

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME** 

# GENDER PARITY STRATEGY 2022-2025

Parity for Greater Equity, Inclusion, and Results

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#### **Executive Summary**

While UNDP has committed itself to adopting a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy, gender parity remains a central element of diversity. The Gender Parity Strategy, 2018-2021, closed on a high note with UNDP receiving the EDGE<sup>1</sup> Move certification for gender equality in the workplace, an award which lays a solid foundation for further advancing gender parity across UNDP's workforce<sup>2</sup>. Another milestone was the achievement of gender parity at an organizational level and maintaining this accomplishment through a global pandemic that affected even the most resilient workplaces.

Building on past achievements, progress and lessons learnt, the new Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025, aims to strengthen UNDP's position as a recognized thought leader in gender equality and advancement of women's rights that "walks the talk" and integrates gender equality values and principles throughout its operations. As such, it is designed to cement UNDP as a gender inclusive workplace, reinforce UNDP's commitment to level the playing field for all personnel, and ensure that everyone can bring their best self to work in a gender inclusive environment.

The Strategy considers the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender dynamics in the workplace and puts in place measures to ensure gains in parity are not eroded. The new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, and the People for 2030 Strategy, Phase 2 provide a framing for the new Gender Parity Strategy with a view to addressing still existing disparities while further embedding the best-in-class practices that underpin UNDP's continued success as a gender parity leader.

More concretely, the Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025 aspires that by 2025, UNDP maintains gender parity gains already achieved while closing remaining gaps, and that people of all gender identities at UNDP work in an equitable, inclusive, flexible, and non-discriminatory environment.

In line with its vision, it aims to achieve the following objectives: (1) Maintain equal representation of women and men among staff at UNDP, and among senior management, as well as reach parity at P4 through D2 levels by 2025; (2) foster gender parity in crisis and post-crisis contexts and increase the share of women serving in crisis and post-crisis contexts; and, (3) strengthen UNDP as a gender inclusive workplace and ensure that all personnel, regardless of their gender identities, benefit from an enabling<sup>3</sup> work environment and a positive employee experience.

<sup>1</sup> Economic Dividends for Gender Equality

<sup>2</sup> UNDP workforce includes staff (i.e., GS, NO, IP) and non-staff contract modalities (i.e., SCs, PSA, interns).

An enabling environment may be interpreted as a set of interrelated and interdependent systemic conditions such as policies, laws, institutional mechanisms, resources, etc., which facilitate the promotion of gender equality. Taken from: <a href="https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/index.html">https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/index.html</a>

O1 Background

#### UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, and People for 2030 **Strategy**

In its Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, UNDP outlines a vision of achieving the 2030 Agenda and commits that, by 2025, UNDP "will continue to build an inclusive working culture, free from all forms of discrimination, exploitation or abuse".

In practice, this commitment means ensuring that UNDP's workforce is both diverse and highly qualified, and there is an enabling environment where diversity is celebrated and where all our employees can thrive and give their best because of – and not despite - their unique identities and backgrounds. By focusing on people, systems and culture, UNDP can unleash the full potential of its greatest asset – its personnel – in pursuit of its mission. This is also the fundamental premise of the People for 2030 Strategy, which aims to progressively transform UNDP's culture and capacity to deliver more and better results.

#### Key Achievements of the Gender Parity Strategy, 2018-2021

In line with the UN Secretary-General's determination to ensure that system-wide gender parity is achieved by 2030, the 2018-2021 UNDP Gender Parity Strategy had the objective of maintaining full gender parity among all staff at the aggregate UNDP level, attaining full parity among all senior management roles and at each grade level (from GS to ASG) by 2021, and working towards reaching at least 47% of women among Service Contract holders engaged by UNDP, and UNVs working in the Organisation by 2026.

It also aimed to attain tangible progress in transforming the culture and the quality of the working environment by: (1) eradicating any forms of gender bias, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace, (2) narrowing the gap in employee experiences across the organisation, with a particular focus on eliminating gender gaps; and (3) ensuring true equality in opportunities and, as such, addressing specific needs of personnel working in different environments.

