



# **A YEAR OF PROGRESS, A LONG WAY TO GO**

**A REPORT CARD ON THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL'S FIRST YEAR**

**FEMINIST U.N. CAMPAIGN**



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# INTRODUCTION

Secretary-General António Guterres took office in January 2017 amid unprecedented global calls for female—and feminist—leadership of the United Nations, which to date has not had a woman at its helm. Mr. Guterres acknowledged that tension early on, asserting that while he was not female, he could nonetheless meet the mantle of feminist leadership that was desired, declaring: “I know many women that are not feminists, and I know some men that are.”<sup>i</sup>

With the signal that the incoming Secretary-General would be open to advancing a feminist agenda as part of his leadership platform, the Feminist U.N. Campaign was born.<sup>ii</sup> Drawing from a series of proposals<sup>iii</sup> compiled and published by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) on behalf of a number of leading U.N. experts, feminist activists and former U.N. staff eager to see the System deliver on the human rights and nondiscrimination standards it was born out of, the Campaign released a set of targeted recommendations for a 100-day agenda<sup>iv</sup> the new Secretary-General could advance to promote needed, feminist transformation throughout the U.N. System. At the end of that period, it published a report card<sup>v</sup> assessing Mr. Guterres’s progress against those recommendations and pledging to, as the Secretary-General had invited, “hold his feet to the fire” in ensuring strong actions followed early promises for change.<sup>vi</sup>

At the end of Mr. Guterres’s first year in office, the Feminist U.N. Campaign has again conducted a rigorous progress assessment, capturing feedback from academics, feminist civil society as well U.N. staff and watchers around the world. We should note that this assessment grades the Secretary-General’s progress against the Campaign’s recommended agenda, not his own, and is therefore independent and

admittedly ambitious. Moreover, we recognize that the Secretary-General is not the only actor responsible for implementing the level of true, system-wide transformation we envision. There is a larger ecosystem beyond the Secretary-General, from his deputies and cabinet, who presumably are aligned with his vision, to member states and various agencies and organizations, which may not be. The additional constraints of impending budget cuts<sup>vii</sup> and a fraught global political climate also present significant challenges with which the Secretary-General must contend. Despite these constraints, he has made visible and recurrent overtures on the importance of women’s rights and gender equality—arguably far more than any Secretary-General preceding him. This is laudable progress.

However, our report card measures progress against a feminist vision for change, not the admittedly poor baseline of past performance. Against this ambitious agenda, we find that the Secretary-General drove significant and truly unprecedented progress in some areas, but made little to no change in others, resulting in an overall score of 78 percent, or a C+. We review in detail his efforts on each of the six thematic areas of the Feminist U.N. Campaign, giving full credit where he made sustained and highly visible interventions, and calling out areas where his efforts were either lacking, or less visible.

Overall, we applaud Secretary-General Guterres’s progress to date and seemingly genuine personal commitment to advancing gender equality and women’s rights across the U.N. System, and hope that those areas where we deliver constructive criticism will prove useful as the Secretary-General considers additional actions and new approaches in his second year of leadership as the world’s top diplomat.







## METHODOLOGY

The scoring reflected in this report card draws on qualitative and quantitative data collected and curated through a variety of different sources and methods. All research procedures were approved by the ICRW Institutional Review Board to ensure full compliance with the Human Research Protection Program.<sup>viii</sup> We sought to be rigorous and generate as representative input as possible. We have also aimed for this endeavor to be replicable, so that similar data can be collected throughout the duration of the Secretary-General's term and thereafter, providing ongoing opportunities for learning and reflection. The intent is to capture whether gender can be effectively mainstreamed across the U.N. System and whether sufficient resources are being dedicated to gender mainstreaming and gender equality and to the more transparent and accountable engagement of civil society in U.N. processes and fora.

### Key Informant Interviews

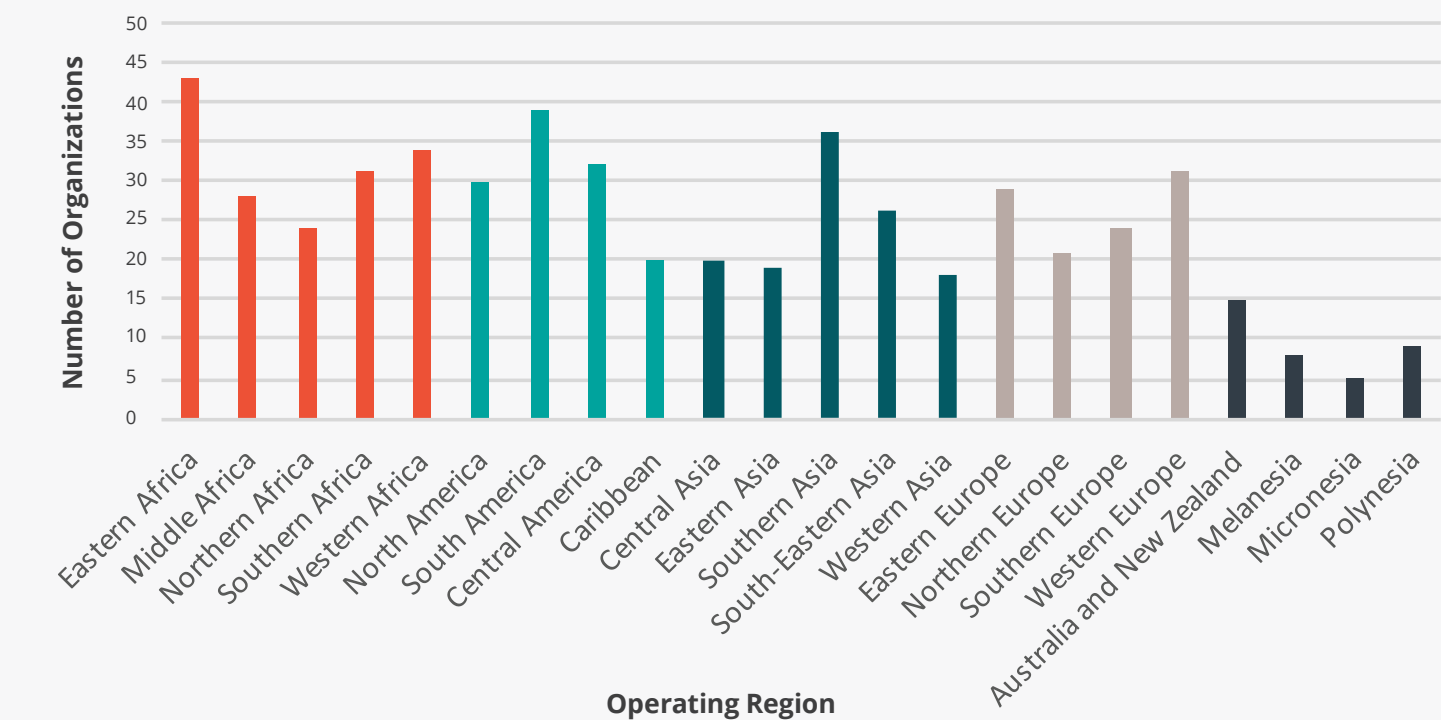
We conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with 17 individuals currently within the U.N. System (5), academia (1), think tanks (1) and global civil society (10) who possess considerable U.N. expertise. Key informants were identified through a number of civil society and U.N. networks, including: Women's Major Group; Women's Rights Caucus; Association for Women's Rights in Development; U.N. Feminist Network, multiple U.N. agencies, the International Trade Union Confederation; and feminist organizations directly engaged in the Feminist U.N. Campaign. Each interview took about an hour. Key informants were asked questions about the different domains of the report card, including the Secretary-General's support for feminist leadership within the U.N., the gender parity agenda in staffing and recruitment, financing for gender equality, financing and support for U.N. Women, engagement with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) and the High Level

Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), as well as gender mainstreaming throughout the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and full implementation of Goal 5. They were also asked about freedom of information and the pursuit of greater accountability for sexual abuse cases by peacekeepers, humanitarian staff and others across the U.N. Key informant responses were analyzed and coded in NVivo qualitative data analysis software and clustered around a number of broad themes to support the scoring methodology. Key informants' responses were anonymized and individuals are only identified by their organization type and broad geographic location.

