Headquarters in the first</p> |

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| | | quarter of 2015, thereby strengthening the procurement management of the organization. |
| KPI 9: Using performance information | Agree | The development of a new results management system (ongoing) will greatly enhance UN Women's ability to make 'real-time' decisions based on performance information. A focus within will be creation of a body of evidence such that performance information can inform decision making. At present, the organization uses performance information to inform decisions in relation to allocation of core resources and approval of annual work plans. However, this is not yet systematically recorded, and UN Women will make adjustments in its procedures such that the clear recording of performance information-based resource allocation becomes standard. |
| KPI 10: Managing human resources | Agree | UN Women will continue to strengthen quality assurance and guidance for its Human Resources services including its performance management system and related policy implementation in order to continue ensuring that the individual staff member performance evaluation process is relevant to its mandate, aligned with best practices and organizational strategy, and responsive to the needs and priorities of its staff members. |
| KPI 11: Performance-oriented programming | Agree | UN Women will continue its efforts to strengthen the quality of planning. |
| KPI 12: Delegating authority | Agree | <p>UN Women presented to its Executive Board a system for delegation of authority based on the new regional architecture. Both that system for delegation of authority and the architecture were approved. However, UN Women was funded well below the budget levels approved by the Board. As a consequence, UN Women's field offices remain under-resourced. The consequences of this include, inter alia, challenges with ensuring adequate staffing to carry out all the roles required in the UN Women Internal Control Framework.</p> <p>In response to this, UN Women has taken steps to ensure that oversight from Regional Offices and Headquarters has been provided to support offices lacking all necessary staffing. This includes taking transactions to regional level from country level where capacity is not in place.</p> <p>As a result, the process of delegation of authority has been done in a staged way, with full delegation only occurring where an assessment at regional and HQ levels shows adequate capacity to undertake necessary roles, partial delegation provided where</p> |

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| | | there is scope to prudently delegate authority in some areas but not in others, and not provided where offices have not yet been able to put in place the capacity required. |
| KPI 13: Supporting national plans | Agree | UN Women will continue to ensure that its plans are aligned and responsive to national priorities. To that end, it will also work to strengthen the linkages at the country level between its operational and normative work, including through clearer guidance to offices in this regard. |
| KPI 14: Adjusting procedures | Agree | UN Women is currently rationalizing and strengthening its programming processes and procedures through revision of its Programme and Operations Manual (POM). |
| KPI 15: Using country systems | Agree | UN Women anticipates continued growth in demand from national governments for support with data and statistics. The organization is actively looking at means to strengthen its technical and operational capacity in this area and this will be further explored through the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan. |
| KPI 16: Contributing to policy dialogue | Agree | <p>UN Women appreciates the finding that the organization is perceived to provide high-quality inputs to policy dialogue, and that this advice is provided in a respectful manner. UN Women's policy advice and input to policy dialogue at all levels is part of the entity's core comparative advantage and reflects the value added support and services it provides to governments and its partners, drawing on its unique mandate to promote gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment.</p> <p>UN Women will continue to play a leading role in shaping policy and normative frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels, including in the context of the Beijing +20 review, global review of UN SCR 1325, the development and implementation of the new post-2015 development agenda and the Financing for Development process.</p> |
| KPI 17: Harmonising procedures | Agree | UN Women is currently revising its programming policies and procedures in its Programme and Operations Manual (POM) to further harmonize its programming guidance with other UN entities and bring it in line with the latest guidance on joint programmes and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Delivering as One (DaO). |
| KPI 18: Co-ordination on gender equality | Agree | Coordination remains a strategic priority for UN Women. The Entity has finalized and circulated its corporate strategy for implementing its UN coordination mandate and functions at global, regional and country level. Planning and coordination specialists will be in place in all six regional offices in 2015, supporting the coordination role of UN Women at regional and country level. The Programme and |

