

A woman with curly hair, smiling, wearing a white and red patterned shirt. The background is a vibrant, colorful patterned fabric.

# **UN Women Kenya 2021**

A large blue circle with a white sunburst pattern, containing the text 'ANNUAL REPORT'.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AGPO</b>	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>HIV</b>	human immunodeficiency virus
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SWAP</b>	System-wide Action Plan
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



# Foreword

Following the global shock of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many people reported loss of jobs and incomes and the collapse of their businesses. Women in particular saw the pandemic erode both livelihoods and security in the home as gender-based violence (GBV) ticked upward, with 80 per cent of women stating that they or a woman they know had experienced violence.<sup>1</sup>

UN Women Kenya and its partners supported the early recovery of 669 women-owned small businesses in 29 counties that were affected by COVID-19 through microloans to keep their businesses afloat and build back their livelihoods. We also supported 1,000 such businesses, including many owned by youth, to diversify their business activities to produce COVID-19 personal protective equipment and hygiene products. Through UN Women's support, more than 100,000 masks and other hygiene products were produced and distributed to vulnerable communities in informal urban areas. To ensure the gender responsiveness of the COVID-19 response, we facilitated women's involvement in committees making decisions about the COVID-19 response at national and county levels, resulting in the adoption of gender-responsive COVID-19 strategies.

In June 2021, Kenya joined world leaders in Paris, France, at the launch of the Generation Equality Forum, where world leaders, business leaders, philanthropists and civil society organizations made history by publicly committing to quicken the pace of gender equality and meet the targets set in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. President Uhuru Kenyatta announced 12 commitments for the Government of Kenya to end GBV and improve access to services for GBV survivors. The commitments now serve as the blueprint for the design and financing of GBV programmes in Kenya.

In 2021, with Kenya at the helm of global peace and security (sitting on the UN Security Council), the Government of Kenya remained steadfast in its commitment to advancing the women, peace and

<sup>1</sup> *The Shadow Pandemic: Rapid Gender Assessments on the Impact of COVID-19 on VAW* (12 November 2021).

security agenda through robust implementation of the second National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Kenya's commitment and achievements are being recognized globally, as the Global Women, Peace and Security Index noted Kenya as one of the top ten most improved countries globally and top six in Africa, moving from 107 in the index ranking in 2017 to 90 in 2021. This is evidenced by an increase in women's leadership and participation in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. Within peace committees, there was an increase in the representation of women from 29.8 per cent in 2019 to 33 per cent in 2021, and a two-fold increase of women in committee leadership positions (chairperson), from 6 per cent in 2019 to 14.28 per cent in 2021.

In the area of governance, UN Women continued to influence the adoption and implementation of policies that support women's political leadership. In 2021, UN Women partnered with the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties and others to draft the gender-responsive Political Parties (Amendment) Act (2022). The law, if implemented, will promote the representation of women and other marginalized groups in Parliament and County Assemblies.

Kenya further made notable achievements in women's leadership, including the appointment of its first female Chief Justice. UN Women continued to push for women's equal representation in elective bodies in Kenya. A select group of more than 1,500 women were trained, coached and mentored in political leadership. Nearly 50 per cent of the women are from counties such as Kitui, Kwale, Marsabit and Turkana, where women's political participation is among the lowest in the country. With the August 2022 elections on the horizon, the risk of electoral violence against women has increased. UN Women Kenya continued to support efforts to prevent and mitigate political violence and protect women candidates and their supporters. We also supported the establishment of the Women Mediation Network at the national level, which will contribute to preventing election-related conflict and sustaining peace in Kenya.



None of these achievements would have been possible without the support of our development partners; our sister UN agencies; our implementing partners; and our government partners, particularly the Ministry of Public Service and Gender. Most importantly, the women and girls of Kenya made this work possible through their sheer resilience and deep conviction that a gender-equal society is not

only possible but achievable – not after one hundred years, but in our lifetime! They are our heroines who continue to inspire the work that we do every day at UN Women.

**Anna Mutavati**  
UN Women Country Representative to Kenya





# Introduction

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to negatively impact the job market, economic growth and literally every sector in Kenya. Staff from most agencies and institutions continued to work remotely, in compliance with government directives aimed at containing COVID-19. While this helped to slow down the spread of the virus, it also resulted in a programme delivery slowdown, as most of our activities had to be postponed, scaled back or held online. To manage this gap, UN Women Kenya proactively continued to utilize information and communications technology in programme and operational delivery, including using virtual platforms to engage with stakeholders and beneficiaries. While this was largely successful, we were not always able to involve those located in hard-to-reach areas with limited electricity and internet connectivity.

Despite Kenya's economy reporting considerable resilience to the enormous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty has increased and the buffers and coping mechanisms of households have been depleted.<sup>1</sup> This reality and the digital divide meant we had to work harder in our commitment to “leave no one behind” and “reach the furthest behind first”. Several

<sup>1</sup> World Bank (December 2021). “Kenya's Economy Is Showing Resilience as Output Rises above Pre-Pandemic Levels Driven by a Rebound in the Services Sector”.

affirmative action measures were put in place to address this, including providing technical and financial support to digitally disenfranchised demographics and regions, as well as carefully designing our beneficiary selection methodologies to ensure the inclusion of the most vulnerable and poorest persons in our activities.