#### As a result of the many activities implemented across the Organisation,



**UNDP maintained full gender parity among all staff** at the total (aggregate) UNDP level – 50% men and women.



**Among its wider workforce** – which includes staff, Service Contract (SC) holders, Personnel Service Agreement (PSAs) holders, and UN Volunteers (UNVs) – the share of women and men remained close to parity (46% females and 54% males), as of December 2021.



**Gender parity targets were met among senior management** – members of the Executive Group (EG), and Resident Representatives (RRs) and Deputy Resident Representatives (DRRs), ahead of the original timeline of end 2021.



A more positive and gender-inclusive workplace experience was strengthened. The 2020 GSS results showed that, while women still scored lower than men across the evaluated metrics, the gender gap in employee experience finally started shrinking.

In recognition of the significant progress UNDP has made towards ensuring gender parity and its commitment to an inclusive workplace, UNDP was awarded the EDGE Move Certificate by the Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE) organisation. See Annex 1 for additional information on achievements.

#### **Remaining Challenges**

Building on the significant achievements attained, the remaining challenges will be addressed as part of the Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025. Specifically, further action is still required to attain parity at the more senior professional levels, as well as in the employee experience of men, women, and personnel with additional gender identities across the Organisation.

A special focus on addressing gender imbalances in offices in conflict and post-conflict settings – where women remain significantly under-represented - is also critical for strengthening equitable representation in these contexts.

The EDGE assessment revealed lower promotion rates for women compared to men in some positions, especially between G and P levels, and imbalanced representation at the P4 level and above. Women were also observed to have higher exit rates than men at the P4/P3/NOD/NOC and D2/P7 levels. Women remain significantly underrepresented in conflict and post-conflict offices. Men, on the other hand, remain underrepresented at GS and P1 and P2 levels.

The 2020 Global Staff Survey also showed that a lower share of women than men agreed that they had fair opportunities to advance or be promoted. Fewer women than men agreed on the compatibility of having a career and a family at UNDP, and women scored lower than men across other workplace experience metrics.

While there has been a significant focus on the representation and experiences of women and men, further action is required to ensure that UNDP takes into consideration all gender identities - i.e., men, women, and non-binary personnel - and "walks the talk" on gender inclusivity in the workplace. Addressing the needs of all genders is critical to ensure a healthy workforce.

The Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025, has been designed amid a global pandemic that continues to affect lives and livelihoods around the world and threatens to have a regressive effect on gender equality. While the full impact of COVID-19 on the workforce is still unfolding, trends indicate a negative impact on the well-being of parents, and women in particular<sup>4</sup> as primary caregivers to their families in terms of childcare, eldercare, and care for dependent family members with disabilities, both physical and intellectual.

Understanding the implications of these pressures on UNDP's personnel, the Organisation recognises the need to foster a flexible work environment and develop family-friendly policies that will enable its workforce to efficiently deliver in an environment of safety and wellbeing. Hence, addressing these challenges will strengthen UNDP's organisational resilience and ensure that progress made on gender parity is not eroded by the ongoing crisis.



# O2 Strategy to Strengthen Gender Parity in the Workplace

#### **Vision and Approach**

The Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025 aims at its core that, by 2025, UNDP ...

- maintains gender parity gains already achieved while closing the remaining gaps, and that
- people of all gender identities enjoy an equitable, inclusive, flexible, and nondiscriminatory work environment

The vision of the Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025 is to take UNDP to the next phase in its gender parity journey. This means:

- an increased focus on acknowledging and maintaining gains in equal representation for both women and men, especially in the face of the still on-going pressures presented by COVID-19 and in offices located in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Lack of gender balance in either direction will be closely monitored and corrected, as necessary.
- The vision also entails a rise in level of ambition to fully achieve a gender inclusive workplace which attracts, retains, and grows our entire workforce.

This also builds on UNDP's approved Action Plan in response to the EDGE assessment, which includes specific solutions in key areas, including workplace experiences, recruitment and promotion, leadership development and mentoring, flexible working, organisational culture, equal pay for equivalent work, and representation.

