



EVALUATION REPORT

# UN WOMEN SOMALIA COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION 2022–2025





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**UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and  
Investigation Services (IEAIS)**

Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

**UN Women**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We extend our thanks to Inga Kaplan Chief of the Independent Evaluation Service; Lisa Sutton, Director of the Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services; and our Independent Evaluation Service peer reviewer, Kay Lau, Regional Evaluation Specialist in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region.

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# ACRONYMS

<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CPE</b>	Country Portfolio Evaluation
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>IEAIS</b>	Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services
<b>IES</b>	Independent Evaluation Service
<b>LEAP</b>	Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection of Women and Girls in Crisis Programme
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNSCR 1325</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
<b>UNSOM</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
<b>UNTMIS</b>	United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Protection (Joint Programme)
<b>WPC</b>	Women's Parliamentary Caucus

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PURPOSE

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) conducted a country portfolio evaluation (CPE) of the Somalia Programme Presence to provide an independent and systematic assessment of UN Women's contributions to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Somalia between 2022 and 2025, which covers the period of the Strategic Note.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation's purpose is to support (a) enhanced accountability for development effectiveness; and (b) learning to inform UN Women Somalia's next Strategic Note.

## OBJECTIVES

The evaluation objectives were to:

- Assess the relevance and added value, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability of the UN Women portfolio in Somalia.
- Identify lessons and good practices to be shared.
- Provide actionable recommendations to inform development of the new Strategic Note.

## INTENDED USERS

The primary intended users of this evaluation are UN Women Somalia personnel, who will use the findings to develop and implement the office's new Strategic Note. Secondary users are expected to be the UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, headquarters colleagues, national partners and other stakeholders working in the region.

## BACKGROUND ON THE UN WOMEN PROGRAMME PRESENCE OFFICE

The Somalia office was established in 2015. Based on the Strategic Note for the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Somalia has operated as a Programme Presence since 2015.

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note is the main planning tool for the office to articulate how it will implement UN Women's triple mandate across normative, coordination and operational work in Somalia. The Strategic Note 2022–2025 is aligned with the Somalia National Development Plan-9 2020–2024; UN strategies and frameworks in the country, specifically the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; and is consistent with conclusions and recommendations of the Common Country Analysis, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan and UN Somalia Gender Strategy. The UN Women Somalia budget between 2022 and 2024 was US\$ 9.2 million.

## METHOD

The CPE employed a theory-based, gender-responsive approach. In consultation with UN Women Somalia, the evaluation team reconstructed the Strategic Note's theory of change and used it as the basis for contribution analysis. Evaluation questions were developed using the theory of change and assessed against the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee criteria. The evaluation team obtained multiple sources of data and consulted 100 stakeholders through interviews, focus groups and surveys. The CPE was delivered in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Handbook. All evaluation products were subject to quality review by IES management, a peer reviewer and the Evaluation Reference Group.

<sup>1</sup> The CPE focused on the current Strategic Note cycle (2022–2025) with the understanding that it was yet to be completed. The CPE analysed work completed through Q4 2024.



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### RELEVANCE

**The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note is highly relevant, as it aligns well with national development priorities, humanitarian frameworks and international commitments on gender equality.**

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note responds to the pressing needs of women and girls in Somalia, particularly in the context of conflict, displacement and climate-related crises. However, to sustain and deepen its relevance, continued engagement with local stakeholders; greater alignment with grassroots priorities; and implementing gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives at scale will be essential to ensure that interventions remain context-specific and responsive to the evolving needs of the target population.

### COHERENCE

**The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note aligns with Somalia's national policies and strategies on gender equality and women's empowerment, and is coherent with UN Country Team (UNCT) and donor strategies.**

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note has an adequate level of coherence with the country's priorities and the UN system. UN Women Somalia's coordination – strengthened by co-leadership of the UNCT, joint programmes and external coordination mechanisms – has enhanced the alignment of the Strategic Note with UNCT efforts and Somalia's national gender equality priorities, promoting a unified approach to women's empowerment. However, further efforts are needed to strengthen coherence and expand the UN's coordinated approach to advancing gender equality in Somalia. Internal coherence within UN Women Somalia's programmes is also limited.

### EFFECTIVENESS

**The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note has been an effective tool for advancing policy advocacy for women's empowerment, joint programme delivery and UN coordination, yet its scale to respond to gender equality needs in Somalia is limited.**

Although UN Women in Somalia has demonstrated effectiveness in policy advocacy, joint programme delivery and UN coordination, structural, contextual, financial and operational barriers continue to limit its potential for broader impact. The evaluation notes the significant organizational capacity and resource mobilization constraints

that limit UN Women Somalia's operational capability to respond to the needs of the target population at scale.

### SUSTAINABILITY

**Prospects for the sustainability of UN Women Somalia's interventions appear promising but remain fragile.**

The sustainability of UN Women's work in Somalia depends on strengthening linkages to local systems for increased ownership; securing long-term investments; and sustaining efforts to transform deeply entrenched gender norms within a context of persistent humanitarian challenges.

### ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

**UN Women Somalia faces significant structural, financial and operational challenges that hinder its ability to effectively implement programmes at scale.**

UN Women Somalia requires strategic commitment to improving the availability of human resources, enabling operational processes and oversight, and addressing security considerations. Given Somalia is a critical country in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality needs, ensuring that the office is well-equipped, adequately staffed and effectively managed is imperative for development and implementation of the next Strategic Note.

### HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

**While UN Women in Somalia has made significant progress in empowering vulnerable women and improving the representation of various marginalized groups, there are still critical gaps in including women from hard-to-reach areas.**

The involvement of religious and traditional leaders in programmes has been beneficial in promoting gender equality; however, challenges remain, particularly in reaching newly liberated areas of the country, as well as rural and displaced women and securing the resources necessary to ensure programme continuity.

Additionally, the lack of legislative endorsement of the Sexual Offences Bill, which protects women's rights, highlights the need for ongoing advocacy to ensure that all marginalized women access comprehensive support and interventions. There is no evidence to suggest that persons with disabilities at the community level were fully integrated into joint programme activities for example.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1

**UN Women should strengthen its personnel capacity in the Somalia office to ensure strategic positioning and long-term programme delivery.**

UN Women should seek to support the Somalia Programme Presence to strengthen its personnel capacity to maximize its impact and effectively implement its mandate. UN Women Somalia must also enhance its strategic positioning by prioritizing its comparative advantage in the normative and coordination spheres. Together with a tailored resource mobilization strategy, this would help to better equip UN Women Somalia with a sustainable structure to advance its work in the country.

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2

**UN Women Somalia should devise sustainable strategies to recruit and retain the programme personnel required to implement long-term programmes. The office should consider recruiting gender equality expertise to contribute to the UNCT and other partners in advocating and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.**

UN Women Somalia should prioritize recruitment of technical personnel with long-term contracts to sustain programme present capacities with a view to building trust from stakeholders, as well as invest in monitoring and evaluation capacities and systems to generate high-quality data on programme outcomes.

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3

**UN Women Somalia should focus on enhancing programming by focusing on leveraging joint programming and improve linking cross-thematic areas.**

UN Women Somalia should enhance its programming by better linking thematic areas; continuing to implement joint programmes; increasing its focus on normative and coordination work to ensure scalability of outcomes; and increasing its efforts to reach the most marginalized populations.

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4

**UN Women Somalia should invest in resource mobilization and communication**

by strengthening its relationships with current donors and building relationships with potential donors.

# 1. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

## PURPOSE

The evaluation's purpose was to promote learning and accountability. It was a formative evaluation to support UN Women Somalia and national stakeholders' strategic learning and decision-making processes.

The CPE provides an independent and systematic assessment of the contributions made by UN Women Somalia to development results with respect to gender equality at the country level; and an assessment of organizational efficiency to feed into learning on what strategies worked well and what needs strengthening.

The primary uses of this evaluation are:

- Learning what strategies work best to advance gender equality in the context of Somalia to support effective decision-making.
- Accountability for UN Women's contribution to advance gender equality in Somalia, in coordination with other UN agencies.

The primary intended users of the CPE are the UN Women Somalia Programme Presence and its key stakeholders, including the government, civil society organizations (CSOs), development partners, other UN agencies and the UN Women Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa, UN Women headquarters, including the Senior Management Team and IEAIS. UNCT Somalia may also use the findings of this CPE as key inputs to the development of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

## EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The specific objectives of the CPE were to:

- Assess the relevance and added value, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability of the UN Women portfolio in Somalia.
- Identify lessons and good practices to be shared.
- Provide actionable recommendations to inform development of the new Strategic Note.

The CPE focused on the current Strategic Note cycle (2022–2025) with the understanding that it is yet to be completed. The CPE analysed work completed through Q4 2024 and ensured a formative analysis of UN Women Somalia's strategy moving forward. The entire programme of work and UN Women's integrated mandate were assessed, including UN Women Somalia's contributions to the normative, coordination and operational mandates. The geographic scope included all locations where UN Women delivered programmes. The analysis was forward looking and an appreciative exploration of how UN Women Somalia can best leverage UN Women's coordination mandate in the future.

## 2. COUNTRY CONTEXT

### SOMALIA COUNTRY CONTEXT

Nearly three decades of conflict, insecurity, political fragility, recurrent climatic shocks and increasing economic pressure have had devastating impacts on the lives of millions of Somalis. Although the formation of a new government and peaceful transition of presidential power in May 2022 brought growing levels of political stability, the security situation remains extremely volatile.<sup>2</sup> As Somalia continues its long recovery, the country has made progress in several areas, including institution building at the national and Federal Member State level, military gains against Al-Shabaab, increased economic growth and improved public sector management.<sup>3</sup>

Economically, the country has prioritized building resilience to shocks to support job creation and economic growth. Economic growth has been challenged by severe droughts, floods, the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity and conflict. GDP growth has been low, averaging only 2 per cent per year between 2019 and 2023. In recent years, rains have strengthened agricultural production and exports, reducing food insecurity. Nonetheless, the economy is heavily dependent on imports, as the conflict has significantly reduced the economy's productive capacity. In 2023, the trade deficit was estimated at 59 per cent of GDP, financed by private remittances and official grants.<sup>4</sup>

Against this background, work is still needed to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in Somalia. The country's societal structure is deeply rooted in a patriarchal framework, where traditional norms and Islamic teachings converge to shape gender roles. Bryden and Steiner<sup>5</sup> note that the clan system is central to Somali identity, influencing both social dynamics and individual development. Within this framework, women's roles have been historically circumscribed and cultural norms prescribe distinct paths for men and women, which often limits women's opportunities for social and economic advancement.

The legal landscape regarding gender equality is marked by both formal statutes and customary laws. According to the Provisional Constitution of Somalia, women are entitled to various rights, including participation in political processes and access to education.<sup>6</sup> However, prevailing customary laws that prioritize traditional practices over statutory protections often undermine the enforcement of these rights. Somalia's commitment to international agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), remains inconsistent, resulting in significant gaps in implementation. Somalia is yet to ratify CEDAW.

<sup>2</sup> [Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan \(February 2023\) - Somalia | ReliefWeb](#)

<sup>3</sup> [UN Somalia Common Country Analysis 2020\\_3.pdf](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Somalia Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank](#)

<sup>5</sup> Bryden, M., & Steiner, M. I. (1998). *Gender and the Clan System in Somalia*

<sup>6</sup> UN Women Country Fact Sheet: Somalia 2020.

In terms of education, data reveal that the literacy rate for women is significantly lower than that for men, with estimates indicating that only 37 per cent of women are literate compared to 64 per cent of men.<sup>7</sup> This educational gap severely impacts women's ability to participate in the workforce and engage in civic activities, thereby perpetuating cycles of inequality. In terms of maternal health, the World Bank reports a maternal mortality ratio of 620.68 per 100,000 live births, with only 31.9 per cent of births attended by skilled health personnel.<sup>8</sup> In addition, according to the Somalia Health and Demographic Survey 2020, 36 per cent of women aged 20–24 were married by the time they turned 18, and the median age at first marriage is 20 for Somali women aged 25–49. Many women of reproductive age (15–49 years) face barriers in accessing their sexual and reproductive health and rights, as reflected by the high adolescent birth rate of 115.7 per 1,000 girls aged 15–19. In 2019, only 2.1 per cent of women had access to modern family planning provisions.

The availability of gender-disaggregated data remains limited. According to the UN Women Somalia Factsheet 2020,<sup>9</sup> as of December 2020, only 21.3 per cent of indicators required to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a gender perspective were available.

In 2022, 55 per cent of the population lived below the national poverty line, with poverty rates higher among the nomadic population. Labour force participation rates are low. One third of men participate in the labour market, compared to 12 per cent of women.<sup>10</sup> In terms of economic participation, women's involvement is limited, with many engaged in informal sectors where job security and benefits are scarce. In 2022, the unemployment rate among women was 27 per cent, significantly higher than the 15 per cent rate for men.<sup>11</sup> This disparity reflects broader economic inequalities.

In terms of political participation, Somalia has established a 30 per cent seat quota for women representatives; however, as of February 2024, women occupied only 19.6 per cent of seats in the national parliament.<sup>12</sup> Efforts to enhance women's political representation have been met with challenges, including societal resistance and

institutional barriers. Consequently, as reflected in the UN Women Country Fact Sheet for Somalia 2020,<sup>13</sup> local governance structures also reflect this disparity, with few mechanisms in place to promote gender parity in political appointments.

In terms of ending violence against women and girls, data from 2019 indicates that 14 per cent of women aged 15–49 reported experiencing physical violence since the age of 12, while 8 per cent reported they had experienced physical violence in the 12 months preceding the Somali Health and Demographic Survey.<sup>14</sup>

There is also evidence that gender-based violence (GBV) is increasing. The survey further showed that over half (61 per cent) of reported GBV incidents were physical assault, 13 per cent rape, 12 per cent sexual assault, 6 per cent psychological/emotional abuse, 5 per cent a denial of resources and 3 per cent forced/early marriage.<sup>15</sup> The Somali Health and Demographic Survey reports that 99 per cent of women aged 15–49 have undergone circumcision.

In terms of humanitarian needs, the 2020–2023 drought was the longest and most severe drought in 40 years, more than doubling the number of people affected by drought since the beginning of 2022. Displacement has increased threefold since early 2022, with more than 1.3 million people displaced due to drought alone and leaving over 8.25 million people, nearly half of Somalia's population, in need of immediate life-saving humanitarian and protection assistance.<sup>16</sup>

Gender inequality in Somalia is deeply entrenched, with women facing systemic discrimination in various spheres of life. The patriarchal structure of Somali society, combined with the impacts of prolonged violence and climate change, has resulted in increased GBV. Reports indicate that domestic violence has surged as men struggle to fulfil traditional roles as providers, leading to tensions within households. Women also often bear the brunt of climate-related challenges, as they are primarily responsible for securing water and food for their families, tasks that become increasingly difficult during times of drought and conflict.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF *Child Marriage in Somalia* 2021

<sup>8</sup> World Bank. (2021). *Somalia Health Sector Review*

<sup>9</sup> [UN Women Somalia Factsheet](#). Accessed January, 2025

<sup>10</sup> [World Bank Overview](#). Accessed May 9, 2024

<sup>11</sup> International Labour Organization *World Employment and Social Outlook 2022*.

<sup>12</sup> IPU *Women in National Parliaments 2024*

<sup>13</sup> [UN Women Somalia Factsheet](#). Accessed January, 2025

<sup>14</sup> UNFPA Somalia | The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020.