These and other innovative measures allowed UN Women Kenya to achieve key results in 2021. For example, the value of procurement tenders specifically awarded to women through the affirmative government procurement initiative increased by 27 per cent. Close to 3,000 women in business benefitted from microloans and other support. More than 1,400 women farmers in arid and semi-arid areas learned new climate-smart farming techniques and gained financial literacy.

Through UN Women programming, 732 survivors accessed GBV services. We continued to promote the localization of the Kenya National Action Plan, which has contributed to the development of County Action Plans in four counties, deepening the ownership and sustainability of the women, peace and security agenda at county and community levels. And more than 90 per cent of trained and mentored women leaders have indicated their intention to run for political office in the 2022 elections. The following sections provide a comprehensive review of the year's results.



# Where We Work

A number of UN Women Kenya programmes are implemented at the national level; UN Women also works with the Council of Governors, representing all 47 counties.

## 1. Women in Leadership

Bungoma, Embu, Garissa, Homa Bay, Kajiado, Kakamega, Kericho, Kirinyaga, Kisii, Kisumu, Kitui, Kwale, Marsabit, Meru, Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Nyeri, Samburu, Turkana, Uasin Gishu, Vihiga, Wajir

## 2. Devolution

Busia, Garissa, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kilifi, Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Narok, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, Wajir, West Pokot

## 3. Women Count

National

## 4. Women's Economic Empowerment

Busia, Kilifi, Kitui, Laikipia, Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Nairobi, Narok, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, West Pokot

## 5. Ending Violence against Women

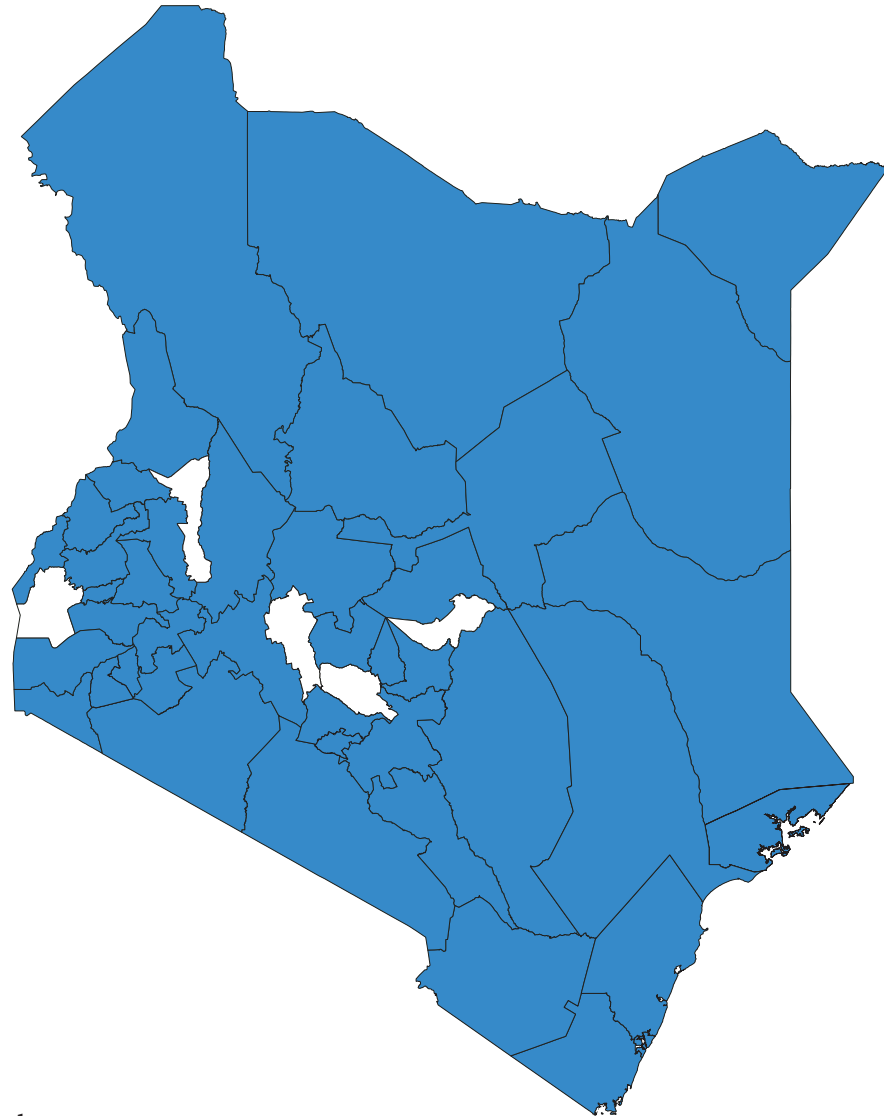
National; Bomet, Bungoma, Busia, Garissa, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kakamega, Kericho, Kiambu, Kilifi, Kisii, Kisumu, Kitui, Kwale, Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Migori, Nairobi, Narok, Nyamira, Turkana, Vihiga, Wajir, West Pokot

## 6. Women, Peace and Security

National; Baringo, Bomet, Kericho, Kilifi, Kirinyaga, Kisumu, Kitui, Kwale, Machakos, Marsabit, Mombasa, Nakuru, Nandi, Nyeri, Taita Taveta, Trans-Nzoia, Turkana, Uasin Gishu, Vihiga

## 7. Generation Equality

National; Makueni, Meru



# Key Achievements

The following is a small selection of key achievements in the main thematic areas. Details of these highlighted activities can be found in the Results section.