As in the previous strategy, the Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025 continues to align with the UN Secretary-General's determination to ensure that system-wide gender parity is achieved by 2030, as articulated in the UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

#### **Key Objectives and Actions**

In line with this vision, UNDP's Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025 has the following objectives:

Maintain equal representation of women and men among staff at all levels at UNDP, and among senior management, as well as reach parity at P4 through D2 levels by 2025.



2. Foster gender parity in crisis and post-crisis contexts and increase the share of women serving in crisis and post-crisis contexts.



3. Strengthen UNDP as a gender inclusive workplace and ensure that all personnel, regardless of their gender identities, enjoy an enabling<sup>5</sup> work environment and a positive employee experience.



The above objectives will be achieved through a series of specific actions as detailed below.

An enabling environment is a set of interrelated and interdependent systemic conditions such as policies, laws, institutional mechanisms, resources, etc., which facilitate the promotion of gender equality. Taken from: https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/ index.html

#### **Objective 1**

### Ensure equal representation of women and men



This priority area focuses on maintaining parity where it has been achieved and increasing women's representation to close the remaining gaps in gender parity among both UNDP staff members, and its wider workforce – which includes staff, Service Contract (SC) holders, UN Volunteers (UNVs) and Personnel Service Agreement (PSAs) holders.

This objective is to be achieved through a **life-cycle approach**, whereby representation across the various stages of the employee journey, from attraction through recruitment, development, promotion, and retention will be monitored and acted upon.

Careful attention will be given to **uncovering the root causes of persisting challenges** in women and men's underrepresentation at specific grade levels, as well as the **intersecting considerations and dimensions of diversity** which people bring to the workplace, and which impact their employee experience. These may include disability, ethnicity, religion, race, social status, sexual orientation, caregiving and other factors that intersect with gender to disadvantage personnel in the workplace.

#### **Key initiatives include:**



Consistently define and ensure **compliance with meaningful gender representation targets** considering the reality of each Bureau. This is to be done through available accountability mechanisms for managers, such as the mandatory gender parity goal in the annual goal plans and Bureau/Office IWPs. (EDGE)



Ensure **tailored Bureau annual action plans** are in place to reach agreed gender representation targets, especially for levels/groups where the share of women is below 45% and include specific measures to address challenges. Bureau action plans should be communicated to all employees. (EDGE)



Create an **open for all dashboard for Bureaus/Offices** to monitor their gender balance data in real time and inform their hiring decisions.



**Identify women at P3-P5 levels with leadership potential** in talent reviews for career and development opportunities (i.e., leadership and mentoring programmes, DRR/RR Assessment Center, and others).



Increase **targeted outreach efforts to attract qualified women candidates**, as relevant, to apply to positions at the levels where there is still lack of parity (i.e., internal, and system-wide talent pools, headhunting, etc.).



Continuously **analyse results from exit interviews for all personnel**, with a special focus on women personnel, to inform offices' tailored action plans to advance gender parity.



Advertise GS positions at levels where parity is not reached externally to increase the diversity of the respective talent pool with a special focus on attracting male candidates.

#### **Objective 2**

#### Foster gender parity in crisis and post-crisis contexts



Women's representation in crisis and post-crisis offices continues to pose a challenge. A tailored action plan to address women's under-representation in crisis contexts will be implemented in close collaboration with the Crisis Bureau and Regional Bureaus overseeing Country Offices in crisis and post-crisis contexts.

#### **Key initiatives include:**



Design and deploy dedicated sourcing strategies to attract qualified female talent into crisis and postcrisis country offices, for all open roles, through UNDP's Employer Value Proposition (EVP) (e.g., highlighting career stories of staff, especially women, working in crisis offices) and dedicated outreach campaigns.



Leverage internal and external (e.g., of other UN Agencies) rosters to identify qualified women candidates interested in or already serving in crisis contexts; and identify internal female talent serving in crisis **contexts for more senior roles** through talent reviews.