### Online Survey

We used the same networks and affiliations to enable us to field an online survey about the key domains and levels of civil society engagement, and civil society's perceptions of U.N. transparency, accountability and support for gender equality under the leadership of this Secretary-General. The survey was sent out through these networks to individuals in different NGOs, INGOs, unions and academic institutions and snowballed as individuals forwarded it to other similar organizations. Again, all information was anonymized and respondents were coded by their type of organization and geographic location. We reached 118 civil society organizations that work across the regions, and various sub-regions, of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Respondents (n=97) were based in 44 different countries.<sup>ix</sup> The chart below represents the operating regions of these civil society organizations (n=98), which is not limited to areas where they have formal registration, but reflects where their work is conducted and mission is advanced. The results of the survey capture the perceptions of civil society respondents about the Secretary-General's progress in advancing gender equality to date. They are used to augment and substantiate our analysis and are not representative of the views of global civil society.

FIGURE 1: In which region(s) does your civil society organization operate?



\*Respondents were asked to select all applicable regions of operation. Many organizations worked in multiple regions, thus the number of regions is greater than the total number of respondents.

### Speeches and Reports

We collated 176 speeches made by the Secretary-General over the last year on U.N.-related matters that were archived on the U.N. Secretariat website.<sup>x</sup> The systematic analysis used key search terms – gender, women, girls and sex – to identify speeches that made reference to gender issues, and subsequently analyzed these speeches for content related to the key domains of interest. We also reviewed reports pertinent to this period. These included the *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity*, as well as the Secretary-General’s reports on *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: ensuring a better future for all*; *Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet*; *Restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar*; and *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse*.

### Appointments

We followed key appointments over the Secretary-General’s first year.<sup>xi</sup> Appointments at Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) and Under Secretary-General (USG) levels were tracked by sex across the year.

### U.N.-SWAP

We analyzed the U.N. System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (U.N.-SWAP) data<sup>xii</sup> and interviewed and convened U.N. staff working on the U.N.-SWAP to find out about ongoing efforts to mainstream and track the mainstreaming of gender through this initiative.

### Key Civil Society Campaigns

In following specific issues, we also followed some key campaigns working on gender equality or women’s rights, including the Code Blue Campaign<sup>xiii</sup> to end impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeeping personnel and the Count Me In! consortium on women’s rights.<sup>xiv</sup>



## Scoring

The overall weighted average score was informed by scores on each of six dimensions<sup>xv</sup> and the subcomponents that we tracked under each:

### 1 Articulate and begin to implement a feminist leadership agenda for the U.N. (30%)

- A. Give speeches that make substantive reference to gender in U.N. processes and commitments (percent of speeches)<sup>xvi</sup>
- B. Seek parity in high-level appointments (percent of new appointments)
- C. Actively engage with civil society in U.N. fora and through town hall meetings (number of meetings with civil society)

### 2 Ensure feminist implementation and accountability for the SDGs (14%)

- A. Make efforts to link the SDGs and their targets to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- B. Make efforts to ensure that CSW has a clear mandate to oversee gender mainstreaming in the SDGs
- C. Link SDG implementation to accountability mechanisms
- D. Emphasize gender equality and human rights in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the HLPF

### 3 Finance for gender equality (14%)

- A. Track and publish what is spent on gender equality throughout the System and support the U.N.-SWAP
- B. Convene an annual high-level panel on financing for gender equality within the U.N. System
- C. Advocate for increased funding for U.N. Women to US\$1 billion
- D. Commit to a pathway to full financial transparency in the U.N.

### 4 Utilize feminist leadership as a defining model of the new administration and throughout the System (14%)

- A. Support parity among ASGs and USGs
- B. Establish gender parity in the Cabinet
- C. Call for nominations for feminist female candidates in WHO, UNFPA and U.N. Treaty Bodies
- D. Support gender equitable employment practices (respect for care work, flexible working hours, paid family leave, zero tolerance for sexual harassment)
- E. Institute a global commission of inquiry for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse

### 5 Enable a feminist transformation for CSW and U.N. Women (14%)

- A. Increase amount and scope of civil society participation at CSW
- B. Encourage focus on women's rights and gender equality in outcome documents and proceedings
- C. Support more transparent and plural advisory council for U.N. Women

### 6 Promote the freedom of information in the U.N. System (14%)

- A. Institute a system-wide freedom of information policy
- B. Publish contributions by member states and staff quotas publicly
- C. Televisе major U.N. meetings and make them available to civil society via internet platforms

Each of these dimensions was scored based on the data from the KII, the online survey, coded speeches and analysis of reports and outcome documents. The grading scale is shown in Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2:** Grading Scale

A+	97%+
A	93%-96%
A-	90%-92%
B+	87%-89%
B	83%-86%
B-	80%-82%
C+	77%-79%
C	73%-76%
C-	70%-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63%-66%
D-	60%-62%
F	0%-59%

The scores were reviewed by a technical advisory group comprised of members of the Feminist U.N. Campaign and are reported for each of the six components. The sub-component analysis is included in the full report below. The first component of the six components was weighted at 30 percent of the overall score in order to reflect that it encompasses the other components by framing an overarching commitment to gender equality within the U.N. System, and is an action that is fully within the power of the Secretary-General to undertake alone (i.e., does not require action by member states or bodies beyond his individual control).





THE REPORT CARD

Overall Score: **C+**

The Secretary-General earned an overall grade of C+, with a score of 78 out of 100 for the weighted average of the different scoring dimensions. He performed best on dimensions 1: Articulate and Implement a Feminist Leadership Agenda for the U.N. and 4: Utilize Feminist Leadership: Parity and Rights Protections. He was weaker on efforts to ensure freedom of information in the U.N. System, strengthening the U.N.'s gender architecture of CSW and U.N. Women and financing for gender equality, dimensions 6, 5 and 3, respectively, and weakest on dimension 2: Ensure Feminist Implementation and Accountability for the SDGs.

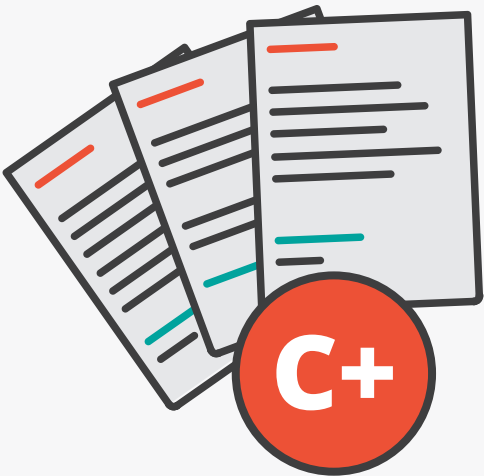


TABLE 1: The Secretary-General's Weighted Scores by Dimension

1	2	3	4	5	6
Articulate and begin to implement a feminist leadership agenda for the U.N. (30%)	Ensure Feminist Implementation and Accountability for the SDGs (14%)	Financing for Gender Equality (14%)	Utilize Feminist Leadership: Parity + Rights Protections (14%)	Enable a Feminist Transformation for CSW and U.N. Women (14%)	Promote the Freedom of Information in the U.N. System (14%)
B	D+	C	B+	C	D+
86	67	75	88	75	68

The rationale for scores of each sub-section are explored in detail below.

SECTION 1: ARTICULATE AND IMPLEMENT A FEMINIST LEADERSHIP AGENDA

Grade: 86 **B**

**Our Ask:** The Feminist U.N. Campaign defines a feminist leadership agenda as a full-fledged women’s rights agenda based on U.N. policies

of human rights, equality, fairness and nondiscrimination, which outlines which members of the Secretary-General’s administration are responsible for implementing its key provisions. Progress on such an agenda should be reported to the public on an annual basis with consultation from feminist civil society and U.N. staff to hone and implement.