## Women in Leadership

In 2021, Kenya ranked 95 out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index report, improving from position 109 out of 149 countries in 2020. UN Women, working together with its partners, contributed to this improvement through various gender equality and women's empowerment programmes. For instance, in 2021 the Parliament of Kenya, with the support of UN Women, passed the Political Parties (Amendment) Bill of 2021, which was then signed into law. It ensures that only political parties that have met the two-thirds gender rule in their registered office bearers receive the Political Parties Fund.

## Women Count

In 2021, Kenya launched its first-ever *SDG Gender Fact Sheet*. It provides a snapshot of the main characteristics of some of the 131 indicators on which Kenya reported in 2021. It also provides precise information to national stakeholders to tackle the main constraints faced in reporting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, thus raising the reporting rates and ultimately contributing to furthering the achievement of the SDGs in Kenya. UN Women supported the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to generate, disseminate and use national data, as well as integrate SDG indicators into the national monitoring frameworks.

## Women's Economic Empowerment

The Kenya Women's Empowerment Index report of 2020 showed that only 29 per cent of women in Kenya are considered empowered. In 2021, UN Women Kenya worked closely with national and county governments, civil society organizations and communities on enhancing beneficiaries' basic understanding of agricultural production and business in their respective communities and markets, as well as gender-responsive, climate-resilient livelihoods. As a result of UN Women's intervention, over 478 women farmers from three priority counties now understand value chains and are more financially literate, allowing them to potentially access financial services.

## Ending Violence against Women

The Government of Kenya, led by President Uhuru Kenyatta, made 12 high-level commitments to end GBV in Kenya at the international Generation Equality Forum in Paris, France, in June 2021, and in Kenya at a function co-hosted by UN Women. The commitments include mobilizing USD 50 million by 2026 through co-financing arrangements and introducing performance indicators in the work of duty bearers on GBV. UN Women provided strategic advice to the forum's National Steering Committee and National Advisory Committee to implement this policy acceleration.

## Women, Peace and Security

Kenya's efforts to advance the women, peace and security agenda was acknowledged in the Global Women, Peace and Security Index, with Kenya in the top ten of most improved countries globally and in the top six in Africa. Women are being recognized for the pivotal role they play in preventing conflict and sustaining peace; women in peace committees increased from 29 per cent in 2019 to 33 per cent in 2021. UN Women contributed to this by supporting the Kenya National Action Plan secretariat and linking local-level initiatives to the national agenda, which has enhanced the implementation of the second-generation plan.



# Results

## 1. Women in Leadership

UN Women continues to inspire unprecedented developments in the Kenyan political space. In 2021, UN Women partnered with the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, among other actors, in drafting the gender-responsive Political Parties (Amendment) Bill. In 2018, UN Women had promoted public participation towards improving political party primaries, and in 2019 supported the drafting of the *Policy Framework for the Conduct of Political Party Primaries in Kenya*.

These efforts culminated in the above bill becoming law in January 2022. The resultant Political Parties (Amendment) Act seeks to promote the representation of women, persons with disabilities, youth, ethnic and other minorities, and marginalized communities in Parliament and County Assemblies – through political parties' support.

In 2021, the UN Women Kenya Country Office continued to push for the equal representation

of women in elective bodies in Kenya, despite the failure of the planned constitutional reforms in the Building Bridges Initiative.<sup>1</sup> As a response to this gap, a large pool of 830 women were mentored in political leadership, out of which 674 women received training, particularly in Kwale, Kitui, Turkana and Marsabit Counties, where women's political participation is among the lowest. As a result, 80 per cent are contesting for a County Assembly seat, 6 per cent are seeking the County Women Representative position, and 5 per cent are aiming to join Parliament.

Non-state actors' capacity to monitor county planning and budgeting in governance processes improved in 2021. UN Women supported communities in Marsabit, Kajiado, Busia and Tana River Counties by strengthening their knowledge to participate in public forums and carry out social audits on county expenditure on projects for improved service delivery.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbi.go.ke>: The Building Bridges Initiative began on 9 March 2018 after President Uhuru Kenyatta and his closest competitor in the 2017 presidential election, Raila Odinga, decided to work at uniting the country (known as "the handshake"). They thereafter jointly formed a team to collect recommendations from citizens. Based on the BBI report, Kenya was scheduled to have a referendum in June 2021 to amend the Constitution of Kenya, but this was halted on 13 May 2021 by the High Court of Kenya, which stated that the process by which the referendum was formed was unconstitutional.



830 women mentored in political leadership through UN Women support



Elizabeth Ruwa, Kwale County

#genderdatakenya

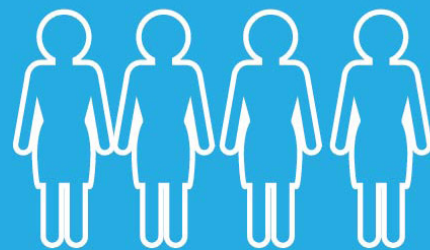
WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

DID YOU KNOW?



**1 in 5 women**

has repeat pregnancies during adolescence period in Kenya.



Probability of having a repeat adolescent pregnancy declines with wealth status and education, but increases with early child bearing.

**GENDER STATISTICS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES**  
Women's economic empowerment, health and gender-based violence



In 2021, political leaders in Kenya started to prepare for the August 2022 general elections. The heightened tensions and political clashes increased concerns that electoral violence against women is likely to occur, hence hindering women's full participation. UN Women Kenya's programmes continued to collaborate closely to support the capacity building of security institutions and actors (364 duty bearers, including 80 trainers of trainers, from the justice, security and medico-legal sectors in Nairobi, Kisumu, Bungoma and Vihiga Counties) to prevent and mitigate political violence and protect women candidates. Select counties have been supported to put in place early warning/action systems and contingency and response plans.