Facilitate career moves by promoting liens on posts, proactively offering career opportunities for women (and men) serving in crisis and post-crisis contexts; and considering women staff serving at P3 level and above with a minimum duration of 1 year in their current assignment for deployment opportunities in crisis and post-crisis contexts.



Integrate dedicated support to women serving in crisis contexts in on-boarding programmes, as well as throughout their assignment – e.g., providing access to the course on women's safety in the field, having an on-boarding conversation with an HR person or manager in preparation for the assignment, connecting with a stress counselor, having access to key resources for staff in emergencies, etc.



Prioritise participation in learning-related initiatives for personnel interested to serve/serving in crisis and post-crisis contexts, with a special focus on women (i.e., stretch assignment opportunities, mentoring and career development programs, etc.).



Promote existing flexible working arrangements and family-friendly policies that meet the needs of men, women and personnel with additional gender identities who work in crisis and post-crisis contexts.



Ensure that existing leadership development programmes include scenarios and learning content that is sensitive to crisis contexts. For example, how to identify the risks for women in crisis contexts and measures to address these risks.

#### **Objective 3**

# Strengthen UNDP as a gender inclusive workplace



A renewed focus on workplace experiences requires a more holistic view of the ways that gender expression and gender identity impact personnel. To develop the organisation's ability to respond to the lived experiences, realities and needs of women, men, and people with additional gender identities in the workplace, **UNDP** will work to strengthen its gender inclusive culture, to reduce gender-based biases and exclusion, and to ensure that every person in the organisation consistently enjoys a safe, positive, and empowering working environment and employee experience. Not only does inclusion lead to greater performance results, it also increases the sense of belonging. If the culture is inclusive and supportive, retention increases. Hence the investment in culture offers substantive returns and cost savings.

#### **Key initiatives include:**



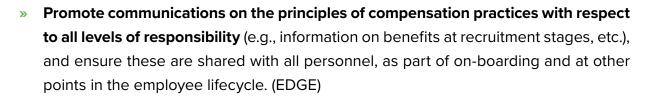
#### Policies and guidance to promote family friendly work environments

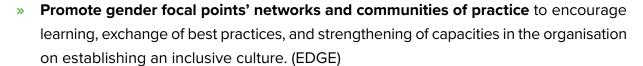
- » Promulgate a revised Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) Policy that incorporates lessons learnt from COVID-19. (EDGE)
- Extend and harmonise the parental leave policy for all parents (in line with the ICSC recommendation and relevant GA decisions) and issue a single Parental Leave Policy, replacing the current separate policies on maternity, paternity, and adoption leave. (EDGE)
- Strengthen awareness of family friendly policies through enhanced communications, with a special focus on encouraging men to take parental leave. (EDGE)
- Encourage managers to foster a family-friendly and work-life balance work culture in which flexibility around working hours, and measures for workload management are implemented, with a special focus on personnel with caregiving responsibilities (i.e. children, elderly, family members with disabilities).
- » Design, refine and implement re-entry programs, phased returns, and other reintegration measures to attract UNDP personnel with family responsibilities who have taken long-term career breaks. (EDGE)



#### Targeted interventions to promote capacity building and accountability

- » Implement a corporate mentoring program with a specific focus on women with potential to progress to levels where women are under-represented. (EDGE)
- » Include the quality of the working environment targets and objectives into Integrated Work Plans (IWPs) and the individual Annual Goal Plans (AGPs) of Heads of Offices, as relevant.
- » Conduct a yearly gender pay-gap assessment and ensure corrective measures to address detected gender pay gaps, if any, are designed and implemented, as appropriate. (EDGE)







#### Gender inclusivity

- » Explore mechanisms that refine existing mandatory gender markers in UNDP personnel profiles to provide UNDP personnel with the opportunity to indicate their gender, not sex at birth, and include woman, man, and non-binary. In addition to mandatory fields (woman, man and non-binary) also provide non-mandatory fields: trans-woman, trans-man, and non-conforming. Candidates should be able to pick more than one option. Assess how to collect and use such data in different contexts and for various purposes, e.g., in the recruitment process.
- » Update UNDP's systems to ensure that they are set-up to successfully intake personnel with passports that have an "X" or no gender in place of their gender identification.
- » Implement blind assessments, where feasible, to reduce potential for gender bias. For example, remove gender identifiers during the written testing phase.
- » Implement communication campaigns that raise awareness of preferred pronouns use (e.g., He/She/They) and encourage their voluntary adoption as part of UNDP personnel profiles to strengthen UNDP's gender inclusive culture.