**Progress to date:** Over the past year, Secretary-General Guterres has repeatedly asserted the importance of gender equality and women’s rights in his speeches,

reports, personnel appointments and through the launch of signature initiatives such as those on parity and sexual exploitation and abuse, each of which are explored in further detail later in the report card. There was little doubt among respondents that this is a leader with strong rhetorical commitment to gender equality. For the Campaign, however, the question is, 1) Has he articulated a clear and coherent, *feminist*, agenda, 2) If so, does it clearly identify parties responsible for implementing its component parts, and 3) Are those individuals accessible and pervious to feminist critique and civil society input?

## 1. The Agenda

Our review finds that at the end of his first year in office, Mr. Guterres has articulated various components of an agenda with clear commitments and responsibilities identified in several areas and some very visible progress on particular priorities, but less visible commitments on a number of feminist issues which are at risk of being overshadowed. For these issues, there is not clarity about what is being done, who is doing it and what the mechanisms for feminist critique and civil society input will be.

On parity, for instance, Guterres exhibits clear and strong leadership, with a clear agenda, benchmarks and actors responsible for leading progress designated. He pledged to achieve gender parity in senior leadership by 2021, and across the U.N. System “well before 2030.”<sup>xvii</sup> To accelerate this process, Guterres endorsed a *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity* – arguably the strongest of its kind, with clear benchmarks and actors responsible for achieving them.<sup>xviii</sup> The Secretary-General’s commitment to reaching gender parity is most welcome, as progress in this area is long overdue (the initial target for gender parity in the U.N.’s managerial and decision-making positions was 2000).<sup>xix</sup> Likewise, appointing women to high-level positions sets a positive precedent for women’s leadership at the U.N. and in global development overall.

However, parity is an element, but not the fulfilment, of feminist leadership, and for many respondents, it appears to risk overshadowing other elements of a full-fledged women’s rights agenda. Most experts interviewed pointed to parity as the Secretary-General’s primary agenda with regard to gender equality, and as one expert put it, the “lowest-hanging fruit.”

The speeches of the Secretary-General are an important indicator of his agenda, and our assessment provides an illustrative tool for thinking about whether it is a feminist one. Our review revealed that of 176 speeches made since his designation, 67 included any reference to gender. Of those speeches, eight were on gender issues, and 16 more addressed gender issues or women’s rights in a substantive way. Of more than 100 remaining speeches, 35 presented particularly obvious opportunities for Guterres to substantively mention gender by meaningfully highlighting the link between gender equality commitments and other key themes mentioned, such as implementation of the 2030 Agenda; security; peace and conflict; climate change; migration and refugee crises; counter-terrorism/countering violent extremism; and youth engagement. Additionally, 34 speeches that included direct references to gender also included missed opportunities to connect the importance of gender equality and women’s rights to other substantive issues on the U.N.’s agenda. More generally, Guterres was more likely to mention women and girls as victims of violence than as current or potential leaders, decision-makers and change agents. He also tended to focus on abstract goals or commitments, such as the general need to empower women or implement the women, peace and security agenda, rather than integrate women and gender into his more concrete discussions of solutions to global challenges.



This word cloud represents the 25 most frequently used words of the 16 speeches in which the Secretary-General included both a direct and substantive mention of gender issues or women’s rights. Connections to human rights, peace and development are most common, though other thematic areas of relevance do not appear.



While the Secretary-General did make an effort to highlight the importance of gender-based violence and women's rights to the U.N.'s goals, he did not often demonstrate this commitment by bringing women's rights and gender issues to bear on issues of security, development, governance and human rights, to name a few. To emphasize the importance of gender in all U.N. activities, the Secretary-General must make a conscious effort to improve substantive references to gender equality and women's rights in his public engagements, private meetings and correspondence with member state leaders, and to make explicit the connections between commitments to gender equality and women's rights and the broader goals of the U.N.

However, closed correspondence with senior U.N. officials reveals that the Secretary-General and his leadership team are setting a more transformative agenda behind the scenes than may be visible in speeches and other public forums. For instance, the Secretary-General led an Executive Committee discussion calling for the U.N.'s reform streams (in development, peace and security, and management) to strengthen the institution's overall gender architecture and build capacity. This is particularly important in a climate of potential and actual budget cuts that could have a regressive impact on the gender architecture and commitments to gender equality. However, this information is not publicly available, nor has the Secretary-General or his team messaged as visibly on this commitment, which contributes to the perception that the Secretary-General is not taking action in the important area of financing for gender equality, or is prioritizing other issues at its expense.

## 2. The Team Responsible

The Secretary-General demonstrated an early commitment to women's leadership in the U.N. by appointing women to senior positions in his own ranks, many of whom are responsible for implementing key components of our recommended agenda. These include Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed, Chef de Cabinet Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Senior Policy Advisor Kyung-wha Kang (since succeeded by Ana Maria Menéndez) and the first-ever Senior Gender Advisor, Nahla Valji. Each of these officials has been made

responsible for key streams of work. For instance, the Deputy Secretary-General oversees the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, and the Senior Policy Advisor leads the *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity* and serves as a civil society liaison.

This is not to suggest that merely being a woman equates with feminist leadership. Another step the Secretary-General has taken to signal support across his team for gender equality and women's voices is that the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Chef de Cabinet and Senior Policy Advisor have joined the International Gender Champions (IGC), pledging to speak on panels only if they reflect a gender balance.<sup>xx</sup> An Executive Committee decision also encourages all senior managers to join the IGC, which is reiterated in the *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity*.<sup>xxi</sup> We urge the Secretary-General to act on his commitment in all engagements, whether at U.N. or non-U.N. events. The Executive Committee meets on a weekly basis and is a principal-level body the Secretary-General tapped to advise on strategic decisions of key importance. It includes 13 standing members – one of which is the Executive Director of U.N. Women.<sup>xxii</sup> This is of fundamental importance, as it positions U.N. Women to inform major decision-making and implementation across all pillars of the U.N.'s work. We are also told by senior officials that this is a primary forum in which the Secretary-General advances a feminist agenda; however, Executive Committee deliberations remain confidential so it is impossible for civil society to know what that agenda is unless it is disclosed to us by officials familiar with those, closed, conversations, which leads us to our final concern regarding the Secretary-General's performance advancing a feminist agenda:

## 3. Opportunities for feminist critique and civil society input

The Secretary-General hosted a women's rights town hall at the 61<sup>st</sup> CSW, which was an important and unprecedented invitation to hear from feminist civil society, the response to which was equally notable—members of civil society were queueing for hours before the doors opened in order to participate, and the hall was completely full. There is clear desire for dialogue, although the invitation indicated that this would be a

regular occurrence and it is not clear that subsequent fora have been organized.

Unlike town halls however, much of the Secretary-General's leadership occurs in closed circles, such as Executive Committee discussions, that are neither shared out with, nor certainly inviting comment from, civil society and broader staff or feminist circles. As an International Gender Champion, Guterres has also committed to meeting with women's civil society organizations and/or visiting related programs in each of his country visits, which is an important indicator that the Secretary-General has heard the Campaign call for continued engagement with and meaningful participation of civil society in his work.<sup>xxiii</sup> Senior U.N. officials have also informed us that the Secretary-General met with relevant mandate holders on ending violence against women and related issues within the U.N. and regional organizations, and asked both U.N.

Women and the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to work with these mechanisms to strengthen coordination and support. The Deputy Secretary-General and the Senior Gender Advisor have also met with the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women to determine how the work of mandate-holders could be used in the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.. These are heartening indications that the Secretary-General and his team are consulting with women's rights experts in the honing and advancement of his agenda; we urge them to deepen and amplify this engagement and rely on the expertise and evidence generated through these mechanisms. As inclusion and meaningful interaction are key to a feminist U.N. System, the Secretary-General should redouble efforts to invite ideas for and share outcomes of his efforts more broadly and visibly than he is currently perceived to be doing.

