



Strategy for Sweden's cooperation with
the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women
(UN Women) 2018–2022



1. Scope of the strategy

This strategy will form the basis of Sweden's cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The strategy establishes the priorities and forms of collaboration for Sweden's membership of, and partnership with, UN Women at global, regional and national level for 2018–2022.

The strategy is guided by Sweden's Policy for Global Development and its overall objective of contributing to equitable and sustainable global development¹ and the Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.² Sweden's Strategy for multilateral development policy³ and Guidelines for strategies in Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance are the overarching policy documents for Sweden's cooperation with multilateral organisations.

The strategy is based on UN Women's mandate and strategic frameworks and takes into consideration the organisational assessment conducted by the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) in 2017. It also takes into consideration the regular assessments of UN Women's activities on the ground conducted by Swedish missions abroad. The strategy comprises funds as authorised by the Riksdag and the Government's appropriation directions to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). During the strategy period, Sweden's advocacy activities within UN Women are also underpinned by the Strategic Partnership Agreement on regular resources reached with the Entity in 2018 on core support totalling SEK 536 million for 2018–2021.

¹ Shared responsibility: Sweden's policy for global development (Govt. Bill 2002/03:122).

² Government Communication 2016/17:60.

³ Reg. no UD2017/21055/FN.

2. UN Women's mandate and activities

2.1. UN Women's mandate

UN Women became operational on 1 January 2011 after four entities⁴ with related mandates were merged to enhance the effectiveness of funding and operations, and promote system-wide coherence. The legal and policy frameworks for UN Women's activities comprise the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), applicable UN instruments and resolutions on women's enjoyment of human rights, gender equality, women's and girls' empowerment, the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security.

UN Women is the secretariat for the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Security Council's Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security. The Entity has also been assigned a place on the Executive Committee of the UN Secretariat

established by Secretary-General António Guterres in January 2017. The aim is to facilitate UN Women's mandate to lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality and uphold accountability for gender equality.

Sweden's engagement in UN Women is motivated by the Entity's triple mandate:

- a normative mandate to support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly and the Security Council in their deliberations and formulation of policies, global standards and norms on gender equality and the empowerment of women;
- an operational mandate to help Member States implement these policies, standards and norms through operational activities at regional and national level;
- a coordination mandate to lead and coordinate the UN system's gender equality work and promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

⁴) The Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women; the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat; the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women.

The triple mandate creates conditions for a catalytic role for gender equality promotion at all levels.

UN Women is largely funded by voluntary contributions from UN Member States. Approximately two per cent of UN Women’s activities are funded from the UN’s regular budget in view of its mandate that includes support to normative intergovernmental processes. Since UN Women’s establishment, Sweden has been among its largest donors.

2.2 Strategic plan

UN Women’s work is governed by four-year strategic plans. The Strategic Plan, together with an integrated budget and results framework, constitutes UN Women’s strategic framework. According to UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021, the Entity will contribute to:

- strengthening and implementing a comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls;
- women leading, participating in and benefiting equally⁵ from governance systems;
- women having income security, decent work and economic autonomy;
- all women and girls living a life free from all forms of violence;
- women and girls contributing to and having greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefiting equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action.

Sweden has been actively involved in the development of the Strategic Plan and its results framework, including through the work of the Executive Board.

⁵ All references to “equally” in outcome statements refer to “equally with men and boys”.

2.3 Organisational assessment

The organisational assessment conducted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2017 concluded that UN Women works directly or indirectly on a number of Swedish priorities. Sweden's foreign and development policy profile areas constitute the core of the Entity's work. UN Women's strategic framework includes a focus on poverty aimed at supporting the poorest and most vulnerable women and girls. UN Women's work includes strengthening democracy from a gender equality perspective, increasing the influence and meaningful participation of women and girls in peace processes, and taking steps so that women and girls are able to contribute to and benefit equally from initiatives to prevent and manage natural disasters and climate change. UN Women is working to protect and advance positions in these areas through international negotiations and supports

the development of legislation, policies and action plans at regional and national level.

According to UN Women's annual report of the overall implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2014–2017,⁶ the Entity fully or largely met 80 per cent of targets for that period. This performance corresponds quite closely to funding levels, with a funding gap of nearly 20 per cent compared to the Entity's integrated budget targets for 2014–2017.

