

TIME FOR FEMINIST ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

A Report Card on the Secretary-General's
Fifth Year from the Feminist U.N. Campaign

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ACRONYMS

ASG	Assistant Secretary-General	GEAR	Gender Equality Architecture Reform
AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development	GEF	Generation Equality Forum
CEB	Chief Executives Board	GEM	Gender Equality Marker
COP26	2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference	HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
COSI	Community of Spotlight Initiative	ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women	INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs	IOM	International Organization for Migration
EC	Executive Committee	IPI	International Peace Institute
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council	KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General	LGBTQIA+ⁱ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer and Questioning, Intersexual, Asexual and plus for individuals and communities who do not feel included in the other categories. This includes people who identify as pansexual, demisexual or other sexual orientations and gender identities not easily summed up in one term
FfD	Financing for Development	MGCY	Major Group on Children and Youth
FS	Field Service		
GDP	Gross Domestic Product		

ⁱThis report uses "LGBTI" in reference to language used by the U.N. and its representatives, and "LGBTQIA+" in all language originated by ICRW.

MGoS	Major Groups and Other Stakeholders	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations	UNDP	United Nations Development Program
OHCHR	Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights	UNDS	United Nations Development System
RFSD	Regional Forums for Sustainable Development	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal	UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
SERP	Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
SWAP	System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	UNPAD	United Nations People of African Descent
SWAP 2.0	System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2.0	USG	Under-Secretary-General
SWE	System-Wide Evaluations	VNR	Voluntary National Review
ToR	Terms of Reference	WHO	World Health Organization
TSM	Temporary Special Measures	WPS	Women, Peace and Security
U.N.	United Nations	WRC	Women's Rights Caucus

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Feminist United Nations (U.N.) Campaign brings together leading feminist thinkers in civil society, philanthropy, and academia, as well as former U.N. staff around a shared agenda for women's rights and gender equality at the U.N. Since 2017, our Campaign has been issuing annual report cards, grading U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres on his progress towards our recommendations for a more feminist U.N. system. Our Campaign is focused on six key action areas:

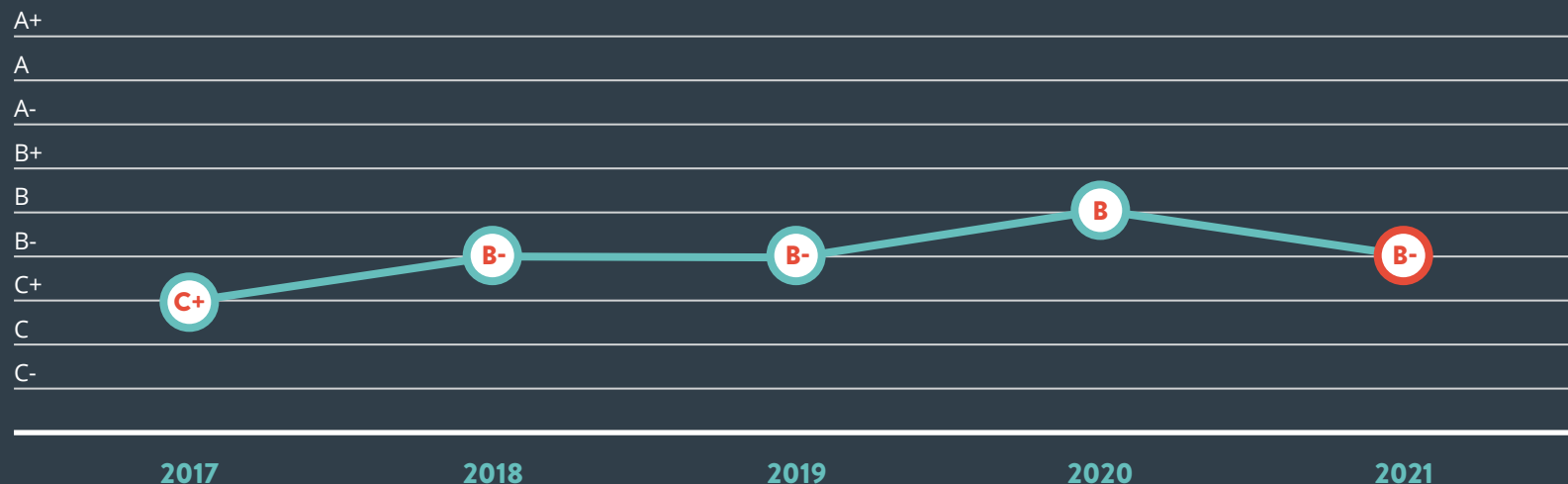
1. Articulate and implement a feminist leadership agenda;
2. Ensure feminist implementation and accountability for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
3. Finance for gender equality;

4. Utilize feminist leadership through parity and rights protections;
5. Enable a feminist transformation for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and UN Women; and
6. Promote the freedom of information in the U.N. system.¹

We issue individual grades for each theme, which we average to determine our overall grade.

This year, Secretary-General Guterres has earned **an overall B-**, reflecting a significant need for improvement as he embarks on his second term from 2022-2026.

OVERALL REPORT CARD GRADES FROM 2017-2021



A summary of Guterres's grades for each theme are as follows, with a detailed analysis laid out in the remainder of the report:

**B**

Articulate and Implement a Feminist Leadership Agenda

**C+**

Finance for Gender Equality

**D**

Enable a Feminist Transformation for CSW and UN Women

**C+**

Ensure Feminist Implementation and Accountability for the SDGs

**B**

Utilize Feminist Leadership through Parity and Rights Protections

**B+**

Promote the Freedom of Information in the U.N. System



ONE

ARTICULATE AND IMPLEMENT A FEMINIST LEADERSHIP AGENDA

2021 GRADE: **B**

The Secretary-General's grade in this section has declined since our assessment in 2020. For 2021, we documented fewer and less substantive references to gender equality in Guterres's speeches, and his engagement with civil society in U.N. fora and through town hall meetings remained limited. In our analysis of the Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda*,² we noted significant commitments to support gender equality, including five "transformative measures." These include protecting and advancing women's

rights, a review of the U.N. system's capacity to deliver on gender equality, and a system-wide policy taking into account intersecting personal characteristics, such as age, gender and diversity. We also point out the areas in which *Our Common Agenda* could better integrate a gender perspective. Specifically, it lacks an overall understanding of intersectionality and the existing power differentials in the U.N. system. Some references to topics like public health and climate change fall short of examining gendered effects. **We encourage the Secretary-General to increase his advocacy for gender equality in all public and private proceedings, increase meaningful engagement with civil society, advance greater transparency of key U.N. decision-making processes and integrate an intersectional feminist approach in all U.N. policy and programming.**



TWO ENSURE FEMINIST IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

2021 GRADE: C+

The Secretary-General's grade in this section has decreased. We commend Secretary-General Guterres for linking multiple U.N. initiatives, such as the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund,³ the *Call to Action for Human Rights*⁴ and *Our Common Agenda*, to SDG implementation. However, the extent of his calls for accountability and implementation do not match the urgency needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, especially considering the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge Secretary-General Guterres to demonstrate greater leadership at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and related SDG review processes. While HLPF outcomes are driven by member states, the Feminist U.N. Campaign believes the Secretary-General can play an important role in calling for gender mainstreaming across all SDGs and full implementation of SDG 5. This is particularly important in 2022, as SDG 5 will be under review at HLPF. **The Secretary-General should hold member states accountable for violations of human rights, connect the 2030 Agenda to other human rights frameworks, promote the collection of data to accelerate implementation of the SDGs, and support greater civil society inclusion in HLPF and other SDG review processes.**



THREE FINANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

2021 GRADE: C+

The Secretary-General's grade in this section has increased. We commend the integration of gender in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund—which significantly exceeded its target to support projects identifying gender equality as a principal objective—and the continued transparency of both this Fund and the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls.⁵ We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's commitment to applying the gender

equality marker system to additional funds.⁶ However, the Secretary-General's grade in this section remains relatively low on two grounds: (1) the work of the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality remains opaque and its report, recommendations and implementation plan continue to be unavailable to the public, and (2) the Secretary-General still falls short of calling for increased member state contributions to UN Women, despite continuous requests from the Feminist U.N. Campaign. **Moving forward, the Secretary-General should continue to champion increased funding for gender equality throughout the U.N. system, increase the transparency of the Task Force and work already underway, and advocate specifically for increased funding for UN Women.**

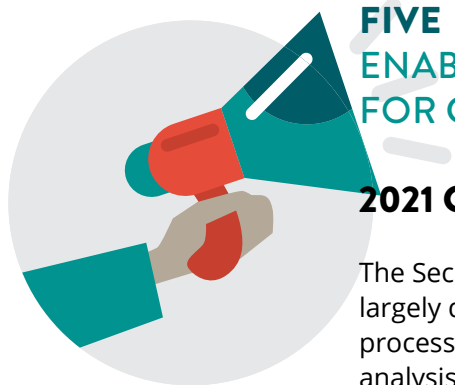


FOUR UTILIZE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP THROUGH PARITY AND RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

2021 GRADE: B

The Secretary-General's grade in this section has declined; his overall 'B' is an average of an 'A' on parity (the same score as 2020) and a 'C-' on rights protections (a decline since 2020). We commend the Secretary-General for his progress in advancing gender parity and his recommitment to achieving this goal. **As Guterres continues this work, we urge an improvement in the availability and accessibility of information on parity initiatives across the U.N. system.** On rights protections, we recognize key commitments, including continued progress on the *Call to Action for Human Rights* and the announcement of a U.N.-wide strategy on

LGBTI issues that is being created through inter-agency work. However, we found a lack of a commitment to defining and implementing an agenda for racial and gender justice at the U.N. that considers the intersecting identities of U.N. staff and the people they are meant to serve. We also found a reduction in the Secretary-General's attention to responding to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse across the U.N. system—despite the continued high incidence of cases. **We call on Guterres to increase his leadership on these fronts: he must centralize intersectionality in all U.N. policymaking and programming, and drive greater urgency to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. The Secretary-General should also ensure greater transparency and accountability around implementing key commitments of the *Call to Action for Human Rights* and the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda.**



FIVE ENABLE A FEMINIST TRANSFORMATION FOR CSW AND UN WOMEN

2021 GRADE: D

The Secretary-General's grade in this section has declined, largely due to the lack of transparency around the selection process for UN Women's new Executive Director. Our analysis points out that despite repeated calls by civil society advocates for a more inclusive and transparent selection process, Secretary-General Guterres failed to incorporate civil society input into the Terms of Reference for the position,

and he provided no public information on the process, including about shortlisted candidates or the selection panel. **The Secretary-General must ensure that future selection processes for high-level appointments are open and collaborative with civil society. We also call on the Secretary-General to expand his engagement with civil society at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and to respond to their concerns about participation in the forum, especially virtually. At CSW, the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) and other negotiations, we urge the Secretary-General to be a more active participant and defender of women's rights, particularly against more regressive member states.**



SIX PROMOTE THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE U.N. SYSTEM

2021 GRADE: B+

The Secretary-General's grade in this section has improved each year since 2017. We commend Guterres for the U.N.'s increased efforts to promote access to data, resources and meetings/conferences—including those related to COVID-19 and its gendered effects—through virtual

platforms. However, we point out that meeting summaries and outcomes of several U.N. decision-making bodies, such as the Executive Committee, Deputies' Committee and the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality, remain unavailable to the public, thereby limiting civil society and feminist engagement with U.N. leadership on key issues.

We encourage the Secretary-General to continue the trend of increased openness, to follow through on his commitment for more inclusive participation in U.N. deliberations, and to keep expanding access to U.N. proceedings, particularly for communities worldwide who lack internet access.

It is important to note that this assessment evaluates the Secretary-General's progress against the Campaign's recommended agenda, not his own.

The goal and intention of this effort is to seed ideas for the Secretary-General's action that would lead to necessary transformation within the U.N. system, giving credit where he has taken up civil society's ideas and calling attention where he has not. As we saw in those first, historic days, this is a Secretary-General who is listening to civil society's calls for feminist leadership and is willing to take promising ideas on board. Each of our six action areas are equally worthy of his attention, and we will continue to push for their consideration and uptake. Even if Secretary-General Guterres does not act on all of our recommendations, some future Secretary-General might, and in the spirit of building momentum and future progress, we will continue to present them.

We also recognize that the Secretary-General is not solely responsible for effecting the recommended changes, and there are a number of factors beyond his control. Political undercurrents surrounding this era of decreasing resource flows, intensifying ethno-nationalist and misogynist sentiments undergirding the rise of authoritarian governments—and ongoing reforms that reflect and manifest these trends—are impacting progress on gender equality at the United Nations, as well as in communities worldwide. Our order is, therefore, an admittedly tall one. Nonetheless, as an institution born out of international crisis, in direct response to authoritarianism, and chartered specifically “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small,” the United Nations is, we believe, up to the task. We present our progress assessment as an appropriate and essential call to action to realize these founding ideals.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2021, the world was still in crisis. COVID-19, conflict and climate change upended our lives, exposing new fault lines and deepening existing ones. If 2020 was a shock, 2021 was a series of aftershocks. The year tested human endurance, as society's flawed systems, governance structures and persistent inequality meant too many were left behind.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the University of Denver, "44 million people are expected to be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030 due to COVID-19" unless significant investments are made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁷ UN Women revealed "limited or no progress across regions and

in at least one case a deteriorating outlook" toward achieving the targets of SDG 5 on gender equality. Across the world, women and girls disproportionately lost their jobs, livelihoods and access to health, education and social services—yet they remain excluded from key leadership roles and decision-making processes. This was especially relevant for women and girls with compounding marginalized identities, who are often left furthest behind. To reverse these setbacks, UN Women urges strong legal and policy action, greater resources for implementation, and a dismantling of the structural drivers of gender inequality.⁸

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, author and political activist Arundhati Roy urged us to uncover hope in a period of despair. She described the pandemic as a "portal, a gateway between one world and the next." She pressed us not to reminisce about "normalcy," for our normal world was already rife with inequality, violence and discrimination, but to envision a better, more promising, more equitable future.

As Roy wrote, "We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."⁹

Nearly two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, Roy's words ring like a forgotten alarm. For many advocates, however, her vision was never entirely lost.



2020 was meant to be a banner year for gender equality, as we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹⁰ and the 10th anniversary of UN Women. Due to concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic, these celebrations were deferred. Feminist advocates set out to ensure that 2021 would change course and put progress back on track. UN Women and the governments of Mexico and France hosted the long-awaited Generation Equality Forum (GEF)—which raised approximately \$40 billion in financial commitments for gender equality. Feminist advocates also gathered, virtually en masse, to push for progress at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)—which was cut short in 2020—the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and other key conferences and events.

And what of the U.N.'s leadership? In 2021, Secretary-General António Guterres was appointed to a second term, after which he selected Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan as UN Women's new Executive Director. Internal politicking among U.N. member states continued—hindering progress on key outcomes and decision-making on gender equality, COVID-19 and other critical issues. In Afghanistan, the Taliban claimed power over the government, putting tenuous progress on human rights and gender equality in jeopardy and raising questions around the legacies of global imperialism. **At a moment when feminist leadership and multilateralism were needed more than ever, the role of the U.N. was called upon, but also questioned and criticized.**

THE FEMINIST U.N. CAMPAIGN: OVER THE YEARS

Five years ago, when the United Nations was selecting its new Secretary-General, member states and women's rights advocates called for a female and feminist leader to take the helm. Ultimately, the General Assembly appointed António Guterres. Guterres had committed to advancing gender equality upon his election, and soon proclaimed

himself a “proud feminist,” signaling interest in embracing feminist reforms across the U.N. system. In response to these commitments, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) convened a group of feminist thinkers, advocates and U.N. experts to imagine a transformative and progressive agenda for women's rights and gender equality in the U.N. system, and the Feminist U.N. Campaign was born.

Since its inception, the Feminist U.N. Campaign has been advancing a shared agenda for women's rights and gender equality at the U.N. In 2016, the Campaign released its flagship report, *Toward a More Feminist United Nations*, delineating an agenda for the incoming Secretary-General Guterres.¹¹ The Campaign adapted these recommendations into an initial 100-day framework, as well as actions the Secretary-General could implement over the course of his five-year term. These included six key points:

1. Articulate and implement a feminist leadership agenda;
2. Ensure feminist implementation and accountability for the SDGs;
3. Finance for gender equality;
4. Utilize feminist leadership through parity and rights protections;
5. Enable a feminist transformation for CSW and UN Women; and
6. Promote the freedom of information in the U.N. system.¹²

Each year following, the Campaign has issued a report card grading the Secretary-General's progress against this agenda.

To assess progress, the Feminist U.N. Campaign developed a methodology to be replicated over the course of the Secretary-General's five-year term. This includes: key informant interviews with U.N. staff and civil society

UNclimatechange/Flickr

representatives; an online survey issued to global civil society; coding and analysis of the Secretary-General's speeches; assessing the Secretary-General's Twitter posts; and reviewing key documents and reports. In 2021, we interviewed 11 individuals from the U.N. system and 14 from global civil society. Our survey had 145 civil society respondents and we coded 79 speeches and 109 tweets. For a full summary of our methodology, see **Annex: Methodology**.

Following a strong rhetorical performance in his first 100 days,¹³ the Secretary-General has been unable to completely implement the transformation imagined in our 2016 agenda. In Guterres's first year, he scored highly in his efforts to achieve gender parity and respond to gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the U.N. system. However, he lagged in fostering greater freedom of information, ensuring feminist implementation of the SDGs and transforming key gender equality institutions and forums—like UN Women and CSW—into stronger, more inclusive bodies, integrated within the wider U.N. system. The Campaign issued the Secretary-General an overall C+.¹⁴

In 2018, Guterres again scored highly in promoting gender parity and the elimination of violence, discrimination and abuse in the U.N. system, particularly in the wake of the #MeToo and #AidToo movements. The Campaign noted improvements in the Secretary-General's efforts to advance feminist implementation of the SDGs and promote greater freedom of information. However, his marks on financing for gender equality remained low. Based on these efforts, the Secretary-General was granted an overall B-.¹⁵

In 2019, the Campaign noted “a year of incremental progress” with another B-. While Guterres's public messaging on gender equality increased, much of his attention was on internal processes, including a continued focus on gender parity and the work of the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality. Though internal reform is essential to fostering a feminist agenda, the Secretary-General's lack of



**António Guterres,
Secretary-General of
the United Nations**

efforts in other areas “resulted in a perception by observers inside and outside of the U.N. of decreased momentum on the overall agenda, particularly in the context of severe funding shortfalls and backlash on initial efforts.”¹⁶

In 2020, the Feminist U.N. Campaign acknowledged Guterres's urgent and prominent recognition of the gendered effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Guterres earned his highest grade yet, a B, largely due to progress in three areas: (1) feminist leadership and agenda-setting, incorporating a gender perspective in COVID-19 policy briefs and the newly-founded COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, (2) feminist implementation of the SDGs, linking the SDGs to a women's human rights agenda, and (3) freedom of information, promoting increased transparency around funding and virtual convenings, necessarily adapting to the pandemic. However, the Campaign criticized continued opaqueness and lack of progress around the High-Level Task Force

on Financing for Gender Equality and stalled support for UN Women and civil society engagement, as well as a surprising loss of momentum on responding to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse across the U.N. system—despite this being a major focus of his leadership agenda in previous years.¹⁷

And in 2021—the fifth and final year of Secretary-General Guterres's first term, one key question emerged throughout our assessment: is his rhetoric being matched with action? After years of embracing feminism and gender equality in his speeches, announcing new policies and procedures, our Campaign was eager to know: are words being translated into policies, programs and funding? Are policies being implemented as intended? Are there systems for accountability? As the Secretary-General embarks on another five-year term, what more do we need? Revisiting our six priority recommendations, assessing progress and setbacks, the answer is clear: **to achieve a feminist U.N. system and meet the demands of today's world, the Secretary-General must do much more.**

In 2021, the Secretary-General's overall grade dropped to a B-.

His grades fell in four of the six areas of analysis. First, regarding his feminist leadership agenda, Guterres released his vision for the U.N.'s next 25 years in *Our Common Agenda*, which made transformative commitments to advancing gender equality as a key priority but missed some opportunities to centralize a feminist perspective. We noted fewer and less substantive advocacy for gender equality in his speeches, continued lack of transparency on internal decision-making, and frustrating restrictions on civil society access to the U.N., particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, on feminist implementation of the SDGs, the Secretary-General stepped up in awareness-raising, but fell short in advancing accountability. Third, on gender

parity and rights protections, Guterres maintained gender parity at the highest levels of the U.N. system, but did not step up in responding to staff concerns or preventing sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. Fourth, on CSW and UN Women, the opaque selection process of UN Women's new Executive Director and minimal engagement in CSW significantly brought down his grade.

Guterres's grades increased in just two areas. First, on financing for gender equality, he made efforts to integrate gender equality across U.N. funds and programs. Second, on freedom of information, our grade reflects ongoing improvement in the U.N.'s efforts to make data and proceedings public.