**What's left to be done:** The Secretary-General has articulated his commitment to gender equality in different thematic areas, with a preeminent focus on gender parity, an overdue but insufficient benchmark of transformation in the U.N. System. Moving forward, he should specify goals, targets, benchmarks and individuals responsible for each aspect of his women's rights and gender equality agenda, embracing gender mainstreaming throughout the System in equal measure as he advances gender parity at the very top levels of U.N. leadership. This process must rely on active participation from feminist civil society and staff across the U.N. System. Furthermore, the Secretary-General must emerge as a feminist voice championing institutional change. He must examine the "deep structure" of the U.N. by addressing not only policies and programs, but equal access to resources and employment, accountability systems and gender-biased norms as well.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Another way to improve performance in this area is by continuing to draw upon recommendations and thematic/country reports from U.N. treaty bodies and special procedures mandate-holders. U.N. treaty bodies issue concluding observations and general comments on member states' adherence to treaty provisions, which can provide critical information on progress towards gender equality, women's rights and implementation of policy frameworks like the SDGs. Similarly, special procedures mandate-holders report on human rights issues in specific country contexts, and often liaise with civil society. Enhancing engagement with these mechanisms, particularly the Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice and the work of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, can further improve the Secretary-General's agenda, speeches, engagements, overall understanding of gender issues worldwide and strategies to address them.

SECTION 2: ENSURE FEMINIST IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

Grade: 67 D+

**Progress to date:** The Secretary-General’s report on the U.N. development system reveals that sufficient support for the 2030 Agenda is still lagging, with approximately 50 percent of funding allocated to SDGs 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). The report also discloses that expenditure on gender equality and women’s empowerment is “far too low and demands much more concentrated attention.”<sup>xxv</sup> This acknowledgment is important for realization of the SDGs, especially in those areas where a focus on gender equality has been most lacking. A majority of survey respondents (n=79) agree that Secretary-General Guterres has been vocal in his support for full

implementation of SDG 5 (to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), and gender mainstreaming across all Goals. He has also deputized Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed to lead his efforts on this agenda, who regularly refers to Goal 5 as the “docking station” with which progress on all other goals must be linked.

Additionally, officials point to the European Union’s recent investment of €500 million in the new Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, which will be organized as a “SDG model fund.” The Spotlight Initiative is included among “a set of strategic UN development systemwide global flagship initiatives in support of the SDGs” in the Secretary-General’s report on the U.N. development system. These flagship initiatives are designed to address existing gaps in SDG implementation and strengthen inter-agency collaboration towards issues crucial to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>xxvi</sup>

FIGURE 2: Survey respondents’ agreement with the statement “The Secretary-General has expressed support for full implementation of SDG 5”

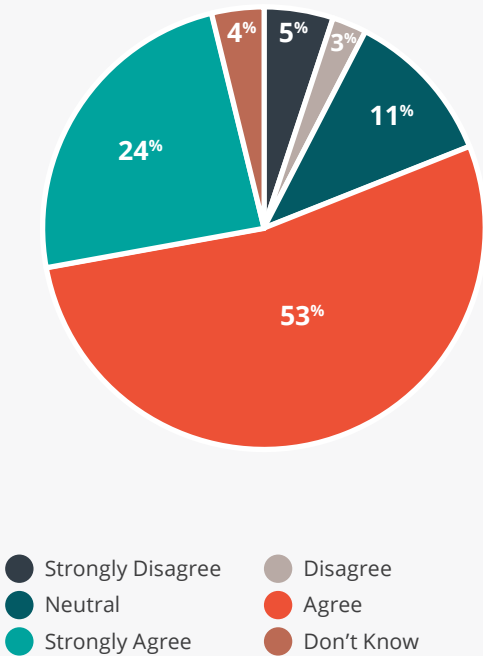
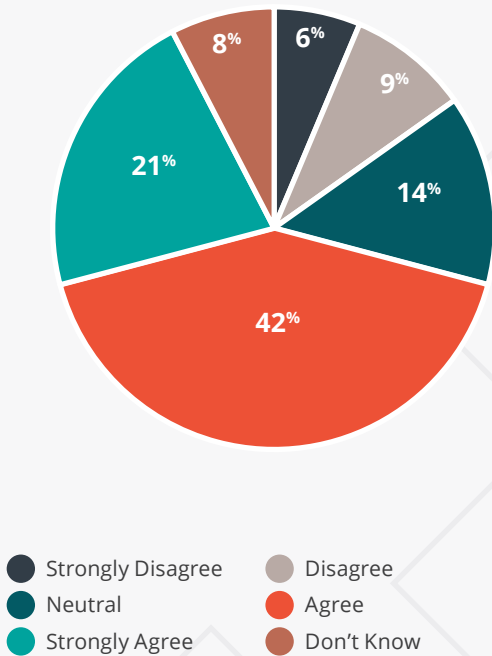


FIGURE 3: Survey respondents’ agreement with the statement “The Secretary-General has expressed full support for gender mainstreaming throughout all SDGs”





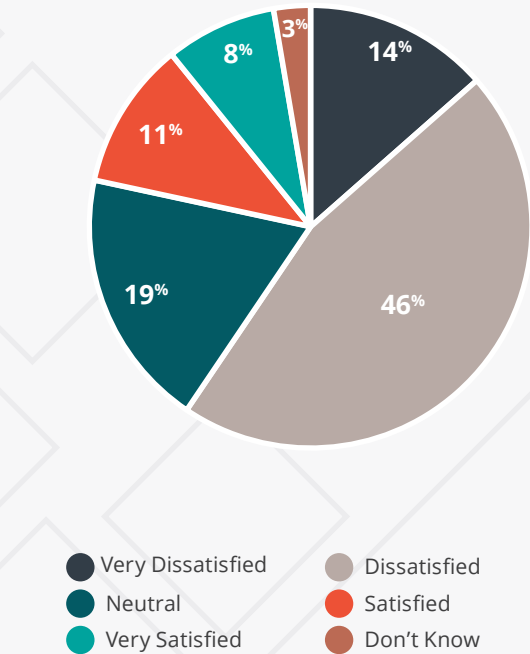
Our review also looks specifically at the HLPF, which plays a particularly important role in galvanizing commitment and accountability to the SDGs. Both key informants and survey respondents emphasized the challenges facing civil society during the 2017 HLPF. Most notably, civil society representatives were offered very limited time to respond to countries' voluntary national reviews (VNRs) on SDG implementation. In some instances, interpreting services were unavailable and in the case of India's VNR, civil society were not even permitted to ask questions. These restrictions severely limit feminist voices at the U.N. – signaling an opportunity for the Secretary-General, or the Deputy Secretary-General as the primary overseer of the SDGs, to intervene and be more vocal in supporting civil society access to HLPF discussions. The Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General can also use their influence to encourage governments to focus on gender and civil society engagement as an accelerator in their VNRs – particularly during sessions when SDG 5 is not under review.