Further, through UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the second Kenya National Action Plan, we supported the establishment of the Women Mediation Network at the national level, which will help prevent election conflict and sustain peace in Kenya. This network will be officially launched in the first quarter of 2022. A caucus of women in Laikipia County was formed to respond to significant conflict in that county. The capacity of the National Police Service, the Judiciary, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Independent Oversight Authority was strengthened to prevent and respond to violence against women in elections.



## Empowering Women Leaders

“What we can do is empower parishioners,” explains Bishop Peter Mwero. Bishop Mwero is a member of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), an organization that is partnering with UN Women on women in leadership. Through dialogues with communities and local authorities and training for women candidates for political office, the project is fostering an enabling environment for women to take up leadership positions.

“Forums like these are an opportunity to challenge one another on our attitudes and social norms. When stakeholders hear others’ experiences, it encourages them to do the same. One of the local sheikhs has formed a WhatsApp group to encourage progressive discussions on traditional, cultural and religious beliefs, which is a great sign of progress,” says Bishop Mwero.

Religious institutions are uniquely positioned to access a wide audience base, who also happen to be voters. A recent forum held by NCCK brought together Kaya elders (traditional spiritual leaders), a council of elders, women leaders, political party representatives, religious leaders and police officials.

Election periods present numerous challenges for female candidates, including disproportionate exposure to electoral violence, negative patriarchal and social norms, and a lack of finances for their campaigns. Elizabeth Ruwa is a member of the Kwale County Assembly and won her seat through the county’s affirmative action mechanism. She says negative traditional beliefs are a primary barrier.

“I was discouraged from contesting... I was told I was too young, without a husband or a child, I had no experience. But I continued working with the community.” During the 2017 election campaign, Elizabeth withstood a smear campaign launched by her opponents.

“Aspirants need confidence, not over-confidence, and they need to build their



Bishop Peter Mwero

self-esteem. We need to build women’s capacity in all aspects of life; not just in politics, but also in the mosques and churches and, most importantly, in the homestead. The head of the family is almost always the man. If you call a gathering today, there will be many women attending, but they keep quiet. It creates a feeling of inferiority,” she says.

Affirmative action ensures individuals from marginalized groups gain seats at the decision-making table. In Kwale County, this is crucial given that all 20 elected members of its assembly are men. However, Elizabeth notes that political seats gained through a nomination/affirmative action system can still lack influence.

Sebastian Gatimu, Programme Officer for the Women in Leadership Programme at UN Women, explains that the project responds to “an urgent need to build grass-roots consensus on women’s ability to lead, but also strengthen the capacities of those aspirants. Local and national politics will benefit from a more inclusive legislature, which in turn will be the catalyst for greater societal gains.”

## 2. Devolution

Strengthening devolution for enhanced service delivery and citizen participation, especially for those left behind, remained a priority for UN Women in 2021. Marsabit, Kajiado, Busia and Tana River Counties strengthened their systems and capacities on citizen participation in county planning and budgeting processes in order to influence greater funding for the delivery of social services and to address gender equality.

As proof of the improved capacity, five community-based groups submitted five memoranda and three petitions to county governments on stalled projects and gender-responsive budgeting. In Busia County, as a result, the maternity health centre in Teso North was completed, and water was restored to Nambale Sub-County Hospital.

Kenya submitted the ninth periodic report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in November 2021. The review of the report by the CEDAW Committee will guide the country at both national and county levels in strengthening policy and programming interventions to accelerate the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

The Ministry of Agriculture—led Agriculture Gender Policy was finalized and validated with stakeholders in five counties from May to July 2021, with technical

support from UN Women and financial support from UNDP. The policy is expected to make county and national government agricultural practices more gender responsive and increase opportunities for businesswomen in agriculture.

The government’s Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) programme for women, youth and persons with disability was strengthened with financial support from UNDP and technical and convening support from UN Women.

The AGPO handbook, which was ready for dissemination in 2021, will be reworked to incorporate the new government guidelines and finalized for dissemination in the first quarter of 2022. It is expected to help women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises simplify their procurement procedures and secure AGPO contracts.

UN Women and UNICEF supported Garissa, West Pokot, Kilifi and Kajiado Counties to develop and implement gender-based violence model policies and laws, including a child protection framework. The policies provide a framework for preventing and responding to GBV issues locally.

UN Women provided technical and financial support for the development of the gender equality and GBV modules in the 2022 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. The modules were informed by recommendations from the Women’s Empowerment Index 2020, with a focus on women’s economic empowerment, GBV and female genital mutilation.





### 3. Women Count

#### Creating an Enabling Environment

In 2021, gender statistics continued to be recognized as a key priority in Kenya's national development plans and laws. UN Women's advocacy and partnership with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the State Department for Gender and other actors led to a review of the Statistics Act regulations, which now mainstream gender across various statistical areas.