Overall, the Secretary-General's 'B-' acknowledges key initiatives and activities but represents a significant need for improvement in his second term. Our analysis recognizes Guterres's efforts in many areas but also points out the need to advance implementation of existing policies, respond to ongoing concerns and ensure greater transparency and civil society and feminist engagement across the U.N. system.

HOW TO BUILD A MORE FEMINIST UNITED NATIONS

The election of a new Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2016 provided an important opportunity to ensure that the United Nations implements an agenda that puts gender equality and women's and girls' rights at the heart of everything it does.

The Feminist U.N. Campaign created its initial report card in early 2017, in response to Secretary-General Guterres declaring himself a "feminist" as he took the helm at the United Nations. Since then, it has measured the extent to which the Secretary-General advanced progress toward a more gender-equitable world and U.N. system across six recommendations:



ONE

ARTICULATE AND IMPLEMENT A FEMINIST LEADERSHIP AGENDA

Secretary-General Guterres should set out and implement a full-fledged women's rights agenda for the duration of his term, including a commitment to report on progress and work with feminist civil society to hone and implement it.



TWO

ENSURE FEMINIST IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE SDGs

Ensure the SDGs have a strong accountability framework and continue to focus on gender including and beyond Goal 5, and align with other commitments such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and have a clear mandate for oversight at the CSW.



THREE

FINANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Ensure there are sufficient funds committed to gender equality across the U.N., including full funding for UN Women as well as for gender integration throughout the U.N. system. Convene an annual High-Level Panel on Financing Gender Equality to analyze and present the state of financing for women's rights and gender equality within the U.N. system. Publish funding sources to enhance transparency across all agencies.

HOW TO BUILD A MORE FEMINIST UNITED NATIONS



FOUR

UTILIZE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP THROUGH PARITY AND RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

Increase the numbers of women and feminists in U.N. leadership, and protect women's rights across the system. Secretary-General Guterres should achieve gender parity in his appointments, call for nominations for strong female candidates to head critical agencies and establish and implement feminist policies across the system, including a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of gender-based violence.



FIVE

ENABLE A FEMINIST TRANSFORMATION FOR CSW AND U.N. WOMEN

Commit to ensure that the CSW and U.N. Women live up to their potential by serving as inclusive platforms for civil society participation, with a specific focus on the inclusion of southern, feminist voices.



SIX

PROMOTE THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE U.N. SYSTEM

Announce system-wide reforms to increase transparency within the U.N. and to build public trust in the U.N. system. Institute universal System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (SWAPs) for all U.N. agencies and bodies, including the fifth committee, and make that data publicly available on a central platform.

REPORT CARD

2021 GRADE: **B**

2020: A-
2019: B+
2018: B+
2017: B

ONE ARTICULATE AND IMPLEMENT A FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

OUR ASK:

The Feminist U.N. Campaign defines a feminist leadership agenda as: (1) a full-fledged women's rights agenda based on U.N. policies of human rights, equality, fairness and nondiscrimination, which (2) outlines which members of the Secretary-General's administration are responsible for implementing its key provisions and (3) reports progress to the public on an annual basis with consultation from feminist civil society and U.N. staff to hone and implement.

PROGRESS TO DATE:

In 2021, Secretary-General Guterres's grade on articulating and implementing a feminist leadership agenda has dropped on the following grounds: fewer and less substantive references to gender equality in his speeches; a need to expand gender integration and take an intersectional feminist approach to future agenda-setting; and still-limited civil society engagement, especially around key decision-making processes relevant to gender equality.

The Agenda

Speech Analysis

Each year, we examine the Secretary-General's messaging on gender equality and various related issues through a coding and analysis of his public speeches. In the time period analyzed for this report (December 12, 2020 to November 5, 2021), the Secretary-General's strong gender-focused public

messaging appears to be decreasing in volume and shifting in content. Almost half (45 percent) of the Secretary-General's 143 public speeches contained no mention of gender, up from 36 percent in 2020. The percentage of speeches containing mentions of gender also decreased, from 55 percent in 2020 to 50 percent in 2021, and a similar decrease was noted in the percentage of speeches entirely on gender issues (from eight percent in the previous reporting period to five percent for this reporting period).¹⁸

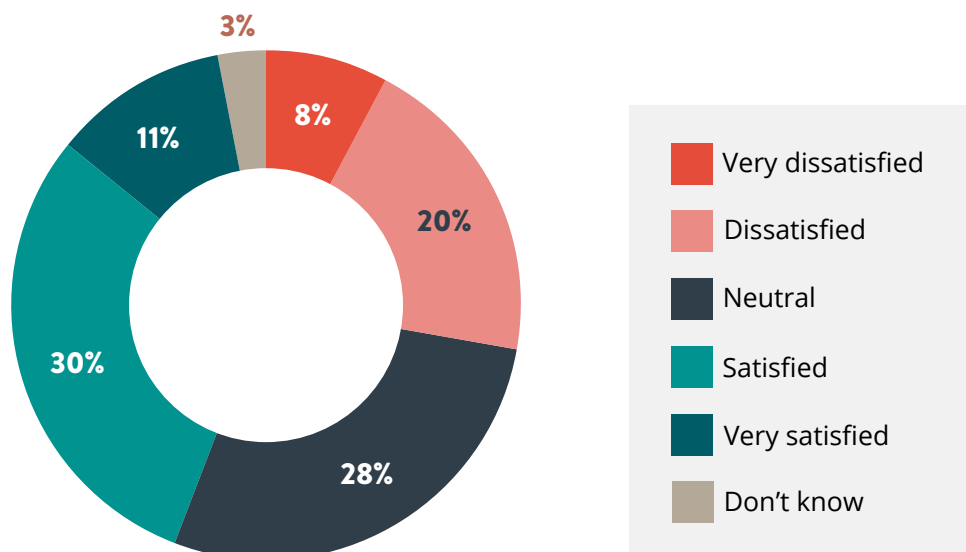
Similar to 2020, the gendered impact of COVID-19 remained a key theme of the Secretary-General's public speeches, along with gender in conflict and peace, women's leadership, women's economic empowerment and violence against women. While the Secretary-General's speeches on gender—such as those delivered at landmark women's rights events—are objectively strong, they are devoid of actionable commitments or accountability beyond the progress toward gender parity at the senior-most levels in the U.N. His speeches for broader audiences and on issues such as macro-level economics (e.g. trade and debt) also lack a strong feminist analysis, and gender is conspicuously absent when discussing the rights of survivors in the U.N.'s response to sexual exploitation and abuse. His speeches on climate change also lack a strong feminist analysis, which is surprising given that 2021 offered many opportunities to link gender equality and climate change, including discussions around the 2021 U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP26), the Food Security Summit, and efforts by many U.N. agencies, such as the U.N. Environment Program and the Food and Agriculture Organization, to link these issues.¹⁹ The Secretary-General must sharpen his intersectional feminist analysis on broader issues and for wider audiences.



The Secretary-General's leadership and response to COVID-19 was well-received by approximately 41 percent of the respondents to our survey. This could be related to some positive initiatives since the onset of the pandemic: the Secretary-General calling for an end to all violence, highlighting the staggering increase in violence against women and integrating the issue into the U.N.'s system-wide COVID-19 response. Some of our key informants, however, were uncomfortable with language that prioritized the protection of women, as opposed to their autonomy, participation and active consultation in the design and implementation of solutions. Thus, the Secretary-General's highlighting of the value of women's leadership in recovery efforts in his statement on International Women's Day and on other occasions was a welcome approach that should be standardized.

FIGURE 1

Survey respondents' satisfaction with the Secretary-General's leadership and response to the COVID-19 pandemic in regards to gender and women's rights issues (n=79).



The Secretary-General has continued framing gender inequality as a power imbalance between men and women, “the most stubborn and persistent of all inequalities.”²⁰ He first spoke of power and gender in his influential New School speech in early 2020.²¹ The fact that informants in our interviews continue to cite that speech as an example of his strong rhetoric almost two years later is a testament to its resonance. However, after multiple references to the need to wrest power away from men, with few concrete steps on how to do so, the message risks becoming a cliché. Little has been said, for example, on financing for gender equality, addressing sexual harassment and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. Rather, the Secretary-General has tended to attribute power imbalances to women's unequal representation in leadership and decision-making, and that is problematic on two counts.

First, this framing creates and sustains a very narrow focus on gender parity as the solution to gender inequalities. While there can be no equality without representation, adding more women alone to unequal institutions does not lead to transformative change, assure feminist leadership or resolve inequitable political dynamics. Nonetheless, in his opening remarks to the Generation Equality Forum in Paris, the Secretary-General claimed rather spuriously that he has seen how parity has contributed to the centering of gender equality in the work of the U.N.

Second, it fails to recognize the root causes of gender inequalities and resulting discrepancies in power, as well as the need to put in place concrete policies and actions to address them. This is evidenced by his assertion that parity can make sexual harassment in the workplace more difficult.²² The assumption that more women in the workplace will have a dampening effect on all forms of sexual harassment fails to recognize harassment as an expression of power, irrespective of the gender or sexual orientation of those involved.

NEARLY 13%
of tweets from the
Secretary-General this
year were about issues
related to gender.

This is a
▼ **3% DECREASE**
from last year.

ONLY 20
of the Secretary-
General's tweets
mentioned the
exacerbated challenges
that women, girls
and LGBTQIA+ people
continue to encounter
as a result of COVID-19.

The Secretary-General rarely discusses the impact of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination on women and girls. Our analysis finds that references to adolescent girls, LGBTQIA+ rights, disabilities, and harassment were largely missing from the Secretary-General's speeches in 2021, and Guterres mostly speaks about gender inequality in reference to men and women, overlooking nonbinary and gender nonconforming individuals. Perhaps more tellingly, in the seven gender-focused speeches that he delivered, the Secretary-General referenced race and ethnicity once. However, in two of his speeches mentioning gender—his remarks at the Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and his message at the Opening of the 46th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council—the Secretary-General acknowledged that women from racial and minority groups are subject to some of the worst impacts due to overlaps and intersections of discrimination—a message he should deepen and reiterate throughout his speeches and public engagements.

It was also notable that, when speaking to feminists in commemorative events and key women's rights meetings or conferences, the Secretary-General made almost twice as many references to the gendered impact of COVID-19 compared to his speeches on non-gender-related issues (where a broader audience might benefit from hearing about these gendered impacts). Other missed opportunities to introduce a gender analysis to non-gender speeches and discuss the value of women's participation or leadership included those related to energy and climate change, financing, debt, trade and some conflicts in the Middle East (including the hostilities and subsequent ceasefire in Gaza). Perhaps the most glaring omission was the absence of any reference to gender whatsoever in the Secretary-General's speech on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, which—at a minimum—could have addressed the disproportionate impact on women and girls or the power dynamics that underpin both abuse and impunity.

Twitter Analysis

In this year's review of the Secretary-General's Twitter engagement, there were 109 posts that were gender-related, nearly 13 percent of his 864 total tweets and a two percentage point decrease from last year's gender-related tweets.²³ Similar to 2020, Guterres often tweeted about the COVID-19 pandemic: 20 of his tweets (18 percent of his gender-related tweets) mentioned the exacerbated challenges (discrimination, poverty, violence) that women, girls and LGBTQIA+ people continue to encounter as a result of COVID-19. Eighteen of the Secretary-General's tweets (17 percent of his gender-related tweets) focus on violence against women and girls in the contexts of COVID-19, child marriage or war.

Only two of his tweets referenced gender violence from U.N. personnel, and one of these tweets focused on the U.N. Victims' Rights Advocate. In his tweets, Guterres does not use the term "gender-based violence" at all, and he instead opts to say "violence against women and girls." This erases gender-based violence against men, boys and non-binary people.

A portion of the Secretary-General's gender-related tweets (about 11 percent) focus on women and girls in Afghanistan with calls for support and solidarity and reminders of the U.N.'s determination to promote and defend their rights. Although Guterres did not mention the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, he tweeted about the #GenerationEquality Forum six times (six percent of his gender-related tweets). 20 of the Secretary-General's tweets (18 percent of his gender-related tweets) are about increasing women's leadership, participation, representation and access to resources.

Although he mentioned the #GlobalGoals 18 times, only three of his tweets mention women or gender equality and the #GlobalGoals together. Guterres tweeted about harassment four times, but only two of those tweets are about harassment against women. He mentioned women/gender and climate issues together just three times, specifically calling for meaningful inclusion of women in these decision-making spaces.

OUR COMMON AGENDA: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS²⁴



A major part of the Secretary-General's leadership platform in 2021 was his publication of *Our Common Agenda*, an “agenda of action designed to accelerate the implementation of existing agreements, including the Sustainable Development Goals.”³⁰ *Our Common Agenda* sets out the Secretary-General's vision for the next 25 years. In this section, we highlight the report's key commitments in support of gender equality, and point out missed opportunities for integrating a feminist perspective. Other commitments from *Our Common Agenda* will be referenced throughout the report per their relevance to our grading criteria.

In support of “[placing] women and girls at the center,” one of the report's priority areas, the Secretary-General commits to five “transformative measures.” These include:

1. The full realization of equal rights, including through the repeal of gender-discriminatory laws;
2. Promoting gender parity, including through quotas and special measures;
3. Women's economic inclusion, including through investment in the care economy, equal pay and support for women entrepreneurs;
4. Inclusion of younger women; and
5. An emergency response plan to end violence against women and girls and other harmful social norms.²⁵

The Secretary-General also endorses the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Generation Equality Forum's Global Acceleration Plan.²⁶

Secretary-General Guterres identifies additional actions to advance gender equality, demonstrating his efforts to mainstream gender across the forward-looking agenda. Most notably, *Our Common Agenda* calls for:

- A “renewed social contract anchored in human rights,” which recognizes the “active and equal participation of women and girls” as a necessary component.
- An updated, more inclusive measurement of GDP that recognizes the informal and unpaid care work shouldered by women and girls worldwide.
- A system-wide policy that “puts people at the center of all its actions and takes into account the impact of intersecting personal characteristics, such as age, gender and diversity,” an important step to integrating intersectionality throughout U.N. policies and programming.
- A recommitment to reaching gender parity across the U.N. system by 2028, as well as a “review of the United Nations system’s capacity—staffing, resources and architecture—to deliver on gender equality as a core priority across all entities.”
- A multi-stakeholder effort to reduce violence worldwide and in all its forms, including against women and girls, as part of a “new agenda for peace”—adopting a key recommendation from the women, peace and security agenda.
- An identification of gender biases in digital technologies, as well as the digital harassment against women and girls.²⁷

We commend Secretary-General Guterres for including these proposals in *Our Common Agenda*, and encourage him to see through their effective, transparent implementation. There are areas of the report, however, in which we noticed a lack of gender integration, which we pose for the Secretary-General’s consideration:

- While we applaud the commitment to a system-wide age, gender and diversity policy, *Our Common Agenda*, overall, lacks an intersectional gender analysis. In over 70 pages, just one paragraph explicitly mentions the need to address discrimination on the basis of race, disability and sexual orientation or gender identity. The U.N.’s recognition and understanding of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination remains a key area for improvement.
- We are encouraged by the Secretary-General’s call to end all violence but note that he falls short of recognizing the full spectrum of gender-based violence, including violence against transgender women, nonbinary people, and men and boys (instead focusing on “violence against women and girls”).
- The power-based analysis of gender inequality in the Secretary-General’s speeches does not carry over to *Our Common Agenda*. The report calls for a “reinvigorated multilateralism” and to “re-embrace global solidarity” but does not examine the U.N.’s complex relationship with colonialism, patriarchy and unequal power dynamics at various levels. A reinvigorated multilateral system must examine the existing power differentials between member states, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, and foster a more fair, inclusive balance between all parties.

- The sections on public health and climate change lack a substantive recognition of gendered effects, despite the exacerbation of health disparities in the COVID-19 pandemic and the differentiated and disproportionate impacts of climate change on women, girls and LGBTQIA+ populations.²⁸ Essential issues, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights, are addressed nowhere in the report.
- While the report highlights engagement with the private sector in several domains, it falls short of examining how unchecked influence of the private sector can have detrimental impacts on the human rights of women, LGBTQIA+ communities and racialized and marginalized groups.

Lastly, *Our Common Agenda* lacks details on the development of timelines and plans for implementation of its commitments.

According to information provided to us by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), *Our Common Agenda* is a vision document, “now being implemented through a member state process and internally in the U.N.” The EOSG explained that “a detailed matrix on each action and item has been created” and that “UN Women is part of this process and is ensuring that gender is across all areas of implementation.”

We encourage the Secretary-General to be fully transparent in the implementation of the commitments articulated in *Our Common Agenda*, and to ensure that gender equality and feminist representation are cross-cutting in all related consultations.²⁹ To foster a more inclusive multilateralism, he must meaningfully engage civil society throughout this process—not just member states. He must develop systems for accountability, particularly for his transformative internal commitments, such as a system-wide age, gender and diversity policy and the review of the U.N.’s staffing, resources and architecture to deliver on gender equality.



29%
of Executive Committee
decisions had a
gender dimension.

This is a
▲ 9% INCREASE
from 2017.

55%
of gender-related
Executive Committee
decisions were made
on thematic topics.

45%
of gender-related
Executive Committee
decisions were specific
to a country or region.

The Team Responsible

In 2021, the Secretary-General's core team featured prominent women leaders. Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed led the portfolio on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Under-Secretary-General (USG) and Senior Policy Advisor Ana Maria Menéndez led accountability and implementation of the Secretary-General's Gender Parity Strategy and served as a focal point for civil society. Senior Gender Advisor Nahla Valji provided gender expertise on Guterres's overall agenda. In December, Secretary-General Guterres appointed Ambassador Courtenay Rattray as Chef de Cabinet, male successor to Maria Luiza Ribeiro. We note that some of these team members, including USG Menéndez and Nahla Valji, have departed the EOSG as the Secretary-General begins his second term, but that period is not covered in this current analysis.

In 2020, key informant interviews with U.N. staff and comments provided by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) revealed that the Executive Committee (EC) and Deputies' Committee (comprised of Assistant Secretary-Generals, or ASGs) hosted a series of welcome, but overdue, discussions on gender equality-related issues. In 2021, comments provided by the EOSG indicate that this practice has continued; the EC has "tackled specific gender items regularly, has six month check-ins on gender decisions actioned, has exponentially increased gender in analysis, background, discussion and follow up actions across the system in the past three years, and is having real impacts on everything from country-specific situations, to internal transformation and reforms, to specific thematics—femicide, violence against women in politics, monitoring internal follow through on WPS recommendations, etc." The EOSG explains that in 2021, 29 percent of EC decisions had a gender dimension, up from nine percent in 2017. Furthermore, 55 percent of gender-related decisions were made on thematic topics, and 45 percent were specific to a country or region.

This increased level of attention to gender equality among U.N. senior leadership is commendable, and we encourage the EC to continue integrating gender into their deliberations. However, we note that summaries of EC decisions and discussions are still not made available to the public, limiting civil society's knowledge on the content of proceedings and effectiveness of key decisions. Additionally, while UN Women remains a member of the Executive Committee, the scope and influence of the agency's participation remains unknown to outside observers.

Our report in 2020 focused heavily on the EOSG's efforts to centralize gender equality in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the issuance of policy briefs and public initiatives. Among these was Women Rise for All, an advocacy initiative convened by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed to urge support for the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the U.N. roadmap for social and economic recovery.³¹ The initiative brings together women advocates, philanthropists, Heads of State and heads of U.N. agencies to "call for all leaders in all countries and in all sectors to meet the human crisis of COVID-19," and support and acknowledge women's frontline leadership.³² The initiative has continued its awareness-raising activities through 2021. At CSW in March, it hosted a "Financing a Future for Women" leadership dialogue, featuring the Deputy Secretary-General and other women leaders to discuss a "resilient and sustainable economic recovery with women's equity at its core." During the UNGA in September, Women Rise for All also streamed messages from women Permanent Representatives in support of the initiative.³³

While our assessment focuses on the actions and initiatives of Secretary-General Guterres, his core leadership team and their activities reflect an extension of his agenda. A key informant from the U.N. system noted that the Secretary-General "empowers those around him." For example, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed visited Somalia in

September to urge women's participation in the country's elections and support women's inclusion in all sectors of society. During her visit, she met with women leaders and advocates to discuss political representation, as well as the violence and insecurity affecting women's rights.³⁴ Mohammed has undertaken seven missions on women, peace and security in the past five years, and following her trip to Somalia, she briefed the U.N. Security Council alongside a young woman civil society leader she had met during her visit.³⁵ Such visits are important in bridging power differentials between U.N. representatives and country and local leaders, and demonstrating the U.N.'s commitment to advancing gender equality worldwide. Similar to Secretary-General Guterres, Mohammed highlights gender equality and women's leadership in her public remarks and engagements.³⁶ While our methodology does not investigate the public messaging of the Secretary-General's senior leadership team, our recommendations for their engagement remain the same: champion gender equality and intersectionality in all remarks, meetings and opportunities.