Also at the 2017 HLPF, language on gender equality for the Ministerial Declaration fell subject to political debate. Ultimately, references to child marriage, female genital

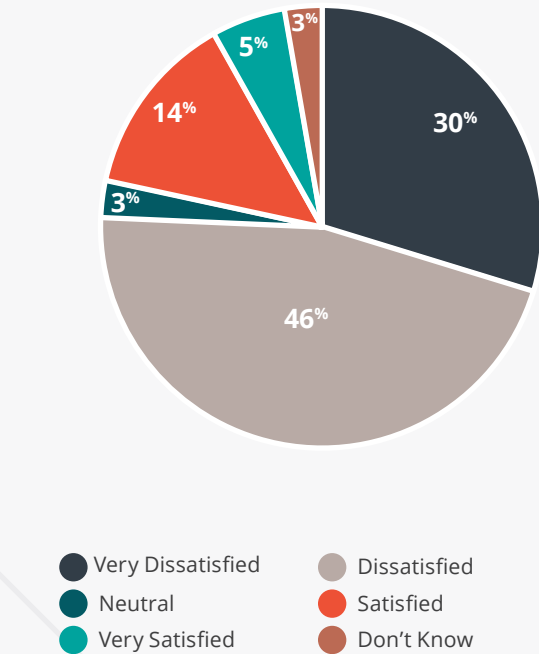
mutilation and sexual and reproductive health and rights were excluded from the final document – despite the fact that they were already agreed upon as SDG 5 indicators.<sup>xxvii</sup> While HLPF and decisions around the Ministerial Declaration are driven primarily by member states, the Secretary-General's team can play a greater role in encouraging member states to affirm consensus around SDG 5, including civil society perspectives. The Ministerial Declaration's stance on gender equality was ultimately weak in comparison to the 2030 Agenda; this can be considered a missed opportunity for exercising feminist leadership. Secretary-General Guterres could have, as one informant described, "put political will behind it to the extent necessary."

Of the survey respondents who attended the 2017 HLPF (n=37), a majority expressed dissatisfaction with civil society access to the forum (see Figures 4 and 5 below). This reflects a limitation on civil society's ability to hold governments accountable to their commitments on SDG implementation, another symptom in an overall landscape of constricting space for substantive civil society engagement at the U.N.

**FIGURE 4:** Survey respondents' satisfaction with consultation between governments and civil society on SDG implementation and reporting at 2017 HLPF



**FIGURE 5:** Survey respondents' satisfaction with opportunities for civil society to comment on countries' Voluntary National Review (VNR) reporting at 2017 HLPF



**What's left to be done:** While Guterres and his Deputy Secretary-General have consistently articulated support for SDG 5 and gender mainstreaming throughout the 2030 Agenda, he and his team have not maximized leadership in this area. Describing the discrepancy between rhetoric and on-the-ground action, a civil society informant based in Asia explained, "The UN needs to push governments to come up with more concrete implementation programs." One area where the Secretary-General or Deputy Secretary-General can do this is by taking a more active role in pushing member states to invest in gender equality and women's empowerment, and to engage with civil society and feminist movements in their SDG reporting.

The Secretary-General's team can and should also use their platform to link the SDGs to feminist accountability mechanisms, such as ensuring the CSW fulfills its mandate to review progress of the 2030 Agenda<sup>xxviii</sup> and linking the SDGs to key women's rights instruments like the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Furthermore, the Deputy Secretary-General should increasingly call on U.N. entities and member states to advance the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity to ensure that all targets and indicators of the SDGs, particularly those relevant to gender, are being reached. U.N. Women and the Spotlight Initiative have already accelerated use of sex-disaggregated data, and at the Security Council debate on women, peace and security, the Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet affirmed that the U.N. would strengthen use of gender statistics and encourage member states to monitor gender equality indicators in their SDG implementation.<sup>xxix</sup> We encourage them to continue and advance this practice through all activities.

## SECTION 3: FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

**Grade: 75** 

**Progress to date:** At the CSW, Secretary-General Guterres indicated that he was working with his Senior Gender Advisor to review proposals for advancing gender mainstreaming across the U.N. Since then, we have learned that Guterres will be inaugurating a Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which will address investments in gender equality across the U.N. System and implementation of the U.N.-SWAP. The Task Force as it is currently envisaged is an internal task force, the focus of which is primarily on budget and staff allocations for gender equality spending throughout the U.N. System, although the Campaign and others have pushed for it to be higher level and encourage member states to also finance for gender equality and the achievement of the SDGs.

During the UNGA, Guterres also announced a three-part strategy for financing the 2030 Agenda, which is relevant for gender equality given Goal 5 and gender mainstreaming across all goals. This includes: ensuring that international economic and financial policies reflect the objectives of the 2030 Agenda; strengthening country teams through U.N. development system reform; and supporting international initiatives that can lead to transformative change. Also during the UNGA, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed highlighted the need to maximize official development assistance and domestic financing.<sup>xxx</sup>

Finally, the EU-U.N. Spotlight Initiative was announced in September 2017. This is a multi-year global initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls. The initial investment of approximately €500 million will be made, with the European Union as the main contributor, stipulating some thematic, funding and implementing agency preferences. Other donors and partners will be invited to join the Initiative to broaden its reach and scope.

The initiative will be managed as a “U.N. multi-stakeholder trust fund, administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, with the support of core agencies UNDP, UNFPA and U.N. Women, and overseen by the Executive Office of the U.N. Secretary-General.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

Despite these achievements, there has been limited visible effort from the Secretary-General or his team on our Campaign recommendations that he become the “fundraiser-in-chief” for gender equality and women’s rights in the System, pushing for full funding for U.N. Women and for other agencies to meet or exceed targets for gender mainstreaming, or for member states to increase spending in these areas. A number of key informants pointed out the inconsistency between the Secretary-General’s focus on retaining gender capacity and expertise in his reforms to peace and security<sup>xxxii</sup> and the budget cuts to peacekeeping and gender advisor roles—a tension which senior officials shared was of

concern, further disclosing that the Secretary-General led an Executive Committee decision on strengthening the capacity of gender advisors and encouraging member states not to cut funding in this area, as discussed in Section 1. However, this and other information, such as the proposed Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, is not publicly available, and widely unknown. As of yet, we have not received an official response from the Secretary-General or his designate with regard to our recommendations and what form the Task Force will take.

**What’s left to be done:** Over 130 civil society organizations and individuals have called on the Secretary-General to widen the mandate of the Task Force to assess the state of gender equality financing more broadly and globally.<sup>xxxiii</sup> We urge the Secretary-General to create space for civil society to play a key role in the Task Force, particularly in a context where private sector actors are increasingly being drawn in to U.N. processes.<sup>xxxiv</sup> It is also critically important to have a clarion-call for financing gender equality in a context where the international financial institutions continue to emphasize fiscal consolidation and austerity and where financing key investments that support gender equality such as health, education and social protection can be greatly undermined by austerity measures.<sup>xxxv</sup>

While it was recognized that the Spotlight Initiative channeled much-needed funding and focused system-wide activity on ending violence against women, several key informants raised concerns that the Initiative could be duplicative and that its mandate had not been clearly articulated beyond the U.N. While we welcome the EU’s generous investment, the creation of a new mechanism has the potential to divert resources away from critical investments towards bureaucratic processes.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Clearly articulating the mandate of the Spotlight Initiative and communicating the role of the various U.N. agencies in its support and execution will be essential for its successful operation and comprehension within and beyond the U.N. The Count Me In! Consortium has called on the European Commission and the U.N. to use this funding to strengthen existing infrastructure and entities, such as the U.N. Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, and to support and collaborate with women’s organizations and movements.<sup>xxxvii</sup> While consultations between civil society and the Spotlight Initiative team have since been organized, key informants expressed dismay about the lack of civil society input and participation in the initial design of the Initiative, which is of the scope and scale of funds as to be potentially transformative. Key informants also pointed out that management of the Spotlight Initiative by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General is confusing if the mandate of U.N.



Women is to be the lead agency on gender equality, whose mandate includes working to end violence against women. As one key informant from civil society opined, “The fact that he [Guterres] didn’t hand these funds to U.N. Women is a contradiction.”

We therefore urge the Secretary-General to pursue a consistent and public agenda in this regard, making information on his efforts publicly available and open for civil society comment, including advocating with agencies, missions and member states for greater investment in gender equality and gender expertise in areas most necessary.