<sup>15</sup> [Gender Based Violence Information Management System \(GBVIMS\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/ff-2020-000055-som>

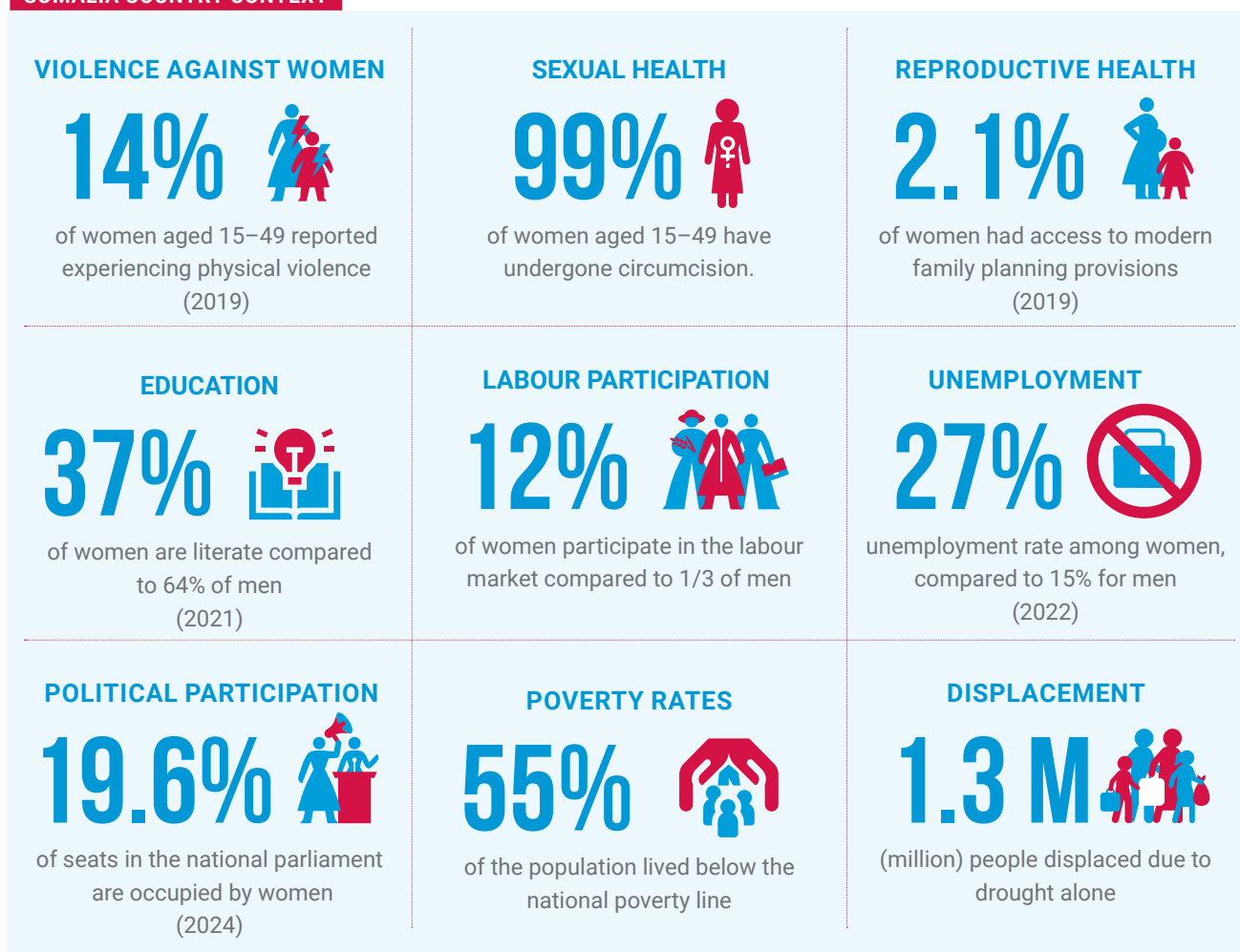
<sup>17</sup> [Climate crisis, gender inequalities and local response in Somalia/Somaliland - Forced Migration Review](#)

The UN system in Somalia operates through initiatives implemented by 26 agencies, funds and programmes, alongside the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS).<sup>18</sup>

The UN system in Somalia has developed an UN Somalia Gender Equality Strategy for 2021–2025 that is grounded in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for 2021–2025. The strategy

provides guidance to the UN system for mainstreaming gender equality in implementation of the Cooperation Framework and the Somalia National Development Plan-9. UN Women holds the secretariat of the UN Gender Theme Group, which acts as the primary mechanism to facilitate implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy, bringing all stakeholders together, ensuring effective coordination and reporting on progress.

#### SOMALIA COUNTRY CONTEXT



<sup>18</sup> UNTMIS succeeded the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) as of 1 November 2024 following the conclusion of UNSOM's operations on 31 October 2024, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2753. This change reflects the progress in Somalia and aligns with the Federal Government of Somalia's request for a two-year phased transfer of UNSOM's functions to the UNCT by October 2026.

# 3. PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

## BACKGROUND

The UN Women Somalia Office was established in 2015. Based on the Strategic Note for the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office, Somalia has operated as a Programme Presence since 2015.<sup>19</sup>

## STRATEGIC NOTE 2022–2025

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note is the Programme Presence's main planning tool to support its normative, coordination and operational work. The Strategic Note 2022–2025 is aligned with the Somalia National Development Plan-9 2020–2024; UN strategies and frameworks in the country, specifically the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; and is consistent with conclusions and recommendations of the Common Country Analysis, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan and UN Somalia Gender Strategy. The Strategic Note is grounded in the standards, principles and obligations of CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Concluding Observations of the Commission on the Status of Women, SDGs, the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, and UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Strategic Note is also in line with the key priorities and challenges outlined in the National Report on the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action +25, as well as the Gender Profile

jointly undertaken by the African Development Bank Group and UN Women.

UN Women Somalia's key initiatives and projects include: the Joint Women, Peace and Protection (WPP) Programme<sup>20</sup>, the Rule of Law joint programme in Somaliland and advancing the Women's Leadership, Access, Empowerment and Protection (LEAP) programmatic work, linking it with the humanitarian portfolio.

To date, there have been no significant changes to the Strategic Note during its period of implementation.

## FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

UN Women Somalia's total budget during the period under evaluation (2022–2024) was US\$ 6.8 million; as of January 2025, US\$ 5.1 million was recorded in expenditure. As of January 2025, UN Women Somalia had a total of 12 personnel, comprising four staff and eight personnel including service contracts (four), consultants (three) and UN Volunteers (one).

During 2022–2024, the two main donors to UN Women's programmatic efforts in Somalia were the Peace Building Fund (42 per cent of the total budget), followed by the Government of Japan (29 per cent). Figure 1 summarizes UN Women Somalia's human and financial portfolio during the Strategic Note period 2022–2024.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The UN Women Enterprise Management System lists Somalia as a Country Office without Delegation of Authority.

<sup>20</sup> The Joint Women, Peace and Protection Programme will be abbreviated as WPS Programme throughout the report to ensure clarity in its thematic objective.

<sup>21</sup> Data available until 2025 in UN Women's internal systems at the time of extraction.

## KEY PARTNERS

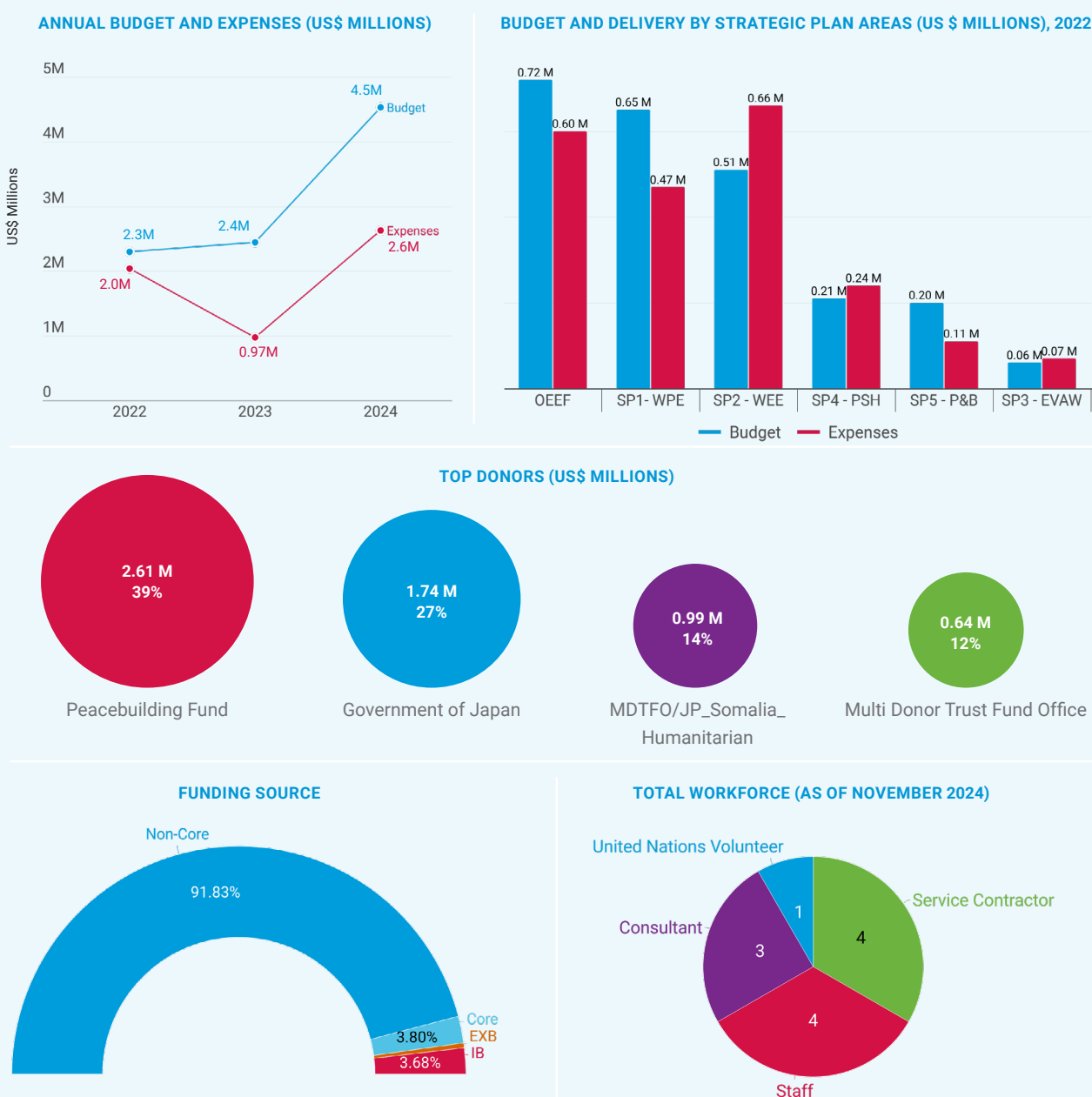
During the initial phase of the evaluation process, the evaluation team conducted a series of preliminary interviews with UN Women Somalia and Regional Office personnel. These discussions were instrumental in laying the groundwork for identifying and mapping the key stakeholders relevant to the CPE.

The evaluation team mapped the different categories of stakeholders engaged throughout data collection. The main stakeholder groups are as follows:

- The UN Women Somalia team responsible for implementing the Strategic Note.
- The Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office responsible for collaborating and supporting implementation of the Somalia Strategic Note.

- UN agencies as collaborating organizations within the UN system in Somalia, and partners in joint programmes.
- Government partners, relevant governmental bodies and officials at Federal and Member State Level, and primary duty bearers responsible for leading the country's development.
- CSOs, non-governmental organizations and community-based groups that contribute to the same results as UN Women Somalia.
- Donors of UN Women's work in Somalia.

**FIGURE 1: Portfolio analysis for UN Women Somalia 2022–2024**



Source: UN Women's corporate database Quantum, January 2025. Prepared by the evaluation team



# 4. METHODOLOGY

## METHODOLOGY

The CPE employed a non-experimental, mixed methods, theory-based and gender-responsive approach. The evaluation answered key questions and subquestions as defined in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 7). After consultations with the Evaluation Reference Groups, the evaluation team reviewed the questions to ensure they reflected the priorities of key stakeholders. The evaluation team applied the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability, as well as a human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion criterion.

The use of participatory methods was carefully considered based on the local context and all health and security guidelines were followed. The desk review was conducted through the lens of external context analysis and how it applies to the situation of women and girls in Somalia. The evaluation methods were discussed with the Evaluation Reference Group and IES senior managers for feedback, and adapted as appropriate.

The CPE was transparent and participatory, involving relevant UN Women stakeholders and partners. The analysis applied a human rights and gender-responsive lens by integrating United Nations Evaluation Group guidance on Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation that suggests analysing links with guiding normative frameworks (e.g. CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action), underlying power dynamics, institutional structures and barriers to gender equality, and reflecting on who has voice in the evaluation.

## DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection was driven by the key evaluation questions and selected with the aim of providing the most useful information possible to UN Women Somalia. Primary data collection was largely qualitative, with some quantitative data collected through surveys (the

evaluation matrix is available in Annex 7; sample data collection tools are also included in Annex 8). Multiple sources of data were obtained: 67 stakeholders from across stakeholder groups were consulted (50 women and 17 men); two surveys were conducted: (a) a UN Women personnel survey with an 61 per cent response rate (N=15/25; 11 women, 4 men); (b) a survey to external partners of the with a 24 per cent response rate (N=18/75; 9 women, 9 men). The evaluation team conducted focus group discussions with 18 participants from the LEAP Programme, and one participatory most significant change discussion.

Before collecting any data, an explanation of the purpose and use of the evaluation, and assurances about the confidentiality of the information, was provided to the participants. Rights holders were consulted about whether they were in a safe space to speak, and their oral consent was requested in their local language. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to opt out of participation or skip any questions. The evaluators highlighted the potential benefits and harm in participating, and that participants could stop the interview or focus group discussion at any point. All responses have been anonymized; there is no expected harm to participants. The evaluation team will share the evaluation brief with all evaluation stakeholders. To ensure fair representation of different voices, the sampling approach took into consideration coverage of different stakeholder categories, including those hard to reach.

The evaluators complied with the UNEG Code of Conduct<sup>22</sup> and delivered the evaluation with honesty, professionalism and impartiality. The evaluators are independent from programme delivery.

Multiple methods of analysis were carried out using both primary and secondary data to triangulate evidence, including desk review, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and UN Women's financial and human resource analysis.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.unevaluation.org/unevaluation/publications/unevaluation-code-conduct-evaluation-un-system>, UNEG

**FIGURE 2: Summary of methodology**



Source: Developed by the evaluation team

## LIMITATIONS

The Strategic Note has passed its mid-point, and it is important to note that progress is still ongoing towards delivering the current Strategic Note outcomes. Overall, the CPE consulted a large and diverse range of stakeholders. The main limitation was that the rights holders consulted from the Somalia LEAP initiative were identified by the programme partner, and the initiative ended in 2024. This may present a response bias, as they may speak more favourably about the programme given their potential desire to continue receiving funds. To reduce bias, the information obtained was focused on rights holders' life experiences before and during the project to bring forth stories of change, rather than solely assessing their perspective on the performance of project implementers.

While there were no field visits to programme implementation sites, a focus group discussion with a sample of rights holders from the LEAP programme was organized and held near Mogadishu. sample sizes were limited, which challenged the interpretation of results and its conclusions. The evaluation mitigated this limitation with strong triangulation with key informant interview data and the desk review.

Data collection was triangulated between sources and methods and validated with UN Women Somalia and the Evaluation Reference Group to ensure validity and reliability.

## EVALUATION GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEY

The UN Women Evaluation Report Quality Assurance criteria is the main tool used to ensure quality of evaluation reports. All evaluation products are subject to review by Evaluation Reference Groups (external and internal) and IEAIS Senior Management.

The internal reference group for this evaluation includes UN Women personnel from the Somalia Programme Presence and the Regional Office. The external reference group included members of the national government of Somalia, UN partners and representatives of women-led organizations in Somalia. The Evaluation Reference Groups were engaged to review the inception report and the draft evaluation reports. Their feedback was critical to ensure factual accuracy and accurate interpretation of contextual information and to identify gaps in the analysis.

# 5. FINDINGS

## RELEVANCE

**To what extent did the Strategic Note aligned to gender equality frameworks; respond to the national priorities of the Somali government; and to the needs of the target population and other stakeholders? What is UN Women's added value in the context of Somalia given the work of its partners and expertise?**

### FINDING 1

**UN Women Somalia's Strategic Note is aligned with key international frameworks and addresses key critical issues such as women, peace and protection; gender-based violence; and women's economic empowerment. However, there is room to improve on how the Strategic Note responds to the needs of the target population.**

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note is firmly aligned with key international frameworks, particularly in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. A comprehensive review of documents and stakeholder interviews confirms its adherence to the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs, notably SDG 5, which emphasizes the need to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. This alignment demonstrates UN Women Somalia's commitment to international norms and principles, ensuring that its strategic objectives contribute to the broader global agenda on gender equality.

The Somalia Strategic Note is closely integrated with the national priorities of the Somali Government, aligning with the Somali National Development Plan - 9, now renamed the National Transformation Plan. These national frameworks incorporate cross-cutting policies aimed at fostering gender equality and social equity, further underscoring the relevance of the Strategic Note in addressing systemic challenges within Somalia's socio-political context.

However, despite the strong alignment with these frameworks, UN Women Somalia's lack of participation in the National Transformation Plan consultations related to gender equality,<sup>23</sup> and the Federal Government's failure to ratify CEDAW reveal critical gaps that need to be

addressed to reinforce Somalia's commitment to international standards on gender equality.