In summary, UN Women – as a global, regional and national advocate for gender equality, women's and girls' enjoyment of human rights and empowerment – is a relevant and effective partner to Sweden on the basis of Swedish foreign and development policy objectives.

⁶ Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 (UNW/2018/2).

3. Direction and thematic priorities

3.1 Direction

Through dialogue, work on the Executive Board and financial contributions, Sweden will work to ensure that UN Women achieves its overall mandate and implements its Strategic Plan, with a focus on Sweden's priority issues. Sweden supports all the objectives in the Strategic Plan results framework through its core support. In addition, Sweden will promote a number of priority issues in each thematic area.

Sweden will promote a clear rights perspective in all thematic areas. Consideration will be given to the fact that women and girls are not homogeneous groups – their identities, participation, needs and living conditions differ. By taking an inclusive and intersectional⁷ approach, Sweden will work to ensure that UN Women avoids reinforcing stereotypical views of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or age.

Furthermore, Sweden will work to ensure that UN Women is able to fulfil its normative support and coordination mandate. The Entity has a unique global position and is expected to contribute gender equality expertise and policy development, coordinate and demand accountability of the UN system for commitments to gender equality.

Sweden will also work to ensure that UN Women, in coordination with other UN agencies, states and other actors, strengthens and develops methods to protect and promote women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights and to mainstream gender equality in policies and initiatives, which also includes increased access to and use of gender statistics and research in all UN Women's outcome areas.

Sweden will be a driving force for the integration into UN Women activities of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and

⁷⁾ An intersectional perspective can help to reveal how different power structures interact, i.e. how different power structures and grounds of discrimination influence and at times reinforce one another, leading for example to measures being adapted accordingly.

environmental – and their synergies. Gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment are both goals in themselves and a means of achieving all the commitments under the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on development financing and the Paris Agreement.

3.2 Thematic priorities

3.2.1. A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is strengthened and implemented

Global gender equality is a priority thematic focus in the Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Sweden will work, in particular, to ensure that:

- UN Women applies a rights-based approach in its activities, focusing clearly on human rights, including all women’s and girls’ full enjoyment of human rights and their access to sexual

and reproductive health and rights;

- UN Women adopts a transformative approach to power imbalances through an intersectional perspective and that UN Women develops its role and responsibility in reaching, supporting and interacting with women and girls in vulnerable situations – including LGBTI people and women and girls with disabilities – and promoting their agency;
- UN Women systematically includes men and boys, ensuring the responsibility of men and boys as actors in promoting gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights and empowerment;
- UN Women strengthens its cooperation and strategic partnerships with rights actors and civil society organisations, including faith-based organisations and human rights defenders;
- UN Women calls attention to the particular vulnerability of women and girls in relation to climate change and environmental threats, and that

women's and girls' knowledge, skills and capacity as change agents for environmentally and climate-resilient sustainable development are harnessed;

- UN Women increases resource allocation to its normative and coordination work.

3.2.2. Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems

Women's political and public participation is central to the creation and maintenance of peaceful, inclusive and sustainable societies. According to the policy framework, Sweden will contribute to strengthening women's and girls' representation, and political participation and influence in all areas of society and at all levels.

Sweden will work, in particular, to ensure that:

- UN Women contributes to the development of national legal frameworks, policies, systems, action plans, budgets and norms that allow

and promote women's political and public leadership, participation, influence in and ability to benefit from decision-making at all levels;

- UN Women, from an intersectional perspective, works to combat all forms of discrimination.

3.2.3 Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy

A priority thematic area in the policy framework is inclusive economic development, where women's economic autonomy is a central element.

Sweden will work actively to ensure that:

- UN Women contributes to the development of national legal frameworks, economic policies and systems that promote women's economic autonomy and rights throughout their lives, such as access to decent and productive work and entrepreneurship; social security systems; sexual reproductive health and rights; education, including

technical and vocational education and training (TVET); women's and girls' rights to land, ownership, use and inheritance rights, and equal pay and opportunity to choose their occupation;

- UN Women works to change discriminatory and stereotypical gender norms that contribute to gender-segregated labour markets, different pay and working conditions, unequal division of unpaid household and care work, and all forms of violence and discrimination.