## SECTION 4: UTILIZE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP: PARITY + RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

**Overall Grade: 88 B+**

**Section 4A: 91 A-**

**Progress to date:** In his inaugural address, the Secretary-General committed to achieving gender parity at the USG and ASG levels, including special representatives and special envoys, by the end of his mandate.<sup>xxxviii</sup> He also called for a clear roadmap with benchmarks and timeframes to achieve gender parity across the U.N. System, and with the same concern applied to regional diversity. He has since followed up on his commitment by releasing the *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity*, which sets targets for achieving parity at all levels and calls for special temporary measures to accelerate progress. The Strategy also mandates that if targets are not met by December 2019, a central human resources office will make all hiring decisions for under-represented grade levels for one year.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The Secretary-General also established a High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation – composed of 18 members, 9 women and 9 men. As Guterres has identified mediation as a key priority for the U.N., setting intentional gender parity is a positive display of his leadership.<sup>xi</sup>

In his first year, Secretary-General Guterres has appointed 35 women and 30 men to ASG and USG levels.<sup>xli</sup> Among ASGs and USGs in the U.N. System overall, there are 67 women and 152 men.<sup>xlii</sup> Guterres’s efforts to appoint

more women reflect an improvement from the efforts of his predecessor. According to the Center for International Cooperation, Ban Ki-moon made similar commitments to gender parity in leadership in 2015-16, but failed to deliver. In 2015, he appointed 53 men and 10 women to ASG and USG positions; and in 2016, appointed 33 men and 13 women.<sup>xliii</sup>

Additionally, the proportion of women serving in deputy/ heads of mission (D/HoM) posts for peacekeeping missions has reached an all-time high of 30 percent. The 13 women appointed in the past year reflect 54 percent of the total D/HoM appointees in 2017 – significantly higher than the 36 percent projection made by the Department of Field Support in their own gender parity strategy last year. Per these numbers, the U.N. is on track to reaching parity in D/HoM of peacekeeping missions by 2021.



**What's left to be done:** The Secretary-General's *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity* leaves room for improvement. Anne-Marie Goetz, professor and former advisor to U.N. Women, notes that the strategy neglects to mention the influence of powerful member states on select leadership positions. Since this defies both merit and gender balance considerations, the gender parity strategy should indicate how this political interference will be addressed.<sup>xliv</sup>

Additionally, the Campaign calls on the Secretary-General to address the patriarchal culture prevalent across the U.N. The strategy does acknowledge the need to create an enabling environment, indicating that this endeavor would require “more deliberate investment into advocacy and awareness initiatives centered on the values of the U.N. highlighting that gender parity and diversity are part of the U.N. DNA.”<sup>xlv</sup> However, explicit measures to address resistance and backlash will be needed. As Goetz argues, in sexual harassment cases, managers have tended to take the side of the accused, suggesting a closing of ranks around men's interests (as least in the past).<sup>xlvi</sup> There is evidence of resistance to the *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity* from a staff union that wrote to Guterres of its concern that the initiative would affect “staff welfare” and indicated that its release undermined “staff management relations.”<sup>xlvii</sup> This resistance has not impacted Guterres's commitment to the gender parity strategy, but demonstrates the urgent need to counter patriarchal attitudes and structures at the U.N. Guterres must be clear that gender parity is necessary to an institution modeling human rights for the world.

The Secretary-General must also recognize that gender parity in numbers does not equal parity in influence. Paige Arthur of the Center for International Cooperation points out that “male USGs are in charge of 95 percent of the budgetary dollars in the largest ten entities run by USGs.”<sup>xlviii</sup> One of these is UNDP, for which Guterres appointed a male leader to succeed former administrator Helen Clark. While negotiating budgetary dollars ultimately requires coordination with member states, the Secretary-General must be strategic in his appointments toward gender parity, taking each appointees' potential influence into consideration. Likewise, major appointments have been assigned to men representing the five permanent Security Council countries. The incumbent occupying the position at the Department of Political Affairs will vacate in a year, and it will be important to see if his position is filled by a woman.



## Section 4B: Rights Protections

Grade: **B**

### Section 4B: 84 **B**

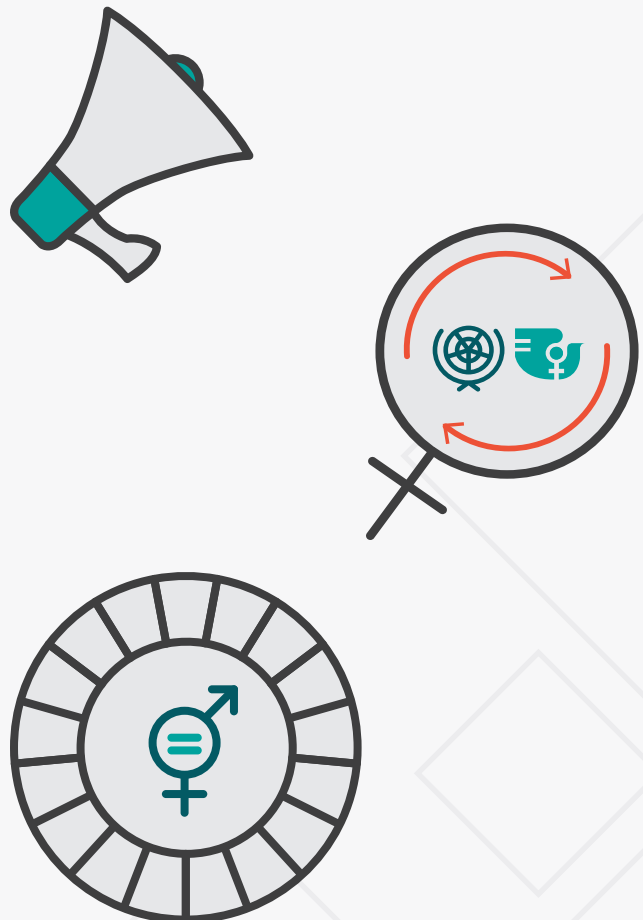
**Progress to date:** During his first week in office, Guterres requested that Jane Holl Lute, Special Coordinator for improving the U.N.'s response to sexual exploitation and abuse, convene a high-level task force to develop a new strategy on the issue.<sup>xlix</sup> In March, the Secretary-General released a new report, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse*, which lays out a four-part approach to addressing the issue: "putting victims first; ending impunity; engaging civil society and external partners; and improving strategic communications for education and transparency."<sup>l</sup> In line with the "victim-centered" approach outlined in the report, in which the Secretary-General commits to personally meeting with victims, the Secretary-General appointed Jane Connors of Australia as the first Victims' Rights Advocate.<sup>li</sup>

During the U.N. General Assembly, Guterres hosted a High-Level Meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. At this meeting, he asked member states to sign a voluntary compact on the prevention of these violations, and announced a Circle of Leadership of Heads of State and Government to display high-level commitment. Furthermore, Guterres committed to establishing an Advisory Board of civil society and external experts on sexual exploitation and abuse. However, the structure of this event isolated civil society experts from the member state conversation, and missed an opportunity to invite feminist critique of where efforts to date have failed and how new efforts under this Secretary-General should be structured.

Given his priority of reforming the U.N.'s peace and security architecture, Guterres must also demonstrate his support for the women, peace and security agenda, and the essential role civil society plays therein. The Secretary-General was notably absent from this year's open debate and did not send the Deputy Secretary-General in his stead—although subsequent, closed conversations with a senior official indicated that

these absences were a result of field travel wherein both the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General were meeting with women's rights groups and victims of sexual assault, which is in line with our call for leadership to consult with civil society and feminist groups. However, the timing is certainly unfortunate as several respondents remarked on the notable absence of leadership at the open debate.

Finally, with regard to our recommendations for staff protections and efforts to tackle the patriarchal culture within the U.N. System, following the #MeToo moment in October, Guterres issued a letter to all U.N. staff, co-signed by 14 U.N. staff union and council leaders, acknowledging the prevalence of sexual harassment, demonstrating support for U.N. colleagues and directing staff to internal resources and offices.<sup>lii</sup> The Secretary-General has also asked Under Secretary-General for Management Jan Beagle to convene a High-Level Task Force on Sexual Harassment to review policies and procedures, and strengthen investigations, support and protection for victims.