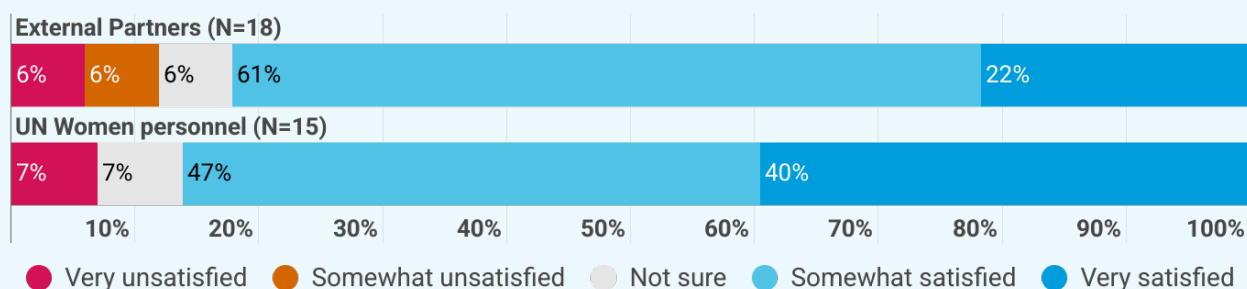
UN Women Somalia facilitated Somalia's national review for the Beijing+30 process in 2024, engaging government entities, CSOs and other stakeholders to assess progress in gender equality and women's empowerment. This collaborative effort ensured that Somalia's commitments were aligned with the Beijing Platform for Action's objectives

UN Women's work in Somalia is also aligned with UNSCR 1325 through implementation of the Somali National Action Plan 1325. Implementation of the National Action Plan is supported by Local Action Plans across five Federal Member States (Puntland, Southwest, Galmudug, Jubaland, Hirshabelle States and Banadir), where UN Women has facilitated grassroots-level gender initiatives, reinforcing Somalia's commitment to the WPS agenda.

An evaluation survey administered to internal and external stakeholders during the evaluation further highlighted the level of satisfaction among UN Women personnel regarding UN Women's work on alignment with the needs of the women and girls in Somalia. As reflected in Figure 3 below, 87 per cent (N=13/15) of UN Women personnel were somewhat satisfied or highly satisfied with UN Women's alignment, and only 14 per cent (N=2/15) of personnel were unsatisfied or not sure.

<sup>23</sup> UN Women Somalia did not participate in the consultations as it was not being invited.

**FIGURE 3: Survey results – satisfaction with UN Women’s work on alignment to the most pressing needs of women and girls in the country**



Source: Developed by the evaluation team

External stakeholders also reported being very satisfied with the alignment (61 per cent N=11/18), with a higher percentage being somewhat unsatisfied (22 per cent N=4/18) and 6 per cent (N=1/18) being very unsatisfied.

While the Strategic Note is aligned with key international frameworks on gender equality, there remains room for improvement in addressing the most urgent needs of women and girls. This is based on stakeholder perceptions and pending enactment of the Somalia Sexual Offences Bill, which is essential for ensuring alignment with international standards and frameworks related to GBV.

Stakeholders expressed that the Strategic Note does not fully address critical issues such as female genital mutilation and women’s access to justice.

Evaluation survey results indicate a generally positive perception of UN Women’s efforts, with 87 per cent of UN Women personnel very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the Strategic Note’s alignment with women’s needs; while 83 per cent of external partners expressed being very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. However, concerns persist regarding the Strategic Note’s efficacy, particularly in addressing the root causes of gender inequality.

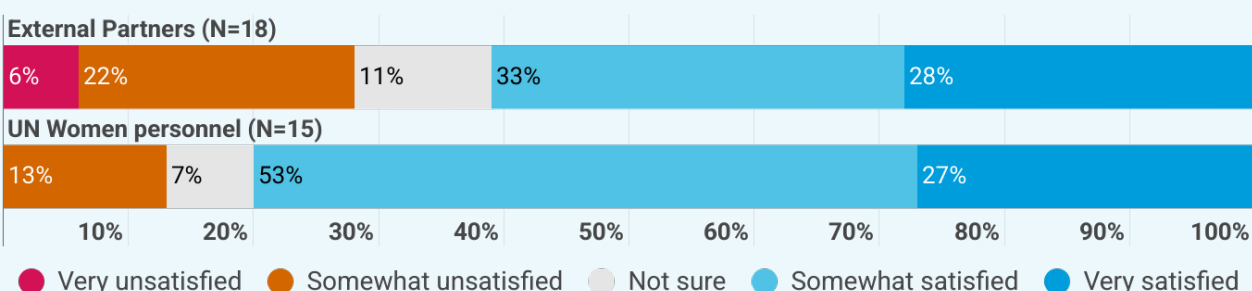
Survey results among external and internal stakeholders indicate a “somewhat satisfied” level of satisfaction in how UN Women Somalia is addressing the causes

of gender inequality, with 33 per cent (n=5/15) and 53 per cent (n=10/18) respectively. However, it is important to point out that both external (22 per cent, n=3/15) and internal respondents (13 per cent, n=2/18) expressed dissatisfaction with how the Strategic Note was addressing the causes of gender inequality. This indicates a recognition of UN Women’s efforts but also highlights a clear expectation for a more robust approach to tackling the underlying issues of gender disparity. The 27 per cent (n=4/15) and 28 per cent (n=5/18) “satisfied” rate suggests that many see value in the work being undertaken, yet the dissatisfaction expressed indicates a need for deeper engagement and more targeted interventions (see Figure 4).

Donor feedback suggested that UN Women’s limited resources and exclusion from key UN agency proposals pose barriers to implementing comprehensive gender equality interventions.

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note is well-aligned with international frameworks such as the SDGs, the Beijing Platform for Action and UNSCR 1325. However, survey results, inputs from interviews and challenges in promulgating laws, indicate that there is room to further align the next Strategic Note to the specific needs of the target populations for the advancement of gender equality and women’s rights in Somalia.

**FIGURE 4: Survey results – satisfaction with UN Women’s work on targeting the causes of gender inequality**



Source: Developed by the evaluation team

## FINDING 2

### **UN Women's added value in Somalia lies in its triple mandate, specifically the coordination mandate and its strong working relationships with women-led organizations from civil society.**

In Somalia, UN Women brings distinct added value by leveraging its mandate in gender equality and women's empowerment. The Entity's comparative advantage lies in its specialised focus on gender equality and women's empowerment, aligning its work with global frameworks such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW and the SDGs, ensuring Somalia's gender initiatives adhere to internationally recognized standards.

Stakeholder consultations and interviews highlighted UN Women's unique strength in its strong relationships with women-led organizations, positioning it to act as a key driver of gender-responsive policies and initiatives. Through its technical assistance and capacity-building efforts, UN Women Somalia contributed to empowering these organizations to advocate effectively for women's rights. For example, through the Women, Peace and Protection Joint (WPS) Programme,<sup>24</sup> UN Women Somalia contributed to supporting the establishment of 17 women's networks that serve as a platform fostering collaboration, resource-sharing and collective advocacy, significantly enhancing the impact of women-led efforts across Somalia (see also Findings 5 and 6).

During interviews, stakeholders mentioned UN Women's Somalia added value in its efforts on normative work, mainly policy advocacy and legislative support that contributed to strengthening Somalia's institutional commitment to gender equality. Stakeholders

emphasized UN Women Somalia's role in promoting women's leadership and participation in decision-making processes, notably through initiatives such as the Women's Caucus, which has strengthened women's involvement in peacebuilding and political arenas. This leadership has been formally recognized by the Federal Government of Somalia in transition of the UN political mission to UNCT, which requested that UN Women take the lead in gender equality and women's empowerment in Somalia.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, UN Women Somalia plays a key coordination function within the UN system in Somalia, ensuring a cohesive approach to gender equality. Stakeholders highlighted its leadership in various groups and task forces, as well as its contribution to developing the Somalia UN Gender Equality Scorecard, which has provided valuable insights for integrating gender considerations into programme planning and implementation (See Finding 4).

Stakeholders confirmed that this support provided them with valuable insights and guidance, ensuring that gender considerations are integrated into all levels of their programme planning and implementation. Stakeholders also mentioned the valuable expertise brought in from the Regional Office for specific gender-related training, such as gender and humanitarian action.

<sup>24</sup> Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme jointly implemented by UNDP and UN Women, and non-recipient agencies UNSOM/OHCHR.

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Federal Government of Somalia's proposal for Transition of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to a UNCT to better align with Somalia's national priorities and its evolving needs. The Transition Proposal identifies thematic areas that will be transferred to the government in a gradual manner in a two-year duration. Page 4 of proposal states "Women's Representation and Participation: will be under the purview of Federal Government of Somalia, with the UN WOMEN Coordinating UN Support."

## COHERENCE

**To what extent is there internal coherence within UN Women Somalia, and with the work of other key stakeholders who are working to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the country?**

### FINDING 3

**While the UN Women Somalia Strategic Note and its theory of change are designed to be coherent, internal coordination within the Somalia office was limited. As a result, programming had become fragmented, with minimal collaboration across thematic areas.**

The thematic focus areas contained in the Strategic Note are interconnected, mutually reinforcing and aim to address multiple dimensions of gender inequality in a coherent manner. The Strategic Note emphasised an integrated approach where programming, policy advocacy and partnerships work together to achieve shared goals in alignment with the integrated approach outlined in the UN Women global Strategic Plan. The Somalia Strategic Note included a results-oriented framework consistent with the global plan's Integrated Results and Resources Framework. Both plans emphasize the strategic allocation of resources to maximize impact in priority areas.

Although design of the Somalia Strategic Note required collaboration across thematic areas to achieve the desired gender equality outcomes and impact, programme personnel noted that internal coherence within the UN Women Somalia Office was weak due to a siloed approach to programming. Programme personnel consulted during the evaluation pointed out that, in practice, programme teams operate independently with limited cross-thematic collaboration, affecting overall internal coherence. They also mentioned that there were no regular internal team meetings and interactions across programmes to jointly plan and rationalize activities and share lessons learned. The personnel survey revealed that only 27 per cent of personnel (n=4/15) confirmed that knowledge and lessons learned are shared in useful ways within the office, while the majority (73 per cent n=11/15) were not sure or stated that there was no useful knowledge-sharing occurring across thematic areas.

Consultations with UN Women Somalia personnel also revealed that internal coherence was limited by the lack of orientation training they had received on the Strategic

Note and its theory of change. This had led to a limited understanding of the interconnectedness between the Strategic Note's pillars and programmes. Personnel also noted that each Strategic Note outcome was tied to a specific programme, and the theory of change lacked clear horizontal linkages, resulting in siloed programming rather than an integrated approach. Evaluations of both LEAP II and LEAP III programmes highlighted this issue, pointing to weak cross-programme synergies and insufficient connections between thematic areas such as women's leadership, protection and economic empowerment.<sup>26</sup>

Interviews with personnel also highlighted that donor priorities significantly influence programme coherence, as 92 per cent of funding is non-core and programming within the Strategic Note therefore often responds to individual donor priorities.

The Strategic Notes high-level outcomes lacked clear pathways for integration, making it difficult for teams to coordinate efforts across thematic areas. For example, the End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme concluded that while the Joint Programme successfully promoted women's political participation and leadership, it missed opportunities to create stronger synergies with complementary initiatives, including potential linkages to Women's Economic Empowerment programmes.<sup>27</sup> Key informants observed that high-level outcomes were difficult to translate into actionable, coordinated interventions across thematic areas, and lack detailed guidance on how to operationalize these outcomes in an integrated way lead to personnel working independently within their thematic focus areas.

<sup>26</sup> End of Programme Evaluation: LEAP III Programme on strengthening protection of women and girls from the disproportionate and adverse gendered impacts of drought and famine in Somalia (June 2024); End of Programme Evaluation Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP II) September 2023.

<sup>27</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.



## FINDING 4

**UN Women Somalia's UN system coordination mandate, strengthened by co-leadership of key UNCT task forces, joint programmes and external coordination mechanisms, has enhanced the Strategic Note's alignment with UNCT efforts and Somalia's national gender equality priorities, promoting a unified approach to women's empowerment. However, further efforts are needed to strengthen coherence and expand the UN's coordinated approach to advancing gender equality in Somalia.**

UN Women Somalia actively collaborated with various stakeholders, including the UNCT, government entities, CSOs and international partners to advance gender equality in Somalia. The Strategic Note demonstrates a high degree of coherence with the broader efforts of the UNCT in advancing gender equality in the country. The Strategic Note was designed to support and complement the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, ensuring that UN Women Somalia's initiatives are integrated into the collective UN strategy for the country. Through the UN Gender Theme Group, UN Women Somalia collaborated with other UN agencies to ensure coordinated and effective implementation of gender equality initiatives. This collaboration resulted in UN Women participating in joint programmes such as the Joint WPS Programme and the Joint Rule of Law programme, contributing to the UN's collective efforts in areas such as inclusive peace, politics and security sector reform. By engaging in joint programmes and initiatives, UN Women Somalia and other UNCT members effectively pool financial and human resources, enhancing the impact and sustainability of gender equality interventions. UN Women currently participates in 11 UN coordination mechanisms in Somalia, and co-chairs four (see Box 1).

The UNCT stakeholders interviewed acknowledged that although the Gender Theme Group was formed back in 2011, it had remained dormant until it was re-established through the leadership of UN Women Somalia around 2020. Since then, the Gender Theme Group meets once a month to facilitate strategic planning and coordination. In July 2023, UN Women Somalia organized a Gender Theme Group retreat, which served as a forum for in-depth discussions, team-building activities and strategic planning. This retreat aimed to strengthen partnerships and align efforts among various UN stakeholders to effectively address gender equality challenges in Somalia.

### BOX 1

#### Participation of UN Women Somalia in UNCT working groups

- Gender Theme Group – co-chaired by UN Women and UNTMIS
- Gender and Human Right Inclusion Group – co-chaired by UN Women and OHCHR
- Gender in Humanitarian Action – co-chaired by UN Women and Save the Children
- Inter-agency PSEA Network – led by UNTMIS
- Humanitarian Country Team
- Head of Humanitarian Organization
- Security Management Team
- Programme Management Team
- Gender and Election Task team – co-chaired by UN Women and UNTMIS
- Pillar Working Group
- Sexual Offences Bill Working Group – co-chaired by UNFPA and UN Women

*Source: Compiled by the evaluation team based on UN Women Somalia inputs*

UN Women's leadership within the Gender Theme Group was also demonstrated through its ability to mobilize resources for the group. Between 2024 and 2025, UN Women Somalia was able to pool funds from UN agencies amounting to a total of USD 305,000 designated for UN coordination activities in gender equality. The UNCT members consulted during the evaluation confirmed that these resources have enhanced the commitment and engagement of UNCT members, and are driving improved efficiency of coordination work.



In terms of Gender Theme Group activities, UN Women Somalia leads the coordination of advocacy campaigns, including International Women's Day commemorations and 16 days of Activism Against GBV. In 2024, during the 16 Days of Activism campaign, for example, UN Women Somalia collaborated with UN entities, government ministries and communities to raise awareness and advocate for the elimination of GBV. The campaign featured various activities including art exhibitions, cultural performances, tree-planting ceremonies symbolizing regeneration amid challenges and cultural storytelling to highlight women's experiences, providing platforms for women and girls to share their experiences and fostering community engagement in combating violence.

UN Women Somalia also played a pivotal role in developing and implementing the UNCT System-wide Action Plan Gender Equality Scorecard in Somalia (see Finding 2). UN Women Somalia provided technical expertise and led coordination efforts in the development and application of the Scorecard. This involved guiding the assessment process to ensure that gender considerations were systematically integrated across UN agencies' planning and programming in Somalia. UN Women Somalia also facilitated training sessions and workshops, supported by the Regional Office to equip UN personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement the Scorecard, thereby promoting a more gender-responsive approach in their respective agencies. The external stakeholder survey conducted during the evaluation revealed that 44 per cent (N= 8/18) of respondents consider accountability on gender through the Gender Equality Scorecard to be effective, 28 per cent (N=5/18) view it as ineffective, while the remaining 28 per cent (N=5/18) were uncertain.

Outside the UNCT, alongside Save the Children, UN Women co-chairs the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group in Somalia. UN Women collaborates with national entities such as the Somalia Disaster Management Agency to enhance the capabilities of CSOs in addressing gender-specific needs during humanitarian crises. For instance, in December 2023, UN Women and Save the Children jointly organized training sessions supported by the UN Women Regional Office and UN

Women Somalia, aimed at equipping CSOs with essential skills and knowledge for effective gender-responsive interventions, which were perceived by the stakeholders interviewed as useful.