Public Reporting and Opportunities for Feminist Critique and Civil Society Input

The Feminist U.N. Campaign calls for annual progress reporting on the Secretary-General's agenda, including consultation with feminist civil society and U.N. staff. On this point, information shared with the public continues to be inconsistent. While many outcomes and proceedings are made public, some information—such as EC decision-making—is only accessible through conversations with U.N. officials, and details can be difficult to track down. As such, we reiterate the same call from last year: the EOSG must develop a mechanism to make its efforts on gender equality visible and accessible to the broader public.

As we reported in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed the landscape for civil society participation in U.N. events and deliberations. Major convenings, like CSW and

HLPF, were held online—offering an opportunity for civil society advocates outside of New York to participate, yet limiting advocacy and engagement through still restricted access. For instance, schedules still adhered to Eastern Time zones, making participation particularly difficult for those in Asia and the Pacific. In the case of CSW, civil society participation in member state deliberations was severely restricted—despite the potential to reach and engage a broader virtual audience. Since his first year in office, Secretary-General Guterres has been hosting an annual town hall with women's civil society organizations during CSW.

While the town hall is a consistent marker of the Secretary-General's willingness to engage with women's civil society organizations, our key informants yet again expressed a desire for more sustained, frequent engagement.

According to information provided to us by the EOSG, ASG Volker Türk holds regular meetings with civil society, “of which a significant number are women's organizations,” and the Deputy Secretary-General meets with women's groups on different matters, such as women, peace and security and the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls.

As in-person meetings began to reconvene in 2021, a major point of concern among civil society was continued lack of access to the U.N. headquarters and regional fora— affecting their ability to access information and influence key deliberations. The heads of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch penned a letter to Secretary-General Guterres about the issue, in which they wrote: “Time and again, diplomats and U.N. staff with whom we interact expressed surprise and bafflement when we inform them that civil society groups remain barred from accessing U.N. headquarters.”³⁷ In November, U.N. officials announced

that civil society representatives would be invited to ad-hoc meetings and events in-person with Special Events Tickets, and starting in January 2022 (later moved to February 2022), representatives from ECOSOC-accredited organizations would be issued annual and temporary grounds passes as they had in the past. While health and safety precautions resulting from COVID-19 are of utmost importance, since member states, U.N. officials, world leaders and journalists already had access to the U.N. headquarters, this decision was perceived as long overdue and contrary to the U.N.'s commitment to civil society inclusion.

A prominent theme of our key informant interviews and civil society survey results was concern about the selection process of UN Women's new Executive Director. While this issue will be further detailed in **Section 5, many key informants pointed to the opaque selection process as**

a stain on the Secretary-General's attempts to pursue a feminist leadership agenda. Key informants dubbed this process "a complete failure," "absolutely not transparent," and contrary to the hiring principles for his own recruitment (the Secretary-General selection process in 2016 featured public debates and information about each candidate). UN Women's new Executive Director was selected behind closed doors, with zero public information provided by U.N. officials about potential candidates—despite repeated calls by civil society to do otherwise. One civil society representative was reportedly on the selection panel, but their identity was not disclosed—thereby preventing any engagement with broader civil society. As one key informant articulated, the flawed selection process reveals the discrepancy between Guterres's public embrace of feminism and a patchy implementation in practice.

In *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General foreshadows new commitments to advance civil society inclusion at the U.N. He writes, "I have heard the calls for a single, high-level entry point for civil society and will further explore options in that regard. However, I also believe that what is most needed at this time is to go beyond a consultation and advocacy role, and rather for all parts of the United Nations system directly to include civil society in their work across all the pillars of our activities. This is about a shift in mentality as well as in practice."³⁸ The report calls upon all U.N. entities to establish a dedicated civil society focal point who will expand overall civil society engagement, which the U.N. will regularly map and monitor. According to the report, the U.N. Office for Partnerships will also ensure the right "administrative, legal and digital instruments" are in place to foster a freer flow of information, without the constraints of visas, funding and travel.³⁹

Our Common Agenda notes that inclusive virtual meetings must address concerns around Internet access, safety, language barriers and time zones. While this is a positive indication that civil society voices—including those of the



Feminist U.N. Campaign—are being heard, the report does not lay out specific details of how the Secretary-General will support or fund these initiatives systemwide. To ensure these recommendations are taken up, Guterres will need to work closely with U.N. agencies and member states to promote sustainable and long-term inclusion.

In the section on adapting the U.N. system to a new era, *Our Common Agenda* urges member states to take up a series of suggestions from civil society. These include: “an annual civil society caucus in conjunction with the General Assembly’s high-level week, as well as calls for an updated resolution⁴⁰ defining how organs like the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council relate to civil society, local and regional governments and business actors, and for the President of the Economic and Social Council to convene a general review of arrangements for observer status or consultation in this regard.”⁴¹ If taken up, such steps could significantly alter the landscape of the U.N., opening up a traditionally exclusive and hierarchical system to be more inclusive and participatory. If the Secretary-General follows through, this could be a step in the right direction: pushing member states to view civil society representatives not just as consultants or observers, but on equal footing.

▶ WHAT’S LEFT TO BE DONE

As we recommend each year, the Secretary-General must be more vocal—online and offline—in recognizing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination facing women, as well as the colonialist and patriarchal history of the U.N, and condemning anti-rights and anti-gender voices in the U.N. and worldwide. In his speeches, he must be more specific about dismantling the power and political imbalances that perpetuate gender inequality, avoid conflating gender parity with gender equality and shift the focus to women as leaders, rather than as victims. He must also steer clear of language affirming binary constructions of gender.

Guterres must promote an understanding of intersectionality across the U.N. system, so that it becomes a key consideration in policies, programs and leadership decisions. As Secretary-General Guterres kicks off his second term, there is no excuse for retaining a narrow perspective on women’s rights. **To truly “leave no one behind,” as the U.N. professes, intersectionality and inclusion must be at the heart of the U.N.’s mission.**

Guterres must ensure implementation and accountability for the commitments made in *Our Common Agenda*. He must follow up with member states and U.N. agencies to urge greater action on gender equality, women’s rights and the expansion of civic space. In each of the *Our Common Agenda* consultations and subsequent meetings, Guterres must ensure that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue, and that feminist representation and gender parity are reflected in all discussions.⁴² In the development of new policies emanating from commitments made in *Our Common Agenda*, such as a systemwide “age, gender and diversity” policy and the review of the U.N.’s staffing, resources and architecture to deliver on gender equality, the Secretary-General must seek civil society guidance and engagement, and guarantee transparency throughout the process. Secretary-General Guterres must ensure that a gender perspective is central to

the implementation of all parts of *Our Common Agenda*. He should consider UN Women's proposals for a "feminist social contract" in their 2021 publication, "Beyond COVID-19: A Feminist Plan for Sustainability and Social Justice."⁴³

In expanding civil society engagement, one town hall at CSW is not enough. The Secretary-General must host multiple convenings, and in numerous time zones, to ensure broad and inclusive participation. Furthermore, annual public progress reporting is necessary to foster transparency and coherence, and it serves as an opportunity to amplify the Secretary-General's ongoing efforts.

In appointing high-level leaders, Special Envoys and heads of agencies, the Secretary-General must offer public information about selection processes and work with civil society. He cannot repeat the same mistakes made in selecting UN Women's Executive Director, where no information was provided to the public despite repeated calls for transparency.

As COVID-19 continues, Secretary-General Guterres and his team must continue to raise awareness about the pandemic's pernicious impacts on women, girls, LGBTQIA+ individuals and other marginalized communities. In any bilateral and multilateral setting, he must keep promoting gender equality as integral to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, support women's leadership in these efforts and ensure that issues like gender-based violence are interpreted as a global emergency that warrants focused attention.

As virtual events continue into 2022, we reiterate our call from last year: U.N. events must be accessible, accommodate multiple time zones, engage women and communities without digital access, and advance meaningful participation. Until all participants are able to safely travel and convene, the Secretary-General must reassure those online that their participation is on equal footing to those in the room.

As Secretary-General Guterres embarks on his second term, many key informants proclaimed that he must be a bolder, more outspoken, more fearless leader. He is no longer tied down by concerns about reelection, and women's rights continue to be under threat—especially with the setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretary-General must stand up to member states threatening progress on gender equality.

As one key informant articulated, he must leverage his influence to achieve "consensus that transforms, not consensus that is about saving the status quo."

In order to become the truly feminist leader he claims to be, Secretary-General Guterres must push member states to rally around a progressive agenda that advances women's and girls' rights and intersectionality comprehensively.



2021 GRADE: C+

2020: B-
2019: C
2018: C
2017: D+

TWO ENSURE FEMINIST IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE SDGs

PROGRESS TO DATE:

This year, the Secretary-General's grade in this section has declined. While he has raised significant awareness about the urgency of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and highlighted the SDGs in other human rights frameworks and within the U.N. development system, the Secretary-General's support for strengthening accountability mechanisms—including HLPF—remains limited. Less than a decade away from 2030, and with the setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic, accountability is more important than ever.

Gender Equality and the SDGs: Awareness-Raising Overshadows Accountability

There are just nine years left to achieve the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the COVID-19 pandemic—as we reported last year—has only “set a world that was already behind further off track.”⁴⁴

This year, UN Women released a report, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2021*.⁴⁵ The report's findings are striking, revealing that not only is the world behind in achieving the targets of the SDGs, but many indicators continue to lack sufficient data to support their monitoring. Regarding SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the report reveals: “Globally, only 1 of the 18 indicators (including sub indicators) is assessed as being ‘close to target.’” Shockingly, “in 6 out of 18 indicators global data remain insufficient to assess current levels,” and “only 2 of the 18 indicators have sufficient data to assess progress over time across all

regions.”⁴⁶ **This lack of sufficient data significantly hinders prospects for accountability, making it difficult to track member states' implementation of SDG 5.**

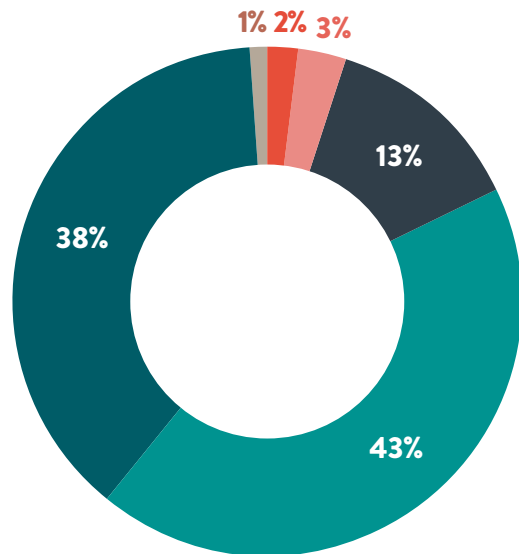
Like years past, a majority of the global civil society representatives who responded to our survey agree or strongly agree that Secretary-General Guterres has expressed support for full implementation of SDG 5 (81 percent, compared to 83 percent in 2020) and gender mainstreaming across all SDGs (70 percent, compared to 75 percent in 2020. See **page 28**). In 2020, Secretary-General Guterres linked the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the *Call to Action for Human Rights* to SDG implementation. In 2021, he did the same with *Our Common Agenda*, and key informants pointed out that his endorsement of the Generation Equality Forum could be viewed as tacit support for the SDGs, and SDG 5 in particular. Secretary-General Guterres should continue linking the SDGs to other key initiatives, human rights mechanisms and activities emerging across the U.N. system.

In 2020, the Secretary-General launched the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs.⁴⁷ The Decade of Action was developed in response to the 2019 Political Declaration of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in which member states asked the Secretary-General to accelerate action on the SDGs, including by organizing an annual “moment” to raise ambition.⁴⁸ In last year's report card, we asked the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General to “ensure that the Decade of Action is not just about awareness-raising, but also implementation and long-term sustainability.”⁴⁹ We hoped the Decade of Action would foster an opportunity to follow up with member states on their SDG progress, promote more urgent implementation and support mechanisms for monitoring and accountability. However, Guterres fell short of fully meeting this recommendation; as we outline, his drive toward accountability must be strengthened, and much of his activities again constituted awareness-raising.

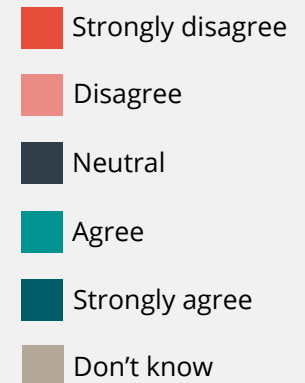
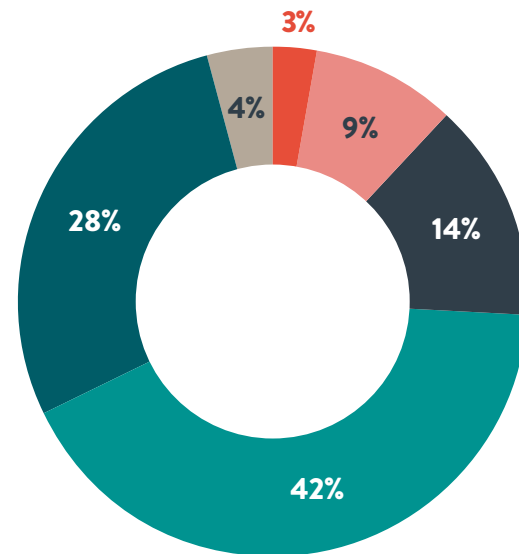


FIGURE 2

Survey respondents' agreement with the statement: "The Secretary-General has expressed support for full implementation of SDG 5 (to achieve equality and empower all women and girls)" (n=93).

**FIGURE 3**

Survey respondents' agreement with the statement: "The Secretary-General has expressed support for gender mainstreaming throughout all SDGs" (n=93).



At the 2021 U.N. General Assembly (UNGA), the Secretary-General convened the second annual SDG Moment, featuring 27 Heads of State and Government.⁵⁰ Guterres reiterated the commitments made in *Our Common Agenda* and proposed five areas for immediate action, including ensuring equal rights for women and girls.⁵¹ The 2021 SDG Moment featured a call for youth leadership and intergenerational transition, and included sessions on localizing the SDGs and fostering more inclusive institutions.

In his remarks at the SDG Moment, Secretary-General Guterres called for bold investments in girls' education, tackling inequitable power structures and advancing women's and girls' participation in politics and decision-making.⁵² The SDG Moment featured a session on gender equality and

the empowerment of women and girls, but it had only two speakers: UN Women's new Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous and Melinda French Gates of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. While leadership voices on this issue are important, the session lacked representation from civil society. **In any discussion on gender equality, sustainable development and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, civil society voices must be included**—especially at a convening like the SDG Moment, where member states and U.N. officials are in the audience.

During UNGA, the Secretary-General participated in the SDG Action Zone—a three-day virtual event bringing together speakers to "highlight the ecosystem-wide solutions, plans, and investments needed to positively impact people's lives

and the future of our planet.”⁵³ Each day of the SDG Action Zone, featuring prominent women advocates, was assigned a different theme: day one was poverty and inequalities, day two was gender equality and day three was climate. In the opening session, Secretary-General Guterres asserted that “equality between men and women is a basic condition to achieve the SDGs and to have a better world.” He referenced several gender equality-related issues, such as gender-based violence, women’s economic empowerment, gender parity and discriminatory laws. While he recognized gender inequality as an issue of power, his remarks on women’s rights lacked any reference to intersectionality.

The Decade of Action, the SDG Moments and the SDG Action Zones are useful mechanisms for raising awareness about SDG progress and setbacks, but they fall short of holding member states accountable to their commitments to the 2030 Agenda. These convenings cannot offer member states another occasion to tout accomplishments and conceal flaws. **To fully press for urgency, the Secretary-General must call out member states for their flawed decisions and rights violations, promote the inclusion of civil society voices and advance the momentum needed to achieve Agenda 2030 once and for all.** Progress is lacking, and urgent times call for urgent measures. Secretary-General Guterres must be a decisive and deliberate advocate for the SDGs, and gender integration across the 2030 Agenda.

We recognize the Secretary-General’s efforts to advance progress on SDG implementation through reform of the U.N. Development System (UNDS), a process that began in 2018 to foster a more focused, integrated UNDS to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.⁵⁴ We also commend him for pushing the UNDS to urgently increase support for critical areas, including gender equality, during the Decade of Action. The Secretary-General’s report on UNDS reform and operational activities highlights the “centrality of gender equality” to the UNDS, and notes that gender equality remained the “most common focus” of U.N. joint programming.⁵⁵ However, it

also points out several areas for improvement; for example, adherence to some U.N. System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) targets and indicators remain low, and among U.N. socioeconomic response plans, just 25 percent mainstreamed gender equality across all response plan pillars, and a mere 9.3 percent featured a “gender analysis of groups furthest behind.”⁵⁶ The report itself points out that despite commitments to accelerating implementation of SDG 5, UNDS performance on gender equality “shows a mixed picture” and a “major effort will be needed to ensure gender mainstreaming at the country level.”⁵⁷

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is a key focus of our assessment each year. HLPF may be a largely member state-driven process, but the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General can play a fundamental role in raising attention to the forum and driving urgent action around the SDGs. They can also serve as stronger advocates for civil society, who often point to intimidation by member states and exclusion from national and local development processes.⁵⁸ Civil society organizations and individuals are essential drivers and beneficiaries of the 2030 Agenda; the Secretary-General must champion their participation in HLPF and all related processes, including Regional Forums for Sustainable Development (RFSDs) and Voluntary National Review (VNR) input and reporting processes. Since HLPF is largely a voluntary convening, the Secretary-General should link the forum to other U.N. mechanisms on human rights—effectively bridging the gaps between sustainable development and human rights, and driving greater accountability for the SDGs.

This year, HLPF was once again hosted online, raising questions of civil society’s access to the forum and its proceedings. Our civil society survey shows less satisfaction

with the forum this year as compared to 2020: for example, 39 percent of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with consultation between governments and civil society on SDG implementation and reporting, compared to 35 percent in 2020; 29 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, compared to 41 percent in 2020—a significant decline. Likewise, 42 percent of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with opportunities for civil society to offer input

into the Ministerial Declaration, compared to 35 percent in 2020; 22 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, compared to 47 percent in 2020—another significant decline. On survey respondents' satisfaction with the Secretary-General's efforts to increase opportunities for civil society participation in HLPF, 29 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, compared to 24 percent last year; 32 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, compared to 47 percent last year.

FIGURE 4

Survey respondents' satisfaction with consultation between governments and civil society on SDG implementation and reporting at 2021 HLPF (n=46).

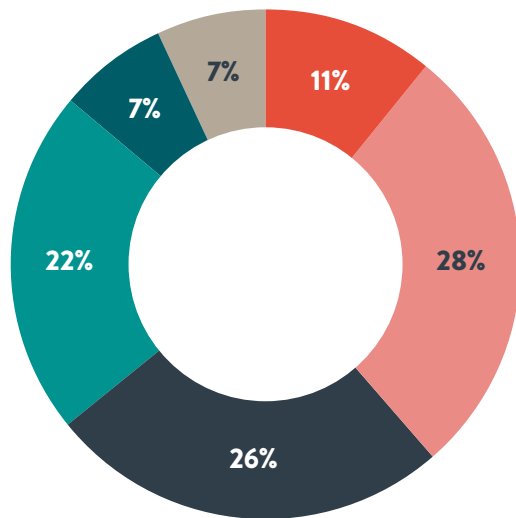


FIGURE 5

Survey respondents' satisfaction with opportunities for civil society to offer input into the 2021 HLPF outcome document, the Ministerial Declaration (n=46).

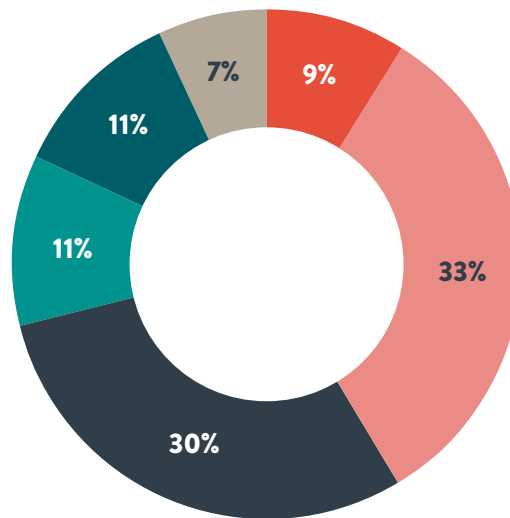
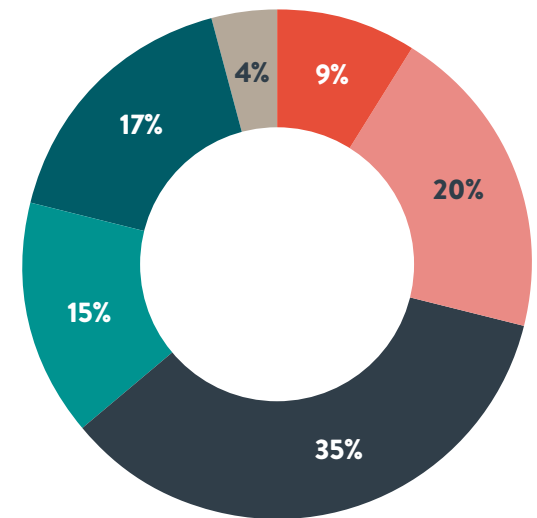


FIGURE 6

Survey respondents' satisfaction with the Secretary-General's efforts to increase opportunities for civil society participation in the 2021 HLPF (n=46).