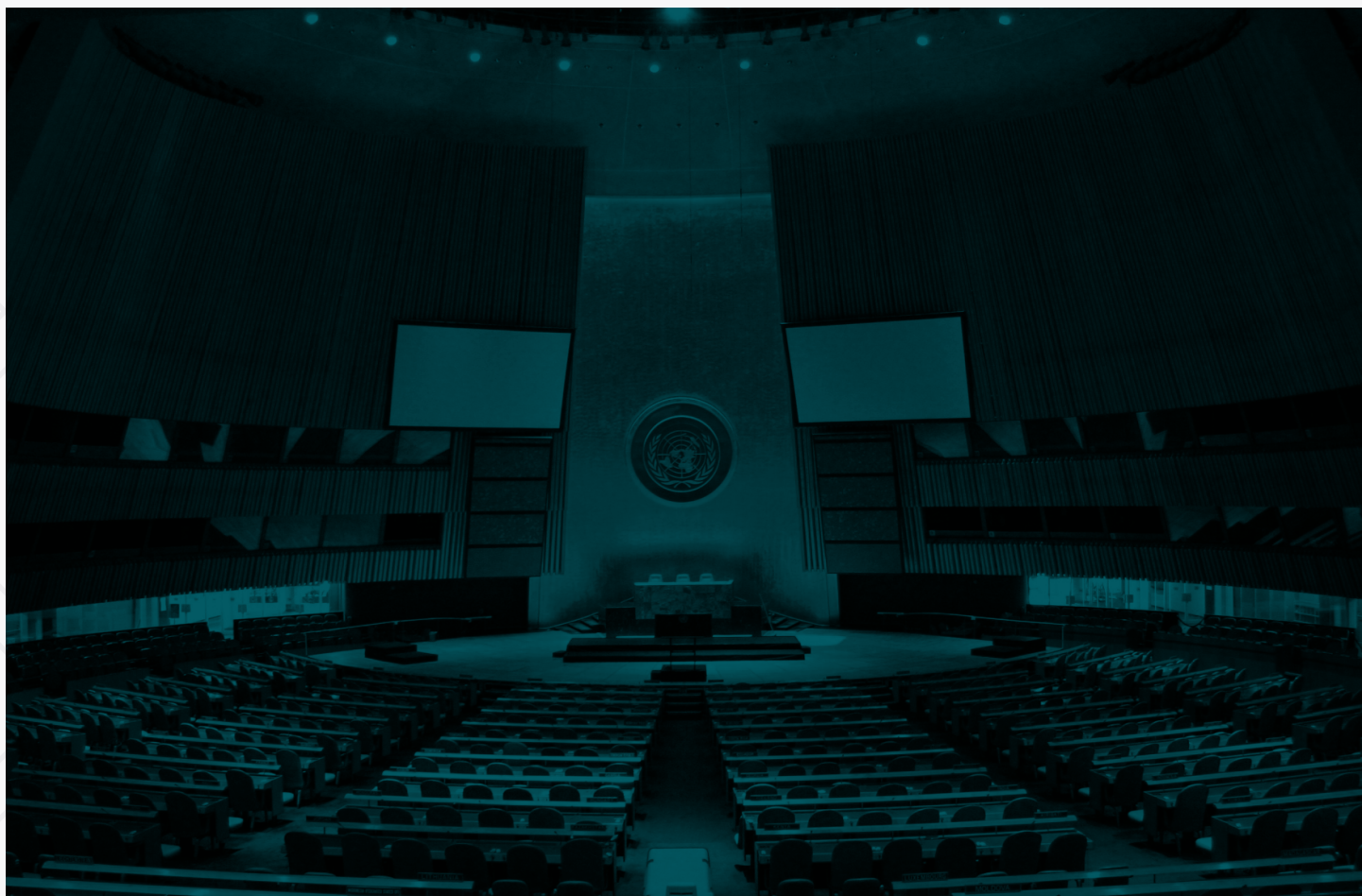




**What's left to be done:** The Code Blue Campaign issued a response to the Secretary-General's *Special measures* report criticizing its neglect to acknowledge the conflict of interest that lies in the U.N. handling accusations against its own staff internally. The critique holds that the U.N.'s failure in rooting out sexual exploitation and abuse cannot be solved by mere reforms – they must be treated as the crimes that they are. Code Blue also mentions the shortfalls of issuing a voluntary compact, as “voluntarism rarely works”<sup>iii</sup> and calls for the creation of Special Courts Mechanism, which would end the conflict of interest and equalize retribution for military and civilian peacekeepers.<sup>liv</sup> The Secretary-General has expressed support for an independent mechanism in the past and should show support for such an initiative.

Likewise, while Guterres's staff letter on sexual harassment demonstrates positive leadership, it was only issued after the #MeToo movement had gained significant momentum. In the words of one of our key informants, “Why is he following? Why is he not leading?” PassBlue, which interviewed nearly two dozen current and former U.N. staff and consultants, reported that “The majority of women who were interviewed for this article said that most or all of their female colleagues at the UN had experienced sexual harassment. All of the women said that the violations were not about sex or about attraction but about power.”<sup>lv</sup>

The Secretary-General, USG Beagle and others on the Secretary-General's team must take leadership in reversing the toxic environment that permits such actions and prevents women's advancement. To start, the Code Blue Campaign calls for an independent entity to conduct a system-wide, anonymous survey on experiences of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse.<sup>lvi</sup>



## SECTION 5: ENABLE A FEMINIST TRANSFORMATION FOR CSW AND U.N. WOMEN

Grade: 75 

**Progress to date:** At the 61<sup>st</sup> session of the CSW, Secretary-General Guterres hosted the first-ever town hall with women's civil society representatives – one of our Campaign recommendations – organized with and moderated by U.N. Women. The Secretary-General declared that this would be the start of similar dialogues (although to date we are not aware of any others that have been held or scheduled). However, this took place at the same time civil society was facing tremendous challenges in accessing negotiations around the Agreed Conclusions, including being locked into and out of buildings in the Secretariat after hours as negotiations continued, until

U.N. Women staff and its Executive Director, as well as the Chef de Cabinet's office, were able to intervene.

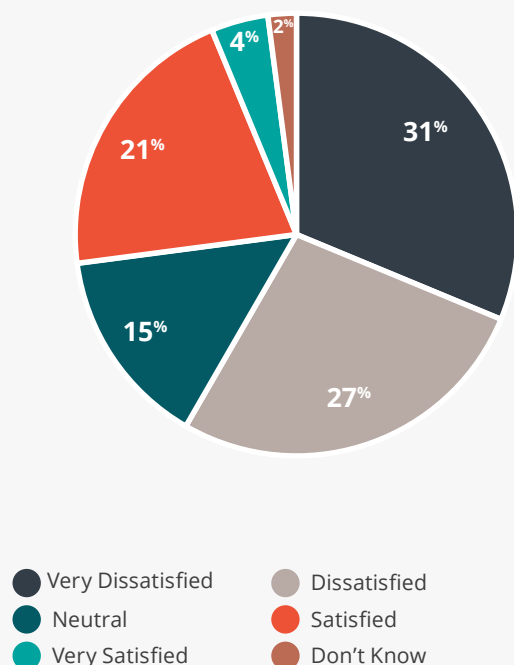
During the town hall, Guterres committed to appointing an Assistant Secretary-General to serve as a civil society liaison and a woman to serve as the next Envoy on Youth. The Secretary-General's Senior Policy Advisor fills the former role, and Jayathma Wickramanayake of Sri Lanka has been appointed to the latter.