The UNCT stakeholders interviewed were generally satisfied with the effectiveness of UN Women Somalia's coordination of UN agencies for gender equality and women's empowerment and attributed the increased coherence within the UNCT to this improved coordination. However, while the external stakeholder's survey shows that 34 per cent (n=6/18) of respondents believed that coherence of UN gender interventions was effective, another 34 per cent (n=6/18) believed it was ineffective and 22 per cent (n=4/18) were not sure. Most respondents to the internal UN Women's survey (60 per cent n=9/15) believed that the coherence of UN gender interventions was effective, while 13 per cent (n=2/15) believed it was very effective. Only 7 per cent (n=1/15) believed that coherence was ineffective and 20 per cent (n=3/15) were not sure.

Some of the gaps relating to the coherence of UN gender interventions were further confirmed during interviews, where external stakeholders observed that in some instances, UN agencies do not speak with one voice, citing conflicting signals from some UN agencies during advocacy for the Somalia Sexual Offences Bill. The End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme also noted that while there were joint initiatives to promote women's leadership and participation, some peacebuilding processes lacked inclusive collaboration with UNCT actors focusing on reconciliation and resilience-building. This limited the potential for integrated, holistic approaches to peacebuilding. The LEAP III evaluation raised similar concerns and concluded that while UN Women Somalia integrated gender priorities into national strategies, it lacked strong linkages with broader UNCT initiatives, including state-building and governance programmes, and climate security and resilience efforts. The evaluation also noted that despite increased participation in UNCT platforms, there were gaps in coordination among UN agencies, reducing opportunities for collective impact and joint advocacy.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### To what extent did UN Women Somalia contribute to the expected outcomes in the Strategic Note across its triple mandate? What strategies have been effective, including coordination and normative work, in the context of Somalia?

The evaluation of the Somalia Strategic Note was premised on a reconstructed theory of change developed during the evaluation's inception phase by the evaluation team. While the Strategic Note's theory of change was found to be highly relevant, appropriate and to some extent coherent during the evaluability assessment, it needed to be simplified to ensure it could be understood by diverse audiences, including stakeholders, partners and donors. The Strategic Note's expected outcomes were reviewed and refined to enhance specificity and feasibility, as the original outcomes were overly broad and not attainable within the Strategic Note's time frame. (See Figure 5 for the reconstructed theory of change).

The evaluation looked at key external and internal factors and how they affected the overall effectiveness of the Strategic Note in order to assess the theory of change and its effectiveness (see Table 1).

In the following sections, the extent to which the Strategic Note contributed towards expected outcomes across UN Women's triple mandate and the effectiveness of the strategies employed is assessed. A box outlining the corresponding outcome is included before each finding for ease of reference. Box 2 summarizes the progress of the Strategic Note across UN Women's triple mandate, and rates it based on the strategies and enabling factors identified within each of the thematic areas covered by the Strategic Note.






Photo: ©UN Women Somalia Country Office



**FIGURE 5. Reconstructed theory of change developed by the evaluation team in consultation with UN Women Somalia personnel**



**TABLE 1. Country-specific enabling and constraining factors affecting the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment in Somalia**

THEMATIC AREA	ENABLING FACTORS	CONSTRAINING FACTORS	OUTCOMES
 <p><b>Cross-cutting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government commitment to gender equality</li> <li>• Strong partnerships and collaboration</li> <li>• Community engagement and male inclusion</li> <li>• Capacity-building and training</li> <li>• Humanitarian focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak enforcement of gender laws and policies</li> <li>• Deep-rooted social and cultural norms</li> <li>• Limited institutional capacity</li> <li>• Insecurity and conflict</li> <li>• Resource constraints</li> <li>• Fragmented internal national coordination mechanisms</li> <li>• Impact of climate crises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's participation and representation in governance</li> <li>• Elimination of violence against women and girls</li> <li>• Women participation in peace and security processes</li> <li>• Women's resilience to climate change</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Women's participation and representation in decision-making</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment by the Federal Government of Somalia to the 30 per cent women's quota in political participation</li> <li>• Support from UN Women and CSOs in training and advocacy for women leaders</li> <li>• Existence of women's caucuses and advocacy networks such as the Upper House Women's Parliamentary Caucus</li> <li>• Increased awareness campaigns promoting women's leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak enforcement of gender quotas, resulting in low women's representation in parliament</li> <li>• Strong patriarchal and clan-based political structures that marginalize women</li> <li>• Limited financial and technical resources to support women candidates</li> <li>• Persistent social and cultural norms that discourage women's leadership</li> <li>• Election-related GBV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's participation and representation in governance</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Security and rule of law</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for strengthening sexual/GBV referral pathways by UN Women and partners</li> <li>• Engagement of male champions in advocating for women's rights</li> <li>• Training programmes for justice and security sector actors on gender sensitivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insecurity and conflict limiting women's access to justice</li> <li>• Weak implementation of gender-sensitive laws</li> <li>• Limited availability and accessibility of legal aid and protection services for women</li> <li>• Cultural stigma associated with reporting sexual/GBV cases and norms that normalize violence within the home</li> <li>• Existence of multiple judicial systems (Sharia law, secular law and customary law) creates ambiguity in legal proceedings, especially concerning women's rights</li> <li>• Underrepresentation of women in the judiciary</li> <li>• Resistance to progressive legislation such as the Somalia Sexual Offences Bill by religious and traditional leaders</li> <li>• High prevalence of GBV, intimate partner violence and female genital mutilation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elimination of violence against women and girls</li> <li>• Women's participation in rule of law institutions</li> <li>• Sexual/GBV survivors' access to legal services</li> </ul>



THEMATIC AREA	ENABLING FACTORS	CONSTRAINING FACTORS	OUTCOMES
 <p><b>Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somalia's commitment to the National Action Plan on WPS</li> <li>• UN Women's support for the participation of women in peacebuilding dialogues</li> <li>• Establishment of grassroots women's peace networks</li> <li>• Advocacy by women-led organizations for inclusive peace processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited inclusion of women in formal peace negotiations</li> <li>• Persistent insecurity and the influence of traditional male-dominated structures</li> <li>• Limited capacity of women's groups to participate effectively</li> <li>• Insufficient funding for women-led peacebuilding initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's participation in peace and security processes and institutions</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Women's Economic Empowerment, Humanitarian Action and Disaster Risk Reduction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations to support women's financial independence</li> <li>• Vocational training initiatives promoting women's employability</li> <li>• Inclusion of women in climate change resilience programmes</li> <li>• UN Women's partnerships with CSOs to enhance women's access to livelihood opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High levels of poverty and unemployment disproportionately affect women, limiting their access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities</li> <li>• Climate-induced crises (droughts, floods) disproportionately affecting women's livelihoods</li> <li>• Limited access to financial services and markets</li> <li>• Persistent gender inequalities in access to resources and decision-making</li> <li>• Impact of care responsibilities on women</li> <li>• Inadequate integration of gender perspectives in humanitarian and disaster risk management strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women in humanitarian situations resilience to external shocks degraded</li> </ul>

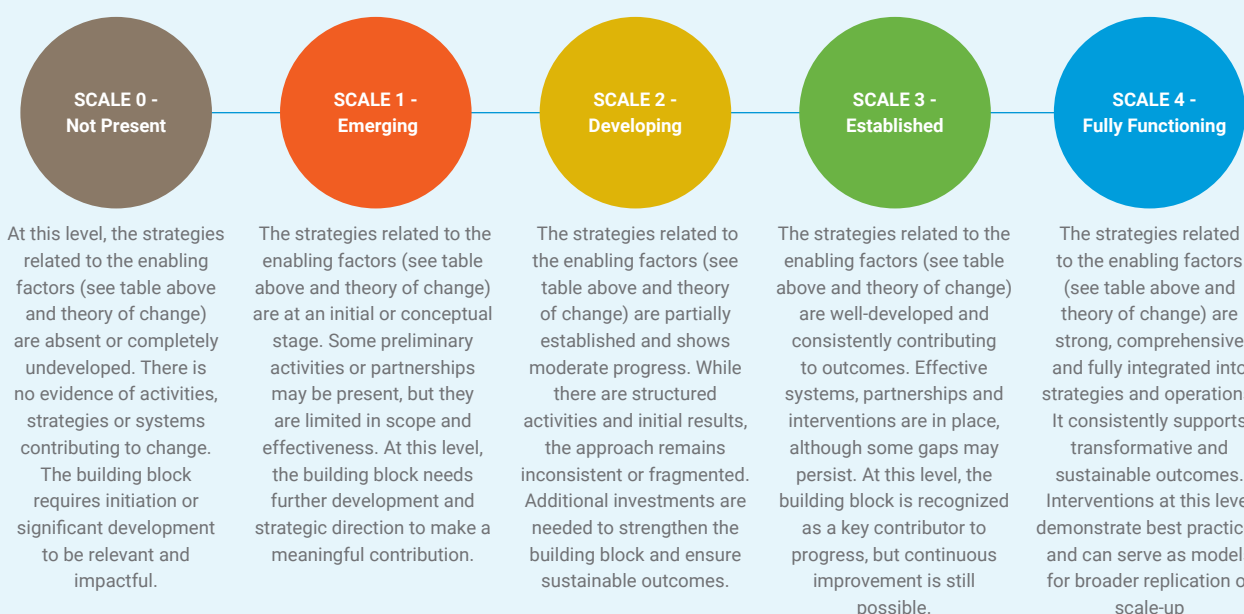
Source: Developed by the evaluation team

## Progress across UN Women's triple mandate

UN Women Somalia has made significant contributions across its triple mandate, particularly in advancing the normative framework for WPP, WPS and ending violence against women and girls. However, the enforcement and implementation of legal and policy frameworks to promote gender equality remain challenging, primarily due to deeply entrenched patriarchal values, social norms and resistance from religious and traditional leaders. UN Women Somalia has enhanced its coordination mandate through its active engagement in the Gender Theme Group. However, operational progress has been impacted by the short-term nature of initiatives, which pose risks to the sustainability of outcomes, and constraints in human and financial resources. Security challenges have also limited outreach and the scalability of interventions.

The evaluation examined progress across UN Women's triple mandate in Somalia, utilizing the Building Blocks Framework. This framework aligns the Strategic Note's reconstructed theory of change with UN Women's integrated mandate and identifies the key enabling factors or "building blocks" for driving change. Progress is measured using a structured scale that evaluates the presence and effectiveness of each building block, assessing how well they contribute to gender equality outcomes. The table below showcases the progress on UN Women strategic note impact areas across the UN Women's triple mandate.

<b>Normative</b>	 SCALE 2 - Developing Finding 5; Table 1	 SCALE 2 - Developing Finding 7	 SCALE 3 - Established Finding 6; Table 1	 SCALE 2 - Developing Finding 9; Table 1
<b>Operational</b>	 SCALE 2 - Developing Finding 5; Table 1	 SCALE 2 - Developing Finding 7; Table 1	 SCALE 3 - Established Finding 8; Table 1	 SCALE 2 - Developing Finding 9; Table 1
<b>Coordination</b>	 SCALE 3 - Established Finding 2, 3	 SCALE 2 - Developing Finding 2	 SCALE 3 - Established Finding 2, 3, 4	 SCALE 3 - Established Finding 2, 3, 4



Source: Developed by the evaluation team using an adaptation of the UN Women Building Blocks Framework for Impact Evaluation

## STRATEGIC NOTE OUTCOME 1

**Somali Women increased influence, participation and representation in governance and decision-making at all levels.**

### **Promoting women's participation and leadership in national and local elections**

#### **FINDING 5**

**Through collaborating with government institutions, CSOs and UNCT partners under the Joint WPS Programme, and enhancing their technical and advocacy capacities, UN Women Somalia contributed to the ratification of the Electoral Bill into law, which includes specific provisions for a 30 per cent quota for women in national and federal state parliaments. While this provides a strong foundation for the achievement of the 30 per cent women's quota target in the next electoral cycle (2025–2026) and within the next Somalia strategic note, it remains uncertain whether the electoral law will be enforced by the government to achieve the women's quota target by 2025.**

In line with UN Women Strategic Plan targets, the Somalia Strategic Note sought to contribute towards achieving a 30 per cent representation of women in the national parliament by 2025 from 26.1 per cent in 2021; 39 per cent in local governments from 33.9 per cent in 2021; and 30 per cent in executive positions from 21.9 per cent in 2021. UN Women Somalia worked with UNDP and UNSOM/OHCHR through the Joint WPS Programme (November 2021–November 2024) on several initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation and leadership in national and local elections. The core strategy focused on enhancing the advocacy capacity and efforts of key stakeholders to support the enactment and enforcement of legislation aimed at achieving the 30 per cent quota for women's representation.

The current Strategic Note (2022–2025) was introduced while the Electoral Bill was in place, but the 30 per cent women's representation quota had not yet been met at the time of the evaluation. The Joint WPS Programme was launched in November 2021, after the 2021–2022 electoral process in Somalia had already commenced, limiting the Strategic Note's impact on achieving the 30 per cent quota target in that election. Consequently, the Strategic Note's contributions are expected to be reflected in the next electoral cycle, scheduled for 2025–2026.

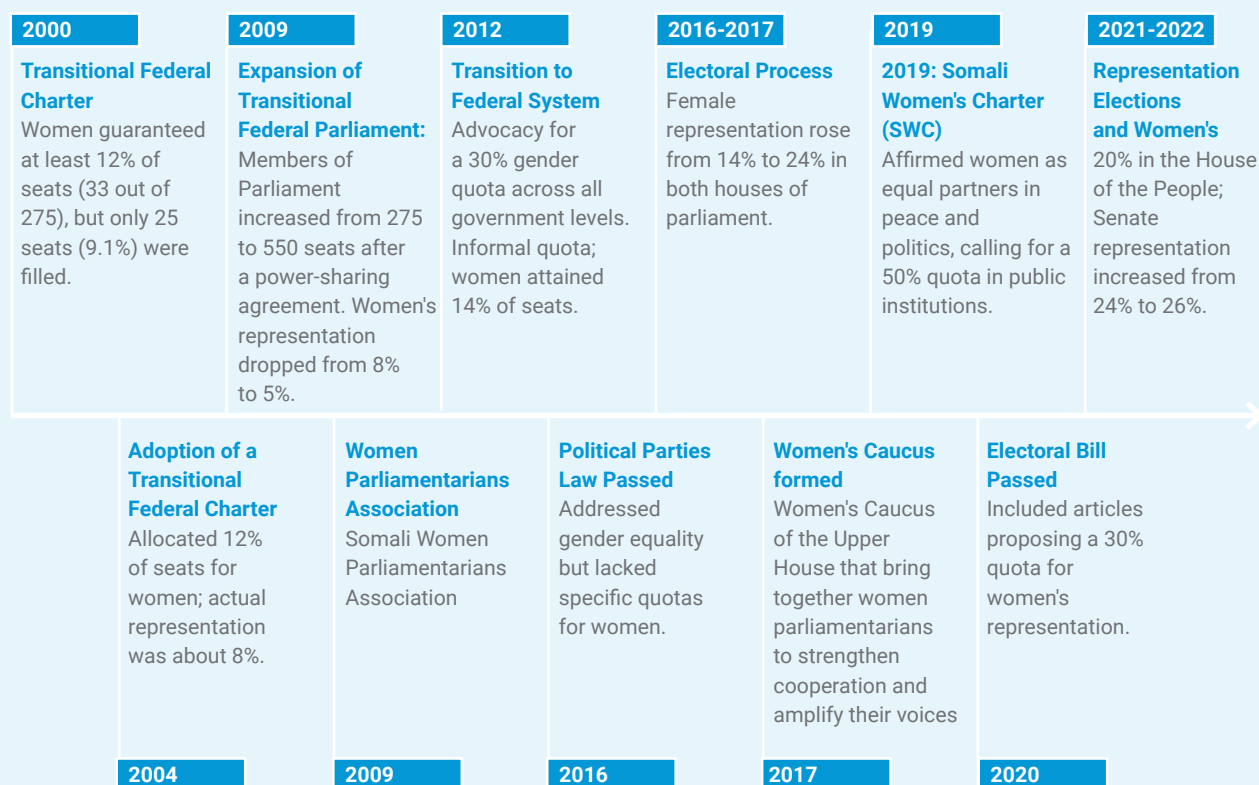
Technical support, capacity-building training and resources were provided to government institutions, CSOs and women's groups to enhance their institutional capacity for gender-responsive programming and to enable them to support implementation of the 30 per cent quota. The Joint Programme was reported to have directly engaged with 915 traditional elders, religious leaders and women-leaders (female 438; male 477); 225 women in 17 networks; representatives of six Parliaments and Parliamentary Women's Caucuses within the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States; representatives of the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States; Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs & Reconciliation and other ministries; 10 CSOs representing young women; 11 CSOs that constitute the Civil Society Reference Group; and 69 journalists, youth activists and women advocates.<sup>28</sup>

As part of efforts to promote women's participation and leadership in national and local elections through the Joint WPS Programme, UN Women Somalia supported the establishment of the Women's Parliamentary Caucuses (WPCs) in 2023 and 2024 by providing technical and financial support. Seven WPCs have been established to date, one each in the Upper House and House of the People and five in Federal Member States.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> UN Women Annual Reports, UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>29</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.