# O3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress in the implementation of the Strategy will be tracked continuously and an annual report will be submitted to GSIC.

The UNDP workforce data available through Power BI and the UN System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity will both be leveraged to strengthen monitoring and data collection on representation data across the organisation. The People for 2030 - Phase II Strategy recognises that a positive employee experience is one of the key predictors of engagement - people's emotional commitment to work that drives productivity, motivation, performance, and results. As such, the staff survey (and additional surveys as needed) will be deployed to identify and validate insights and feedback on employee experience across UNDP to support focused analysis in alignment with the objectives.

The table below shows the key outcome indicators that will be monitored to evaluate the impact of the Strategy.

Outcomes		er equal workplace where women, men and people wi	th different gender identitie	
Outcome Indicators				
Indicator	Baseline	Target	Source of data	
1. Maintain equal representation of women and men among staff at all le	evels at UNDP, and among senior	management, as well as reach parity at P4 through D	2 levels by 2025	
a. Percentage of men and women at the UNDP level among staff and workforce	50/50	Maintained 50/50	DEI PowerBI Dashboards	
b. Percentage of women to reach parity (above 47%) across all grades including in senior manager positions (P4, P5, D1 and D2)	P4 - 44.4% P5 - 41.5% D1 - 47.2% D2 - 40.2%	47% to 50% of women across all grades (P4 - D2)	DEI PowerBI Dashboards	
c. Percentage of men at the P1, P2, G7, G6, and G5 levels.	P1 – 36.8% P2 – 37.9% G5 - 41.7% G6 - 36.9% G7 - 38.2%	At least 15% increase in share of men at the G5 -G7 levels	DEI PowerBI Dashboards	
2. Foster gender parity in crisis and post-crisis contexts and increase the	share of women serving in crisis	and post-crisis contexts		
a. Percentage of women working in crisis and post-crisis contexts <sup>6</sup>	IP - 38.7% NO - 41.6% GS - 37.1%	At least 10% increase in each category	DEI PowerBI Dashboards	
b. Percentage overall positive engagement score of women serving in crisis and post-crisis contexts such that it matches the overall average for all women	TBD (baseline data to be calculated once historical GSS data is available in Glint)	TBC	Surveys	
3. Strengthen UNDP as a gender inclusive workplace and ensure that all experience	l personnel regardless of their gen	der identities enjoy an enabling work environment ar	nd a positive employee	
a. Percentage of personnel who completed the UNDP mandatory course: The Gender Journey: Thinking Outside the Box	80.1%	90%		
b. Percentage favorable engagement scores of UNDP personnel who are men, women, and people with additional gender identities	Female: 81% Male: 85%	At least 10% increase	Surveys	
c. Percentage gender divide of employee experience	6%	At least 3% improvement	Surveys	
d. Percentage of staff responding favorably to pulse surveys on flexible work arrangements and family friendly policies are across UNDP	TBD	At least 70%	Surveys	
e. A system to enable candidates/personnel to report non-binary gender identities in place	No	Yes	Quantum, ORC	

Data was collected as of 1 December 2021 and reflects the share of women serving in the following countries: Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Libya, Programme for the Palestinian People, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Venezuela and Ukraine.

# O4 Governance

#### Leadership

The Administrator and members of the Gender Steering and Implementation Group (GSIC) will champion the implementation of the Gender Parity Strategy.

#### Reporting and accountability

Every year, a set of concrete actions will be implemented based on available funding and will be periodically reassessed for impact. Bureau Directors and Heads of Offices will be accountable for the implementation of agreed actions. In line with the established practice, each Bureau will define and then report on the implementation of their annual commitments and related Action Plans.

