

# TRANSFORM

## The normative support work issue

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## Dear Readers,

The third issue of *Transform*, a new magazine developed by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office, aims to make more accessible good practices and lessons learned from the recently concluded “Evaluation of UN Women’s normative support work and its operational linkages”. This evaluation brings forward important findings, conclusions and lessons on UN Women’s normative support work at the global, regional and country level that are relevant to all offices and units within UN Women, as well as its partners. It also provides the management response and action plan endorsed by UN Women to implement the recommendations.

The evaluation was managed and conducted by the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, in close collaboration with the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office, which forwent its own planned evaluation on the subject in order to increase efficiencies and avoid duplication of efforts. As a result, the findings of the evaluation also have further reach through presentation to both the General Assembly Committee on Programme and Coordination and the UN Women Executive Board. The implementation of the recommendations will be reported back to both the Committee on Programme and Coordination and UN Women in three years.

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to the colleagues from the Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation team and from UN Women who participated in this evaluation.

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## *Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.*

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**Opening of the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women** The opening of the 59th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters on 9 March 2015. During the meeting, the Commission adopted a political declaration on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

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## Normative Support Work of UN Women: *What is it?*

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*In intergovernmental forums at the United Nations, Member States come together to debate and seek agreement on global gender equality norms and standards. These commitments offer the basis for action by governments and other stakeholders to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment at the global, regional and national levels, through laws, policies and programmes.*

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As part of its three core functions – normative support, UN system-wide coordination and operational activities – UN Women plays a leading role in supporting improvements in global norms and standards that accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women provides substantive expertise and policy analysis, works to strengthen the knowledge base on gender equality and incorporates good practices and lessons learned from regional and national experiences in its normative support work. It engages with Member States

through awareness-raising and advocacy, and facilitates alliance-building and partnerships. UN Women contributes to the implementation of norms and standards through its country programmes.

UN Women provides substantive support to the Commission on the Status of Women, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The Entity also engages with other intergovernmental processes in an effort to strengthen the integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women in their outcomes.

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*UN Women's normative support work contributes to results at three levels:*



**DEVELOPMENT OF NORMS AND STANDARDS  
AT THE GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL**

in conventions, declarations, guidelines and other standard setting instruments such as resolutions and agreed conclusions



**IMPLEMENTATION OF NORMS AND STANDARDS  
AT THE POLICY LEVEL**



**IMPLEMENTATION OF NORMS AND STANDARDS  
AT THE PROGRAMME LEVEL**

The normative work of UN Women has taken on additional importance at a time when a number of global intergovernmental processes provide unprecedented opportunities for an accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment

Conference in July 2015, the post-2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted in September 2015, the 15-year review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and

Evaluation Division of the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services used the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) definition of normative work approved by all UNEG members, including UN-Women, in 2012: “the support to the development of norms and standards in conventions, declarations, regulatory frameworks, agreements, guidelines, codes of practice and other standard setting instruments, at global, regional and national level. Normative work also includes the support to the implementation of these instruments at the policy level, i.e. their integration into legislation, policies and development plans, and to their implementation at the programme level”. This definition encompasses UN Women’s mandate for such work at global, regional and national level, through its three core functions.

*UN Women plays a leading role  
in supporting improvements in global norms  
and standards that accelerate the realization of  
gender equality and the empowerment of women.*

of women. These are, in particular, the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in March 2015, the Financing for Development

security, as well as the new climate agreement to be adopted in Paris in December 2015.

For the evaluation of normative support work, the Inspection and

# WHAT WORKS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

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The portal makes available more than 400 evaluations and helps promote the exchange of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations related to gender and development.

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 **UN WOMEN** Independent Evaluation Office





# What does it mean to evaluate normative support work?

Evaluation of normative support work can be challenging, as establishing causality in the logic chain of normative work is rarely straightforward.

For this evaluation, normative work is defined as “the support to the development of norms and standards in conventions, declarations, regulatory frameworks, agreements, guidelines, codes of practice and other standard setting instruments at global, regional and national level. Normative work also includes the support to the implementation of these instruments at the

Much of the normative work carried out in the UN system can be difficult to assess because the very nature of the work requires flexibility and regularly realigning outputs and outcomes, which are not always well documented. In addition, normative work is not always linear, takes a long time

undertook an evaluation of UN Women’s normative work.

The objective of the evaluation was to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance and effectiveness of UN Women in achieving its mandate in support of gender equality through normative support work and its link with operational activities. Given the need for UN Women to strengthen the linkages between intergovern-

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