3.2.4 All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence

Preventing and combating all forms of gender-based violence, including mental, physical and sexual violence, in all situations and environments is a priority in the policy framework for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. Extensive and widespread gender-based violence and harmful practices, in times of peace and in conflict and post-conflict settings, are the most manifest expression of

women's and girls' systematic subordination throughout their lives.

Sweden will work, in particular, to ensure that:

- UN Women supports the development of national legal frameworks, policies, systems and norms that prevent and combat violence against women and girls, and address the consequences of violence against women and girls, including combating impunity for gender-based and sexual violence, and increasing women's and girls' access to justice;
- UN Women's work on freedom from violence for all women and girls includes prevention, combating and addressing violence in both public and private spheres, including child marriages, harmful practices, sexual exploitation, trafficking in human beings and other forms of exploitation;
- UN Women contributes to combating prostitution based on the view that prostitution should not be regarded as work, for example in the Entity's

normative work, strengthening the empowerment of vulnerable women and girls, and efforts to combat poverty;

- UN Women calls attention to the fact that displaced women and girls face particular challenges and risks of being subjected to gender-based violence, harmful practices and trafficking in human beings, and consequently works for appropriate measures;
- UN Women promotes efforts to prevent and combat sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and contributes to upholding accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout the UN system.

3.2.5 Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action

The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies is a Swedish development cooperation priority. Within this framework, Sweden will contribute to strengthening the influence and meaningful participation of women and girls in peace processes, and to ensuring that women and girls are given special protection based on their needs, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and its subsequent resolutions. Strengthening women's and girls' right to protection in humanitarian crises and their ability to play an active role in humanitarian crisis response is one of the objectives of humanitarian assistance.

Sweden will work, in particular, to ensure that:

- UN Women contributes to strengthening women's influence and meaningful participation as agents for peace and security and promoting accountability as part of implementing the women, peace and security agenda based on resolution 1325 and other related resolutions;

- UN Women works to combat all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflicts and humanitarian crises;
- UN Women calls attention to women's and girls' specific humanitarian needs and particular vulnerability during crises, works to integrate a clear gender perspective into humanitarian efforts with the aim of strengthening women's meaningful participation and influence, and harnessing women's and girls' knowledge, skills and capacity in conflict and post-conflict situations;
- UN Women works to enhance women's influence, participation and role as agents in initiatives to prevent and manage natural disasters and climate change;
- UN Women works to enhance women's influence, participation and role as agents in initiatives to strengthen the link between humanitarian action and development cooperation;
- UN Women helps to call attention to the importance and role of education for women and girls, for example, in combating violence against women and girls, including in conflict and post-conflict situations.

4. Priorities concerning the Entity's working methods

In the most recent Swedish Government Offices organisational assessment (2017) of UN Women, the Entity's effectiveness was assessed as good, even though skills and capacity constraints were identified primarily at country and regional level. It was also noted that underfunding makes it difficult for UN Women to fully implement its mandate and meet the high expectations placed on the Entity.

In its operational activities, UN Women has tended to focus on small-scale projects and not set strategic priorities. In accordance with the midterm review of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017,⁸ all the initiatives were therefore gathered under larger 'flagship programmes'. Sweden believes it is very positive that UN Women is replacing small-scale projects with long-term and coherent programmes.

Based on the organisational assessment, the Government intends to prioritise the following issues in respect of working methods:

Focusing on collaboration and partnership:

- UN Women contributes normative support and expertise in the development and operationalisation of UNDAF,⁹ and works to ensure that, in programme activities, the entire UN system leverages its operational activities for gender equality in an integrated manner.
- UN Women's efforts to strengthen cooperation and dialogue with other key multilateral actors as well as civil society organisations, organisations working with men and boys to promote gender equality, peace and security actors, faith-based organisations, human rights and women's rights defenders, as well as research institutes, social partners and the private sector.

⁸ Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 including the Midterm Review of the Strategic Plan.

⁹ United Nations Development Assistance Framework – the UN system's results framework at country level.

- UN Women’s normative work for the promotion of women’s and girls’ full enjoyment of human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, within the Commission on the Status of Women, among other fora, and through support for the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Focusing on reform and increased quality and effectiveness of the UN:

- UN Women’s implementation of the UN development system reform with the aim of further strengthening harmonisation and coordination within the UN system and joint implementation as One UN.
- UN Women’s work to replace small-scale projects with long-term and coherent programmes in line with the Entity’s flagship programme initiative.
- UN Women’s work to enhance the quality of field work by ensuring merit-based recruitment and effective

governance for enhanced context-appropriate and needs-based capacity and skills at regional and country level, including the provision of high-quality, integrated policy advice.