Very dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very satisfied Don't know

Kyle Glenn/Unsplash



HLPF, including side events and VNR Labs, was once again held in Eastern Standard Time—thereby limiting global participation. Through the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGoS) mechanism,⁵⁹ civil society representatives were permitted to participate in deliberations around the Ministerial Declaration, as well as expert discussions—albeit in a still-limited and marginalized capacity. The diversity of feminist voices at the U.N. and opportunities to influence key discussions remain limited. Civil society organizations possess a unique perspective on SDG monitoring and implementation, and their inclusion is necessary to obtain an accurate understanding of progress.

Key informants pointed out the need to bring more civil society voices into HLPF agenda-setting processes, and throughout the forum. For example, in a paper released this year, Dragica Mikavica of Save the Children argues that “despite the HLPF’s mandate to directly involve children and account for their views in measuring progress and discussing

challenges in the implementation of the SDGs, the practice of involving children is still largely missing.”⁶⁰ Mikavica calls upon the U.N. system to empower the Major Group on Children and Youth (MGCY) to better represent children, and she asks member states to include children in official government delegations and support child-led reporting.⁶¹ Also, feminist advocates of the Women’s Major Group criticize HLPF every year for its siloed assessment of the SDGs. By reviewing the SDGs individually, HLPF overlooks key cross-cutting issues—like gender equality and human rights—and fails to build coherence across the 2030 Agenda. This hinders progress and momentum, as sustainable development issues are all interlinked.⁶²

In *Our Common Agenda*, the Secretary-General invites “governments, sectors, partners and alliances” to participate in HLPF in order to “increase ambition, accelerate implementation efforts and build connections across issues that are essential for effective multilateralism.”⁶³ **Since HLPF is the main review mechanism for the SDGs, the Secretary-General’s call for participation in the forum, as well as support for greater civil society inclusion, could have been much stronger.**

He also proposes a separate Biennial Summit where members of the G20, the Economic and Social Council and the heads of international financial institutions can discuss a “sustainable inclusive and resilient global economy.”⁶⁴ One of the goals of the Biennial Summit would be to support investment in the SDGs and to form a “last-mile alliance to reach those furthest behind.”⁶⁵ His proposal for a Biennial Summit includes no mention of civil society engagement, despite its relevance to advancing the 2030 Agenda, and it overlooks the existing Financing for Development (FfD) process in which many civil society organizations participate.⁶⁶ The Feminist U.N. Campaign calls upon the Secretary-General every year to guarantee civil society participation in key U.N. convenings and deliberations; in the case of the Biennial Summit, Guterres must hear this call.

In 2021, key informants expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome document of HLPF, the Ministerial Declaration, arguing that “nothing was advanced on gender in the negotiations” and that “countries were questioning the issue of gender equality.” In fact, in the final deliberations, member states voted on an amendment put forth by Russia that would weaken language on gender equality.⁶⁷ While the amendment was struck down, witnessing member states vote on the importance of gender equality reveals a grim reality: **in the U.N. system, women's rights are still up for debate.** The Secretary-General should use his leadership platform to urge member states to follow through on their commitments to gender equality, and to ensure that women's rights are respected and advanced in key outcomes and negotiations.

Secretary-General Guterres must champion a holistic review of the SDGs and their gender integration, and demonstrate unequivocal support for gender equality in settings like HLPF.

As one of our key informants expressed, “We need more political ambition and political courage to get out of the usual intergovernmental stuff and make good on the promises of the 2030 Agenda.”

This message aligns with a key theme emerging from our key informant interviews: the U.N. needs to be a role model for governments, and the Secretary-General must lead by example.

▶ WHAT'S LEFT TO BE DONE

Progress on the 2030 Agenda was already lagging, and the COVID-19 pandemic has been detrimental. **If the world proceeds with business as usual, we will reach 2030 with a sense of deep collective regret and disappointment.** The Secretary-General has recognized this urgency, feeding into the launch of major campaigns and initiatives over the past two years: the Decade of Action, SDG moments, *Call to Action for Human Rights* and *Our Common Agenda*. While commendable, the Secretary-General must push member states to accelerate progress, to collect the data needed to track all SDG indicators and to ensure that gender and intersectionality are foundational to any COVID-19 response and recovery planning.

As we wrote in last year's report card, “the Secretary-General must use every element of his leadership platform to push for gender mainstreaming throughout the SDGs; for the full implementation of Goal 5, including its more controversial components, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights; and for full civil society participation, particularly for feminist, girl-led and women's rights organizations.”⁶⁸ The Secretary-General should continue to link the 2030 Agenda with other parts of the U.N. system, including human rights mechanisms, and demonstrate support for related initiatives, such as the Generation Equality Forum. In our 2020 report card, we asked the Secretary-General to “send a system-wide directive asking entities to participate in and make transformative commitments at the GEF.”⁶⁹ While he encouraged participation, endorsed the GEF and invited UN Women to brief U.N. leadership on the forum—as we will cover in **Section 5**—the Secretary-General could have gone much further in promoting commitment-making throughout the U.N. system. And in strengthening UNDS performance on gender equality, Guterres should continue to ensure that U.N. development system entities and country teams are equipped and resourced to support gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the SDGs, as well as SDG 5 specifically.

Regarding HLPF, while SDG implementation is largely perceived as a member state-driven process, civil society and other stakeholders are recognized as part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.⁷⁰ This past HLPF was evidence that gender equality and human rights are not always treated as top priorities in the U.N. system. Since the 2030 Agenda is central to the U.N.'s mission and mandate, the Secretary-General must use his political leverage to push governments to take bold action on these issues. Despite the urgency around the SDGs and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministerial Declaration failed to make progress on fundamental issues; instead, as the MGoS declared, it signified a "lack of ambition."⁷¹

The Secretary-General should advance the recommendations of the Women's Major Group, which calls for policy coherence and "creating holistic cross-sectoral priorities and strategies that evaluate impacts on people and planet."⁷² **SDG 5 will be under review at the 2022 HLPF—a prime opportunity for Guterres to urge progress on gender equality and highlight its significance to all other SDGs.**

To advance civil society participation in HLPF, and the processes leading up to it, Guterres should call on member states to include civil society representatives in their delegations to the forum, as UN Women often requests member states to do for their CSW delegations.⁷³ He can also help ensure that MGoS mechanisms are adopted at regional, country and subnational levels. He should urge member states to work with local actors in VNR processes, as well as participate in VNR labs during HLPF.

If HLPF remains virtual, or takes up a hybrid format, the Secretary-General must ensure it is open and inclusive. All formal deliberations, side events and other dialogues must be open to civil society, providing accessibility and translation needs, and held in multiple time zones amenable to global participation. The Secretary-General should promote more interaction between member states and civil society to foster

dialogue and collaboration, especially if they are not in the same physical space. And as we called for last year, HLPF should introduce a CSW-style town hall, where civil society and grassroots organizations can ask their questions directly to U.N. leadership.



2021 GRADE: C+

2020: C

2019: C+

2018: C+

2017: C

THREE FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

PROGRESS TO DATE:

The Secretary-General's grade in this section slightly increased as compared to last year, due to continued effectiveness and transparency around the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls. However, the Secretary-General's grade remains relatively low due to continued opaqueness around activities of the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality and lack of support for increasing UN Women's financial capacity.

Like years past, the U.N. continues to be inundated with budget concerns, as member states fall short on their financial commitments. In such a dire funding landscape, it becomes harder to secure resources for commonly overlooked issues like gender equality. When presenting his 2022 budget request to the Fifth Committee, Secretary-General Guterres was clear to member states that the U.N. can only fulfill its mandate if financial obligations are received on time. He warned, "We are being forced to operate not on the basis of strategic direction, but rather on the availability of cash, which undermines mandate implementation."⁷⁴

Tracking Financing for Gender Equality and the U.N.-SWAP

The Secretary-General's 2021 report to ECOSOC summarizes the results of the System-wide Action Plan 2.0 (SWAP 2.0). It recognizes "financial resource tracking and allocation" as a key area for improvement. As it points out, "In 2020, 26 and 15 entities complied with the financial tracking and allocation performance indicators, respectively. Slightly more than a third of the United Nations system entities (39 percent)

implemented a tracking mechanism to quantify investments on gender equality, and more than a quarter (27 percent) met a financial benchmark for implementation of the gender equality mandate."⁷⁵

The report goes so far as to say, "Without increased attention to adequate financing, the United Nations system is unlikely to make its full contribution to the 2030 Agenda. A strong focus on building capacity in the area of gender equality markers, combined with the establishment of financial targets for gender equality, are expected to provide some redress."⁷⁶

Shockingly, the report actually points out that the number of U.N. entities with financial resource tracking mechanisms declined between 2019 and 2020. The percentage of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements of the financial resource tracking indicator dropped from 47 percent in 2019 to 37 percent in 2020.⁷⁷ This may be due to improvements in the quality of reporting, but these findings indicate that U.N. entities still have a long way to go in understanding and implementing gender equality markers.

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund

In last year's report card, we commended the Secretary-General for prioritizing gender in his new COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. The fund "targets those most vulnerable to economic hardship and social disruption."⁷⁸ In its Terms of Reference, the Fund explicitly requests all initiatives to pursue an inclusive and human rights-based approach to service provision, to address the gendered implications of COVID-19 and to avoid gender-based discrimination. In a second call for proposals, 30 percent of funds were reserved for projects identifying gender equality as a principal objective (characterized as Gender Equality Marker 3, or GEM 3).⁷⁹ Furthermore, we applauded the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) (which administers the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund) for publicizing and regularly updating funding



status, government contributions, delivery status and contact information—promoting greater transparency.

Since then, the MPTF has released an Early Lessons and Evaluability Report, as well as the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund's first annual report recapping its activities. The Early Lessons and Evaluability Report is a direct response to the Secretary-General's request to enhance "system-wide evaluations" (SWE), and analyzes the fund's effectiveness alongside U.N. Country Team (UNCT) Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plans (SERPs). Since last year's release of the *U.N. framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19*,⁸⁰ 121 countries have developed SERPs. The Early Lessons and Evaluability Report finds that the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund was "a positive factor in strengthening the pursuit of gender equality in the SERPs and in Fund supported projects."⁸¹ However, it recognizes that in rapidly developing the fund, engagement with national authorities and civil society was overlooked. Based on experiences from the past year, the report recommends that all U.N. entities at the country level strengthen their operationalization of gender equality, human rights, disability inclusion and "leave no one behind" principles.⁸²

The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund's annual report reveals that 69 percent of programs funded through its second call for proposals were GEM 3—significantly exceeding its target of 30 percent (the SG's 2021 report to the UNSC on WPS, published some months later, reveals a more updated number: 73 percent).⁸³ On International Women's Day, the MPTF also released a fact sheet summarizing "emerging results from funded projects that support

healthcare, personal safety, social safety nets, and livelihood opportunities for women."⁸⁴ **We commend the Secretary-General for prioritizing gender in this rapid response mechanism. As results show, it influenced other U.N. mechanisms, like SERPs, to pay greater attention to the gendered effects of COVID-19, policy and programming.** We also appreciate the public release of both reports, setting a positive precedent for accountability.

Because the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and SERPs were designed as "stand-alone emergency planning," their activities are expected to dissolve between late 2021 and 2022. As the annual report lays out, the fund will merge into a revised Joint SDG Fund that will accelerate SDG investments through more "innovative financing approaches" and help respond to future emergencies.⁸⁵ In this merger, the Secretary-General must ensure that gender equality and human rights remain central to all activities and that no progress is lost during the transition. In his 2021 report to the U.N. Security Council on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), the Secretary-General recognized that "greater focus has been placed on systems that track gender-focused allocations across pooled funds," citing the relative success of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. He also indicated that the gender equality marker system will be "expanded to funds that do not yet incorporate this," a positive initiative but one that requires additional detail and transparency.⁸⁶

The figure below, included in the report, shows the share of funding that U.N. multi-donor trust funds allocated to programs with a gender equality focus in 2020. We encourage regular updating and accessibility of this data.

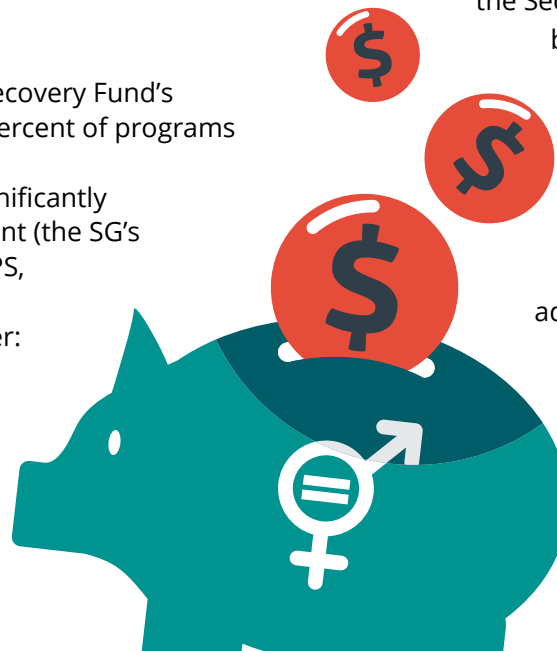
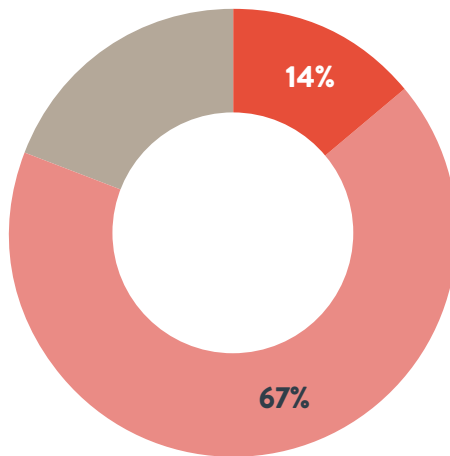


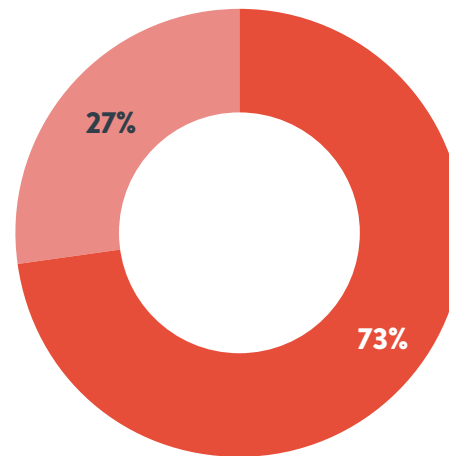
FIGURE 7

Share of funding from United Nations multi-donor trust funds allocated to programs/projects contributing to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls in developing countries, 2020.

Peacebuilding Fund
(\$173 million)

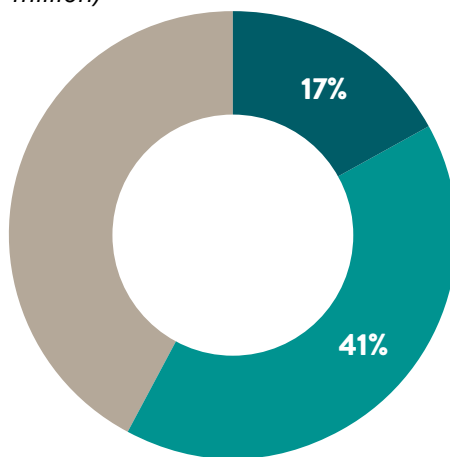


COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund
(\$30.8 million approved in the second call)

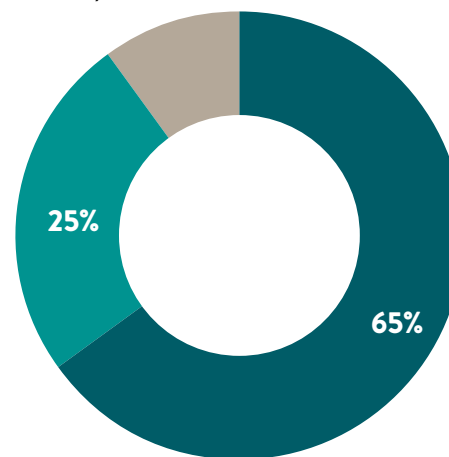


- Gender Equality Marker code 3 or 2b (i.e. gender equality/women's empowerment is the principal objective)
- Gender Equality Marker code 2 or 2a (i.e. gender equality/women's empowerment is a significant objective)
- Other

Central Emergency Response Fund
(\$847 million)



Country-based pooled funds
(\$909 million)



- Gender with Age Marker code 4 (likely to contribute to gender equality, including across age groups)
- Gender with Age Marker code 3 (likely to contribute to gender equality, but without attention to age groups)
- Other

Note: The COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund approved for \$75 million in the first call and second call for proposals. The information about funding distribution against Gender Equality Markers is available in the second call approved in 2020 and early 2021.

Image source: United Nations Security Council (27 September 2021). "Women and peace and security." Report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/827).

The Secretary-General's report importantly points out that “sectors that address gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health services are funded at only 33 and 43 percent respectively, compared with an average funding of 61 percent for United Nations appeals overall.”⁸⁷

The Secretary-General should accelerate his call for funding to these sectors, particularly as the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected women's access to both. In the report, the Secretary-General acknowledges the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which launched a new campaign this year that aims to raise \$112 million for women leaders and their civil society organizations by the end of 2025.

According to a survey conducted by the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund in 2021, “84 percent of civil society respondents felt that their organization's existence was at risk due to a lack of funding—a striking increase from the 30 percent reported in 2020.”⁸⁸ While the Fund launched an emergency response window last year, the Secretary-General's report points out that it still faces a funding gap of over \$30 million.⁸⁹ As such, the Secretary-General must strengthen his call for greater support to women's civil society organizations in humanitarian settings.

The Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls

The Feminist U.N. Campaign has been following key developments around the European Union-backed Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls since its launch in 2017.⁹⁰ The Spotlight Initiative's governing body is chaired by Deputy-Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, as well as EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission Josep

Borrell. In the past, the initiative has been touted as an “SDG model fund,” and it is implemented at the country-level by the U.N. Resident Coordinator system.⁹¹

In our 2020 assessment, we commended the Spotlight Initiative for taking steps to enhance civil society participation. It launched a civil society page on its website, convened Civil Society Reference Groups, launched a Grassroots Action Plan and made additional resources publicly available.⁹² It appears the Spotlight Initiative has kept up with this practice of promoting transparency, regularly updating its Community of Spotlight Initiative (COSI) and Virtual Library with key resources.⁹³

According to the Spotlight Initiative's 2020 annual report, 48 percent of program funds (about \$146 million) have been allocated directly to civil society organizations, and 77 percent of these went to national and grassroots organizations. The report also states that in all decision-making bodies, “civil society plays a meaningful role, with representatives serving as full voting members in global- and programme-level steering committees” and that organizations were consulted in COVID-19-related response plans and programming.⁹⁴ In its summary of results, the report reveals various successes: over 650,000 women and girls were provided gender-based violence services; 84 laws and policies in 17 countries have been signed or strengthened; and 1,111 “local and grassroots women's rights organizations reported having greater influence and agency to work on eliminating violence against women and girls.”⁹⁵ The report also notes that the Spotlight Initiative encountered multiple challenges, including (but not limited to) new barriers posed by COVID-19, violence against women's human rights defenders and civil society's still-restricted access to U.N. funding.

In November, Devex reported that, as the Spotlight Initiative spends down its initial 500 million euros by 2023, “talks are ramping up over what comes next, with Brussels keen to bring in other donors.”⁹⁶ As the Spotlight Initiative

seeks additional funding and to continue its work, it must keep prioritizing its commitment to civil society and grassroots feminist engagement in all programming and decision-making, and it must remain accountable to any civil society criticism.⁹⁷

High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality

The High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality (HLTF or Task Force) has been a key focus of the Feminist U.N. Campaign for the past several years. In our initial paper, *Toward a More Feminist United Nations*, we asked Secretary-General Guterres to establish a panel that would assess the state of financing for gender equality within the U.N. system, in countries worldwide and within the philanthropic sector.⁹⁸ The HLTF was subsequently announced in 2017 and convened in 2018, much to our initial praise and satisfaction. However, over the years, gathering information about the Task Force has become more challenging—making it difficult to assess its activities and whether it has met its goals.

