

UN WOMEN

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

1. Facts and figures

Type of organisation: Entity

Established in: 2010 (operational from 2011)

Headquarters: New York

Number of country offices: UN Women's country-level presence is currently under development, but the plan is to have 6 regional offices, 6 multi-country offices, 52 country offices, and a country presence in 24 countries by the end of 2013

Head of organisation: Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (South Africa)

Dates of Board meetings in 2013: 23–24 January, 25–27 June, 16–18 September

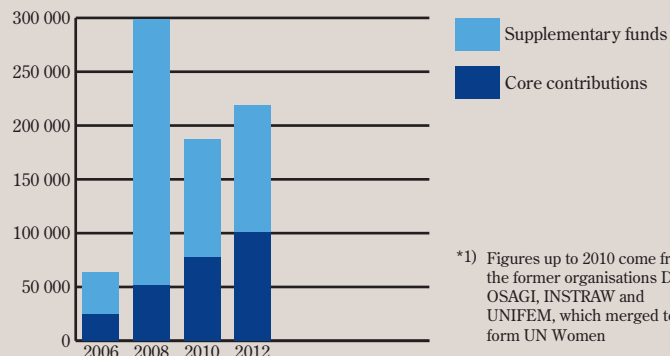
Norway's representation on Board: Until the end of 2014, 2016

Number of Norwegian staff: 5

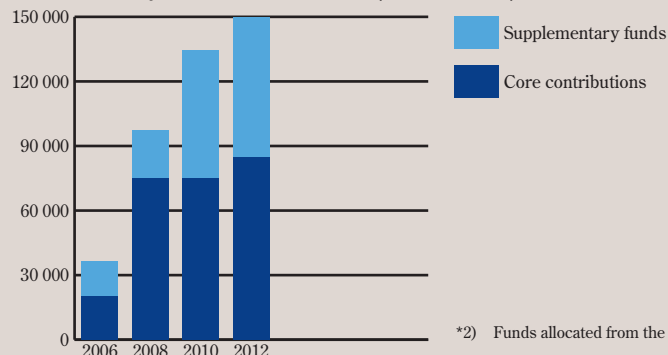
Competent ministry: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Website: www.unwomen.org

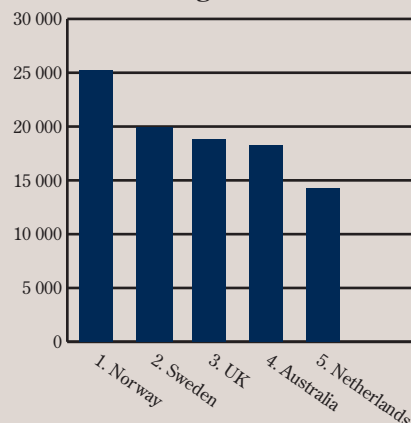
Total revenues^{*1)} (1000 USD)



Norway's contributions^{*2)} (1000 NOK)



The five largest donors in 2012 (1000 USD)



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mandate and areas of activity

UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, was created by Resolution A/RES/64/289 on system-wide coherence, which was adopted by the 64th session of the UN General Assembly on 2 July 2010. The organisation became operational on 1 January 2011 and held its first ordinary Executive Board meeting on 24–26 January 2011. The new organisation has both a normative and an operational mandate and as such represents an innovative approach, combining both secretariat functions (the Commission on the Status of Women) and operational roles. The UN Women Strategic Plan 2011–2013, as contained in UN document UNW/2011/9, was discussed at a Board meeting in June 2011 and approved by Decision 2011/3. The organisation has an important mandate for strengthening UN efforts to promote overall gender equality, globally and at country level.

The strategic plan sets out the organisation's visions and priorities for the period and defines the following priority areas:

- strengthening women's leadership and participation,
- ending violence against women,
- strengthening women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes,
- strengthening and improving women's economic empowerment,
- promoting the gender-equality agenda at all levels in national planning and budget processes, and
- contributing to ensuring that intergovernmental processes in the UN system are more comprehensive, dynamic and binding with regard to norms and standards in gender-equality policy.

The document is the outcome of a broad-based consultation process. The strategy and performance framework are to be revised in the course of 2013. Norway will sit on the Executive Board until the end of 2014, and then again in 2016.

Results achieved in 2012

UN Women is in the process of being established, and considerable efforts in 2011 were focused on strengthening the organisation institutionally. The Annual Report 2012–2013 refers to concrete results in all the strategic plan's target areas (political and economic participation; violence against women; women, peace and security; support for national processes; and budget). A great deal has been achieved in terms of developing and establishing tools for the UN as a whole; in this respect, the new System Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality adopted for the entire UN system is a milestone.