Focusing on long-term and flexible financing:

- UN Women’s measures to increase the proportion of regular resources, for example through the implementation of structured financing dialogues and visibility for core support outcomes, which can promote more flexible funding in the form of core support and high-quality, soft-earmarked resources.
- UN Women’s work for resource mobilisation, for example, by increasing revenue from existing donors, widening the donor base and encouraging new forms of financing.

Focusing on sustainable outcomes and governance:

- UN Women’s work to lead and coordinate the UN system’s gender equality work and promote accountability, including through regular monitoring of system-wide progress.
- UN Women’s work to strengthen results-based management and budgeting, and strengthened results and financial reporting, including with regard to Sweden’s thematic support via Sida;
- UN Women’s work to strengthen the evaluation function, including coverage and the ability to learn from evaluations.

Focusing on risk management, transparency and anti-corruption:

- UN Women’s ability to further integrate risk management into its activities.

- UN Women’s work on following up recommendations from internal and external audits.

- UN Women’s work on accountability and transparency – including but not limited to – the Entity’s handling of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse within its own organisation, its activities on the ground and the UN system.

Focusing on recruitment:

- UN Women’s work on streamlining recruitment processes, including how to better take advantage of the Swedish resource base.
- UN Women’s work to ensure a gender balance with particular focus on senior/leading positions, non-discriminatory employment and organisational structures, and a staff policy that makes it easier for employees to combine family and working life and helps to prevent and combat all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.

5. Advocacy and forms of collaboration

5.1 Advocacy

Sweden's advocacy activities will involve a number of actors at different levels. The main advocacy forums include:

- continuous and consistent bilateral dialogue with UN Women at both political and technical level;
- active and constructive involvement in the work of UN Women's Executive Board, together with like-minded Member States, with the aim of gaining traction for Swedish priorities and values;
- an annual high-level consultation with UN Women's Executive Director and management group, preferably at state secretary level;
- ongoing monitoring of both core and bilateral support to UN Women, which includes a close dialogue with counterparts in the Entity;
- a constructive and results-oriented dialogue at regional and country level with UN Women representatives in countries where Sweden has bilateral development cooperation to monitor both Swedish core support and bilateral support;
- ongoing dialogue with the Swedish National Committee for UN Women;
- active Swedish monitoring and interaction with UN Women in social media;
- harnessing Swedish expertise and experience in UN Women's activity areas by promoting recruitment of Swedes to UN Women's regular positions and through various resource base development programmes (including secondments, JPO and UNV) for mutual learning and skills exchange;
- harnessing Swedish expertise in procurement processes.

5.2 Forms of collaboration

The Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) has the primary responsibility for Sweden's relations with UN Women. The Division for Gender Equality at the Ministry for Health and Social Affairs is responsible for matters related to the Commission on the Status of Women. Strategic, coherent and effective advocacy requires close cooperation and information exchange with all the relevant agencies (especially the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in New York, Sida, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency and relevant missions abroad) and with other actors in Sweden such as civil society organisations, academia and business. In relation to UN Women, the overall division of roles and responsibilities within the Government Offices, and between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sida and Sweden's missions abroad, are set out in Sweden's Strategy for multilateral development.

Organisation consultations on UN Women are to be held twice a year to share experiences gained from cooperation and dialogue, and strengthen joint and strategic action. These consultations are convened by the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), which invites the relevant ministries, Sida, the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN, the Gender Equality Agency and other relevant agencies in Sweden and abroad.

6. Monitoring

The primary results monitoring is conducted in relation to UN Women's Strategic Plan and its separate results framework.

The strategy is given concrete form in a joint annual work plan developed by the Swedish actors. The work plan specifies how the year's activities will contribute to achievement of the strategy's goals and the division of work and responsibilities between the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), Sida and Sweden's missions abroad. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for the development and update of the work plan in consultation with the relevant agencies.

Joint travel (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sida, missions abroad and other agencies) to monitor the strategy, or parts of it, may be undertaken.

The next organisational assessment of UN Women will be conducted ahead of the upcoming strategy period and by 2022 at the latest.



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