**BOX 3**
**Journey towards 30 per cent quota for women's political representation in Somalia**


Developed by the evaluation team

UN Women Somalia's support of the WPCs focused on facilitating knowledge exchange by providing an overview of proposed electoral systems outlined in the draft electoral law and sharing examples of successful Temporary Special Measures from other countries that have been effective in promoting women's political participation. UN Women Somalia also contributed to the creation of a platform for collaborative brainstorming, where strategies were developed to gain political support for integrating Temporary Special Measures into election-related laws, with the aim of achieving at least 30 per cent women's representation at the District, State and Federal levels. UN Women Somalia and UNDP also organized a study visit to Rwanda for WPC delegates to gain insights into Rwanda's approach to achieving gender parity in Parliament. This visit reinvigorated the delegates' commitment to advocating for the inclusion of the 30 per cent women's quota in Somalia's Constitution.<sup>30</sup>

UN Women Somalia also trained WPCs for the Upper House and House of the People on advocacy for gender-responsive laws, policies and programmes. The training focused on providing support to WPCs to enhance their capacity to participate effectively in

political processes. A total of 90 WPC members and 169 male MPs were reported to have been provided with transformational leadership skills and legislative drafting and advocacy training, enhancing their ability to advocate for the inclusion of gender-responsive policies, including promoting the 30 per cent women's quota in electoral processes. UN Women Somalia also provided technical assistance to build WPC capacity in understanding electoral systems and advocating for Temporary Special Measures to enhance women's political representation at district, state and federal levels.<sup>31</sup>

Members of the WPCs interviewed acknowledged that UN Women Somalia was instrumental in advocacy efforts for a 30 per cent quota for women in political positions. They further noted that UN Women Somalia's support not only included essential resources but also provided a fully furnished space for the Women Caucus in the Upper House. WPC members pointed out that this physical presence has greatly enhanced their ability to operate effectively and engage with legislative processes.

UN Women Somalia also facilitated WPCs' outreach efforts by supporting visits to all Federal Member States. These visits were pivotal in raising awareness

<sup>30</sup> Key informant interviews, UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>31</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024

and advocating for the 30 per cent quota, ensuring that their message reached a wider audience. The WPCs conducted six advocacy initiatives to promote women's political participation, including training workshops and dialogue sessions, concept notes and draft documents on the 30 per cent quota.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the external stakeholders (71 per cent N=13/18) who responded to the survey confirmed that they had participated in capacity-building and training activities supported by UN Women Somalia and only 29 per cent (N=5/18) had not participated. CSO interlocutors also acknowledged during interviews that the capacity-building support provided by UN Women Somalia enabled women to participate more effectively in governance and peace processes, thereby amplifying their voices in decision-making. Stakeholders further

noted that the capacity-building training programmes were targeted, ensuring that they met the unique needs of each women's organization. They acknowledged that the training equipped women leaders with essential skills in advocacy, leadership and resource management, enabling them to operate more effectively and sustainably. In addition, joint monitoring efforts in Federal Member States ensured that the voices of women were included in governance and decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive political landscape. CSOs also valued the learning visits to other countries facilitated by UN Women Somalia, enabling Somali women leaders to learn from best practices and experiences in different contexts. These opportunities for knowledge-sharing not only inspired innovative approaches but also strengthened international networks of women's rights advocates.

## **Facilitating operationalization of the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan to ensure women's meaningful engagement in peacebuilding processes at all levels**

### **FINDING 6**

**Women's participation in peace and security efforts at both the national and community levels in Somalia has improved through the development and implementation of National and Local Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security; the creation of 17 women's peace networks; the active involvement of the Women's Parliamentary Caucuses; and capacity strengthening of key stakeholders. However, significant structural and systemic barriers continue to hinder Somali women's ability to fully exercise their rights and engage meaningfully in peacebuilding and governance processes.**

In partnership with the Federal Government, particularly the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, UN Women Somalia facilitated the development of the Somali National Action Plan for implementing the Somali Women's Charter and UNSCR 1325. The plan addresses issues such as conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, access to justice and women's inclusion in peacebuilding and state-building efforts. The plan was officially launched on 5 September 2022, marking a significant commitment by the Somali government to promote and protect women's rights in all peace and security initiatives. UN Women Somalia, through the Joint WPS Programme, also contributed to developing Local Action Plans aligned with the National Action Plan in six Federal Member States and the Banadir District. UN Women Somalia provided financial support to the

Federal Member States to carry out the consultation processes and develop, officially launch and print the Local Action Plans. It also provided written inputs to the draft Local Action Plans and supported development of the dissemination plan.

UN Women Somalia also supported the establishment of women's peace and security networks, providing platforms for local women to strategize and address issues pertinent to their communities; financial assistance; and ensuring their leadership was selected through an inclusive and participatory process. A total of 17 women's networks, comprising approximately 225 women leaders from various sectors, including civil society, were established to mobilize local organizations to advocate for women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and politics in their respective geographical areas.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Key informant interviews, UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>33</sup> End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

Representatives of these women's networks reported that they monitor and support referrals for victims of GBV and collaborate with traditional elders and peace committees to resolve conflicts.

The networks also actively engage with the Federal and State Ministries of Women/Family Affairs, as well as justice, security and district authorities, to address issues related to protection and peace. This engagement has contributed to improved documentation of GBV cases and enhanced access to services for survivors, such as one-stop centres.

UN Women Somalia has continued to provide financial support to facilitate these networks' participation in coordination meetings led by the ministries, focusing on women's protection. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that UN Women Somalia provided technical guidance, training sessions and supported advocacy campaigns and peer-to-peer learning initiatives. With UN Women's advisory and financial support, the six Ministries of Family/Women (one at the federal level and five at the member state level) continued their efforts to raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders. More specifically, the networks received capacity-building training on gender justice and women's rights, transformative leadership and women's rights, transformative change, programming and policy design, conflict management, conflict analysis, mediation and conflict resolution, early warning systems and GBV. A training manual entitled "*Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights*" was developed and used in delivering training to the women's networks. UN Women Somalia worked with women-led organizations, namely Hear Women Foundation, Ifrah foundation, Somali Women Leadership Initiative, African Women Leaders Network and the Civil Society Reference Group as implementing partners for the capacity-building training on Monitoring and Evaluation of National Action Plan implementation.

Consultations during the evaluation revealed that the networks had conducted dialogue sessions with a total of 915 (female 438; male 477) opinion leaders such as community elders and religious leaders where they advocate for the acceptance of women as peacemakers and leaders.<sup>34</sup> Experiences, stories and case studies collected from these women's networks during the end-term evaluation of the Joint WPS Programme have shown that greater coordination and joint action have been facilitated between network members and traditional elders, with existing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and other community peace structures.

#### BOX 4

##### Engagement of traditional and elder leaders on women's meaningful representation

The end evaluation of the Joint WPS Programme confirmed that the programme engaged traditional elders and religious leaders on the importance of women's meaningful representation. A total of 1,230 (female: 532, male: 698) traditional elders, religious leaders and women leaders were reported to have been engaged and sensitized on the WPS agenda. In addition, 259 (female: 90, male: 169) members of parliament at the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States level were also trained on the WPS agenda, transformational leadership skills, legislative drafting and advocacy. Sixty-nine (female: 40, male: 29) journalists, youth activists and women advocates were trained by the National Union of Somali Journalists on amplifying the WPS agenda through media.

*Source: Developed by Evaluation Team based on the End-Term Evaluation of the Joint WPS Programme (2024)*

During interviews, the women's networks indicated that they have started working in newly liberated areas of Somalia<sup>35</sup> without additional support from the Joint WPS Programme and are providing dignity kits to GBV survivors using their own resources.

UN Women Somalia played a key role in achieving these outputs by enhancing the technical and financial capacities of the government, women's rights organizations and CSOs.

**Implementation of the National Action Plan:** UN Women Somalia contributed to the establishment and operationalization of the National Steering Committee, which oversees implementation of the National Action Plan and ensures coordinated efforts across various sectors and levels of government. Other structures established with UN Women Somalia's support include: the Women Parliamentary Caucus whose role is to advocate for gender-sensitive legislation on female genital mutilation and the Somalia Sexual Offences Bill; inter-ministerial committees, cluster working groups on WPS and GBV; and District Peace Committees. Through these strategic initiatives, UN Women Somalia has contributed to the operationalization and localization of UNSCR 1325 in Somalia, promoting women's active participation in peace and security processes at both national and local levels. This grassroots engagement ensures that the principles of UNSCR 1325 are effectively localized and implemented.

<sup>34</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Liberated areas refer to areas of Somalia liberated from Al-Shabaab's control.

In interviews during the evaluation, CSOs and government key informants noted that although progress has been made in promoting women's participation in peace and security processes, challenges persist. While gender equality frameworks exist (e.g. the WPS National Action Plan, Somalia Women's Charter), they often lack enforcement mechanisms. Customary and religious law systems frequently override statutory protections for women. CSOs noted that deep-seated patriarchal attitudes restrict women's leadership, mobility and public participation. Women's roles are often confined to domestic spheres by cultural and clan-based systems. There is also social backlash and stigma against women who engage in politics or peacebuilding. Women activists and peacebuilders often face harassment, threats or attacks.

Focus group discussions with women's groups during the End-term Evaluation of the WPS Joint Programme (2024) showed that capacity-building activities were effective in enhancing women's skills to lead, participate in and influence community development and peace initiatives within their respective regions.<sup>36</sup> The SWOT analysis<sup>37</sup> conducted in February 2024, also as part of the Joint WPS Programme evaluation, confirmed women's networks' enhanced capacity to be more self-reliant and confident in their knowledge and skills to influence the direction of social change, including mobilization of other women in communities to resist violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution.

All stakeholders consulted, including donors, CSOs, UN Women, UNCT and government, concurred that the Joint WPS Programme was the flagship programme for UN Women in Somalia because it had had the most impact

on the gender equality and women's empowerment landscape in the country. Stakeholders emphasized that the Joint Programme effectively showcased UN Women's added value in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Somalia. Government key informants confirmed that UN Women is the most suitably positioned agency to support the WPS agenda in Somalia.

These findings collectively demonstrate that women's participation in peace and security processes has increased with growing institutional support, and greater engagement at various levels of governance and community peace efforts. Despite these advancements, government and civil society stakeholders emphasized the need to expand women's networks beyond the current 17 districts, which account for only 12 per cent of all districts in Somalia, to achieve broader and more sustainable impact.

While women's participation in peace processes within these districts has increased, the extent of their engagement at national level remains unclear due to the absence of relevant data in UN Women Somalia reports and the End-Term Joint WPS Programme Evaluation.

Somalia's status in the Global Women, Peace and Security Index dropped from 159/170 in 2021/2022 to 169/177 in 2023/2024.<sup>38</sup> This regression signals that despite some progress, especially in developing the WPS National and Local Action Plans, and increasing the visibility of women in peacebuilding, impact on the ground remains limited and uneven. Structural and systemic challenges continue to prevent Somali women from enjoying their full rights, protection and participation in peace and governance processes.

<sup>36</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>37</sup> Annex 10 SWOT analysis with women's networks. UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>38</sup> Global Women, Peace and Security Index Report, 2023/2024

## STRATEGIC NOTE OUTCOME 2

### Human Rights, Gender Equality and Climate Security Upheld through Stronger Security and Rule of Law Institutions, improved Accountability and Effective Legal Frameworks

#### FINDING 7

**Phase II of the Joint Rule of Law Programme in Somaliland began in January 2025 after a year-long delay, making it too early to assess its effectiveness. However, its limited scope to Somaliland and lack of coordination with federal-level UN Women efforts hinder broader justice-sector reforms, although stakeholders acknowledged the benefits of Phase I's capacity-building initiatives.**

UN Women Somalia is jointly implementing the European Union-funded Joint Rule of Law and Access to Justice Programme in Somaliland with UNODC, UNDP and UNSOM. Implementation of the programme was due to start in 2024 but was delayed because of difficulties in recruiting the programme manager and signing the partnership agreements, which were only signed towards the end of 2024. The partnership agreements were signed with two CSOs (NAGAAD Network and Somaliland Women Lawyers Association), and a governmental institution, Somaliland National Human Rights Commission. Actual implementation of the programme started in January 2025 and only a few activities had been conducted at the time of the evaluation, which limited its assessment.

In the previous Joint Rule of Law Programme (June 2020–December 2022), UN Women Somalia supported organizations such as the Somaliland Women Lawyers Association which provides free legal services to women facing abuse, neglect and other injustices. This support has been crucial in promoting women's access to legal representation and justice. The Joint Programme facilitated the establishment of regional hubs overseeing support to judicial, human rights, security and corrections structures. These hubs aim to extend legal assistance to underserved populations, including internally displaced persons and rural communities, ensuring that justice services are accessible to all. By partnering with local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, the programme has worked to provide legal assistance and raise awareness about legal rights among marginalized groups, particularly women and girls.

CSOs interviewed during the evaluation confirmed that their capacities have been enhanced through working with UN Women on the previous programme and, in turn, they have been able to provide training to religious and clan leaders, law enforcement agencies and the media to enable them to appreciate the importance of gender-responsive laws and institutions, as well as gender-sensitive service delivery.

UN Women Somalia has collaborated with the Somali authorities to draft and advocate for laws that protect women's rights and promote gender equality, addressing issues such as GBV and discrimination. UN Women worked with the Somaliland Human Rights Commission in developing and harmonizing the Sexual Offences Bill for Somaliland. In interviews, the Somaliland Human Rights Commission noted that the partnership between UN Women and the Commission under the second phase of the Joint Rule of Law Programme has reignited discussions surrounding the Sexual Offences Bill. In December 2024, the Commission convened a first meeting to establish a working group aimed at harmonizing the bill. This group will identify gaps in perceptions about the bill and advocate for its adoption. In January 2025, the Commission held a follow-up meeting to discuss the terms of reference for the working group.

During the first phase of the project, initiatives were implemented to train police and other security forces on gender sensitivity, aimed at building trust between communities and security providers, and to ensure that women's security concerns are adequately addressed. The programme has supported the development of community policing models that encourage collaboration between law enforcement and local communities, fostering a safer environment for women and marginalized groups.

Although partners acknowledged that their capacities have been strengthened through the training provided with support from UN Women Somalia, this was largely through the previous phase of the programme.

The EU reduced the programme budget from the original EUR 10 million to EUR 7 million before cutting it further to EUR 3 million following a misalignment of expectations between the donor and the government. This disrupted planned capacity-building activities, and it is likely there will be a no-cost extension request.



Stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation referred to UN Women Somalia's limited human resource capacity (one personnel coordinating implementation) compared to the large scope of the programme.

At the federal state level, UN Women Somalia has been instrumental in advocating for enactment of a comprehensive Sexual Offences Bill in the country, aimed at strengthening legal protections against sexual violence. In May 2018, the Somali Council of Ministers adopted this bill, which sought to modernize outdated laws and provide clear legal recourse for survivors of sexual violence. Despite this progress, the bill faced significant challenges in the parliamentary process as it was opposed by the House of Elders and was therefore not signed by the President. In 2020, a new draft, known as the "Sexual Intercourse Bill," was introduced, containing provisions that many CSOs and international partners, including UN Women, found concerning. This alternative bill was criticized for potentially undermining the rights of women and girls, allowing child marriage and normalizing violence against women and girls.

In response, UN Women Somalia, alongside other UN agencies and civil society groups, intensified advocacy efforts to promote the original Somalia Sexual Offences Bill. These efforts included public statements, policy dialogues and support for local organizations working to protect women's rights. CSOs highlighted that the new bill lacked participatory drafting processes and failed to address serious crimes of a sexual nature committed against women and girls. The goal was to ensure that any legislation passed would align with international human rights standards and effectively safeguard individuals from sexual offences.