Upon taking office, Secretary-General Guterres also appointed the Executive Director of U.N. Women to a standing role on his Executive Committee, meaning that U.N. Women now has a voice in regular leadership discussions and decisions.<sup>lvii</sup>

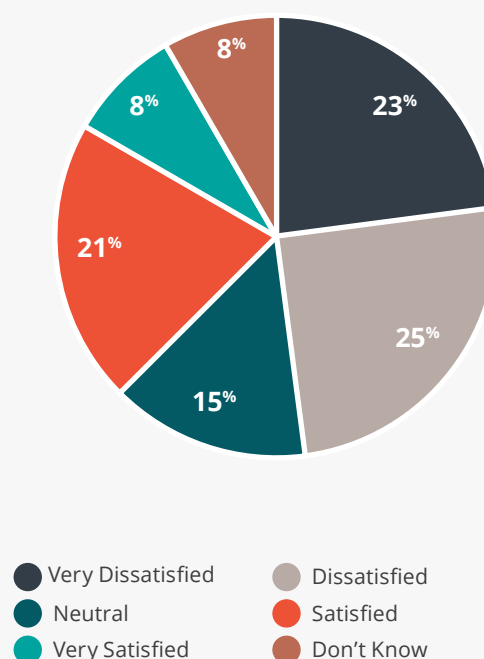
**What's left to be done:** The Secretary-General's CSW town hall was largely well-received and hopefully the beginning of ongoing engagement with women's rights advocates. However several experts felt Guterres missed an opportunity to play a more active and visible role in defending the rights and access of feminist advocates to the U.N. space, which is actively being constrained by member states. The Secretary-General's team should call on member states to be more transparent and collaborative with civil society; continue to work with security to ensure that NGO passholders are permitted to remain on premises for the full duration of the negotiations; and defend women's rights against the regressive views and policies increasingly permeating U.N. processes. As one civil society key informant expressed, "Overall there is a lot of civil society presence at CSW, a lot of attempts to include civil society on panels and plenary sessions that take place during commissions, push to get civil society on delegations; however, when it comes to political negotiations of Agreed Conclusions themselves, there's a real effort to keep civil society out by governments which is usually successful." The Secretary-General should also take steps to foster greater southern participation in CSW processes, such as through increasing the capacity and frequency of regional dialogues.

Similarly the Secretary-General was not seen to be visibly supporting a stronger U.N. Women, although the ascension of its Executive Director to his Executive Committee is a potentially transformative step. Some respondents thought the Spotlight Initiative undermined U.N. Women's leadership on gender equality in the U.N. System, and while it may not be a clear mandate-holder on gender-based violence nor have the kind of programming strength of other agencies, the Secretary-General should be seen as an active advocate to make the agency into the ideal that was promised at the time of its creation. To advance civil society input and representation in U.N. Women, Guterres can support the convening of a plural advisory council that includes civil society organizations, unions and the private sector.

**FIGURE 6:** Survey respondents' satisfaction with civil society access to CSW negotiations on the outcome document, the Agreed Conclusions



**FIGURE 7:** Survey respondents' satisfaction with the Secretary-General's efforts to engage with and respond to concerns of civil society at the CSW



## SECTION 6: PROMOTE THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE U.N. SYSTEM

**Grade: 68 D+**

**Progress to date:** The Secretary-General has recommended information for both of his new initiatives on parity and sexual exploitation and abuse be publicly available. This will be an essential element for public accountability and transparency, which we take as a feminist issue.

The new *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity* indicates that U.N. entities' progress against its recommendations will be tracked on a public website. The website is currently online, but with limited data.<sup>lviii</sup> The Secretary-General's proposals for tackling sexual exploitation and abuse urge developing data and reporting on member states' actions. They also ask the Department of Public Information to establish a system wherein credible reports on sexual exploitation and abuse are released publicly and regularly.<sup>lix</sup>

In January, Secretary-General Guterres approved a strengthened whistleblower policy that broadens protection for those who report on misconduct not only by staff, but also by contractors, non-U.N. peacekeepers and others. The policy also permits the Ethics Office and Office of Internal Oversight Services to take preventive action in cases where the potential for retaliation is identified. The Secretary-General convened an internal working group to explore expansion of this policy, which was tasked with providing recommendations by the end of June.<sup>lx</sup>



**What's left to be done:** While the Secretary-General's updated whistleblower policy expands its application, it still cedes too much discretion over management of cases to the Ethics Office.<sup>lxi</sup> This raises concerns, as the Ethics Office has historically not responded with urgency when needed (as in the case of Anders Kompass, who reported sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic to French forces).<sup>lxii</sup> The whistleblower policy must include greater protection for employees, and measures to offer relief to those whistleblowers who experience retaliation.<sup>lxiii</sup>

We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to be more transparent in reporting on the *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity*. He can also use his leadership to call on U.N. Women to update and make publicly accessible U.N.-SWAP data, which was instituted to measure six elements of gender mainstreaming (accountability, results-based management, oversight, human and financial resources, capacity and knowledge exchange and networking). The deadline for U.N. entities to meet the performance standards of the U.N.-SWAP was 2017 (those with a technical focus are afforded until 2019) – but irregular application and lack of transparency limits the potential of the U.N.-SWAP's initial purpose.<sup>lxiv</sup>

Lastly, the Secretary-General must endeavor to make internal processes more public. Conversations with senior U.N. officials have revealed that decisions on gender equality are being made by the Executive Committee, but the group's meetings are confidential. We ask that the Executive Committee report on their decisions and communicate effectively with external stakeholders. The Secretary-General should also consider Campaign recommendations to televise meetings throughout the System.

## CONCLUSION

The Secretary-General's first year has been a year of building his platform for future progress: articulating his agenda and assembling a team to help him implement it.

In that time, the Secretary-General has shown demonstrable rhetorical commitment to gender equality and women's rights issues. Speaking publicly about the importance of gender equality and women's rights is one of the few tools solidly and exclusively within his power, and our analysis of his speeches reveals a leader who consistently addresses these topics. While he could be more rights-based in his rhetoric, and there are always more opportunities to link gender equality to other policy issues, Guterres is a leader who consistently talks the talk with regard to women's rights.

This is laudable, and also warranted: the Secretary-General came to power at a time of unprecedented calls for female—and feminist—leadership of the United

Nations. It therefore makes sense that he would lead with a focus on parity, surrounding himself with accomplished female leaders who will help him to hone and implement his vision. The fact that he promised to achieve gender parity, and one year in seems to be on track toward his commitments (with the few potential caveats we have noted in our extended analysis) is noteworthy.

A year in, we are also starting to see the fruit of some of his efforts, with reports and signature initiatives launched and processes in place to ensure gender is taken up in areas it used not to be, such as at the level of his Executive Committee. This high-level policy focus, combined with the launch of the Spotlight Initiative—a sum of funds larger than ever earmarked for women's rights (and coincidentally, roughly equivalent to the budget originally promised for U.N. Women)—has the potential to be transformative.

However, this report card evaluates progress against a recommended (ambitious, feminist) vision for the

future—not the poor performance of the past. Ours is an agenda that demands transformation and insists on the Secretary-General pulling all the levers of power at his disposal to advance progress across a host of areas in urgent need of attention. And on many of those—from publicly championing increased access for feminist voices in the U.N., to campaigning for full funding for U.N. Women, to urging member states and actors throughout the System to finance for gender equality—the Secretary-General has not spoken out as forcefully. This is an admittedly tall task that requires being a disruptive force in a system controlled by member states, many of whom are resisting human rights, women’s rights and civil society participation, from their capitals to the halls

of the United Nations. We are also asking him to do more with less, in the context of U.N. reforms and austerity measures.

A tall order, to be sure, but such is our Campaign: pushing ever forward toward our shared ideals of rights, dignity and equality, imagining a United Nations for the peoples, and not just the states. At the end of Mr. Guterres’s first year, we congratulate him for solid progress, but acknowledge that there is a long way to go before our Campaign vision of a truly Feminist United Nations is achieved.

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