While the HLTF was convened in 2018, its composition, the composition of its Advisory Group of external experts and its terms of reference were never disclosed. The Task Force prepared a report and recommendations that were endorsed by the U.N.'s Executive Committee in 2019. The Executive Committee then asked the HLTF to develop an implementation plan. **To date, none of these documents have been released publicly.** While the Advisory Group provided significant input into the report, they had no opportunity to meet with the Task Force or its co-chairs (USG Ana Maria Menéndez and then-Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka).

The EOSG has repeatedly emphasized that the work of the Task Force was always intended to be internal and that it never sought to increase financing for gender equality. However, the Concept Note we released in our 2020 report indicated otherwise: the HLTF would aim to increase

investment in gender equality across the U.N. system and among member states (in line with our Campaign's initial recommendation), and the report and recommendations would be shared in a public event. The EOSG has provided conflicting information about the discrepancies in the Concept Note and the work of the HLTF, as well as indicated that COVID-19 placed prospects for a public event on hold. In 2020, the EOSG commented that the implementation plan was soon to be submitted to the Executive Committee, and "with plans to share with all HLTF members and the Advisory Group for comment."⁹⁹

In our 2020 report, we called upon Guterres: "We urge the Secretary-General to reembrace the original, stated scope and ambition of the Task Force. At a minimum, Guterres should direct the HLTF to meet with its Advisory Group, as well as representatives from the U.N.'s entities, to discuss the recommendations and implementation plan, and subsequently host the originally-conceived, public event disclosing the Task Force's findings, recommendations and the implementation plan."¹⁰⁰ **At the end of 2021, none of these recommendations were taken up—and information about the HLTF continues to be extremely limited and confusing.**

In 2021, we asked UN Women, which co-chairs the HLTF, for clarification about the Task Force's activities. They shared that the HLTF is implementing the recommendations adopted at the end of 2019 and is focusing specifically on "implementing a harmonized approach to gender equality markers," or financial tracking mechanisms that will streamline entities' reporting on the amount of funding directed toward gender equality. They noted that "it is a slow process as it requires 'change': sometimes starting from scratch and sometimes undertaking some adjustments" and that priority has been given to programmatic funding, as opposed to other functions like human resources. As an example, UN Women pointed to the launch of a new module, the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting solution, which

enables the use of gender markers and other markers (SDGs, disability, etc.) for Secretariat entities.¹⁰¹ UN Women also disclosed that they are working with entities administering pooled funding mechanisms on the same objective. UN Women's response provides no detail on any of the other Task Force recommendations, information about the implementation plan or plans to engage with the wider Task Force and its Advisory Group.

In his reports to the U.N. system, the Secretary-General's messaging on the Task Force remains similarly vague. For example, the Secretary-General's 2021 report to the U.N. Security Council on WPS states that, "During the reporting period, and in follow-up to the High-level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality established by the Secretary-General, the United Nations has increased efforts to strengthen the pool of resources for gender equality and to review and improve systems for tracking gender equality allocations."¹⁰² It indicates that certain entities, like UNDP, UNICEF and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), have increased their overall spending on gender equality—while "several entities still lack mechanisms to track these expenditures." The report does not identify which entities, or how many, fall in this latter category, and includes no information about the Task Force's findings, implementation plan or activities over the past year.¹⁰³ The Secretary-General's 2021 report to ECOSOC on "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" mentions the HLTF just twice. It first mentions the HLTF in the context of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and its application of the gender equality marker, and its second mention simply notes that "ensuring adequate funding for gender-related programming is the key objective" of the Task Force.¹⁰⁴ As one key informant pointed out, this reflects the Secretary-General's "selective and cursory approach in publicly discussing the Task Force report and its recommendations or the implementation plan."

The Secretary-General also missed an opportunity to discuss the work of the HLTF in *Our Common Agenda*, where he commits to "undertake a review of United Nations system capacity—staffing, resources and architecture—to deliver on gender equality as a core priority across all entities," but does not refer to the work already done.¹⁰⁵ Per information provided to us by the EOSG, this will be an independent review that builds on "numerous pieces," such as evaluations, thematic reports, U.N. development system reforms, the Global Study and the HLTF.

Beyond that, we learned from key informants in interviews that the implementation plan was never shared with the Advisory Group. As a key informant pointed out, this is a "glaring indication that the Task Force process has not been conducted in a genuinely inclusive and participatory manner."



One thing that remains unclear is the status of the Task Force itself. **Key informants from the U.N. admitted that the HLTF is “not meeting at this point but it has not been dismantled.”** We learned from the EOSG that the Secretariat's Controller, Chandramouli Ramanathan, will be co-chairing the Task Force alongside UN Women, but we have received no information about whether UN Women's new Executive Director has been briefed on the Task Force and to what extent she plans to engage with it.

Our interviews with key informants, and the continued lack of transparency around the HLTF, raise critical questions about the mandate, membership and scope of the Task Force and the extent to which its recommendations are being acted upon. This remains of significant concern to the Campaign, especially since it has been years since the HLTF's establishment, and gender equality remains vastly underfunded both within the U.N. system and worldwide.

Full Funding for UN Women

In calling for the establishment of UN Women, feminists who coalesced under the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) Campaign insisted that the agency be “funded initially at a minimum level of \$500 million to \$1 billion USD with increases over time.”¹⁰⁶ According to the agency's website, “UN Women's budget, endorsed by its Executive Board, estimated a total of USD 970 million in voluntary contributions for the 2020–2021 biennium. A total of USD 400 million in regular resources and USD 570 million in other resources.”¹⁰⁷ It appears UN Women is getting closer to the \$1 billion benchmark a decade after its establishment. The agency's latest strategic plan explains that, “UN Women's impressive growth still leaves it short of the resources required to meet demand and requires realistic strategic planning.”¹⁰⁸

While we appreciate the Secretary-General for elevating UN Women to the Executive Committee, endorsing the Generation Equality Forum and participating in public events alongside UN Women's Executive Director, heightened roles and expectations for UN Women need to be matched with heightened resources. Key informants expressed concerns that UN Women's lack of adequate funding will lead to greater corporate capture, as they seek more private sector funding, and continued competition with civil society and grassroots movements for the same funds. **Secretary-General Guterres still avoids calling for increased member state contributions to UN Women.**

▶ WHAT'S LEFT TO BE DONE

In a dire funding landscape, and as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to threaten lives, the Secretary-General must be a fearless, relentless advocate for financing gender equality. While we applaud the centrality given to gender equality and human rights in the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, the Secretary-General must ensure that progress is not lost and that this focus is retained as emergency response programming wraps up, or is merged with other U.N. mechanisms. He can amplify resources like the U.N. Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality's *Minimum Requirements Checklist*, which calls for gender integration into all COVID-19 socioeconomic response planning.¹⁰⁹ In doing so, he should take up the Inter-Agency Network's recommendation to ensure that COVID-19 funding be accompanied by gender analysis that takes an intersectional lens and gives visibility to diverse groups of women and girls, as well as LGBTQIA+ communities. The Secretary-General must also insist that all U.N. funding mechanisms continue to centralize civil society engagement and agency.

The U.N.'s transparency around the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the Spotlight Initiative stands in stark contrast to the Secretary-General's continued opacity around the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality. As we called for last year, the Secretary-General must reembrace the original ambition of the Task Force, convene its Advisory Group, report on activities to date and publicly release the report, implementation plan and other associated recommendations, timelines or updates. The HLTF presents an immense opportunity to urge greater resourcing toward gender equality in the U.N. system and worldwide—and the Secretary-General cannot let this opportunity falter or pass.

Secretary-General Guterres must also urge member states to fulfill and increase their funding commitments to UN Women. And as Guterres embarks on a second term, he cannot stop here.

He must make financing for gender equality a central component of his second term in office, using every platform and leadership opportunity to insist support for women's civil society organizations and grassroots movements, including through member state, U.N. agency and philanthropic commitments to the Generation Equality Forum.



2021 GRADE: B

2020: B+

2019: B+

2018: A-

2017: B+

SECTION 4A

2021 GRADE: A-

2020: A

2019: A

2018: A

2017: A-

FOUR UTILIZE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP: PARITY + RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

SECTION 4A: PARITY

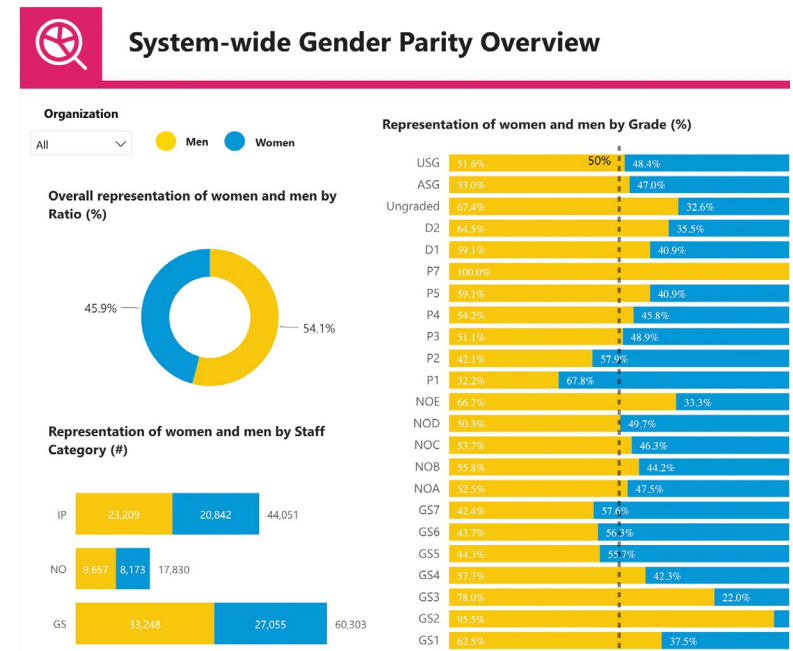
PROGRESS TO DATE:

The Secretary-General retains a high grade in this section, largely due to achievement of gender parity at the top levels of the U.N. system. As our analysis points out, moving forward, Guterres must continue pushing for greater gender parity across entities and at all levels, improve the availability and accessibility of information on parity initiatives and their implementation, and strengthen system-wide accountability.

As the Secretary-General embarks on his second term, momentum on gender parity—his personal commitment and primary area of focus in his first term—appears to be lagging. Early successes in the Senior Management Group (2019), among Resident Coordinators (2019), and among all ASGs and USGs (2020)¹¹⁰—all appointments made directly by the Secretary-General or by the General Assembly under his recommendation—are being sustained. **While overdue and historic, they are not representative of progress across the system.** The 2017 System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity applied two target years for entities, based on their gap to parity: 2021 for those within the percentage gap range and 2026 for those outside of it.¹¹¹ For a small number of entities—primarily peacekeeping operations and technical agencies—the target year was extended to 2028, given their very low starting numbers and the challenges to diversifying their staff. However, according to information shared with us by the EOSG, all entities are now projected to reach parity at all levels by 2028. Peace operations are still not expected to meet the target, despite dedicated efforts to accelerate progress, including roster reforms and the establishment of an emergency working group on parity.



Overall, women account for 46 percent of U.N. personnel, but their representation drops 32 percentage points from the P1 to D2 level.¹¹² Notably, the D2 level in the Secretariat is also under the direct purview of the Secretary-General, but the percentage of women in D2 roles is two percentage points lower than the level immediately preceding it (D1) and six percentage points lower than the ASG level,¹¹³ a lag that some informants have attributed to an increasing politicization of appointments even at that level.



Source: UN Women, UNDP (2022). *UN-System-wide Dashboard on Gender Parity*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3HuDwQw>.

The same pattern can be observed in field missions: in 2020, 48 percent of mission leaders (Deputy Special Representatives and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General) were women (up from two percent in 2006 and 25 percent in 2017), who led some of the most challenging missions (e.g. Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq and DRC).¹¹⁴ This is undoubtedly an impressive achievement, but it is again

driven by Deputy Special Representatives (64 percent), who are appointed directly by the Secretary-General. Meanwhile, only 32 percent of Heads of Missions are women,¹¹⁵ pointing to persistent political interference at the highest levels of leadership,¹¹⁶ despite the rigorous selection processes implemented or strengthened under Secretary-General Guterres. Women's representation in every international professional grade remains above 40 percent, but ranges from a paltry 13 percent at the highest field service grade (FS7) to 31 percent at mid-level. Numbers have barely moved in this category. While the Secretariat has reached parity at headquarters (49 percent), only 32 percent of personnel in the field are women.¹¹⁷

Efforts to reform internal administrative procedures and establish dedicated inter-agency coordination bodies are ongoing. In 2021, the Secretary-General restated his commitment to equal representation in *Our Common Agenda*, urging member states and other stakeholders to consider measures—including quotas and Temporary Special Measures—to promote gender parity at all levels of decision-making.¹¹⁸

However, some of the issues we had raised in our previous reports—such as a lack of system-wide accountability and inconsistent monitoring; a

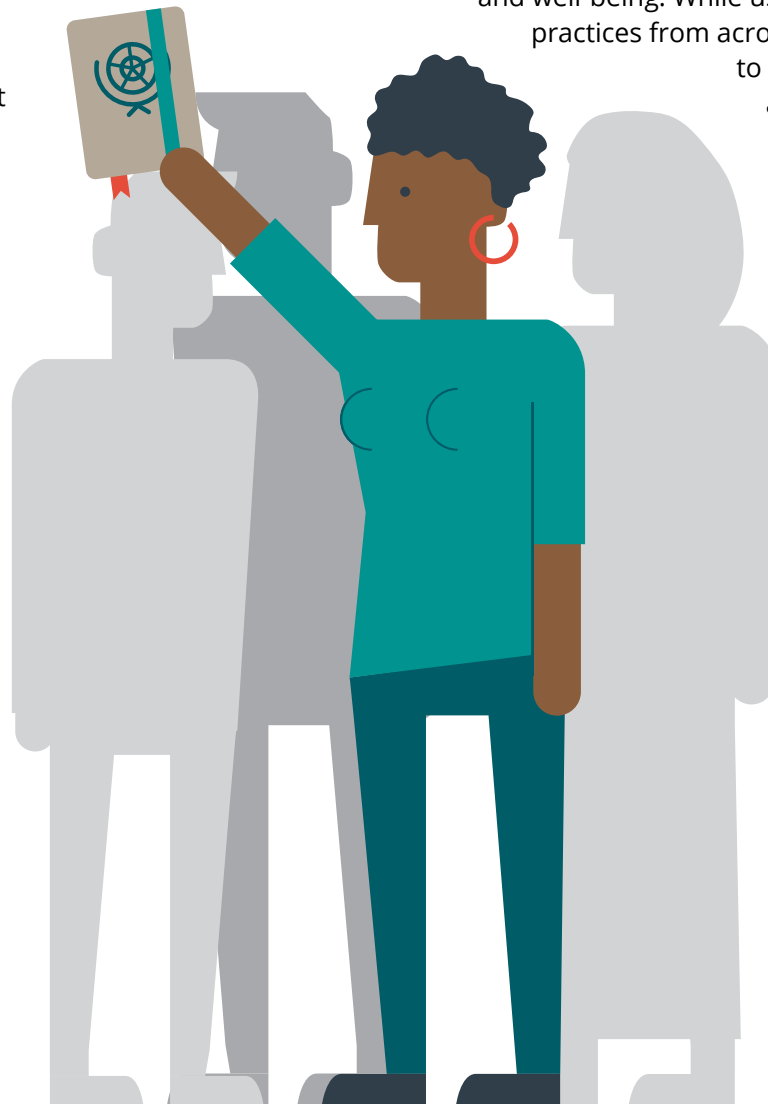
binary and non-intersectional conceptualization of parity; a conflation of parity with equality or feminist leadership; and a failure to address deeper cultural issues within the U.N.—remain largely unchanged.

In 2021, the Office of the Focal Point for Women in the U.N. System published *Making Parity a Reality: the Field-specific Enabling Environment Guidelines*,¹¹⁹ which provide tailored guidance on standards of conduct, safety and security, health and well-being. While useful as a compendium of best practices from across the system, when it comes

to issues like sexual harassment and other forms of abuse, the document is focused almost entirely on soft approaches—such as diversity and inclusion trainings, leading by example and practicing inclusive leadership. In

2021, key informants have highlighted that one of the reasons why women avoid positions in mission settings is an entrenched masculinized culture and frequent, but largely unreported, instances of sexual harassment and abuse. In this context, the guidelines seem insufficient to foster the cultural

changes and management practices that are needed to address these problems, particularly harassment and abuse, and accelerate progress toward parity.



We were pleased to note progress toward increasing transparency regarding gender parity. However, consistent access to data across the U.N. system continues to be a challenge. UN Women has been tasked with monitoring and reporting on system-wide progress through the report on the Improvement in the Status of Women in the U.N. System.¹²⁰ UNDP and UN Women recently launched a system-wide parity dashboard, with data from 40 entities, which is expected to be updated every four months.¹²¹ It is the first effort to capture system-wide metrics. However, this development created a new resource instead of adding the system to the existing dashboard on the U.N. Secretariat's dedicated gender parity website. **This is a challenge because a multitude of tools of different modalities can create confusion and complicate external monitoring.**

While the dashboards are welcome, additional transparency is needed. Much of the information about how strategies to increase parity are being implemented within the U.N. system remains restricted. In late 2020, the Secretary-General asked entities to submit their updated gender parity implementation plans by January 2021.¹²² These, however, are confidential. Similarly, data on the implementation of special administrative measures the Secretary-General put in place to accelerate progress and support accountability—such as Temporary Special Measures and written justifications for not hiring a qualified short-listed woman—are restricted. We encourage the Secretary-General and his team to share anonymized aggregate information on implementation plans, exception requests, Temporary Special Measures and other measures to accelerate progress in persistently underperforming entities.

A key Campaign ask of the Secretary-General was to call for nominations for feminist female candidates in non-Secretariat entities and U.N. Human Rights Treaty Bodies and mechanisms. The latter, according to the latest report of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee,¹²³ show a serious lack of gender parity, with women remaining

underrepresented in treaty bodies, among special procedure mandate holders and in the Advisory Committee itself. It also shows that women are concentrated in bodies or mandates specifically dealing with issues related to women and children.

A number of appointments or confirmations this past year—some more prominent than others—have spread a sense of cynicism both in the U.N. system and in civil society. There were concerns voiced by key informants about selecting candidates without consulting with core agency stakeholders,¹²⁴ as well as re-appointing men who have been in the U.N. system for decades to some of the most difficult settings, instead of bringing more women mediators in¹²⁵—disregarding transparency or merit-based selection processes.¹²⁶ There was also a concern regarding the appointment of a known abuser with no relevant experience to a consequential post.¹²⁷ **While the Secretary-General got the parity numbers in the Secretariat right quickly, there have been highly visible missteps in appointments that he oversaw that undermine faith in the parity project and could even be a stain on his legacy.**

Finally, Guterres has made a number of claims about the impact of parity on broader U.N. culture and policy that is not supported by research and evidence.¹²⁸ For example, as discussed in **Section 1**, Guterres has referred to his work to achieve gender parity as having a number of added benefits, such as making “harassment more difficult.”¹²⁹ He has also consistently conflated gender parity with feminist leadership. While parity does not equate feminist leadership—a point reiterated in multiple of our key informant interviews—messaging that showcases the value of feminist leadership can also strengthen the case for gender parity. While his commitment to a gender-equal workforce should be lauded, these claims—combined with weak mechanisms for accountability—may undermine his credibility on the issue.

SECTION 4B

2021 GRADE: C-

2020: C+

2019: C+

2018: B

2017: B

SECTION 4B: RIGHTS PROTECTIONS**PROGRESS TO DATE:**

Over the past five years, the Feminist U.N. Campaign has been analyzing the extent to which the Secretary-General promotes women's human rights, both inside and outside of the U.N. system. This includes launching major campaigns and initiatives; supporting human rights mechanisms; countering sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse; and implementing gender-responsive policies. This year, the Secretary-General's grade in this section dropped due to stalled progress on responding to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in the U.N. system, and for a lack of transformative leadership on human rights and intersectionality.

Call to Action for Human Rights

In our 2020 report card, we commended Secretary-General Guterres for launching a *Call to Action for Human Rights*, which recognized gender equality as a key priority. The *Call to Action* commits the U.N. to six actions on gender equality:

1. engaging with member states to support gender-equitable laws and policies;
2. ensuring adequate protection for women;
3. incorporating a "gender lens" in all U.N. engagement and decision-making;
4. integrating gender analysis in all conflict prevention and resolution efforts;
5. improving risk analysis and early warning methodology to recognize violence against women; and
6. regularly consulting with women's human rights organizations.¹³⁰

In 2020, the EOSG informed us that they were working with the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights

(OHCHR) to promote implementation of these commitments, particularly in two areas: repealing gender discriminatory laws and instituting Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) to promote women's participation in decision-making. In 2021, the EOSG informed us that they were also convening an interagency group that meets regularly to advance progress in these two areas. The agencies working on TSMs include UN Women, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and UNDP. The agencies working on repealing discriminatory laws include UN Women, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Per the EOSG, they have already piloted at the country level, are supporting country teams to audit laws and push for repeal of discriminatory legislation and are advocating with governments to implement TSMs.