Passage of the Sexual Offences Bill remains pending. UN Women Somalia continues to collaborate with the Federal Government of Somalia, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development and other stakeholders to advocate for the bill's enactment. This ongoing commitment underscores the importance of establishing robust legal frameworks to combat sexual violence and uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals in Somalia. CSOs interviewed pressed upon UN Women and other UN agencies to support the establishment of an inclusive and continuous monitoring mechanisms to track legislative progress, hold stakeholders accountable and prevent regression on gender laws. The backlash against the Sexual Offences Bill suggests that public understanding of GBV laws remains low.

The evaluation identified a lack of coherence between Sexual Offences Bill initiatives at the federal-state level and the Joint Rule of Law Programme in Somaliland. The Joint Rule of Law Programme is only being implemented in Somaliland and is not supporting the Sexual Offences Bill and rule of law advocacy activities at the federal-state level. Somalia is a federal state, and limiting justice-sector reforms to one Federal Member State reinforces fragmented legal and institutional systems and creates disparities in legal protection, access to justice and human rights across different states. It also prevents the development of a coherent national rule of law framework that could unify practices and standards. To enhance effectiveness, legitimacy, equity and impact, CSOs and government stakeholders interviewed insisted that the Joint Rule of Law Programme needs to be implemented nationally, across all Federal Member States and Mogadishu, while maintaining support to Somaliland.

#### BOX 6

### Timeline for the Somalia Sexual Offences Bill

**May 2018**

**Draft Sexual Offences Bill**  
Draft Sexual Offences Bill unanimously approved by Council of Ministers.

**Nov. 2019**

**Return for Amendment**  
Draft Sexual Offences Bill was returned by the Speaker to Cabinet for amendment with no consultation from relevant Committees.

**June 2020**

#### Legislative Attempt

Parliamentarians unsuccessfully attempted to introduce new legislation instead of debating the Sexual Offences Bill already approved by the Cabinet. The Sexual Offences Bill (SOB) in Somalia was repealed after two years and replaced by the Sexual Intercourse and Related Crimes Bill (SIRC) in 2020. The SIRC bill was criticized for allowing child marriage and other violations of women's rights.

**Dec. 2023**

#### Cabinet Approval

The Somali Cabinet approves Rape and Indecency Bill

#### Parliament Submission

Draft Sexual Offences Bill was sent to Parliament for debate and adoption.

**June 2018**

#### Parliamentary Motion

15 parliamentarians brought a motion to return the bill to Parliament for first reading in accordance with article 69

**Dec. 2019**

#### Generation Equality Forum Launch

Launch of the Somalia Generation Equality Forum (to advocate for the enactment of the Rape, Indecency and Related Offences Bill)

**Aug. 2024**

#### Bill Presentation

Rape and Indecency Bill presented at the Federal Parliament.

**2024**

Source: Developed by the evaluation team

**All Somalis, particularly women, live in a peaceful, inclusive and cohesive society****FINDING 8**

**UN Women Somalia has contributed to strengthening women's capacity for grassroots peacebuilding through women's peace networks; early warning systems for sexual gender-based violence; and targeted women, peace and security training. However, challenges such as socio-cultural resistance, limited district coverage, resource constraints and weak monitoring hinder women's participation in peace and security processes and the effectiveness of these initiatives.**

As mentioned in Finding 6, the Joint WPS Programme was effective in establishing 17 women's networks with regular engagements at national and local government levels to promote women's active roles in peace and security processes.

Members of the peace networks reported having led community awareness campaigns within their districts, including in areas recently liberated from Al-Shabaab. These networks convene quarterly meetings with district authorities, justice and security actors, and other stakeholders to raise concerns related to protection and peace, discuss solutions and coordinate joint action. Despite limited resources, networks have been active in newly liberated areas, distributing dignity kits to GBV survivors using their own resources. They also conducted dialogue sessions with community and religious leaders to advocate for the recognition of women as legitimate peace actors and leaders. The networks assist in monitoring, referral and conflict resolution efforts, often in collaboration with traditional elders and peace committees.

CSOs interviewed described the training they received as effective, citing noticeable improvements in the advocacy, leadership and conflict-resolution skills of network members. A survey conducted during the evaluation found that: 71 per cent (N=13/18) of external respondents had participated in UN Women-led training sessions and 95 per cent (N=17/18) considered the technical support for gender mainstreaming effective. The End-Term Evaluation of the Joint WPS Programme concluded that the initiative had been successful in implementing a comprehensive capacity development strategy; enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding; and raising awareness about the WPS agenda across Somalia.

CSOs, government and UN partners interviewed all concurred that the establishment of peace networks and capacity-building efforts under the Joint WPS Programme had led to increased joint actions with traditional elders and other community peace structures; improved leadership, negotiation and advocacy skills of women leaders and groups, particularly young women; and increased visibility of the WPS agenda at both local and national community levels. UN Women Somalia and CSOs attributed the enactment of the anti-Female Genital Mutilation Act in Galmudug state; the enactment of the Electoral Law with 30 per cent women's representation quota; and the adoption of the National Reconciliation Framework to the advocacy efforts of the Women's Peace Networks, CSO Reference Group and the African Women Leaders Network.

The Civil Society Reference Group in Somalia was established with the participation of 11 CSOs whose members provided monitoring and advisory services to women's networks. While confirming that they participate in the monitoring and provision of services to women's networks, members of the reference group interviewed noted that they lack adequate resources to effectively do their work and therefore their monitoring activities are limited. Some areas are also not easily accessible due to security issues.

**Early warning system and preparedness initiatives:** UN Women Somalia contributed to the development of early warning systems and preparedness plans in 2024; and technical and financial support to the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development for the development and official endorsement of a standard operating procedure on the early warning system aimed at preventing sexual and gender-based violence, conflict-related sexual violence and other violations related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The standard operating procedure was endorsed during a stakeholder event attended by 52 participants, including 32 women.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.



To operationalize the standard operating procedure, UN Women Somalia reported that it facilitated capacity-building training targeting six Ministries of Women/Family Affairs (the Federal Government and five Federal Member States); early warning focal points from key line ministries; 17 women's peace networks (involving 245 women); 10 women-led CSOs (300 women); and the Hirshabelle Police Force, including 15 women and 10 men. This training aimed to strengthen coordination, improve preparedness and ensure gender-responsive early warning and prevention mechanisms across national and subnational structures. Stakeholders were also trained on early warning monitoring and reporting of violence against women.<sup>40</sup>

The Results Management System Report for 2024 mentions that the trained women from the peace networks are taking the lead in gathering information and documenting GBV/conflict-related sexual violence incidents in the early warning system established by the federal and state governments. A total of 229 survivors of sexual/GBV (female:226, male:3) are recorded to have so far received psycho-social, legal and health services from three sexual/GBV one-stop centres in Baidoa,

Dhusamareb and Kismayo and this is attributed to the awareness activities carried out by the peace networks. The report also notes that these one-stop centres have established databases tracking GBV cases and trends.

However, despite these positive indications, the efficacy of the early warning systems in sexual/GBV prevention is not clear based on the limited data available. The Results Management System mainly collects data on output indicators, with limited data on outcomes, which makes it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the early warning systems. Although some of the stakeholders interviewed indicated that early warning systems were in existence and that they have improved collaboration between peace networks and the police, they did not provide evidence showing the effectiveness of the systems. The End-Term Evaluation of the Joint WPS Programme report acknowledges that the peace networks are raising awareness in their communities but points out that the role of the early warning systems has not been clear in terms of conflict prevention in communities. More outcome-level data is required to conduct an assessment of their effectiveness.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>41</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

## STRATEGIC NOTE OUTCOME 4

### **Women Achieve Income Security, Decent Work and Economic Autonomy, Contribute Meaningfully to Sustainable Development, and Benefit Equally from Economic opportunities**

#### **FINDING 9**

**While the Women's Economic Empowerment and humanitarian components of the Strategic Note achieved key outputs through the LEAP programme in Somalia, assessing their contribution to Outcome 4 was constrained due to limited data, security constraints and the programme's short duration and scale. Although participants reported positive changes to their livelihoods, the LEAP programme alone is insufficient for transformative women's economic empowerment, requiring broader strategic expansion.**

Under the Strategic Note, UN Women Somalia contributed to Outcome 4 through implementation of the LEAP programme only. The programme was implemented for three consecutive years from 2021 to 2023. The first phase focused on women's leadership in the COVID-19 response. The programme promoted COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures, targeting women and girls in internally displaced persons and refugee camps, through activities aimed at strengthening leadership skills and capacities. The second phase of the programme (LEAP II) focused on women's economic empowerment, supporting vocational technical training; the creation of village savings and loans groups; and building capacity on prevention and response to sexual/GBV. The programme also established strategic partnerships with other humanitarian actors. The third phase (LEAP III) sought to enhance leadership skills and promote gender-responsive resilience. Management reported that the project directly reached 10,850 people (70 per cent female; 30 per cent male) and exceeded the people reached target by 18 per cent.

#### **Enhanced access to livelihood skills, training, tools and technologies in relation to climate-smart agriculture**

The LEAP initiative was reported to have made progress on improving the employability and economic self-reliance of 1,470 women and youth in Somalia, especially those affected by climate-related shocks such as droughts and floods. As part of the programme, 440 women were reported to have enrolled through GBV one-stop centres successfully completed vocational training in diverse fields including tailoring (181), henna design

(141), make-up artistry (16), baking (39), tie-dye (44) and shampoo production (19).<sup>42</sup> In addition to technical skills, participants received training in financial management and were provided with customized start-up kits to help them launch their own businesses.

Although focus group discussions with project participants and key informant interviews with stakeholders during the LEAP III Final Programme Evaluation affirmed the relevance and positive impact of the vocational training, both groups expressed concerns about the short duration of the training, which lasted only two months. Stakeholders highlighted that this limited time frame was insufficient for participants to achieve advanced skill levels, emphasizing the need for extended training periods to enable more comprehensive skill development. They added that project participants may graduate with only basic knowledge, making it difficult to compete in local markets or meet customer expectations. The stakeholders stated that two months leaves little or no time for job shadowing, apprenticeships or mentorship, which are vital for real-world learning and confidence-building – elements that are especially important for young or first-time entrepreneurs.

No capacity assessment was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational training, nor were outcome indicators established to measure the impact of these capacity-building efforts. The Results Management System primarily reported on output-level indicators, without capturing outcome-level data related to the vocational training provided under the LEAP programme. As a result, it is challenging to determine the extent to which the training contributed to women's economic empowerment.

<sup>42</sup> Strengthening the leadership, empowerment, access and protection of women affected by drought and famine in Somalia 2023-2024 (LEAP III), UN Women Final Donor Report, February 2024 .

## Supporting women entrepreneurs with micro and small businesses to set up and improve their operations in agriculture and non-agricultural sectors

In addition to acquiring financial management skills, all 440 graduates were reported to have received tailored start-up kits, supporting them to launch their businesses. However, project participants noted that the start-up kits distributed were not enough to establish viable small-scale businesses.<sup>43</sup> The LEAP III End of Programme Evaluation (June 2024) noted that women faced challenges in fully implementing their newly acquired skills due to the lack of necessary resources and equipment. For example, some of the women trained in tailoring were not using the sewing machines they were given because they did not have the funds for installation of the machines. Women trained in henna artistry and cloth dyeing faced the same challenges as they did not have enough supplies to start up their businesses.

Although the LEAP III End of Programme Evaluation (June 2024) and key informant interviews with implementing partners highlighted several success stories related to women's economic empowerment, there is limited clarity on the overall performance of the supported small businesses – specifically, how many have succeeded

versus those that may have failed. This is largely due to gaps in monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. As mentioned above, the Results Management System does not capture this outcome indicator, making it difficult to assess the actual impact of the start-up support on women's economic empowerment. As a result, the programme's contribution to the Strategic Note Women's Economic Empowerment pillar remains unclear.

## Enhancing women's access to savings and credit

The LEAP III Programme Evaluation noted some progress in the saving culture of Village Savings and Loan Association members. The project strengthened women's financial resilience by instilling a savings culture that allowed them to better withstand financial shocks and support their households. On average, Village Savings and Loan Association members were reported to have saved between US\$ 2 and US\$ 9 each per month, while contributing US\$ 0.20 to US\$ 1 per month to a social fund, reinforcing community solidarity and mutual support.<sup>44</sup>

The savings generated by the LEAP Village Savings and Loan programme are comparable to other schemes in similar settings as shown in Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2: Comparison of monthly savings in Somalia's LEAP III Village Savings and Loan programme with those of similar programmes in comparable contexts**

Country	Name of programme	Monthly savings per member	Development agency	Details
Somalia	LEAP	US\$ 2.00-US\$ 9.00	UN Women	Includes social fund contributions of US\$ 0.20-US\$ 1.00 per member. Based on 42 Village Savings and Loan Associations in Baidoa and Kismayo <sup>45</sup>
Uganda (West Nile Region)	Vision Fund Project	\$4.00-\$5.26	Vision Fund	Weekly Savings: 1,000-5,000 UGX. Annual share-outs are approximately \$1,000 per group <sup>46</sup>
Côte d'Ivoire	WE CAN Project	\$6.40	Fair Labour Association	\$77,318 saved across 1,000 members in 21 VSLAs over one year <sup>47</sup>
South Sudan	Don Bosco IDP	\$3.33	UNIDO	\$1,600 saved over four months by 120 members <sup>48</sup>

Source: Developed by the evaluation team based on management and third party reporting

<sup>43</sup> UN Women Somalia, LEAP III End of Programme Evaluation (June 2024).

<sup>44</sup> UN Women Somalia, LEAP III End of Programme Evaluation (June 2024).

<sup>45</sup> UN Women Report, 2024: Assessment of Village Savings and Loan Association Groups under the LEAP Programme.

<sup>46</sup> Vision Fund, 2019: Contextual and Financial Assessment of Savings Groups in West Nile, Uganda. [Contextual and Financial Assessment of Savings Groups in West Nile, Uganda | VisionFund](#)

<sup>47</sup> Fair Labour Association. We Can Project Final Report, 2021. <https://www.fairlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/WE-CAN-Report.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> UNIDO, 2024: Empowering newly arrived female internally displaced persons to ensure food security and peace consolidation in South Sudan, Project Terminal Report. [https://downloads.unido.org/ot/35/00/35003698/Terminal%20Report-220147\\_S.Sudan.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://downloads.unido.org/ot/35/00/35003698/Terminal%20Report-220147_S.Sudan.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

An assessment conducted in 2024 by NAPAD and UN Women Somalia<sup>49</sup> reviewed the Village Savings and Loan groups established under the LEAP programme since 2021. The findings confirmed that most groups remained functional and cohesive, demonstrating a sustained commitment to saving and lending. In Kismayo, 17 of 21 village savings and loan groups (81 per cent) were reported as operational, while four groups (19 per cent) had become inactive. In Baidoa, all 21 groups (100 per cent) were reported as fully functional. Notably, all the non-functional groups were located in rural areas severely impacted by flooding, which led some members to relocate and withdraw from group activities.

The full functionality of village savings and loan groups in urban areas highlights the greater viability of business opportunities in those settings compared to rural locations. However, the assessment also identified several challenges, including inadequate financial literacy and limited diversification of income-generating activities. This was further confirmed through consultations with stakeholders.

While there is evidence of savings, Results Management System data does not track outcome indicators on Village Savings and Loan Groups such as the proportion of groups still functional and those that have disbanded, income growth, asset ownership, access to loans, etc. Without tracking these outcome indicators, it is difficult to determine the impact of the Village Savings and Loan Groups on the livelihoods of the project participants. LEAP III's Village Savings and Loans programme are a meaningful starting point, but current savings levels are not enough by themselves to achieve transformative women's economic empowerment as defined in the UN Women Somalia Strategic Note. More strategic layering and scaling are therefore needed for increased impact.

### **GBV awareness, protection and support to victims.**

Through its implementing partner, the LEAP programme was reported to have appointed 90 community ambassadors (30 in Banadir, 20 in Garowe, 20 in Baidoa and 20 in Kismayo, consisting of youth and men) to engage in structured dialogues aimed at challenging harmful gender norms. Following their training, the ambassadors were reported to have reached approximately 800 men and youth through targeted awareness campaigns, community outreach and capacity-building sessions.

Their engagement has helped build community trust and inspired broader participation, contributing meaningfully to shifting attitudes and advancing gender equality at the grassroots level.<sup>50</sup>

In addition, the project reportedly delivered psychosocial counselling, mentorship and peer-influence training to 300 individuals (221 women and girls, and 79 men and boys). The training was reported to have equipped participants with the knowledge and tools to provide support within their communities, fostering positive behavioural change and promoting resilience. These efforts contributed to creating a more supportive, inclusive and cohesive community environment, driving progressive shifts away from social norms that condone violence against women and girls and sexual/GBV.<sup>51</sup>

The project also spearheaded climate action awareness campaigns led by women, girls, and youth leaders representing camp committees, elders and religious leaders in internally displaced persons settlements. The LEAP III End of Programme Evaluation Report confirmed that these campaigns reached 700 individuals (497 females and 203 males) across Baidoa, Kismayo, Garowe and Banadir, with the aim of enhancing community knowledge on climate change and promoting active participation in climate resilience efforts. These initiatives also addressed environmental health and safety concerns in displacement-affected communities.