BMS/OHR will be responsible for measuring progress in the Strategy implementation and will track achievements of the key results through the employee engagement platform, the Power BI workforce analytics dashboards, and other mechanisms, and will provide annual reports to GSIC, as well as ad hoc progress updates, as needed.

As part of the UN-wide reporting, the UNDP Administrator will annually report to the Chief Executives Board (CEB) chaired by the UN Secretary General on reaching the agreed targets and implementation of the UNDP Gender Parity Strategy.

Key targets for some gender parity and working environment indicators calculated based on the GSS data have been included into the Strategic Plan Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) and UNDP will report to the Executive Board on the achievement of annual milestones as part of the Annual Report. UNDP will also report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of which measures to ensure gender parity internally is part.

#### **Implementation**

While most of the action would be required in each Bureau/Office, BMS/OHR will support and facilitate the implementation of the Strategy and related actions. As such, it will take the lead in the development and issuance of respective human resources polices, instructions and guidance, design and implementation of corporate learning, development, career support, and other talent management activities and programs.

The BMS/OHR Business Partners will play a key role in supporting the rollout and socialisation of this strategy, especially in partnering with leadership toward achieving organisational change. BPPS Gender Team will be a technical partner for BMS/OHR, and other Bureaus' Gender Focal Points across UNDP will be key partners in implementing the Strategy and supporting systems of monitoring and accountability.



#### Annex 1: Key achievements under the 2018-2021, **UNDP Gender Parity Strategy**

To support gender parity tracking across the UN system and as part of efforts to promote a ONE UN approach to Gender Parity, UNDP jointly with UN Women developed a UN System Wide Dashboard on Gender Parity. As of December 2021, there are 38 agencies reporting against gender parity at all levels of their organisation.

UNDP's policy on "Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority" was updated in 2018 and 2021. The updated policy is aligned with the CEB Model Policy on Sexual Harassment. In addition to the policy, a comprehensive Strategy and an Action Plan were also developed to strengthen prevention.

To increase UNDP staff and managers' understanding of gender equality issues and prompt action to help achieve gender equality objectives, the online Gender Journey course has been made available at the UNDP Learning Management **System**. The Gender Journey is an exploration of the meaning of gender equality to help staff understand the connection between gender equality and UNDP's organisational goals. It is part of mandatory training for all UNDP staff and was revised in 2021 to reflect the latest research. Additional virtual learning paths and resources were curated and offered to women and men on topics related to women and leadership in partnership with LinkedIn Learning and Coursera.

Recognising that women remain under-represented at more senior professional levels, a variety of learning and career development programs were offered to women. For example, the UNDP SPARK (Strive. Perform. Aspire. Reimagine. Know.) Career development program was launched in July 2020 and provides state-of-the-art tools, coaching and resources to support the professional development of UNDP personnel across the globe.

The new UNDP Competency Framework includes gender-related technical competencies, such as Gender and Institutional Development. Gender parity and diversity are explicitly mentioned in the UNDP job site as a key feature of the UNDP working environment. UNDP also encourages qualified women to apply for its positions in its vacancy announcements.

In recognition of the significant progress UNDP has made towards ensuring gender equality and its commitment to an inclusive workplace, UNDP was awarded the EDGE Move Certificate by the Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE) organisation. The EDGE MOVE award is the second highest level of gender equality achievable, and UNDP is the second UN entity to receive this certification. The EDGE Action Plan which was developed in response to the findings of the assessment has been incorporated in its entirety into the Gender Parity Strategy, 2022-2025.

To make UNDP a more family-friendly organisation as part of its Parental Leave Policy, two months of Special Leave with Full Pay for IP staff members serving in D and E duty stations in conjunction with the maternity leave was introduced. Increased time away from the office for staff who are breastfeeding/expressing milk was also provided. Additional measures have been introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic and built into the proposals for the Reimagine Workplace.

A gender parity indicator is included into the UNDP Strategic Plan Integrated Results and Resources Framework and is reported annually to the UNDP Executive Board "Percentage of staff who are female.



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