The Secretary-General has continued to champion the *Call to Action for Human Rights*. Marking its one-year anniversary, Guterres delivered a public speech outlining ongoing activities and conveying: "We are leading an initiative to help governments dismantle outdated discriminatory laws against women—and reinvigorating the use of Temporary Special Measures, to accelerate gender parity."¹³¹ Yet, he provided no further details on the status of implementation nor information on whether specific action is being taken around any of the other *Call to Action for Human Rights* gender equality priorities. To ensure that activities are advanced and implemented, we encourage the Secretary-General to make information more publicly accessible. It is difficult to track how member states and U.N. agencies are responding to the *Call to Action for Human Rights* and to what extent they are engaging civil society actors in their work.

In *Our Common Agenda*, Secretary-General Guterres reiterates his *Call to Action for Human Rights*, including "through a United Nations system-wide agenda for protection, and making human rights commitments a reference point in the design and delivery of United Nations programmes, development

assistance and crisis prevention initiatives.”¹³² He further expresses support for the human rights treaty monitoring system, including through more sustainable financing.

Still Needed: Intersectionality and Inclusion at the U.N.

At an event hosted by the LGBTI Core Group during UNGA in September, Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination Volker Türk explained that a discussion was held among all senior leaders and the Secretary-General on LGBTI issues. As a result of that discussion, they decided to have a U.N.-wide strategy that “would look at all these issues of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.”¹³³ According to the International Peace Institute (IPI), this discussion was held in September 2020.¹³⁴ Türk explained that different parts of the U.N. system are involved, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights and High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as U.N. Country Teams in their SDG implementation. **However, no information about this discussion or the resulting U.N.-wide strategy on LGBTI issues has been released publicly.** When asked about how *Our Common Agenda* addresses these issues, Türk reiterated its call for a renewed social contract, its commitment to developing a system-wide policy akin to UNHCR’s age, gender and diversity policy,¹³⁵ and the other gender dimensions of the report. However, as we pointed out in **Section 1**, while we commend the commitment to an age, gender and diversity policy in *Our Common Agenda*, the report mentions discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity just once. During the event, Volker Türk affirmed, “We know that LGBTI people all around the world have been at the forefront of social change and transformation,” citing its comparison to the feminist movement.¹³⁶

While Türk’s representation on this issue is commendable, both advocates and member states have expressed frustration with Guterres’s lack of engagement, public statements and event participation on LGBTQIA+ issues, as

compared to his predecessor, Ban Ki-moon. A recent paper by IPI assesses the history of U.N. policy and programming on sexual orientation and gender identity and offers recommendations for improvement; as it points out, “At the very top, the U.N. Secretary-General helps set the tone for the U.N.’s approach to SOGIESC” (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics) and “At least until recently, the U.N. Secretariat has widely been seen as taking a step backward on LGBTI rights under António Guterres.”¹³⁷

While these initiatives demonstrate elevated support for human rights, and its ties to sustainable development, many of our key informants pointed out that the human rights agenda is an area of weakness for the Secretary-General.



Multiple key informants expressed that Secretary-General Guterres should be more outspoken on human rights in his second term, particularly on key issues like sexual and reproductive health and rights, LGBTQIA+ rights and intersectionality.

As discussed in **Section 1**, in the 142 speeches the Secretary-General delivered in 2021, there were only eight references to sexual and reproductive health and rights and three to LGBTQIA+ rights.

Key informants also noted that issues of racial justice “have not had as much exposure” in the U.N. and that U.N. leadership needs to pay greater attention to issues of racial equity and diversity. As we pointed out in our speech analysis, the Secretary-General did not reference race or racism in his speeches dedicated entirely to gender equality—indicating a blind spot on the intersections between race, gender and other identities.

United Nations People of African Descent (UNPAD), a staff platform advancing greater inclusion for persons of African descent in the U.N., administered a survey in 2020 to better understand staff experiences of racism. Their findings highlight the need to urgently address racism: 52 percent of respondents had experienced racism, and “a large majority of respondents stated that there is nothing or very little that has been done to tackle institutional racism and racial discrimination” in their respective agency, entity, fund or program. The report gathered several recommendations from respondents on how the U.N. can improve in the areas of recognition, staffing, accountability, training, internal support and frameworks. As UNPAD points out, the survey “demonstrates an urgent need for first and foremost acknowledging that racial discrimination and racial bias exist within the U.N. system and that they must be addressed and eliminated once and for all if we are to hold true to the values espoused in the U.N. Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.”¹³⁸ Secretary-General Guterres must hear staff concerns about racism and be a stronger advocate for racial justice both within the U.N. system and worldwide.

Conflict Amid Crisis

Last year, Secretary-General Guterres called for a global ceasefire, a halt to all conflict so that the world could focus on collectively responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. He accompanied this with a call for “peace in the home,” urging governments to recognize that violence against women was on the rise, and to incorporate prevention and response strategies into COVID-19 planning. In our 2020 report card, we commended this advocacy effort and lauded the Secretary-General for bridging a connection between conflict and violence against women. This was repeated by key informants in 2021, demonstrating the impressionable impact of his efforts. However, 2021 marked an unfortunate era for global conflict, with violence raging in Palestine, Ethiopia, Yemen and, markedly, Afghanistan—to name a few.



Secretary-General Guterres demonstrated rhetorical support for Afghan women and girls in his speeches and online engagement. Per information provided to us by the EOSG, the Deputy Secretary-General led high-level action to support national staff and ensure protection, and met with a delegation of Afghan women on the sidelines of the Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security. However, an article in *PassBlue* reported that, at least initially, more attention was given to evacuating international staff rather than protecting national staff members.¹³⁹ We encourage Secretary-General Guterres to continue his advocacy in support of Afghan women, girls and other marginalized populations. He must also ensure that all staff—particularly female staff—can safely access needed protections,¹⁴⁰ and should work with all U.N. agencies in support of these staff protections.

Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

The Secretary-General's 2021 Report on Women, Peace and Security¹⁴¹ outlined the system's efforts to counter women's marginalization in peace and security. It noted improvements in women's participation in peace processes, where they account for 40 percent of staff in U.N. mediation support teams. In leadership positions, women now represent 57 percent of heads or deputy heads of United Nations special political missions in 2020—up from just 14 percent in 2015. It further noted ongoing efforts to prioritize women's direct and early involvement in formal negotiations, invest in grassroots women's networks and support women peacebuilders.

The 2021 WPS report also focused on the ten directives to U.N. entities identified in the 2019 report,¹⁴² which reflected core commitments on financing, accountability, public messaging and engagement with women's organizations, amongst others. The report found that progress against these directives has been uneven: for example, dedicated gender expertise is increasingly available to mission leadership and compacts with senior leaders now include WPS commitments, but none of the U.N. country teams

have set benchmarks to allocate a minimum of 15 percent of programmatic budgets to gender equality and improve gender mainstreaming in all areas of expenditure. The report notes that, for the third consecutive year, the Peacebuilding Fund allocated 40 percent of its investments towards improving gender equality.

In 2020, our report found that the Secretary-General had narrowed the scope of the WPS agenda to a set of key actions and recommendations without adequate justification for why they were prioritized over the remaining elements. In line with this finding, key informants believe that the Secretary-General's 2021 WPS report also fell short of providing transparent and comprehensive updates on what actions/measures have actually been taken up by the U.N. system and other actors to close gaps and advance implementation. This is particularly pressing when considering the repeated calls on the Secretary-General to present either a comprehensive update on progress of all elements of the WPS agenda or a much-needed proposal for robust action to close all remaining gaps, in line with our recommendations in our 2020 Feminist U.N. report card.

In our 2020 assessment, we also found that the Secretary-General's 2020 report on Women, Peace and Security did not provide updates on if and how the Executive Committee was tracking implementation of these actions and recommendations. This year, we were informed that progress against these directives was reviewed in an annual meeting of the Executive Committee in mid-August, but no information from this meeting has been shared publicly, undermining the Secretary-General's promise to hold "senior leadership accountable."¹⁴³ Such a high-level review of progress and gaps across the system is important. We urge the Secretary-General and his team to consider publicly sharing a report from these meetings, even if abridged.

Similarly, information on the task force established under the Standing Committee on Women, Peace and Security to

strengthen and update the existing monitoring framework remains limited. While the 2021 WPS report mentions that consultations have been ongoing and “have contributed to enhanced knowledge and engagement [...] within the system,”¹⁴⁴ it does not elaborate—for a second year in a row—on why the framework has not been updated or when and how this is expected to happen.

Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse

Each year, we analyze the Secretary-General's efforts to respond to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in the U.N. system. We have been tracking the Secretary-General's initiatives on this issue since the start of our Campaign, first witnessing increased attention, and then a lack of momentum.

In 2017, the Chief Executives Board (CEB) established the Task Force on Sexual Harassment. This resulted in the Model Policy on Sexual Harassment to encourage agencies throughout the U.N. system to develop or strengthen their own policies. The U.N. also convened a team of all-women investigators in the Office of Internal Oversight Services. In 2018, a “Clear Check” system was established to prevent staff members with a history of harassment, exploitation or abuse from being re-hired. 68 percent of the subjects in the Clear Check system have been reported by staff at the U.N. Secretariat. Since 2018, the system has identified two matches out of approximately 1,700 verification requests.¹⁴⁵ Considering that many cases remain unreported due to the fact that the reporting process can be protracted and onerous, this may be an insufficient tool to prevent perpetrators from remaining within or re-entering the U.N. system. In 2019, the Secretary-General issued a bulletin on discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority, giving the Model Policy greater visibility.¹⁴⁶ The Task Force on Sexual Harassment also developed a set of criteria advising the U.N. system on how to respond to allegations of misconduct. This led to the drafting of the Model Code of Conduct, which aims to prevent harassment and assault during U.N. events.¹⁴⁷

Despite these actions, key informants reported that staff remain disillusioned with the leadership's dedication to changing the U.N.'s macho culture of impunity, are profoundly mistrustful of reporting and justice mechanisms in the system, and are fearful of retaliation.

A number of high profile incidents, such as the appointment of a known abuser as the U.N.'s Tech Envoy (since removed),¹⁴⁸ have contributed to the current state of disenchantment across the U.N. system. This has been reinforced by incidents at specialized agencies, such as the refusal to release the results of the sexual harassment investigation in UNAIDS,¹⁴⁹ and findings that World Health Organization (WHO) staff had sexually abused and exploited women in the Democratic Republic of Congo during their Ebola response mission between 2018-2020. **Key informants described the reporting process as “byzantine” and much more onerous on the person reporting than on the accused, with final reports “falling into a black hole” perpetuating a sense of impunity and lack of accountability.** Others also astutely observed that the U.N. tends to react to social movements like AidToo and MeToo (as well as Black Lives Matter in 2020) with an undue haste to create new policies and structures, but also tends to view them as distinct problems rather than structural issues that need to be addressed in a systemic and intersectional manner in the long-term.

The Secretary-General outlined a systemwide strategy to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse (A/71/818)¹⁵⁰ in 2017. In our 2020 report card, we recapped ongoing work of the Victims' Rights Advocate, first appointed in 2017, as well as U.N. entities' efforts to make prevention and reporting more transparent and accessible. However, our 2020 assessment found that “the momentum we reported on in previous report cards around rooting out misconduct has

stalled.”¹⁵¹ While sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse continued to plague the U.N. system, we found that rhetorical and policy attention to these issues had significantly slowed. This year, we reiterate the same concern. **Guterres instituted new systems to respond to sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in the earlier years of his term, but his attention to rooting out misconduct has notably declined.** Cases continue, raising the question of whether existing systems are working effectively to change a system-wide culture of permissiveness and impunity.¹⁵²

As revealed in the Secretary-General's Report to the General Assembly,¹⁵³ **the number of sexual exploitation and abuse incidents and related survivors is still substantial for the one-year period of 2020 (and is likely also high for 2021), with 66 allegations involving peacekeeping and special political missions; 91 against other U.N. entities, including agencies, funds and programs; and 227 against implementing partners.** Two missions (in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic) account for the majority of cases (as high as 70 percent of allegations for peacekeeping and political missions in 2020).¹⁵⁴ Given the persistently high numbers of incidents, and the likely under-reporting of incidents, key informants requested the Secretary-General to prioritize a more urgent response to and ensure greater accountability for sexual exploitation and abuse within the U.N. system.

▶ WHAT'S LEFT TO BE DONE

SECTION 4A: PARITY

The Secretary-General's historic appointments have changed the face of U.N. senior leadership after decades of stalled efforts. In his second term, he should focus on refining his messaging, addressing persistent systemic barriers to parity and improving transparency.

To accelerate the pace of change, the Secretary-General and his team should now turn their attention to grades below those directly appointed by him, as well as focus on addressing structural and cultural challenges in peacekeeping operations and political missions. Following his request for updated implementation plans in late 2020, the Secretary-General can strengthen accountability through more frequent reporting and ensuring the consistent application and monitoring of Temporary Special Measures.

Ensuring the transparency of information regarding the parity project remains a key unaddressed recommendation of the 2017 Gender Parity Strategy. While efforts have been made to present the gender breakdown per grade both in the Secretariat and across the system, **there should be a consistent and accessible tool to monitor system-wide progress against multiple identity markers, such as race and nationality, as well as all staff and non-staff modalities.** Furthermore, additional information on entity-level targets, implementation plans and the proceedings of the working group on emergency measures to achieve parity in the field, would greatly enhance external monitoring and accountability.

There is also a need to improve the Secretary-General's messaging around parity. Speaking from his own personal experience, Guterres has often talked about the impact of parity on internal discussions and the organization's broader work on gender equality. We encourage the Secretary-

General and his team to support such claims with clear evidence and links to his broader feminist agenda.

SECTION 4B: RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

Secretary-General Guterres must defend gender equality and human rights against regressive voices in the U.N. system. He can support alliances among U.N. member states, like the Group of Friends for Gender Equality, a coalition of progressive delegations. The Secretary-General must also publicize progress and implementation of the *Call to Action for Human Rights*. To advance inclusion, Secretary-General Guterres needs to accelerate the U.N.'s commitment to a systemwide LGBTI strategy. He must listen to and engage with staff to advance racial equity within the U.N. and ensure that racial justice is integral to the U.N.'s mandate and promotion of human rights.

The Secretary-General must defend the rights of LGBTQIA+ persons, people with disabilities, religious minorities and other communities facing intersecting forms of discrimination worldwide. He must also advocate for representation of these communities among U.N. staff and leadership.

We also urge the Secretary-General to amplify the work of the U.N. Special Rapporteurs, who report on human rights issues and propose recommendations for greater protection and promotion of human rights. Guterres should highlight the gendered nature of their findings, as well as the potential for highly unequal and intersectional outcomes.¹⁵⁵ The Secretary-General should also support the call for inputs in future Special Rapporteur reports, promoting a wider reach and more inclusive reporting process.¹⁵⁶

On women, peace and security, in our 2020 report, we asked Secretary-General Guterres to issue a time-bound implementation plan addressing all 196 recommendations of the 2015 Global Study on U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325, as well as other developments that merit note since its publication.¹⁵⁷ In 2021, Guterres fell short of doing so. We reiterate our call: **the Secretary-General must formulate a targeted, time-bound and sufficiently-resourced plan of action to achieve the ambitions of the WPS agenda, including all recommendations of the 2015 Global Study and outstanding provisions of the 10 Security Council resolutions on WPS.** Guterres must also ensure that women civil society representatives and women human rights defenders can meaningfully participate in Security Council deliberations, including opportunities for self-selection.¹⁵⁸

Secretary-General Guterres must bring needed attention to rooting out sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse in the U.N. system. As our Campaign has been calling for, the Secretary-General needs to take immediate action to support meaningful accountability, including:

- Championing systematic and meaningful survivor consultation;
- Requiring appropriate standards of proof;
- Including minimum protections from retaliation;
- Implementing standard disciplinary measures; and
- Utilizing common definitions and coordination across various offices, agencies and entities, such as ethics offices, the ombudsman, human resources departments, etc.

The Model Policy on Sexual Harassment should be reviewed and evaluated regularly, with consistent data collection taking place to measure effectiveness, including in the virtual workplace. All agencies across the system should adopt the

policy and fully institutionalize it. Systemwide efforts should also be made to bring greater awareness and adherence to the Code of Conduct on U.N. Events, along with 100 percent system-wide participation in the Clear Check program. **The U.N. must adapt its sexual harassment response to meet this new virtual/hybrid working format, ensuring online safety, protection and accountability.** It can apply its Code of Conduct to virtual events and convenings to guarantee that all participants are aware of the U.N.'s zero tolerance policies.

The Secretary-General should also challenge claims of diplomatic immunity in cases of gender-based violence, and help ensure that known abusers are not re-appointed to new positions.¹⁵⁹ As one key informant recommended, Guterres must “ensure member states are not excused from their obligation to uphold standards.”



2021 GRADE: D

2020: C

2019: C+

2018: C

2017: C

FIVE ENABLE A FEMINIST TRANSFORMATION FOR CSW AND UN WOMEN

PROGRESS TO DATE:

This year, the Secretary-General's grade in this section has dropped due to a lack of transparency around the selection process for UN Women's new Executive Director, despite repeated calls by civil society for increased openness, and a still-limited role in expanding civil society participation at CSW, particularly during its second entirely virtual arrangement.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The Commission on the Status of Women is the U.N.'s primary mechanism to review progress on women's rights. While largely a member state driven process, the Feminist U.N. Campaign believes the Secretary-General can use his influence to persuade member states to support progressive outcomes, and help expand space for civil society participants. In 2020, CSW coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and so the convening was largely suspended. The Commission proceeded only with opening statements and the adoption of a Political Declaration, and Secretary-General Guterres hosted his town hall with women's civil society some months later. For these reasons, we opted not to grade the Secretary-General on the extent to which he supported civil society participation in CSW in 2020. In 2021, however, that was no longer the case. The 65th session of CSW reconvened its full agenda and was hosted entirely online.

Our survey results show that 45 percent of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the Secretary-General's efforts to engage with and respond to concerns of civil

society about CSW. **This dissatisfaction was also expressed by key informants, who argued that civil society were treated like "television viewers, not participants" in this CSW.** One key informant pointed out that the 2021 CSW was "one of the hardest we've faced" because civil society's ability to engage with member states was extremely limited, time differences made it challenging for those outside of New York to participate in a meaningful way and access to the negotiations around the Agreed Conclusions was "more closed than ever." Another key informant lamented that "everything was wrong with this year's virtual CSW," echoing the same concerns of exclusion.

Like HLPF, the CSW schedule was organized per Eastern Standard Time, making it difficult for civil society representatives in other regions to follow and influence. As one key informant pointed out, "lobbying and engagement was like broadcasting." Contrary to civil society's hopes and excitement for CSW, especially after the 2020 CSW was largely suspended, the event felt limiting and frustrating.

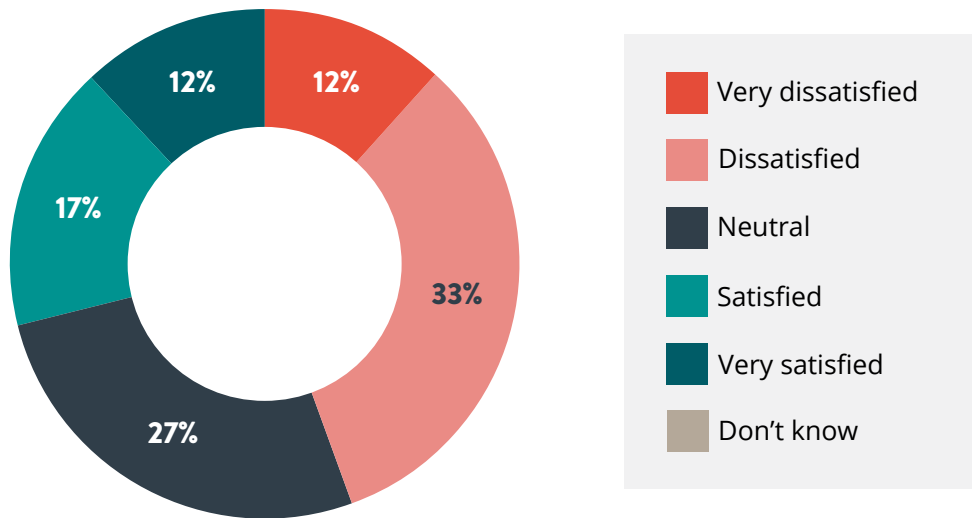
Access to negotiations around the Agreed Conclusions was highly restricted. Only two representatives of each governmental delegation were invited to participate in the negotiations, meaning that few were willing to share their seats with civil society representatives on their delegations. Civil society representatives had to rely on one another to obtain information about the proceedings, and their ability to influence negotiations fell back on pre-existing relationships with New York-based diplomats. According to key informants, this was reflected in weak Agreed Conclusions, which failed to make significant new commitments on the theme of women's participation in public life.