The LEAP III Programme Final Evaluation observed that the project contributed to increased awareness of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, sexual/GBV and early marriages by providing platforms through which women and men engaged to discuss these issues openly. Focus group discussions with project participants confirmed that they had increased awareness of GBV issues and harmful practices. Several key informants interviewed attested that the project's training programmes played a pivotal role in changing people's attitudes towards women and girls.

Evaluations of the LEAP programme,<sup>52</sup> along with interviews with its partners, confirmed that the initiative has contributed to enhancing social inclusion for women, enabling their participation in community events, mediation processes and local dispute resolution meetings.

Overall, the LEAP III End of Programme Evaluation revealed stakeholders' positive perceptions on the programme's positive effect on their well-being in contributing to tackling gender disparities.

<sup>49</sup> NAPAD and UN Women: Assessment of village savings and loan groups in Kisimayo and Baidoa Districts, 2023.

<sup>50</sup> End of Programme Evaluation: LEAP III Programme on strengthening protection of women and girls from the disproportionate and adverse gendered impacts of drought and famine in Somalia (June 2024).

<sup>51</sup> End of Programme Evaluation: LEAP III Programme on strengthening protection of women and girls from the disproportionate and adverse gendered impacts of drought and famine in Somalia (June 2024).

<sup>52</sup> End of Programme Evaluation Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) Somalia (July 2022) ; End of Programme Evaluation Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP 2) (September 2023); End of Programme Evaluation: LEAP III Programme on Strengthening protection of women and girls from the disproportionate and adverse gendered impacts of drought and famine in Somalia (June 2024)

## SUSTAINABILITY

**Will the changes last at the technical, financial, institutional, environmental levels? To what extent has UN Women established mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of results?**

### FINDING 10

**The sustainability of interventions under the UN Women Somalia Strategic Note is mixed, showing both potential and challenges, requiring further efforts to ensure long-term impact.**

This finding is based on an analysis of the enablers and threats to the sustainability of interventions under the UN Women Somalia Strategic Note.

#### Enablers for sustainability

**Capacity development initiatives:** UN Women Somalia has conducted capacity development training for its partners including government officials, CSOs, women's organizations and networks (see Findings 4–8). These capacity-building initiatives aimed to equip local institutions and stakeholders with skills that they can continue to use well after the Strategic Note period has ended. The evaluation survey revealed that the majority of the external stakeholders (71 per cent n=13/18) had participated in capacity-building initiatives organized by UN Women Somalia and the Regional Office. Key informants and focus group discussion participants also believed that their capacities had been enhanced and that they will continue to utilize the acquired knowledge and skills in the future. Some established women's peace networks have expanded their work into new areas without the support of the Joint WPS Programme, using local resources.

**Community ownership and local engagement:** Community dialogues and gender awareness campaigns contributed towards local buy-in and attitudinal shifts that support gender equality, including on harmful practices such as sexual/GBV and female genital mutilation. Under the Joint WPS Programme, a 10 per cent positive attitudinal shift on women's participation in peace and security processes was recorded owing to local engagements.<sup>53</sup>

**Alignment with national policies and UN frameworks:** UN Women Somalia's Strategic Note is aligned with Somalia's National Development Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, strengthening the likelihood of integration into national systems and therefore enabling sustainability of the work.

#### BOX 5

##### Unexpected outcomes of the LEAP interventions in Somalia

In the context of implementing UN Women's Strategic Note in Somalia, several unexpected outcomes, both positive and negative, have been observed. The establishment of peace networks and one-stop centres for survivors of sexual/GBV led to increased community involvement in addressing GBV issues as part of the LEAP programme. Communities became more proactive in supporting survivors and advocating for women's rights. For example, the peace networks were reported to be mobilizing their own resources to support survivors of sexual/GBV with dignity kits without the support of the LEAP programme. Capacity-building initiatives inadvertently fostered stronger networks among women's organizations, leading to collaborative advocacy efforts beyond the programme's initial scope.

The main negative unexpected outcome was resistance from traditional leaders. Efforts to promote women's participation in political processes encountered unforeseen resistance from traditional clan leaders, hindering progress in certain regions. Death threats were issued against some gender equality activists and female candidates aspiring for political office, which forced some to go into hiding and abandon their gender equality and women's empowerment advocacy activities and aspirations.

*Source: Developed by the evaluation team based on LEAP evaluations*

<sup>53</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.



## Threats to sustainability

**Short project cycles and limited funding:** Interventions such as LEAP III were implemented over short 12-month cycles, limiting long-term planning and follow-up. The funding cycle was too short to shift deep-rooted gender norms and power dynamics; embed behavioural and institutional practices; and allow women to fully absorb, apply and benefit from new skills or services. For example, both beneficiaries and stakeholders of the LEAP programme were concerned that the vocational training period of two months for the women's economic empowerment component was too short for the trainees to have adequately internalized the skills for long-term sustainability. While short-term funding undermines the transformative and systemic goals of UN Women's Strategic Note in Somalia, funding constraints, especially in light of shifting donor priorities, pose risks to continuation and scaling of interventions.<sup>54</sup>

**Cultural and social norms:** While progress is being made, entrenched gender norms and discriminatory practices remain major barriers to sustained change, especially in rural and conservative areas of Somalia. Changing mind-sets requires long-term, repeated engagement, which short-term projects struggle to deliver. CSOs interviewed noted that the regression in women's representation in parliament and the delay in passing the Sexual Offences Bill provide clear examples of how gender equality and women's empowerment gains can be reversed once the momentum from UN Women Somalia's Strategic Note interventions diminish.

**Political and security instability and reliance on external donors:** Ongoing insecurity and displacement in Somalia, particularly in areas affected by drought and conflict, threaten the durability of gains. Limited institutional capacity and political instability limit state-led continuation of services. Government and CSO stakeholders were concerned by the over-reliance of government and local CSOs on donor funding and the lack of domestic capacity to continue supporting gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives in the absence of external donors.

**High personnel turnover:** Stakeholders interviewed identified high personnel turnover in government and CSOs, as well as in UN Women as a threat to sustainability as it will lead to loss of institutional knowledge. This is largely because there is no formalized knowledge transfer system to ensure continuity when trained individuals leave an organization.

**UN Women's reliance on non-core funding:** In Somalia, the vast majority of UN Women's funding for key programmes such as Joint WPS Programme, LEAP and the Joint Rule of Law Programme are funded from non-core sources. In most cases, this funding is time-bound and output-focused. UN Women Somalia's reliance on non-core funding undermines the sustainability of its Strategic Note by limiting strategic flexibility, creating fragmentation and weakening long-term investment in systems and institutions. Stakeholders interviewed cited the example of the Joint Rule of Law Programme whose funding was drastically reduced by the donor leading to scaling down of planned activities.

<sup>54</sup> End of Programme Evaluation Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) Somalia (July 2022); End of Programme Evaluation Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP 2) (September 2023); End of Programme Evaluation: LEAP III Programme on strengthening protection of women and girls from the disproportionate and adverse gendered impacts of drought and famine in Somalia (June 2024).



## ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

**Is UN Women obtaining the most from its limited resources? Is it investing resources (time and money) in the most value-adding places to achieve results/impact? Does UN Women Somalia have the appropriate office structure and sufficient capacity and capability to deliver results?**

### FINDING 11

**UN Women Somalia faces significant structural challenges that hinder its ability to effectively implement programmes. Two outstanding challenges include high staff turnover and limited human resource capacity, as well as limited funding to implement sustainable programmes.**

#### HUMAN RESOURCES

UN Women Somalia operates in a challenging security environment as a non-family duty station. The Programme Presence was established in 2015; and, until July 2020, UN Women Somalia was classified as a Programme Presence but since then it has been classified in the Enterprise Data Management system as a small Country Office, with no delegation of authority.

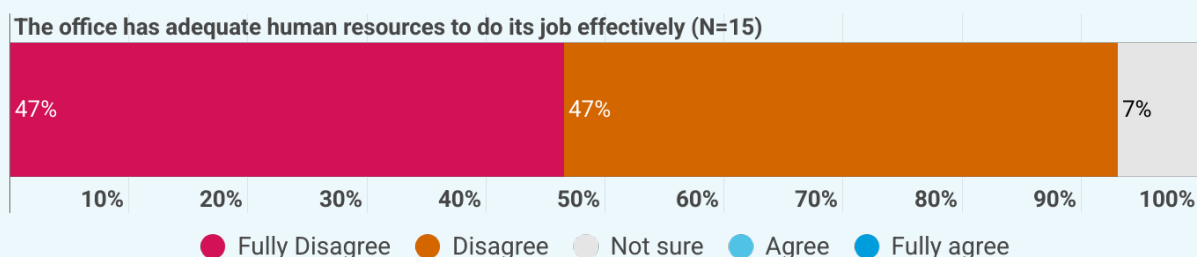
At the time of the evaluation, UN Women Somalia had a workforce of 12 individuals. The organization chart (see Annex 6) shared by the office shows five staff positions filled, two staff positions vacant; eight non-staff including four service contracts, three consultants and one UN volunteer filled, and two non-staff positions vacant. A country programme manager, who headed the office since 2020, recently moved to a different UN Women Country Office. A replacement was in place until mid-February 2025 as part of a detail assignment. At the time of the evaluation, the position of country programme manager was still under recruitment.

Several challenges were identified regarding the composition of the office. Among them, UN Women Somalia suffered from a high turnover of personnel and the absence of key positions required for effective office management. The absence of a deputy country manager meant that the office had no official approval authority every four weeks when the country manager took his

rest and recuperation period. This led to significant leadership gaps, such as delays in office processing and staff overburden at critical periods of Strategic Note implementation. A Regional Office mission on June 2024 led by the Regional Operations Team was able to address this challenge by advising the establishment of an Office-In-Charge during the country manager's rest and recuperation periods. While the solution proved to be optimal for operational functioning, stakeholders interviewed expressed a need to improve the consistency and continuity of UN Women Somalia management to maintain effective relationships with government, UN and CSO partners.

Interviews also revealed a gap between the expectations placed on UN Women Somalia and its actual capacity in terms of human resources to effectively advance gender equality and women's rights in the country. This was reiterated in all interviews and brought up as one of the main factors limiting the ability of UN Women Somalia to sustain results. All stakeholders interviewed, both internal to UN Women and external partners, mentioned the office's lack of adequate human resource capacity to respond to gender equality needs in Somalia as a major challenge to be addressed. The survey of internal partners strongly confirmed this as no one agreed or strongly agreed that the office has adequate human resources to carry out its mandate effectively (See Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6: Results from the survey of UN Women personnel on the extent to which they agree on the following statement**



Source: Developed by the evaluation team

Similar to many UN Women offices, the Somalia Programme Presence has a high prevalence of non-staff contractual arrangements with unstable, short-term contracts. In Somalia, this was mostly prevalent among programme personnel as opposed to operation staff whose contracts rely on core funding. During interviews, internal stakeholders referred to the imbalance between operational and programmatic contracts as potentially posing challenges to the execution of programmes, and in responding to the needs of the target population. Some external stakeholders referred to the limited gender equality technical capacity of UN Women Somalia personnel, mainly in the context of UN gender coordination mechanisms. While there was appreciation for bringing experts from the Regional Office for specific training and technical advice, stakeholders expressed the need to improve the sustainability and continuity of these efforts.

## PROGRAMME EFFICIENCY

Secondary evidence from the LEAP Programme and End-Term Evaluation of the Joint WPS Programme, as well as interviews with stakeholders, indicated challenges in terms of programme efficiency of UN Women Somalia's programmatic work. The main issues relate to programme implementation and delays in disbursement of funds; limited data collected to inform indicators related to UN Women Somalia's achievements; and limited evidence in internal UN Women Somalia reports, affecting their quality.

The Joint WPS Programme in particular experienced delays in implementation due to a slow start and limited capacity in partners institutions. Alongside these challenges, the End-Term Evaluation of the Joint WPS Programme pointed to a lack of financial capacity at the ministry level, mainly knowledge of UN financial reporting requirements, which resulted in further delays

during implementation of the Joint Programme. The evaluation also highlighted a disproportionate distribution of resources targeting mostly coordination mechanisms for implementing the Joint Programme to the detriment of direct capacity development of women at the grassroots level. This resulted in less consideration of the specific needs of women and communities in each state and district where the Joint Programme was operating.<sup>55</sup>

The LEAP programme undertook three evaluations<sup>56</sup> based on its three phases. The evaluations all highlighted delays in disbursement to partners which, in turn, delayed implementation of planned activities and led to partners having to pre-finance considerable portions of their operational budget. In this case, stakeholders mentioned that the delays were usually due to the multiple iterations related to quality assurance compliance for project documents and follow-up to programmatic guidance. This was compounded by delays related to UN Women Somalia's delegation of authority arrangements.

Finding 7 indicates that the delays experienced in implementing the Joint Rule of Law Programme were due to donor priorities shifting and programming delays.

Evaluation findings point to challenges with respect to the duration of programmes versus the planned activities and actual implementation. While the evaluation confirms that budgets were spent, maximizing the resources allocated, it also indicates that activities were not always implemented as planned, leading to delays.

In terms of overall evidence related to programme efficiency, interviews with stakeholders during the evaluation confirmed findings from programme evaluations. Internal stakeholders explained the lack of sufficient data to inform indicators along with the lack of monitoring and evaluation capacity at the country level, and the security context complicated field data collection.

<sup>55</sup> UNDP Somalia, UN Women Somalia, UNSOM, End-Term Evaluation of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, August 2024.

<sup>56</sup> End of Programme Evaluation Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) Somalia (July 2022); End of Programme Evaluation Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP 2) (September 2023); End of Programme Evaluation: LEAP III Programme on strengthening protection of women and girls from the disproportionate and adverse gendered impacts of drought and famine in Somalia (June 2024).

Stakeholders repeatedly reiterated the need to improve the quality and timeliness of reporting on the Strategic Note results framework. Programme efficiency and reporting of results was also found to be impacted by the absence of monitoring and reporting personnel. Since the start of the Strategic Note period, UN Women Somalia has relied on short-term monitoring and evaluation consultants, which has resulted in a lack of continuity; long breaks between contracts; and different personnel employed, which limited continuity and institutional memory. Since November 2024, recruitment has been under way for a more stable national position.

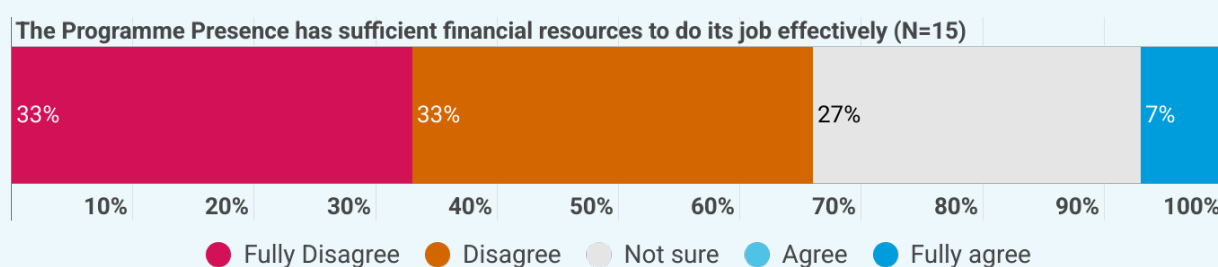
## FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND DELIVERY

UN Women Somalia's total budget during the period under evaluation (2022–2024) was US\$ 6.8 million; as of January 2025 it recorded US\$ 5.1 million in expenditure. Ninety-two per cent of the budget comes from non-core resources from four donors, distributed among three programmes, two of which are joint programmes, with UNDP the lead coordination agency. At the time of the evaluation, the three phases of the LEAP programme

funded by Japan had been finalized, with Japan providing 38 per cent of donor resources received. The Joint Rule of Law Programme for Somaliland started its second phase with a one-year delay, and the Joint WPS Programme with UNDP had received a six-month extension. As of July 2024, the total office resource requirement was US\$ 3,446,000 representing significant resource mobilization to be achieved. The decrease in non-core donor contributions was referred to by external and internal stakeholders (also triangulated in the internal survey, see Figure 7 below) as a major obstacle to the sustainability of UN Women's work in the country. The survey of UN Women Somalia personnel revealed that only 7 per cent (n=15) of personnel agreed that the office has sufficient financial resources to effectively achieve its mandate.