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| | | <p>UN Coordination Divisions provide regular support and advice to Regional and Country Offices on how to best engage Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams on gender equality and the empowerment of Women, including through the UNDAF/One Programme.</p> <p>UN Women is a strong supporter of the Standard Operating procedures for DaO, and of the new global cost-sharing modality for the functioning of the Resident Coordinator System. UN Coordination is a regular item for review within the Peer Review Group for regional and country level Strategic Notes and Annual Work Plans. If resources available to UN Women are to increase, additional funding will be allocated for implementing the coordination mandate of UN Women, particularly at regional and country level.</p> <p>UN Women will continue to expand and deepen its partnership with civil society. UN Women recognizes the private sector as a strategic partner to advance women's empowerment and gender equality. As the assessment rightly observes, UN Women's work with the private sector is fairly recent, and the Entity is still building its capacity, especially at field level, to solicit, build and nurture such partnerships. The objective in partnering with the private sector is two-fold: to give UN Women an opportunity to not only raise funds but also to influence corporate practices. In addition to existing partners, as of December 2014 around 30 prospective corporate and foundation partners are being cultivated for funding partnerships. A customized partnership strategy has been developed for each of these. The income from private sector partners is steadily increasing, as are the number of corporations committed to the Women's Empowerment Principles, now counting more than 800. 2014 also saw the establishment of the Executive Director's "Private Sector Leaders Advisory Council", comprised of 10 CEOs from global corporations. The Council Members commit to accelerate economic and social progress for women and girls worldwide by combining their expertise, reach and resources for greater results. The Council also represents an important potential fundraising venue.</p> |
| KPI 19: Evaluating results | Agree | <p>UN Women acknowledges that the structural independence of IEO is adequate but agrees that it could be further enhanced. The IEO will lead the internal review of the Evaluation Policy in 2016 taking into account the MOPAN and other external assessments. The internal review will include an examination of issues related to independence as raised by the Mopan and other external assessments. IEO will engage stakeholders in the review, including Executive Board members and UN Women senior management and staff to ensure a comprehensive perspective.</p> |

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| | | <p>In order strengthen country evaluation capacities, in 2015, IEO will be launching in collaboration with Human Resources and the Training Centre, a professionalization programme that includes the UN Women Evaluation Handbook, an online e-learning course based on the handbook and a coaching programme to ensure hands-on learning. Completion of this programme will lead to certification as a UN Women Gender Responsive Evaluation Manager, which will incentivize participation. IEO will also continue implementing quality assurance mechanisms including the Global Evaluation Oversight System (GEOS) and Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS). At the same time, IEO is consolidating “evaluation process standards”, which will clarify roles and responsibilities for UN Women staff and managers involved in evaluation processes. These initiatives will complement ongoing face-to-face training and other capacity development efforts and are aimed at enhancing the quality of decentralized evaluations leading to more credible evidence for decision-making and learning. IEO will also be enhancing the gender and evaluation roster to facilitate identification of qualified professional evaluation consultants.</p> <p>IEO places great importance on ensuring the credibility and learning of UN Women’s corporate and decentralised evaluations. The IEO will continue its practice of active consultation with key stakeholders to ensure relevance and utility of evaluation with the aim of enhancing use of evaluation for learning and decision-making. IEO will also continue to implement innovative gender responsive evaluation methodologies and share this experience both internally and externally</p> |
| KPI 20: Presenting performance information | Agree | UN Women has collected baseline data for all of the Strategic Plan 2014-17 indicators and this will be presented to the Executive Board and made public in 2015. As part of its broader efforts to strengthen results and performance management, the organization is also developing guidance on indicator development and measuring the effect of its capacity development work. |
| KPI 21: Disseminating lessons learned | Agree | As noted in the report UN Women has a draft Knowledge Management strategy. This will be approved and implementation will begin in 2015. |
| II. Evidence of UN-Women’s relevance and development results | | |
| KPI A: Evidence of UN-Women’s relevance | Agree | UN Women will continue to strengthen quality assurance and guidance for its country level programmes to continue ensuring that results are relevant to its mandate, aligned with global trends and priorities, and responsive to the needs and priorities of beneficiaries. |

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| KPI B: Evidence of progress towards organisation-wide results | Agree | Strengthened guidance and regulation (through the POM revisions) will address issues related to baseline data and theories of change. The implementation of the corporate evaluation plan over the coming years will generate a stronger evidence base for demonstrating the organization's effectiveness. The development and roll-out of the new results management system will also provide offices with a system for gathering and collating data and evidence in relation to results. |
| KPI C: Evidence of UN-Women's progress towards stated country-level results | Agree | The development and roll-out of the new results management system will provide UN Women offices with a system for gathering and collating data and evidence in relation to results. Strengthened guidance and support through the deployment of a full complement of Planning and Coordination Specialists at the Regional Office level will also lead to improved capacity to marshal evidence of UN Women's effectiveness and contributions to outcome-level change. |
| KPI D: Evidence of UN-Women's contribution to national goals and priorities, including the MDGs | Agree | UN Women will continue to ensure that its work is aligned with national goals and priorities and it is anticipated that there will be a greater body of evaluative evidence to verify this during the current Strategic Plan period of 2014-17. |