The organisation can also report that it has established and further developed partnerships with different stakeholders, and has succeeded in mobilising more resources and donors, even though the organisation still lacks the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate. In the normative field, the report describes UN Women's participation in important global processes such as Rio+20, the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Istanbul and the OECD High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan. The report points out that UN Women succeeded in including language on gender equality in the Least Developed Countries 4 conference in the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action, and helped to develop a Busan Action Plan on Gender Equality, both of which are good, concrete outcomes of efforts to promote gender equality in these processes. UN Women played a more passive role at the UN Commission on the Status of Women's meeting in 2012, which failed to reach agreement on a final document.

However, after intense negotiations, the 2013 UN Commission on the Status of Women reached consensus on a final document on violence against women, and UN Women played an active role in the preparations for and organisation of the Commission.

Women's political participation

UN Women supported a total of 71 countries in their efforts to strengthen women's leadership and political participation. This was done by helping to introduce quota systems for female candidates in elections, supporting electoral processes that include women and supporting female decision-makers and political candidates. In 2012, UN Women reported that it helped to ensure that more women were elected to national assemblies and positions at the local level in seven countries, and that more women were mobilised to exercise their right to vote. In Algeria, in 2011, UN Women supported the introduction in electoral law of a quota system for women, resulting in an increase of 7.7 per cent in female representatives in the national assembly to 31.0 per cent in the 2012 elections. In Senegal, UN Women provided funding for training female election observers. This, reports UN Women, in turn helped to increase the turnout of women voters and to boost the percentage of women in the national assembly from 22.0 per cent to 43.3 per cent in the 2012 elections.

Source: UN Women Progress Report 2012

2. Assessments: Results, effectiveness and monitoring

The organisation's results-related work

UN Women has a results framework that defines targets at all levels, and to some extent contains good indicators. However, there is room for improvement in establishing linkages between result levels. A certain amount of statistical data is lacking and the targets could have been better formulated. The results framework is to be revised in 2013, and the Executive Board will be involved in this process, thereby enabling it to contribute towards improving the framework.

Generally speaking, the first two progress reports for 2011 and 2012 were very good. Their layout was clear and largely consistent with the results framework. Good visual tools were used that showed the progress made against results framework indicators. However, the quality of the reports was uneven with regard to the analysis of the progress made and the challenges in each target area, they reported unevenly on indicators and the selection of indicators for 2011 and 2012 was inconsistent. It is positive that a practice of preparing follow-up plans (management responses) to evaluations has been established, making it easier to monitor whether evaluation recommendations are implemented. UN Women improved its performance from 2011 to 2012 with respect to drawing up such management responses, which is positive. However, implementation of the recommendations for follow-up action still leaves something to be desired.

Planning and budgeting systems

The organisation has adopted a results-based budget, but has no single budget for all its activities. UN Women's strategic plans and budget are considered by the UN's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and by the Executive Board. The plan is to introduce country programmes as from 2014. Criteria for applications to the Gender Equality Fund may be found on UN Women's website, and the Executive Board has adopted a harmonised cost-recovery policy, which is also posted on the website.

UN Women has adopted the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), a set of independent accounting standards designed to ensure transparent reporting of costs. The process of implementing IPSAS initially made slow progress in UN Women, and the audit of the 2011 financial year, carried out by the UN Board of Auditors (UNBoA), revealed significant inadequacies in UN Women's financial management. Problems that were particularly emphasised were the lack of internal budgetary controls and a plan for implementing IPSAS. Another problem has been the use of dual project-management procedures: on some occasions UNDP procedures have been used, while at other times UNIFEM procedures were followed.

In 2011, UN Women was to follow up on 28 audit recommendations from the previous year's closing financial statements; as of 31 December 2011 only 15 of these had been implemented so as to make it possible to close the matters. The fact that so few of the matters could be closed was partly due to

the delay in receiving 2012 figures, as a basis for comparison was needed, but in general this was an extremely poor result. Part of the explanation for the poor performance is that when implementation of IPSAS commenced, UN Women lacked a financial team.

When an IPSAS team was appointed in UN Women in 2012, on the other hand, implementation of IPSAS soon accelerated, and when the annual report was sent to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), 23 of the 28 recommendations had been implemented (only 24 of the recommendations had a deadline). Thus there is much to indicate that UN Women's poor performance in the initial phase is ascribable to the restructuring process as well as to "figures and procedures inherited" from UNIFEM, and that future reviews of procedures and financial statements will not reveal similar deficiencies.

Oversight systems and anti-corruption

UN Women is audited by the UN Board of Auditors (UNBoA). UNBoA reports are not confidential, and can be accessed by donors and potential donors. UNBoA is also responsible for monitoring UN Women's implementation of audit recommendations.