The Women's Rights Caucus (WRC), a global coalition of over 200 feminists, issued a statement following the adoption of the Agreed Conclusions. They wrote, "Despite progress, a number of states and anti-rights civil society actors continue



FIGURE 8

Survey respondents' satisfaction with the Secretary-General's efforts to engage with and respond to concerns of civil society about the CSW (n=60).



to disrupt constructive and plural dialogue with attacks on human rights language and opposition to truly advancing a gender equality agenda.” They also urged member states to take “swift action and mobilization of public resources” to fulfill their commitments to women’s rights and gender equality. Reaching consensus and signing off on the Agreed Conclusions is an insufficient display of leadership. As the WRC points out, “commitments mean nothing without action.”¹⁶⁰ The Secretary-General should incorporate these concerns in his bilateral and multilateral engagement with member states, pressing them to back their global commitments with action at the country level.

Similar concerns were voiced by key informants about the Secretary-General: **hosting one town hall at CSW barely scratches the surface of meaningful civil society**

engagement. The Secretary-General should exercise his leadership in calling for a more open and inclusive CSW, being more present and collaborative at the convening and using his political prowess to call out regressive member states and anti-rights actors.

In 2022, CSW will review its methods of work—a unique opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of the Commission and enhance its capacity. In *Our Common Agenda*, Guterres encourages member states to “strengthen efforts towards gender equality in all United Nations intergovernmental processes.” He writes that the review of the CSW working methods “could include a reassessment of the role of the Commission in relation to other intergovernmental mandates, and consideration of how to build on the multistakeholder momentum of the Generation Equality Forum.”¹⁶¹ We commend the Secretary-General for including this in *Our Common Agenda*, and encourage him to strengthen and follow up on this call.

CSW must go much further than merely preserving the status quo, and the Secretary-General can play an essential part in making sure it is a transformative, progressive and collaborative celebration of women’s rights, as well as a foreshadowing of the gains to be won. Instead, as it stands, CSW is another marker of concern for civil society and feminist advocates.

Selecting UN Women’s New Executive Director

This year, our assessment of the Secretary-General’s support for UN Women hinges on a few main points: the selection of UN Women’s new Executive Director; the hosting of the Generation Equality Forum (GEF); and ongoing support, or lack thereof, for UN Women’s otherwise marginalized position in the U.N. system.

As we described in **Section 1**, the process for the selection of UN Women’s new Executive Director, Sima Sami Bahous,

was considered a major misstep on the part of the Secretary-General. **Bahous' selection was commonly raised in our key informant interviews, reflecting civil society's deep disappointment in the secretive nature of the selection process.** In *PassBlue*, Anne Marie Goetz and Joanne Sandler, formerly of UN Women, wrote, "U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has the final say in selecting the right person for this daunting job, but as with any high-level U.N. appointment, the process is a balance between horse-trading among member states and candidates' record of success in advancing the agency's mandate—in this case, the rights of women and girls. What tips the scale in a candidate's favor is often a mystery to outsiders. Like most U.N. selection processes for top jobs, it is secretive."¹⁶²

Civil society advocates wrote to the Secretary-General three times demanding a more inclusive and transparent selection process for the new Executive Director, as this position is highly consequential for determining progress on women's rights globally.

As Goetz and Sandler described, "The next UN Women leader's charisma, abilities, courage and credibility among both feminists and government circles will determine the fate of the U.N.'s gender equality agenda for at least the next four years."

Over 1,000 feminist civil society organizations and representatives first wrote to Secretary-General Guterres on April 9, 2021, and continued on-going advocacy of these key issues through outreach and additional letters. They asked Guterres to work with civil society in developing a Terms of Reference (ToR) for the position, and then to advertise it widely through both U.N. and civil society channels. The letter requested civil society input into a clear timeline for

the selection process, including "explicit moments and mechanisms" when updates are shared with the public. Signatories asked that all candidates provide public mission statements and participate in open debates where civil society can directly hear from and interact with candidates. Furthermore, the letter cited civil society's request for a candidate with "qualities such as having a global stature and track record as a gender equality and women's rights advocate, extensive knowledge of and understanding of gender equality and women's rights issues, and knowledge and understanding of feminist movements and of relevant political processes, among others."¹⁶³

The EOSG replied to the letter on April 29, noting that the Secretary-General "exercises with great care the discretionary authority entrusted to him by the [UNGA], to ensure transparency and to maintain the institutional safeguards of the recruitment and selection process of senior officials, while protecting the privacy of candidates." Signed by the Secretary-General's then-Chef de Cabinet, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, the letter noted that the Secretary-General will issue a Note Verbale to member states, place a vacancy announcement on the U.N. website and distribute the announcement to reach "the widest possible international audience." It indicates that the Secretary-General will specifically ask member states and the public to nominate women candidates, in an effort to promote greater gender parity and geographical diversity. The letter noted that a panel of experts would interview shortlisted candidates and issue a recommendation to the Secretary-General, but it did not explain who would be on this panel or if civil society would be consulted in any way.¹⁶⁴ The EOSG confirmed with us that a civil society representative was on the panel. However, their identity was kept confidential, and the representative did not seek any inputs from the broader civil society community.

On May 17, with no opportunity for public input, the ToR for the position was posted online, identifying an application due date of June 28. Among the desired skills and expertise for

the candidate, the ToR requested a “recognized leader” who could be a “powerful and convincing advocate on all aspects of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment within the United Nations system, with Governments, and externally with civil society organizations, as well as the wider public.”¹⁶⁵ It asked for demonstrated leadership in management, commitment to the 2030 Agenda and experience working with a diverse and multicultural team. As the EOSG’s response laid out, the ToR was widely distributed throughout the U.N. and civil society networks. However, the skills and expertise section made no reference to knowledge and understanding of feminist movements, which civil society feels is key criteria for the position.¹⁶⁶

In September, the U.N. announced the appointment of Sima Sami Bahous of Jordan as the next UN Women Executive Director, succeeding Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.¹⁶⁷ Following months of civil society advocacy, the Secretary-General failed to incorporate civil society input into the ToR, and he provided no public information about shortlisted candidates or who was on the selection panel. To obtain information about the process, civil society relied entirely on rumors and hearsay from those close to the U.N. system.¹⁶⁸ For years, the Feminist U.N. Campaign has been asking Secretary-General Guterres to strengthen and support UN Women. But the opaqueness around selecting the agency’s new leader did just the opposite. It undermined civil society’s closeness and contributions to the U.N. system and fed into a culture of exclusion.

While it is too soon to critique Bahous’s leadership, many civil society advocates expressed concern about her lack of ties with feminist movements and limited record on women’s rights. However, soon after taking office, Bahous issued a public letter to civil society noting that, “UN Women will continue to collaborate with and support feminist movements, and women’s rights and youth and social justice organizations who serve and represent women in all our diversity, across all areas of our work.” Building on the GEF,



Bahous expressed support for multistakeholder engagement, more open dialogue and partnerships with young people. She wrote, “I will also continue cultivating partnerships with organizations and groups of women who are often left behind, such as rural women, adolescent girls and young women, women living with HIV, indigenous women, and LGBTQI+ people.” She pledged to safeguard civic space, online and offline, and to call for increased sustainable and flexible funding for women’s rights organizations.¹⁶⁹ These were welcomed commitments, and signaled Bahous’s early interest in pursuing the engagement with civil society that her selection process denied. We call for her to follow through on these pledges and be a fearless advocate for gender equality globally and in all intergovernmental fora.

Generation Equality Forum (GEF)

This year, UN Women co-hosted the Generation Equality Forum, alongside the governments of Mexico and France, marking the delayed celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. While the GEF was riddled with its own issues of inaccessibility,¹⁷⁰ exclusion¹⁷¹ and technical problems, our analysis will focus on the role of the Secretary-General. Our survey showed mixed results on civil society's level of satisfaction with the Secretary-General's involvement in the Beijing+25 and GEF processes: 27 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with his engagement, 40 percent were satisfied or very satisfied and 20 percent were neutral.

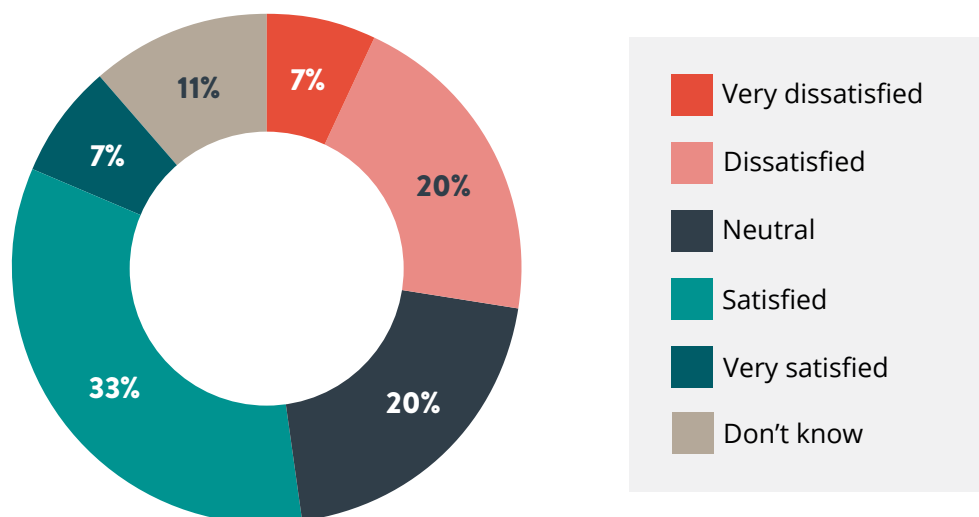
The same sentiments were reflected in our key informant interviews. On one end, key informants commended the

Secretary-General for endorsing the GEF process and participating in both sessions of the forum. Guterres delivered a virtual statement for the Mexico City forum in March 2021, and attended the Paris forum in-person in July 2021. In Paris, he joined the opening session alongside UN Women's then-Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, and French president Emmanuel Macron. According to one key informant, the Secretary-General's presence signaled support for what the GEF offers (at least in vision): a multistakeholder, co-leadership model of decision-making, equitable leadership and accountability and a responsive multilateral system. Another key informant revealed that the EOSG has been "very hands on" in ensuring momentum and movement building for the GEF, and that Mlambo-Ngcuka supposedly briefed the Deputy Secretary-General on the GEF once before the forum kicked off, once after the Mexico session and once after the Paris session. According to the EOSG, she also briefed the Executive Committee and the Senior Management Group at the invitation of the Secretary-General. And in *Our Common Agenda*, "building on the multi-stakeholder momentum of the Generation Equality Forum" is mentioned (albeit just once)—signaling the Secretary-General's endorsement, but with little further detail or support.

Other key informants felt that the Secretary-General could go much further by playing a more prominent role in amplifying the GEF. As one key informant suggested, the Secretary-General could "have a role in mobilizing member states" or "[urge] greater investments to feminist movements," particularly since Guterres's efforts to rally world leaders from the public and private sectors in the lead up to the GEF could have been much stronger. Other key informants felt the Secretary-General could view the GEF as a "vehicle for change" and "take inspiration from GEF" as a means of mobilizing global support, working alongside civil society and urging commitment-making and action for gender

FIGURE 9

Survey respondents' level of satisfaction with the Secretary-General's involvement in the Beijing+25/GEF process (n=55).



equality. Similarly, survey respondents pointed out that Guterres could bring more high-level visibility to the GEF, link the GEF to other agendas and discussions at the U.N. and play a key role in advancing accountability mechanisms.

In previous report cards, we have commended the Secretary-General for participating in public events alongside the UN Women Executive Director and ensuring that UN Women had a seat on the Executive Committee (though information about how UN Women utilizes this seat, or how it is respected in the space, is not available to the public). In our 2020 report card, we recognized that UN Women was also appointed to the Advisory Committee of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. And in 2021, we acknowledge the Secretary-General's endorsement of the GEF, a UN Women-led process. However, falling short of meeting our Campaign recommendations, Guterres still does not publicly advocate for more member state budgetary support to UN Women.

▶ WHAT'S LEFT TO BE DONE

Regarding CSW, there are several areas in which Secretary-General Guterres can play an important role. Firstly, he must ensure it is open and accessible—as we recommended with HLPF. Last year, we asked Secretary-General Guterres to take up the recommendations in *An Open Call for Strong and Inclusive Civil Society Engagement at U.N. Virtual Meetings*, initiated by the Women's Major Group and supported by members of the MGoS. This year, we reiterate the same call: the U.N. must consult with civil society actors prior to finalizing engagement mechanisms, make information available in multiple languages, prevent the targeting and harassment of human rights defenders, offer financial and technological assistance for those without adequate internet access and collect data to understand who can and cannot participate—among other recommendations.¹⁷² The Secretary-General must ensure his annual town hall is as inclusive and wide-reaching as possible and that he follows up and reports back on the recommendations presented to him by civil society.

The Secretary-General must engage with and advance the recommendations of feminist civil society, such as the Women's Rights Caucus, in making the most of the 2022 review of the CSW methods of work. He should endorse their efforts to have women and girls in all their diversity represented at CSW, urge the Commission to centralize intersectionality in its work, and push member states and the Commission to meaningfully and equally engage civil society in all preparatory processes, negotiations and official sessions. We also repeat our call from last year: the Secretary-General should endorse WRC's call for a "task force comprised of regionally diverse feminist organizations who can select speakers for all CSW panels and negotiations" and support "reasonable accommodations for all participants and mechanisms to enable early dialogue around the Agreed Conclusions."¹⁷³

CSW's 2022 priority theme (on climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programs) and review theme (women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work) also offer the Secretary-General an opportunity to amplify commonly overlooked interlinkages between these issues. As we pointed out in our speech analysis, his remarks on issues like climate change and macro-level economics lacked a strong feminist analysis. We urge him to champion the ongoing U.N., GEF and international efforts to link gender equality and intersectionality to these issues.¹⁷⁴

Based on the experience of this year's CSW, key informants also pointed out that the Secretary-General must use his political influence to stand up for gender equality. As one key informant expressed, the Secretary-General should "speak more strongly to member states who are trying to sabotage negotiations." And as another opined, the Secretary-General needs to "put more weight and support behind the intergovernmental process" and "ensure that member states and the U.N. system advance the agenda."

Secretary-General Guterres must be a more active supporter of the Generation Equality Forum, particularly as the forum lays out plans and processes for accountability. As one of our key informants pointed out, the success of the GEF hinges largely on the political will of governments—and the Secretary-General must amplify his voice as a progressive political leader. He must urge member states, U.N. agencies and other stakeholders to participate in the forum's future sessions and increase investment in gender equality and feminist movements. Guterres is uniquely positioned to strengthen linkages between the GEF and related U.N. agendas and initiatives, including the 2030 Agenda, and to make his own commitments to the GEF Action Coalitions. He should be more proactive in linking key U.N. priorities, such as climate justice, to the work of relevant Action Coalitions, effectively harmonizing global efforts.

For UN Women, he must reiterate the need for financial support. While the Secretary-General engages with and amplifies UN Women publicly, he must do the same in his bilateral and multilateral meetings with member states—insisting upon increased resources to support the agency. To avoid further criticism, the Secretary-General must ensure that future selection processes for high-level appointments are open and collaborative with civil society. Leadership selection processes are becoming more transparent, such as the selection process for the U.N. Secretary-General,¹⁷⁵ the Director-General of the World Health Organization¹⁷⁶ and the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).¹⁷⁷ We encourage committing to a similar level of transparency in the selection of top U.N. posts.



IN 2021,

UN Women appointed its new Executive Director, Sima Sami Bahous, and introduced its latest Strategic Plan. We asked our civil society survey respondents what they would recommend for a stronger UN Women in the future. Here's what they said:

**“Listen to us. Include us in discussions.”**

UN Women should be the entity on which women's rights advocates in every country can always count to engage them and partner with them. Respondents overwhelmingly call for strengthened collaboration and structured engagement for civil society in UN Women's governance and support for participation in intergovernmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women.

“UN Women country teams should not create systems of power.”

Respondents expect clearer and consistent communication on opportunities for engagement, decision-making processes, budgets and funding opportunities. They want UN Women to build stronger linkages and trusted relationships with civil society organizations at the international, regional and national levels that are accessible and inclusive of marginalized groups, including LGBTQIA+ communities and women with disabilities.

“Talk less, act more.” “All words are like feathers in the air.”

More broadly, respondents want the newly-appointed Executive Director to be a vocal feminist, a strategic global leader and a strong advocate for the rights of women and girls. Respondents stressed that UN Women needs to more firmly embed human rights principles in its working methods and advocacy, “speak more human rights language” and strengthen its work on civil, political, and reproductive rights. They also expect the Executive Director to promote gender mainstreaming within the U.N., strengthen UN Women's system-wide oversight and authority and hold member states accountable for their commitments to gender in international treaties and conventions.

2021 GRADE: B+

2020: B-
 2019: C-
 2018: C-
 2017: D+

SIX PROMOTE THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE U.N. SYSTEM

PROGRESS TO DATE:

The Secretary-General's grade in this section has progressively increased over the years, reaching his highest grade to date, due to increased efforts to promote access to data, resources and meetings/conferences through virtual platforms. However, Guterres still falls short of instituting freedom of information systemwide, and both civil society and U.N. staff continue to face barriers to access.

The Feminist U.N. Campaign considers freedom of information to be a feminist issue, especially when information about the treatment and advancement of women is difficult to come by. The U.N. has long been criticized for its bureaucratic, hierarchical nature. Year after year, civil society—especially feminist civil society—demands increased access to U.N. convenings and decision-making spaces, and even those within the U.N. speak to us about the fragmented, overwhelming nature of the system. This is especially relevant in the past few years, with the COVID-19 pandemic posing new challenges to transparency and accessibility.

Many of the topics covered throughout this assessment are tied to our analysis of freedom of information in the U.N. system. To start, much of the insights we gathered for this report come from key informant interviews with U.N. staff, who are uniquely positioned—relative to civil society—to know the status of certain activities and initiatives within the U.N. We also obtained information from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, a privilege that we recognize is not afforded to most civil society organizations, especially those

without close ties to the U.N. system. Interestingly, one key informant pointed out that communication from the EOSG on gender equality issues needs to be stronger within the U.N. system: “It’s telling that I have very little idea of what comes from his office and what doesn’t.”

This year, we reiterate that outcomes and summaries of discussions held at the highest levels of the U.N. system, including in the Executive Committee and the Deputies’ Committee, are not provided anywhere online. As such, civil society is completely unaware of how U.N. leadership is receiving and interpreting information about key gender equality and women’s rights initiatives, including the Generation Equality Forum. Likewise, as we pointed out in **Section 3**, the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality has yet to release its report, recommendations and implementation plan—and updates on the status of the Task Force are incredibly difficult to track down.

Last year, we commended the Secretary-General for incorporating the U.N.-SWAP into the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, and this year, we are pleased to learn that the gender equality marker system will be expanded to additional funds. We await further details on this commitment, and we hope that it will mainstream gender equality accountability throughout the U.N. system and prompt greater action.

One area in which the Secretary-General can help promote greater freedom of information is urging transparency around existing and future gender equality commitments, particularly through the Generation Equality Forum. In 2021, the GEF made headlines for raising about \$40 billion for gender equality worldwide. However, despite the forum’s conclusion in July, civil society is still waiting to receive the “fine print” on these funds: who committed this money, and where will it be going?

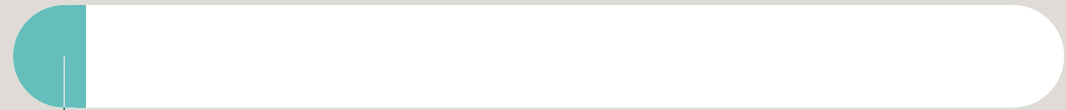


ANALYSIS OF \$40 BILLION

RAISED BY THE GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) conducted their own analysis of the \$40 billion to determine just how much would directly support feminists, particularly in the Global South.

They found that "only US \$2 billion has been pledged with an explicit objective to support feminist movements and women's rights organizations. This accounts for as little as 5% of the US \$40 billion and roughly 8% of all funding committed by the governments and philanthropy through the GEF process so far."¹⁷⁸



5% of the \$40 billion was pledged to support feminist movements and women's rights organizations.

Confirming the fears of many feminist advocates, AWID reported that a significant portion of this \$2 billion may not even be new funding. AWID also points out that, while some stakeholders made financial pledges to the GEF, other internal changes or shifts in resourcing may hinder their sustained commitment to gender equality.