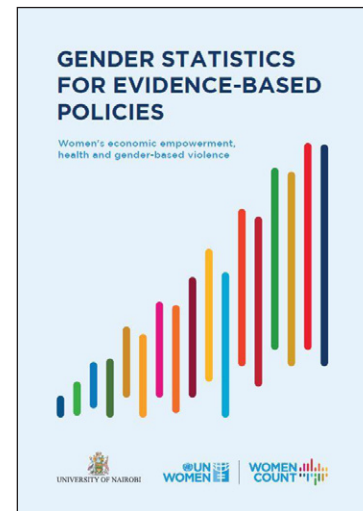
The Gender Sector Statistics Plan 2019–2023 provided a guiding framework for determining progress on gender statistics in the National Statistics System. The plan also helped structure resource mobilization efforts and consequently led to the implementation of a road map for the unpaid care and domestic work policy. In addition, gender data are better coordinated and data communities are no longer siloed as a result of the Inter-Agency Gender Statistics Technical Committee.

France, on 30 June 2021, President Uhuru Kenyatta underscored his commitment to ending violence against women and girls, including by building a strong data and evidence base to inform policies and programmes.

#### Improving Data Availability and Use

In 2021, new data on women's economic empowerment informed policy action. The first-ever Time-Use Survey will contribute to the inclusion of care work as a priority in the next Medium-Term Plan IV (2023–2027), inform the development of the first-ever national care policy during the plan, shape the creation of the country's first-ever satellite national account to measure unpaid care work, and provide policy recommendations.

Reporting for the ninth CEDAW periodic report was improved as a result of having more SDG data available than ever before. UN Women and GROOTS Kenya partnered to drive the uptake and use of gender data among civil society organizations. Several national



#### Increasing Data Production

In 2021, UN Women supported Kenya's ability to monitor gender-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Kenya's gender-related SDG data increased from 26 per cent in 2015 to 44 per cent in 2021, as provided in the *SDG Gender Fact Sheet 2021 – Kenya*, resulting in improved accountability and reporting on its national and international normative commitments. Increased data collection and analysis has helped fill many gender data gaps across the SDGs.

There is now presidential commitment to produce more and better gender data on GBV. At the opening ceremony of the Generation Equality Forum in Paris,

reports were published on the implementation of the SDGs from a gender perspective and/or the provision of data on the status of women, men, girls and boys in the country. These provided the evidence needed to shape the gender interventions for the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the Government of Kenya (2022–2026).

Catalytic partnerships with data users have bolstered gender data analysis and research in Kenya, with 221 data users strengthening their data-related capacities. The skills gained by University of Nairobi student grantees enabled them to develop a 2021 research compendium, *Gender Statistics for Evidence-Based Policies*.



Launch of the research report Gender Statistics for Evidence-Based Policies

**53%** of the minimum set of SDG gender indicators were published



**221** data users were informed, socialized and inducted on existing gender statistics products



## 4. Women's Economic Empowerment

### Climate-Smart Agriculture

In response to the adverse effects of climate change on socioeconomic development in Kenya, UN Women enhanced the economic empowerment of women in the arid and semi-arid counties of Kitui, Laikipia and West Pokot through climate-smart agriculture. This was achieved through sensitization and capacity building of county government officials to develop and implement gender-responsive and climate-sensitive agricultural policies, strategies, plans and legal frameworks, as well as the inclusion of women and other interest groups in agricultural and climate change adaptation governance processes.

A total of 816 farmers (721 females, 95 males, 274 youth and 35 persons with disabilities) were equipped with skills in climate-smart agriculture approaches and financial literacy. Going forward, UN Women intends to facilitate the development of selected value chains in line with the farmers' preferred agro-enterprises, as well as access to finance and markets. This is expected to increase their agricultural productivity and enhance their resilience to climate change.

### COVID-19 Response

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises make up to 75 per cent of businesses and employ largely women and youth. But they are fragile, and COVID-19 hit businesses and jobs hard. In response

to this reality, UN Women partnered with Echo Network Africa to enhance the early recovery of 669 women-owned small businesses that were affected by COVID-19 in 29 counties through microloans worth KES 5 million. UN Women supported 1,000 women- and youth-owned small businesses to diversify activities to produce personal protective equipment and hygiene products such as masks, soap, hand sanitizers and handwashing tanks.

We facilitated women's involvement in the COVID-19 response and recovery decision-making committees in 14 counties. Through UN Women's support, 106,543 masks and other hygiene products were distributed to vulnerable communities in informal urban areas. These masks were produced by women trained under Echo Network Africa, the Kenya Association of Women Business Owners and the Uweza Foundation. Through GROOTS Kenya, 250 fully mounted handwashing stations were distributed to 29 schools in rural areas, and 13 grass-roots women's organizations were trained in the production of hand sanitizer.

### Access to Government Procurement Opportunities

According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics economic survey (2021), 13,078 tenders amounting to KES 13.8 million were awarded to women through AGPO in the year 2020/2021, compared to 13,938 tenders worth KES 10.9 million in the year 2019/2020. Even though there was a slight reduction in the number of women who were awarded tenders, there was a significant increase of 26.7 per cent in the total amount paid to women entrepreneurs through AGPO. UN Women contributed to this achievement through capacity building and sensitization of the AGPO secretariat and women entrepreneurs in various counties.

In 2021, 156 women members of the Women Enterprise Fund from six counties were trained on AGPO procurement, including linking Women Enterprise Fund monies with government procurement opportunities. Looking ahead, UN Women is developing a beneficiary database to track the impact of this training on the uptake of AGPO opportunities and the growth of women-owned micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. According to a recent impact assessment, the main challenges for AGPO include the government's late payments to suppliers, corruption and bureaucracy. In addition, procurement illiteracy keeps women from bidding for AGPO contracts.