UN Women has an independent internal audit function carried out by the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI), which audits UN Women units at the organisation's headquarters and at country level. Each unit that is audited must prepare a response to the audit findings and recommendations, which is incorporated into the final report. OAI monitors the implementation of its recommendations through the web-based Comprehensive Audit and Recommendation Database System. Cases of fraud are dealt with by OAI's Investigation Section. At its second regular session in 2012, the Executive Board decided that OAI is to publicise internal audit reports, subject to the proviso that information may be withheld if it will have adverse consequences for a third party (UNW 2012/10). Concrete cases of wrongdoing are described in the Report on Disciplinary Measures and Other Actions Taken in Response to Fraud, Corruption and Other Wrongdoing. As mentioned in the point above, the follow-up of audit findings still leaves something to be desired, but this is expected to be remedied as the organisation gradually puts in place procedures, and not least more resources, for internal audits, a priority endorsed by the Executive Board at the Board session on 28–30 November 2012.

UN Women's anti-corruption work is grounded in a broad-based framework: the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules (in particular paragraph 1.2), UN Women's Rules and Regulations (in particular paragraph 24.2), and the UN Women Programme and Operations Manual, which includes a definition of corruption and guiding principles for ethical standards, corruption and fraud. UN Women provides mandatory ethics training for its employees. UN Women has also introduced an Internal Control Framework with explicitly defined roles and responsibilities and clear distinctions between delegated purchasing functions. UN Women's Legal Frame-

work for Addressing Non-Compliance with UN Standards of Conduct defines wrongdoing and describes the reporting and investigative mechanisms. Responsibility for conducting investigations lies with OAI. UN Women also has an online Anti-Fraud Hotline.

Institution-building and national ownership

The organisation has defined support for national planning and budget processes as a separate target area, and can point to effective efforts to integrate gender equality into national planning and budget processes in several countries (e.g. Nepal, India, Timor-Leste), in addition to support for the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), its implementation and reporting. UN Women has also made a considerable effort to strengthen the work of the UN as a whole to advance gender equality globally and at country level. In many cases, UN Women coordinates the activities of UN working groups on gender equality and serves as coordinator in joint programmes on gender equality under UN auspices. It has also developed a tool for use in the processes of developing new UN country programmes, the UNCT Gender Scorecard. UN Women works increasingly with national authorities, whereas UNIFEM previously worked mainly with civil society. It seldom uses parallel implementing units, but in some cases it may perhaps provide somewhat excessive support for national ministries for women etc. by “doing the job for them” or by funding

external advisers who work in the government system. This suggests that UN Women’s new role has not fully materialised in a harmonised approach throughout the organisation.

Much of the capacity-building work is done in the form of training programmes, but institution-building is also carried out by establishing practices and policy, such as gender budgeting, which is the integration of the gender-equality dimension in budget processes.

Willingness to learn and change

UN Women has adopted an evaluation policy that is considered to be very good, and has established the practice of preparing management responses to evaluations to facilitate the follow-up of evaluations. Nonetheless, there is room for improvement. In 2011, ten out of a total of 16 evaluations had a management response/follow-up plan. Furthermore, reports showed considerable variation in the implementation of management responses: out of 120 binding follow-up points from 2011 evaluations, only three had been carried out as of February 2012. The reports prepared for the annual session in June 2013 showed improvements in this regard.

UN Women has also followed up on important Board decisions, such as the decision to establish a new regional architecture. Given the young age of the organisation, it remains to be seen how much of this will be followed up in practice.

3. Norway’s policy towards UN Women

Norway was a strong advocate for the creation of UN Women, and the core activities of UN Women are largely consistent with Norway’s policy on women’s rights and gender equality (cf. Report No. 11 to the Storting (2007–2008) On Equal Terms: Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in International Development Policy and the Action Plan for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation). Norway has won support for several important decisions and principles in board decisions, related to such issues as strategic target areas, focus on fragile states, increased institutional budgets and support for reforms aimed at strengthening the organisation’s country-level capacity.

UN Women plays an extremely important role in efforts to support women’s rights and gender equality in development policy and cooperation, normatively at global level and also as a key partner for embassies at country level. The organisation is new and has inherited a weak structure at country level from the former UNIFEM, and experience so far shows that many of the country offices have capacity problems. It is important to give the organisation time to carry out reform processes and strengthen its capacity in the field, at the same time as it is important to require that it deliver on the targets that it has set for itself and that its Executive Board has adopted. Norwegian interaction with UN Women at country level should be coherent and aligned with Norway’s general strategic approach.

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For more information, contact the Section for Budget and Administration by e-mail at: sbf-fn@mfa.no. This document can be found on our website: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/selected-topics/un>.