Their analysis finds that many activists "fear that instead of supporting progressive feminist agendas, the bulk of the \$40 billion will end up in sustaining 'business as usual,' such as contributions to the private sector."¹⁷⁹

The GEF was a huge marker of 2021, and the momentum it raised cannot be lost. The continued lack of transparency around this funding is a blow to freedom of information, especially since so much funding is at stake.

In our 2020 report card, we commended the U.N.'s efforts to increase transparency around COVID-19 and its gendered effects. These efforts continued into 2021, with ongoing updates to the COVID-19 data portal on socioeconomic response,¹⁸⁰ UN Women's COVID-19 and Gender Monitor,¹⁸¹ and UNDP's COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker.¹⁸² Likewise, the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund and the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls continue to make updates and resources available to the public.

Survey results show mixed civil society views on freedom of information in the U.N. system. 54 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that sufficient information about

the U.N.'s activities is available online (compared to 68 percent in 2020), and 29 percent disagree or strongly disagree (compared to 13 percent in 2020). 64 percent agree or strongly agree with the statement "I know how to find information about the U.N.'s activities in my country," while 19 percent disagree or strongly disagree. 62 percent agree or strongly agree with the statement "I know how to find information about the U.N.'s activities at its headquarters," while 19 percent disagree or strongly disagree—all comparable to our 2020 results. Regarding the statement "I am able to contact U.N. staff in my country if I seek more information," 51 percent agree or strongly agree (compared to 43 percent last year), and 35 percent disagree or strongly disagree (compared to 20 percent last year).

FIGURE 10

Survey respondents' agreement with the statement "I know how to find information about the U.N.'s activities in my country" (n=80).

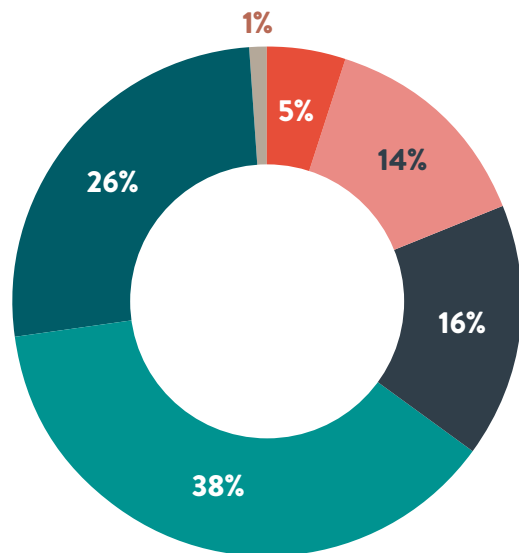


FIGURE 11

Survey respondents' agreement with the statement "I know how to find information about the U.N.'s activities at its headquarters (New York and Geneva)" (n=79).

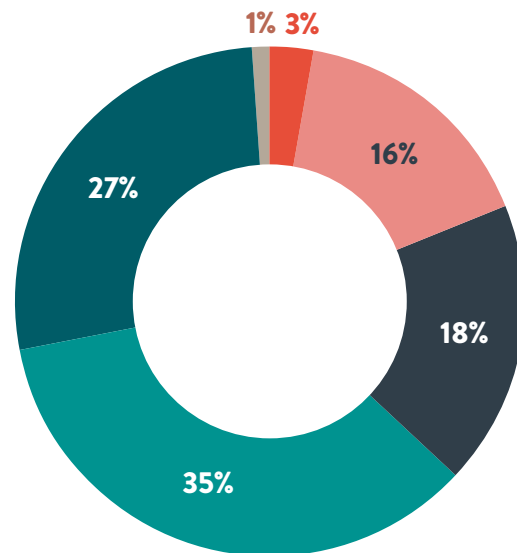
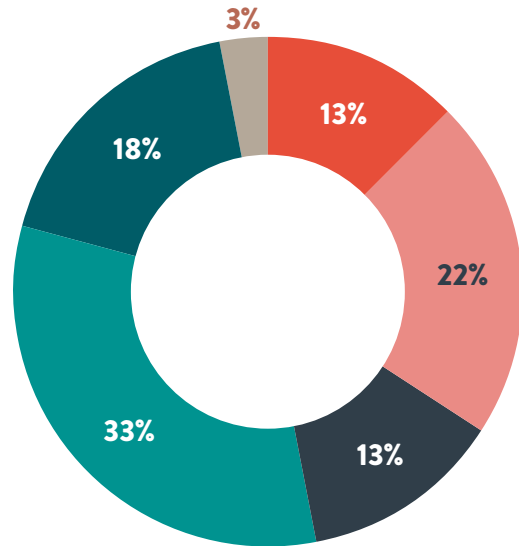
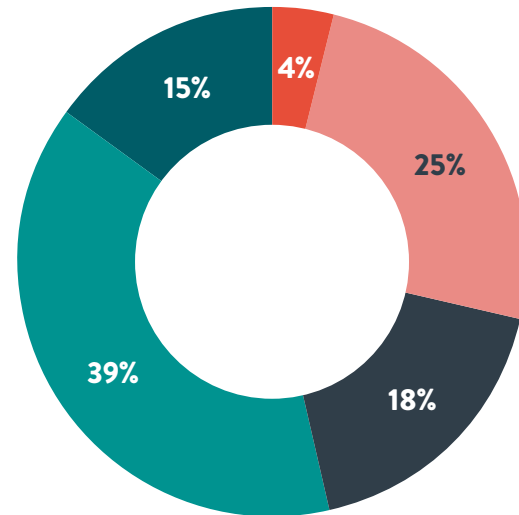


FIGURE 12

Survey respondents' agreement with the statement "I am able to contact U.N. staff in my country if I seek more information" (n=79).

**FIGURE 13**

Survey respondents' agreement with the statement "Sufficient information about the U.N.'s activities is available online" (n=80).



Per our grading criteria, the U.N. continues to publish member state contributions publicly, and in *Our Common Agenda*, Guterres calls for increased harmonization around the U.N.'s budgeting and funding requests, which are currently affected by the "unpredictability and timing of our cash inflows."¹⁸³ Data on staff with geographical status ("staff quotas") are publicly shared in the Composition of the Secretariat report. However, annual progress targets on gender parity by entity are difficult to track down, and entity implementation plans are also confidential.

Our 2021 key informants expressed continued concern around freedom of information in the U.N. system. In virtual settings, they found that information was still difficult to track down or communicated in an untimely manner. For civil society, this impacted their ability to conduct advocacy or partake in influencing opportunities. One key informant pointed out that resources are often in "U.N. language," and

thereby inaccessible to groups interested in engaging with the system but with limited previous U.N. experience. Others within the U.N. system pointed out that information is "not even easily accessible for someone in the organization."

Another key informant raised the pressing issue of the ongoing digital divide. **Particularly in the COVID-19 era, the U.N. needs to take more tangible steps to engage women, girls and communities worldwide who lack internet access.** In *Our Common Agenda*, we commend the Secretary-General for acknowledging internet access as a human right, calling for a Global Digital Compact and recognizing the need for "accelerated steps to connect the remaining 3.8 billion people offline to the Internet by 2030, notably those most often left behind, including women, along with indigenous and older people."¹⁸⁴ We expect to see Guterres follow through on these actions in his second term.

▶ WHAT'S LEFT TO BE DONE

Secretary-General Guterres must encourage transparency and freedom of information throughout the U.N. system. He must push for key decision-making bodies, like the Executive Committee, Deputies' Committee and the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality to make meeting summaries and outcomes available to the public. He must also ensure that those within the U.N. system are regularly updated on the activities of the EOSG and that feminist voices inside and outside of the U.N. have an opportunity to provide feedback and inputs.

The Secretary-General should push for greater transparency around gender equality commitments, as with the Generation Equality Forum, to ensure that civil society and the public have accurate information about how much money is flowing, or not flowing, to gender equality and feminist movements globally.

In line with his Data Strategy, the Secretary-General should improve data accessibility and sharing regarding gender parity targets and the system of desirable ranges for member state staff representation.

In a virtual or hybrid working environment, the Secretary-General must guarantee that information is delivered in a timely manner, that events and meetings are transparent and accessible (including adequate translations and interpretation and taking into account multiple time zones, as we pointed out in earlier sections). He must take efforts to ensure that those without internet access are able to effectively and meaningfully engage in the U.N. system.¹⁸⁵



CONCLUSION

Based on this analysis, Secretary-General Guterres has **earned an overall B-** for his efforts to advance gender equality and women's rights in 2021.

In the final year of his first full term, the Secretary-General returns to the same grade that our Campaign issued in 2018 and 2019—demonstrating a significant need for improvement in his second term.

In the past five years, Secretary-General Guterres has made many accomplishments aligning with the Feminist U.N. Campaign's agenda. He has given greater prominence to gender equality and women's rights in his speeches, appointed women leaders to top positions and encouraged male leaders to be feminists, advanced reforms supporting gender equality across the U.N. system and integrated a gender perspective into COVID-19 response and recovery planning. **He has both been an inspiration to many and also "lit a fire under people whose heart wasn't really in it," as one of our informants put it. Guterres has set a high bar for future Secretary-Generals to exceed.**

However, there is still a long way to go to achieve a feminist, transformative and progressive U.N. system. To rekindle the fire, the Secretary-General needs to strengthen his advocacy and integrate an intersectional approach to U.N. policies and programming. He must advance gender mainstreaming across all SDGs and call for the meaningful participation of civil society in all SDG review processes and major gender equality fora. Guterres must continue to champion increased funding for gender equality throughout the U.N. system, improve the availability and accessibility of

information on parity initiatives across the U.N. system, and increase his leadership on racial justice issues, preventing and responding to sexual harassment and exploitation and other forms of abuse of power. As he continues in his second term, the Secretary-General needs to expand his engagement with civil society and be a more active participant and defender of women's rights, particularly against more regressive member states. He must also follow through on his commitment for more inclusive participation in U.N. deliberations.



WHAT SHOULD SECRETARY-GENERAL GUTERRES PRIORITIZE IN HIS SECOND TERM?

At the start of his second term, the Secretary-General has to contend with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, a host of protracted and erupting conflicts and humanitarian crises, a fracturing multilateral system, and the complexities of internal reforms. In his candidacy vision statement for a 2022-2026 term, Guterres reaffirmed commitments to gender equality, racial justice and key issues like sexual and reproductive health and rights, investing in the care economy and adopting an age, gender and diversity lens—an encouraging outlook within a fraught broader context.¹⁸⁷

Key informants and survey respondents shared reflections on which issues the Secretary-General should prioritize in his second term. **They view the Secretary-General's renewed mandate as an opportunity for transformative leadership, and want him to be bolder in his engagement with member states.**

The main themes highlighted in these reflections included:



Centralizing intersectionality:

The Secretary-General must recognize and amplify the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination facing women and girls worldwide, including supporting LGBTQIA+ rights, racial justice, disability rights and other movements. Conversations about power, privilege and intersecting inequalities should be happening at all levels.



Defending human rights:

The Secretary-General should be more outspoken about human rights, including the rights of women and girls. He is reportedly wary of strong statements on human rights issues,¹⁸⁶ but respondents expect him to do more to highlight the need for structural change in the face of rapidly eroding rights, shrinking civic space and increasing threats and violence against human rights defenders.



Promoting structural and systemic change:

The Secretary-General must match his appeals—in his speeches, statements and social media—with increased action to promote gender equality.



Advancing gender across the entire U.N. system:

Respondents recognize that some parts of the system are not under the direct purview of the Secretary-General, thus he may be more constrained in the level of change he can effect. However, they do expect him to articulate a bold vision, disrupt power and ensure that leadership reflects the organization's values.



Engaging with civil society more meaningfully and consistently:

Respondents expect the Secretary-General to be more proactive in his communication with civil society organizations, and more committed to developing constituencies with civil society on women's rights, with a particular focus on ensuring inclusion and accessibility.



Ensuring greater transparency, accountability and implementation:

The Secretary-General must foster greater transparency in U.N. proceedings and decision-making, as well as in the implementation of key commitments and corresponding accountability processes.

ANNEX

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.

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 could be collected throughout 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 25 individuals. These informants came from within the U.N. system (11) and global civil society (14), each possessing considerable U.N. expertise. Where possible we interviewed the same individuals we had spoken to last year in the same agencies or organizations. Key informants were identified through a number of civil society and U.N. networks, including: Women's Major Group, Women's Rights Caucus, U.N. Feminist Network, multiple U.N. agencies, 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 United Nations, the gender parity agenda in staffing and recruitment, financing for gender equality, financing and support for UN Women, engagement with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), as well as gender mainstreaming throughout the SDGs and full implementation of Goal 5. They were also asked about freedom of information, sexual harassment and the pursuit of greater accountability for sexual abuse cases by peacekeepers. Last year, we added questions about the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) and the Secretary-General's leadership and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, we added questions about future priorities for both UN Women and the Secretary-General. 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 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), INGOs, unions and academic institutions, which 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. This was the second year we administered the survey in three languages: English, French and Spanish. In total, we reached 145 respondents that work across the regions and various sub-regions of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania

and across 48 countries (n=98). We reached 96 respondents in English, 19 in French and 30 in Spanish. The chart on the following page represents the operating regions of these civil society organizations, which are not limited to areas where they have formal registration but reflects where their work is conducted and their 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.

SPEECHES

Text of the Secretary-General's speeches was pulled from the U.N. Secretary-General's website, covering the time period following the end of last year's data collection period (December 12, 2020) to the end of this year's data collection period (November 5, 2021). In that time, the Secretary-General made a total of 143 speeches. Of these, seven were focused entirely on gender and women's rights issues, and 72 made references to gender but were focused on other topics. These 79 speeches were downloaded into NVivo and all were coded thematically. The 72 speeches focused on issues other than gender were also coded based on whether their references to gender were substantive or non-substantive. The 64 speeches that made no reference to gender were excluded from the analysis.

Non-substantive references included quick references to women or gender as an aside on another topic, or as part of a grouping. For instance, when listing the challenges facing the world, "racism, poverty, xenophobia, violent misogyny, homophobia" would be an important but non-substantive reference. General statements, such as "we must make gender equality a priority" were also non-substantive, if they did not elaborate on why gender equality should be a priority or how to achieve it. It is important to note that non-substantive statements are not necessarily unimportant.

They were often used to highlight that women and gender equality were relevant to the conversation in instances where that may not have been evident. This was especially the case when used in combination with substantive references, to highlight the relevance of gender to certain issues.

Key Terms:

Woman/women, girl, female, gender, sex/ual, mother, wife, daughter, sister, feminist/ism, harassment, #Metoo, #Aidtoo, SDG 5, Sustainable Development Goal 5, women's economic empowerment, Generation Equality, Beijing.

Thematic Areas:

Adolescent girls; agriculture; Beijing/ Generation Equality Forum; child marriage; climate change; conflict, peace and security; COVID-19; disabilities; economic empowerment; education; empowerment; funding; hate speech; humanitarian assistance; LGBTQIA+; migration and refugees; nutrition; other important; power; sexual exploitation and abuse; sexual harassment; SRHR; technology; terrorism and extremism; violence against women; women's leadership; racism.

TWITTER ANALYSIS

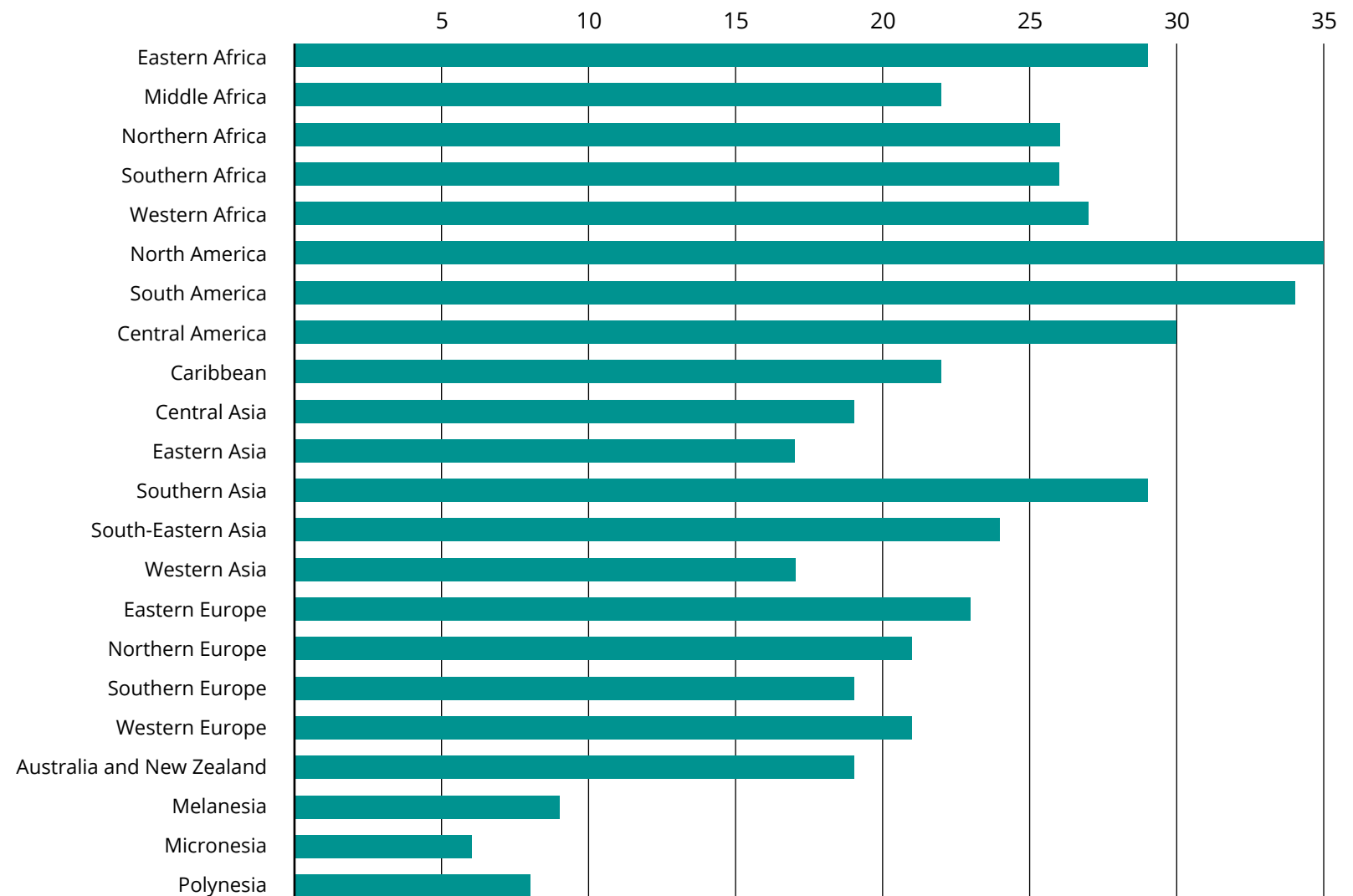
We pulled the Secretary-General's tweets (@antonioguterres), covering December 12, 2020 to November 5, 2021. In that time, the Secretary-General tweeted a total of 864 times. 109 tweets, nearly 13 percent, focused on gender or women's rights issues. We analyzed how often the Secretary-General called himself a "proud feminist" (one tweet), mentioned violence against women and girls (18 tweets), women/ gender equality and the #GlobalGoals together (three tweets), the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (zero tweets), #GenerationEgalite or #GenerationEquality Forum (six tweets), #MeToo or #AidToo (zero tweets), COVID-19 and gender together (20 tweets), gender parity and women's leadership (20 tweets), the

Spotlight Initiative (two tweets), power imbalances between men and women (six tweets), LGBTQIA+ people (three tweets), sexual violence from U.N. personnel (two tweets),

harassment against women (two tweets), women and climate issues together (four tweets), women and girls in Afghanistan (12 tweets).

FIGURE 14

Survey respondents' region(s) in which their civil society organization operates (n=102).



SCORING

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

ONE. ARTICULATE AND BEGIN TO IMPLEMENT A FEMINIST LEADERSHIP AGENDA FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

(30 percent)

- A.** Give speeches that make substantive reference to gender in U.N. processes and commitments (percent of speeches)
- 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)

TWO. ENSURE FEMINIST IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE SDGs

(14 percent)

- 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 HLPF

THREE. FINANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

(14 percent)

- 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 UN Women to US\$1 billion
- D.** Commit to a pathway to full financial transparency in the U.N.

FOUR. UTILIZE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP AS A DEFINING MODEL OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION AND THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM

(14 percent)

- 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 survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse

FIVE. ENABLE A FEMINIST TRANSFORMATION FOR CSW AND UN WOMEN

(14 percent)

- 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 UN Women

SIX. PROMOTE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION IN THE U.N. SYSTEM

(14 percent)

- 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 KILs, the online survey, coded speeches and analysis of reports and outcome documents. The grading scale is shown here:

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. 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).

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