**26.7%**  
Increase in the total amount paid to women entrepreneurs through AGPO



**KES 5 million**  
Revolving grant to enable women entrepreneurs in Kenya to stay in business



Irene Auma, Ugunja



## Tackling COVID-19

In 2020, the Government of Kenya put in place a fiscal package to stimulate economic growth and recovery. Economic stimulus of KES 56.6 million (0.5 per cent of gross domestic product) was provided in the 2020/2021 financial year. It targeted new youth employment schemes, provision of credit guarantees and increasing funding for cash transfers.

To support these efforts, UN Women, in collaboration with Echo Network Africa, supported 669 women in 29 counties to keep their businesses afloat thanks to a KES 5 million revolving grant, and enabled their businesses to grow during the COVID-19 period. This microcredit provision project will continue to impact many more women-owned small businesses since its repayment rate is 95 per cent. Demand for this revolving, zero-interest microcredit scheme outstrips the available funds. However, it charges a minimal one-off administrative fee, which contributes to its sustainability. It is administered through well-established countrywide Kenya Women Microfinance Bank infrastructure. The model utilizes existing databases of tested women entrepreneurs across the country with the skills to grow micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

UN Women Kenya documented best practices and lessons learned in gender-responsive COVID-19 frameworks through videography, photography and social media posts. Different knowledge products (six videos and three articles\*) were developed and disseminated through UN Women's platforms, advocating for women's engagement in decision making on COVID-19 prevention and response, social cohesion, GBV prevention, and inclusive recovery efforts such as countering discrimination and hate speech. They also highlighted the challenges women and girls face as a result of the pandemic.

Such advocacy will increase efforts in the recovery process to transform gender relations through the leadership and empowerment of women as decision-makers, first responders and economic actors to build the long-term resilience and social cohesion of communities.

\*"Restoring dignity and justice for survivors of gender-based violence in response to COVID-19", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1T3Mk2YdJs&t=75s>; "Empower women and protect communities from COVID-19", <https://youtu.be/svffEnrLaOs>; "Women at the centre of the COVID-19 response in Mandera County", <https://youtu.be/ijz2pmwdwrl>; "Women's access to credit", <https://youtu.be/DvgkCmXXUsE>; "Gender champions", <https://youtu.be/vl7Ww-zgUkA>; "1195 – Healthcare Assistance in Kenya supported by UN Women and UNFPA", <https://youtu.be/molcNug7H5o>.

Globally in  
2020/2021:  
**590** UN Women  
partner women's  
groups mobilized  
COVID-19  
responses in 50  
countries

## 5. Ending Violence against Women

The adoption of two county GBV policies in Kitui and Marsabit enhanced the county-level enabling environment for GBV prevention and response.<sup>1</sup> In addition, 129 duty bearers – including police, chiefs and health officers – were trained on GBV prevention and response in four target counties, enhancing their knowledge.

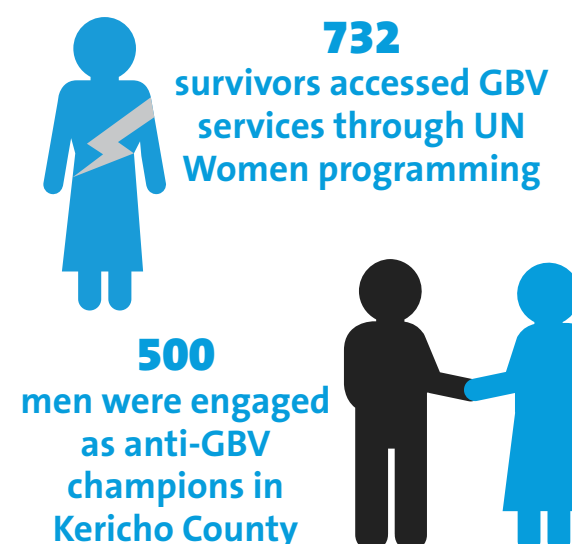
A total of 732 survivors accessed various GBV services through UN Women programming; out of those, 73 GBV survivors accessed justice services, while 659 accessed essential services such as psychosocial services, health care and referral for more enhanced care.

UN Women and UNFPA promoted increased participation and engagement of men in the prevention of GBV, with approximately 500 men (400 of them below the age of 35) engaged as anti-GBV champions at Kabianga University in Kericho County. In addition, there was increased awareness on prevention of GBV and available services in the same county following the engagement of an estimated 50,000 people in community dialogues through radio (Radio Injili 103.7 FM).

UN Women and UNICEF supported four counties to develop and implement GBV policies and laws, including a child protection framework. Garissa County reviewed its draft gender policy and developed a policy brief for advocacy. West Pokot developed a county gender policy. Kilifi County reviewed the draft gender and development policy, which they subjected to public participation. Kajiado County reviewed its anti-female genital mutilation policy.

The policies are expected to provide a framework for each of the counties on preventing and responding to GBV issues locally. The policies will also ensure the sustainability of UN Women and UNICEF support on GBV beyond the current leadership of the counties.

<sup>1</sup> The GBV policies provide for prevention measures and a support system for survivors of GBV, including budgetary provisions, shelters and safe houses.