Despite this, UN Women Somalia was able to mobilize US\$ 149,800 in 2024 and US\$ 117,700 in 2025 from UN partners as part of the Gender Thematic Coordination Group for advancing gender equality advocacy related activities (see Finding 4).

**FIGURE 7: Survey of internal UN Women personnel**



Source: Developed by the evaluation team

## To what extent were interventions reaching and benefitting those who are most marginalized and hardest to reach?

### FINDING 12

**UN Women Somalia is perceived as reaching marginalized groups, internally displaced persons and survivors of gender-based violence but not at a sufficient scale to respond to the level of need in the country.**

UN Women Somalia has made significant strides through its programmatic interventions aimed at empowering vulnerable women. These efforts have ensured the participation of many marginalized groups; however, there remains a noticeable gap in the inclusion of women from hard-to-reach areas. While the representation of diverse sectors (including women with disabilities, clan minorities, internally displaced persons, survivors of GBV and entrepreneurs) has improved, further engagement is necessary.

The LEAP programmes<sup>57</sup> supported drought-affected women and implemented various interventions, including training, counselling services, provision of dignity kits, establishment of safe spaces and support for economic opportunities. The results reported by management included 440 marginalized women acquired different skills: 181 (tailoring), 141 (Henna), 44 (tie and dye), 39 (bakery), 19 (shampoo making) and 16 (make-up) (see Finding 9). In the 17 women's networks under the Joint WPS Programme, UN Women reported that it actively engaged a diverse range of marginalized women. Notably, women from CSOs comprised 28 per cent of the participants; women from minority backgrounds represented 14 per cent; internally displaced persons accounted for 10 per cent; women with disabilities constituted 7 per cent; and GBV survivors 4 per cent. While this inclusive approach underscores UN Women Somalia's commitment to amplifying the voices of various marginalized groups, external stakeholders noted the limited scale of these two programmes as an area to be improved.

The involvement of religious and traditional leaders in both programmes has played a crucial role in fostering a better understanding of the effects of gender inequalities within communities. Stakeholders' insights recorded through evaluation interviews noted that these leaders had influenced perceptions and attitudes, facilitating a cultural shift towards greater gender equity based on a small sample of participants from the programmes.

Through the LEAP programme, these leaders were trained on the hazards of harmful cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation, which are deeply rooted in society. Some of these leaders have become vocal in advocating for the end of such practices. However, despite these positive developments, challenges persist.

Interviews and findings from the Joint WPS Programme and LEAP evaluations confirmed that one major challenge is the need to include more women from the newly liberated areas of the country, as these groups remain among the hardest to reach. However, the lack of programme resources has been a major factor in its limitation in scope. Programmes such as LEAP are usually one year in length, limiting their ability to reach beyond marginalized women in areas easier to reach. Consequently, such limitations hinder the ability to impact at scale and produce changes in power dynamics and shift entrenched social norms. Interviews with external stakeholders observed that working at the normative level, and through joint initiatives, might lead to greater reach and impact.

The endorsement of legislation aimed at protecting women and addressing GBV is still lacking. This gap underscores the need for continued advocacy and support to ensure that marginalized women, particularly those in hard-to-reach areas, benefit from the full spectrum of interventions.

Survey results on engagement with marginalized populations revealed mixed perceptions among UN Women Somalia personnel and external stakeholders. While 60 per cent (N=9/15) of UN Women personnel expressed satisfaction with the level of engagement with marginalized women, only 56 per cent (N=10/18) of external stakeholders share this view, indicating a slightly more favourable internal perspective. Dissatisfaction is slightly higher among UN Women personnel (26 per cent) than external stakeholders (23 per cent), suggesting internal recognition of areas needing improvement.

<sup>57</sup> The Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection of Women and Girls in Crisis (LEAP) Programme Phase 1 2021-2022; LEAP II: Prevention of COVID-19 infections among women and girls displaced into internally displaced persons and refugee camps in ESAR 2022-2023; LEAP III: strengthening the leadership, empowerment, access and protection of women affected by drought and famine in Somalia 2023-2024.



Additionally, 22 per cent (N=4/18) of external stakeholders are uncertain about the effectiveness of such engagement, compared to 13 per cent (N=2/15) of UN Women personnel, highlighting potential communication gaps. Stakeholders largely fall into the “Somewhat Satisfied” category (50 per cent), while UN Women personnel show a more varied distribution of opinions, underscoring differing expectations and perceptions of engagement success.

IES’ document review indicates that UN Women Somalia committed to ensure that monitoring is informed by data collection disaggregated at least by sex and age. It is evident from partners’ reports that they were informed and mobilized to collect disaggregated data on their activities; however, this was not consistently pursued by the Joint WPS Programme to ensure that reporting on relevant targets is supported by data collected according

to human rights and leave no one behind standards. Therefore, this limits the evidence on the extent to which the Joint WPS Programme contributed to positive shifts in gender roles and power dynamics. The Joint WPS Programme has been extended for another phase in order to address this limitation.

The LEAP programme established Village Savings and Loan Associations that enabled members to borrow money without incurring additional fees. While both Village Savings and Loan Associations and climate-smart agriculture interventions implemented specific targeting to meet the needs of marginalized groups, there is no evidence to suggest that persons with disabilities at the community level were fully integrated into these initiatives.



Photo: ©UN Women Somalia Country Office

# 6. LESSONS LEARNED

to inform and enhance future programming:



**THE CAPACITY OF A UN WOMEN OFFICE SHOULD ALIGN WITH ITS SCOPE OF WORK:** UN Women Somalia operates with a triple mandate – normative support, UN system coordination and operational activities – which requires adequate personnel, financial resources, technical expertise and institutional structures to effectively deliver on its commitments. While UN Women Somalia has made significant progress in gender advocacy, policy reform and programme implementation through joint programmes, capacity constraints in personnel, financial resources and operational efficiency have limited its ability to achieve scalable changes. Donors and stakeholders' perceptions that UN Women Somalia has limited capacity will impact funding flows to the office.



**LEVERAGING UN WOMEN'S TRIPLE MANDATE:** Effectively utilizing UN Women Somalia's unique triple mandate has been instrumental in strengthening global frameworks and translating them into actionable national initiatives. This approach has underscored the importance of integrating these three facets to drive sustainable progress in gender equality and women's empowerment.



**SHIFTING SOCIAL NORMS AND ELIMINATING HARMFUL PRACTICES** requires long-term, sustained efforts rather than short-term interventions. Shifting narratives at institutional level has the potential to effect change, together with community ownership, engagement with religious leaders, generational education and continuous investment.



**EMBRACING AN INTEGRATED THEMATIC APPROACH:** Adopting a holistic strategy that interconnects various thematic areas is essential. Such an integrated approach, which needs to be reflected in the Strategic Note's theory of change, ensures that interventions are not siloed but rather address the multifaceted nature of gender issues, leading to more comprehensive and sustainable outcomes.



**SYSTEMATIC APPLICATION OF INTERSECTIONALITY:** Incorporating a consistent intersectional perspective across all impact areas is crucial. By recognizing and addressing the diverse and overlapping identities and experiences of women and girls, programmes can more effectively promote inclusivity and ensure that no one is left behind.



**ENHANCING COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS:** Strengthening collaboration with a diverse range of partners, including governments, CSOs, the private sector and other UN agencies, has been identified as a key factor in achieving impactful and sustainable results. Effective coordination amplifies resources, expertise and reach, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of interventions.



# 7. CONCLUSIONS

## RELEVANCE:

**The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note is highly relevant, as it aligns well with national development priorities, humanitarian frameworks and international commitments on gender equality.**

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note responds to the pressing needs of women and girls in Somalia, particularly in the context of conflict, displacement and climate-related crises. However, to sustain and deepen its relevance, continued engagement with local stakeholders; greater alignment with grassroots priorities; and implementing gender equality and empowerment of women initiatives at scale will be essential to ensure that interventions remain context-specific and responsive to the evolving needs of the target population.

## COHERENCE

**The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note aligns with Somalia's national policies and strategies on gender equality and women's empowerment, the mandates of the UNCT system and donor strategies.**

The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note has an adequate level of coherence with the country's priorities and the UN system. However, gaps in government ownership, institutional coordination and long-term funding stability reduce the overall alignment and effectiveness of UN Women's programmes in the country. Internal coherence within UN Women Somalia's programmes is also limited.

## EFFECTIVENESS:

**The UN Women Somalia Strategic Note has been effective in advancing policy advocacy for women's empowerment, joint-programme delivery and UN coordination, yet its scale to respond to gender equality needs in Somalia is limited.**

Although UN Women's Strategic Note in Somalia has demonstrated effectiveness in policy advocacy, joint programme delivery and UN coordination, structural, contextual, financial and operational barriers continue to limit its potential for broader impact. The evaluation notes the significant organizational capacity and resource mobilization constraints that limits UN Women Somalia's operational capability to respond to the needs of the target population at scale.

## SUSTAINABILITY:

**Prospects for the sustainability of UN Women Somalia's interventions appear promising but remain fragile.**

The sustainability of UN Women Somalia's interventions depends on strengthening linkages to local systems for increased ownership; securing long-term investments; and sustaining efforts to transform deeply entrenched gender norms within a context of persistent humanitarian challenges.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY:

**UN Women Somalia faces significant structural, financial and operational challenges that hinder its ability to effectively implement programmes at scale.**

UN Women Somalia requires strategic commitment to improving the availability of stable human resources, ensuring enabling operational processes, and security considerations. Given Somalia is a critical country for UN Women, ensuring that the office is well-equipped, adequately staffed and effectively managed is imperative for development of the next Strategic Note.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY:

**While UN Women in Somalia made progress in empowering vulnerable women and improving representation from various marginalized groups, there are still critical gaps in including women from hard-to-reach areas.**

The involvement of religious and traditional leaders has been beneficial in promoting gender equity; however, challenges remain, particularly in reaching newly liberated areas of the country and in securing the resources necessary to ensure programme continuity.

Additionally, the lack of legislative endorsement of the Sexual Offences Bill that protects women's rights, highlights the need for ongoing advocacy to ensure that all marginalized women access comprehensive support and interventions. There is no evidence to suggest that persons with disabilities at the community level were fully integrated into joint programme activities for example.



Photo: ©UN Women Somalia Country Office

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Presentation of the preliminary findings took place with the UN Somalia Programme Presence to inform the recommendations and suggested steps presented below. Each recommendation is linked to corresponding findings. The level of priority and timeline for implementation are indicated below each recommendation.

### RECOMMENDATION 1: HUMAN RESOURCES CAPACITY AND STRATEGIC POSITIONING

**UN Women should strive to strengthen its human resources capacity in the Somalia Programme Presence to ensure strategic positioning and long-term programme delivery.**

**UN Women should explore options to more effectively support the Somalia Programme Presence to strengthen its human resource capacity to maximize its impact and effectively implement its mandate. UN Women Somalia must also enhance its strategic positioning by prioritizing its comparative advantage in the normative and coordination spheres. Together with a tailored resource mobilization and communication strategy, this would equip UN Women Somalia with a sustainable structure to advance its work in the country.**

*Based on Findings 1,2,3,4,10,11*

Priority: **HIGH**

Timeline: **SHORT-TERM**

#### **Suggested steps to be taken:**

- Clarify the country typology of UN Women Somalia with a view to maximizing its impact based on the needs of the country and the strategic priorities of UN Women.
- Strengthen human resources and technical capacity for increased strategic positioning both programmatically and operationally.
- Strengthen senior coordination capacity in UN Women Somalia to support the UNCT in the country.

**To be led by:** Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and Somalia Programme Presence Representative

**Rationale and impact:** The current typology of UN Women Somalia is not clear to maximize its strategic positioning in the country. To better respond to the needs of the target population, CSOs, government and UN partners, UN Women Somalia should enhance its internal capacities in strategic positioning, coordination and programme management. This would allow UN Women Somalia to respond more effectively to the Somalia context ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment remain central to humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts.

## RECOMMENDATION 2: SOMALIA PROGRAMME PRESENCE CAPACITIES

**UN Women Somalia should devise sustainable strategies to recruit and retain the programme personnel required to implement long-term programmes. The office should consider recruiting gender equality expertise to contribute to the UNCT and other partners in advocating and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.**

*Based on Findings 3, 4, 10, 11*

Priority: **HIGH**

Timeline: **SHORT-TERM**

### **Suggested steps to be taken:**

- Prioritize the recruitment of technical personnel with long-term contracts to sustain UN Women Somalia capacities with a view to building trust from stakeholders.
- Strengthen personnel capacity in thematic areas such as humanitarian response, women's economic empowerment, governance and peacebuilding through targeted training and knowledge exchanges.
- Invest in monitoring and evaluation capacities and systems to generate high-quality data on programme outcomes.

**To be led by:** Eastern and Southern Africa Deputy Representative and Programme Presence Country Programme Manager, with support from Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Representative

**Rationale and impact:** Programming capacity during implementation of the previous Strategic Note was insufficient due to short-term contracting modalities. Prioritizing programming capacities for the long term would support more effective implementation of programmes and would regain the trust of partners in how UN Women Somalia can deliver on its mandate. Personnel turnover, short-term contracts for programmatic personnel and other interpersonal issues have affected office dynamics. Continuing to address this would improve the situation.

### RECOMMENDATION 3: PROGRAMMING

**UN Women Somalia should enhance programming by better linking cross-thematic areas; continuing to implement joint programmes; increasing its focus on normative and coordination work to ensure scalability of outcomes; and increasing its reach to the most marginalized populations.**

*Based on Findings 3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12*

Priority: **HIGH**

Timeline: **MEDIUM-TERM**

#### **Suggested steps to be taken:**

- Ensure the new Strategic Note, and the number and scope of outcomes targeted is realistic, based on available personnel capacity and projected funding.
- Continue to move to designing programmes with a focus on results rather than activity, moving towards longer and larger programmes that work across thematic areas (where donor funding allows) ensuring all programmes have exit plans in place and, where possible, are linked to national approaches, systems and structures.
- Continue exploring opportunities to increase joint programming with other agencies and deliver larger, more holistic programmes that work across thematic areas.
- Consider strengthening focus on coordination and normative work to enhance the effectiveness of Gender Theme Groups, and the mainstreaming of gender across cooperation frameworks and programmes and national normative processes to reach scalability of outcomes.
- Consider increasing the office's reach to the most marginalized populations by focusing on programming with traditional leaders, thereby also targeting change in gender and social norms.

**To be led by:** Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and Programme Presence management teams

**Rationale and impact:** UN Women Somalia operates based on funding available through programmes that are disconnected. Current programmes are ending, and respond to thematic areas without being interconnected. Given the needs of the country in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment are significant, UN Women Somalia can best leverage its impact by focusing on normative and coordination-level types of programmes. This means scaling up technical support to government (together with the UN system) to progress the passing of laws related to ending violence against women and fully implementing women's political representation commitments. Due to capacity constraints, UN Women Somalia has been limited in what it has been able to deliver in terms of operational work through its own short-term programmes and through joint programmes. Addressing these issues would strengthen delivery against UN Women's triple mandate and its target outcomes, and further support national normative-level work, such as the passing of the Sexual Offences Bill, the ratification of CEDAW, continuous implementation of the Women's Political Representation Act and implementation of UNSCR 1325. Continuing UN Women Somalia's strong footprint within the UNCT and leveraging its coordination mandate in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, would also ensure greater coordination outcomes.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

**UN Women Somalia should invest in resource mobilization and communication by strengthening its relationships with current donors and building relationships with potential donors.**

*Based on Findings 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11*

Priority: <b>MEDIUM</b>	Timeline: <b>LONG-TERM</b>
<b>Suggested steps to be taken:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to engage with donors as they contribute to larger joint programmes that pool funding across donors.</li><li>• Strengthen relationships with existing donors and external communication by demonstrating the results and needs in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Somalia.</li></ul>	
<b>To be led by:</b> Country Programme Manager in Somalia and <i>Regional Resource Mobilization Specialist</i> .	
<b>Rationale and impact:</b> UN Women Somalia has struggled with small, donor-driven projects and larger-scale joint programmes with challenges in effective joint implementation. Donors agree there is a critical need for advancing gender equality programming across Somalia. Building on its strengths and recognized added value in promoting gender equality, along with the trust it has earned from the government, will be essential in attracting additional funding.	



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**Produced by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS)**

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit and Investigation Services under the Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS). The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

# **UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

UN Women As the lead UN entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social behaviors and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations translate progress into lasting changes. We make strides forward for women and girls in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security as well as humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.



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