Above: Fanis Lisiagali, Executive Director of HAK 1195, Kenya's GBV hotline supported by UN Women  
Below: A HAK 1195 hotline operator in action



### From Where I Stand: Caren Omanga

*Caren Omanga has been a social activist for over 20 years. After working for six years as a teacher, she felt she could do more to counter the injustices she had witnessed from an early age. She is now a human rights defender in Kisumu County, helping women and many survivors of gender-based violence to achieve justice.*

I've seen a lot of human rights violations in the slums where I grew up. Life in these places is not conducive for human rights. I remember the first campaign I participated in. It was a campaign against the flour price. It went up to over USD 1 per packet, and people simply could not afford it. Every homestead was complaining. I thought, *We need to do something about this.* It was approaching Labour Day, and we wanted to talk to the government. We did not want NGO support; we wanted the government to listen directly to us. Can we speak as a community? We organized ourselves [to do] a march into town, holding nothing but a spoon and a saucepan... they were the only tools we needed. When we reached town, we only had one song: "*Unga 30 bob!*" (Flour 30 shillings!). I escaped arrest; I was getting good at dodging the police!

It is one of the most dangerous jobs to do in Kenya. You need a hard heart. The work you do exposes you to police, perpetrators and members of the community. For example, cultural values in this region and human rights

do not go together. There are parallel systems at work. We're empowering women who have been suppressed for a long time. But according to many of the elders of the communities, we are inciting women against men. We are taking time to explain and ask them, "Consider these women as your daughters – would you allow your own daughters to be treated and violated in these ways?" They are slowly understanding.

The [upcoming] election worries me. I don't come from this community and my tribe is usually a target in this region. So, every election I'm very sensitive about tribal profiling. I've been here 12 years, and every election year it has been difficult for me and my family. I always have to move away. Whenever I hear someone explicitly talking about someone's tribe, I become very alert.

I don't think assurances of peace from the politicians have trickled down to the community yet. The government needs to do more. I had to transfer my granddaughter to a different school because of the hostility she received – including from teachers. She would come back and say, "Grandma, I'm being called a thief at school. They say we stole votes from them."

*Caren participated in training as part of the UN Women/Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights project Let It Not Happen Again. Supported by the Government of Italy, the project aims to prevent and respond to violence against women in elections.*



## 6. Women, Peace and Security

UN Women's ongoing policy support, advocacy, awareness-raising and institution-strengthening efforts in Kenya have contributed to advancing the women, peace and security agenda in 2021. Women are being recognized for the pivotal role they play in preventing conflict and sustaining peace, leading to an increase of women in peace committees, from 29 per cent in 2019 to 33 per cent in 2021. There was a two-fold increase of women in committee leadership (chair), from 6 per cent in 2019 to 14.3 percent in 2021. This notable achievement led to the establishment of the National Women's Peace Committee Network in 2021. This has enhanced the implementation of the second Kenya National Action Plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

We continued to promote the localization of the Kenya National Action Plan, which has contributed to the development of County Action Plans in Marsabit, Kilifi, Mombasa, Taita Taveta and Kwale Counties, deepening the ownership and sustainability of the women, peace and security agenda at county and community levels. The initiative translated national commitments into local actions. In Marsabit County, four Pillar Technical Working Groups were established for their plan. This localization effort also contributed to the establishment of a county intergovernmental coordination mechanism – County Gender Sector

Working Groups on Women, Peace and Security – in 19 counties.<sup>1</sup>

In Kwale County, Human Rights Agenda, in partnership with the National Counter Terrorism Centre and county officials, developed an Implementation Plan on Gender Mainstreaming which ensures that the implementation of the County Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism is gender responsive.

UN Women raised awareness about ending violence against women during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign in refugee camps in Kenya. This was achieved in partnership with four civil society organizations through 16 sessions, forums and community discussions with community leaders, women and persons with disability; 10 social media broadcasting and radio shows; and 6 awareness-raising forums, reaching a total of 5,191 community members through the joint efforts.

UN Women also enhanced the capacity of duty bearers to respond to GBV cases in the refugee and host communities using a survivor-centred approach through training on referral pathways and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. These initiatives successfully engaged men as allies against GBV and disseminated UN Women's global message ("Orange the world: end violence against women now!") around the country through common hashtags adopted by the Kenya Gender Working Group.

<sup>1</sup> Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Marsabit, Kwale, Baringo, Mombasa, Kilifi, Taita Taveta, Nakuru, Kisumu, Kitui, Turkana, Kirinyaga, Machakos, Kericho, Bomet, Vihiga, Trans-Nzoia and Nyeri.



Local peacebuilders celebrate the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 anniversary, Isiolo County



### Rosemary Cheptai in Her Own Words: Finding Common Ground

*Rosemary Cheptai, 50, lives in the Mount Elgon region of Kenya's Rift Valley. She has been a member of her district's local peace committee for 11 years. As a proponent of peace, Rosemary has successfully navigated conflicts in the community by raising awareness about land rights in a region experiencing decades-long conflicts over land.*

We've seen violence erupt in 1992, 1997 and 2005. The main conflict here is over land, which has never been fully resolved. Initially, these issues began from a government resettlement programme that dates back to the 1970s.

The conflict has led to a loss of lives; husbands have gone to fight and never returned. It has stopped children from going to school due to fear and tension. It has also led to the rape and defilement of women and girls. Some community members have lost hope, and it has caused disruption to the local economy.

My membership in the district's peace committee has also allowed me to interact with a lot of people of different tribes. I have also been able to bring people together, especially those in conflict, and to enable them to live peacefully together.

Lasting solutions require bringing all communities together and finding common ground. At present, we have relative calm, but it deteriorates and we repeat our peacebuilding efforts every time. As a mother, I feel so pained because families suffer every five or ten years. All the stakeholders in Mount Elgon should come together and find a lasting solution to the conflict.

Men in the community did not allow women into the elders' meetings because of the belief that they leak secrets. But the amount of information I was able to bring to the committee as a woman ensured my inclusion. I provided early warnings on conflicts – we are often the first to acquire information through word of mouth. The men in the committee value me because I gathered information that enabled the resolution of conflicts before they erupted into full-blown violence. As a group we convinced youths to surrender guns. We managed to reintegrate one of the youths back into society. He then brought friends who he convinced to surrender their guns. He is currently a pastor in one of the churches.

In 2007 and 2017, we have also seen violence following elections, and as we approach the 2022 elections, there's a real possibility for conflicts too. It is not something that ends, and it takes a long time to settle.



## 7. Generation Equality

In 2021, the Government of Kenya made 12 high-level commitments to end GBV and female genital mutilation (*Kenya's Road Map for Advancing Gender Equality and Ending All Forms of Gender-Based Violence and Female Genital Mutilation by 2026*), through the Generation Equality Forum.

The document was unveiled by President Uhuru Kenyatta at a function co-hosted by UN Women and the Government of Kenya.<sup>1</sup> Illustrating Kenya's commitment to preventing and responding to GBV, the road map provides a clear framework for priority investments and performance on GBV in Kenya, including the development of joint programmes by the United Nations.

The commitments include dedicating USD 23 million by 2022 and mobilizing USD 50 million by 2026 through co-financing arrangements; introducing performance indicators in the work of duty bearers on GBV; strengthening accountability on enforcement and implementation of Kenya's GBV-related legislation; investing in systems to collect and analyse data on GBV to inform the design, scale-up and evaluation of female genital mutilation and GBV programming; and strengthening related service delivery.

<sup>1</sup> <https://kenya.un.org/en/133232-president-uhuru-kenyatta-gives-roadmap-accelerate-national-efforts-end-gender-based-violence>.

UN Women and UNFPA jointly drove the advocacy for the Generation Equality Forum that led to the high-level adoption of the 12 commitments. Partnering with the Government of Kenya, donors and women's rights organizations, UN Women provided support through strategic advisory and technical input into policy briefs through our membership in the National Steering Committee and National Advisory Committee of the Generation Equality Forum.

While several commitments are still to be fulfilled, the Government of Kenya made strides in some: allocating 302 million shillings towards anti-GBV and anti-female genital mutilation programming in the financial year 2020/2021, and allocating a further 110 million shillings for the financial year 2021/2022. There has also been a review of the GBV laws and policies to guide the identification of relevant indicators for ministries, departments and agencies.

We will continue to lobby and rally key actors – development partners, the private sector, the media, civil society organizations, women's rights organizations, foundations and international financial institutions – to support the government to realize the commitments. At the same time, we will continue to promote synergies between the Generation Equality Action Coalition on GBV and the leaders and commitment makers in the five other thematic Generation Equality Action Coalitions.



Natalie Robi Tingo, 28, is the Founder and Executive Director of Msichana Empowerment Kuria, a women-led community-based organization in rural Kenya that has since 2015 worked to end female genital mutilation

# Evaluations and Lessons Learned

## Evaluations

UN Women Kenya had no programme/project evaluations in 2021. However, the Kenya Country Office Strategic Note Midterm Review was concluded in the fourth quarter. All the lessons learned, recommendations and best practices will be utilized in 2022 while developing the next Kenya Country Office Strategic Note (2023–2026).

Further, UN Women Kenya, in collaboration with the UN Gender Working Group, provided inputs to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluation to ensure its gender responsiveness. The evaluation contributed to the development of the draft new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – 28 per cent of its outcome indicators are gender oriented and aligned to the “leave no one behind” principle. Additionally, the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard assessment was concluded in 2021, which revealed the status of the gender-mainstreaming performance of the United Nations in Kenya, and the recommendations informed the new cooperation framework.

Overall, the Kenya Country Office adopted relevant recommendations from the 2021 UN Women Corporate Evaluation *UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence against Women* and the 2020 *Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Support to National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security*.

## Lessons Learned

- The COVID-19 online working mode posed the risk of alienating or excluding women beneficiaries who are vulnerable and hard to reach. UN Women mitigated this challenge by supporting digitally disenfranchised women with internet bundles and mobile phone airtime, which will be used as a best practice in future UN Women programming.
- As a trusted partner, UN Women will continue to provide gender-specific technical assistance in emergency situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Deployment of a public health advisor to the COVID-19 planning committee and conducting a rapid gender analysis to provide gender data to inform key stakeholders planning for Kenya's COVID-19 response ensured that women's and girls' needs were included.
- Elections raise the possibility of partner government officials leaving office. While this may affect project delivery, it can also create opportunities for more balanced participation between technical staff and politicians, as well as women's engagement in leadership.
- In working towards the localization of the second Kenya National Action Plan, it is vital to strengthen the capacity of grass-roots women- and youth-led organizations – not only as beneficiaries, but also as active agents of peace and community resilience.





Claret Adhiambo, Ghetto Radio

# UN System Coordination on Gender Equality

The development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework saw the inclusion of 9 gender-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators (out of the 32 outcome indicators) in the draft results of the new framework. This can be directly attributed to the UN Women Kenya Country Office leadership and the engagement of the UN Gender Working Group in advocating for a standalone gender, GBV and harmful practices subchapter in the Common Country Analysis, as well as making a significant contribution towards the inclusion of gender data and analysis in the sectors under the Common Country Analysis, in close collaboration with other UN agencies.

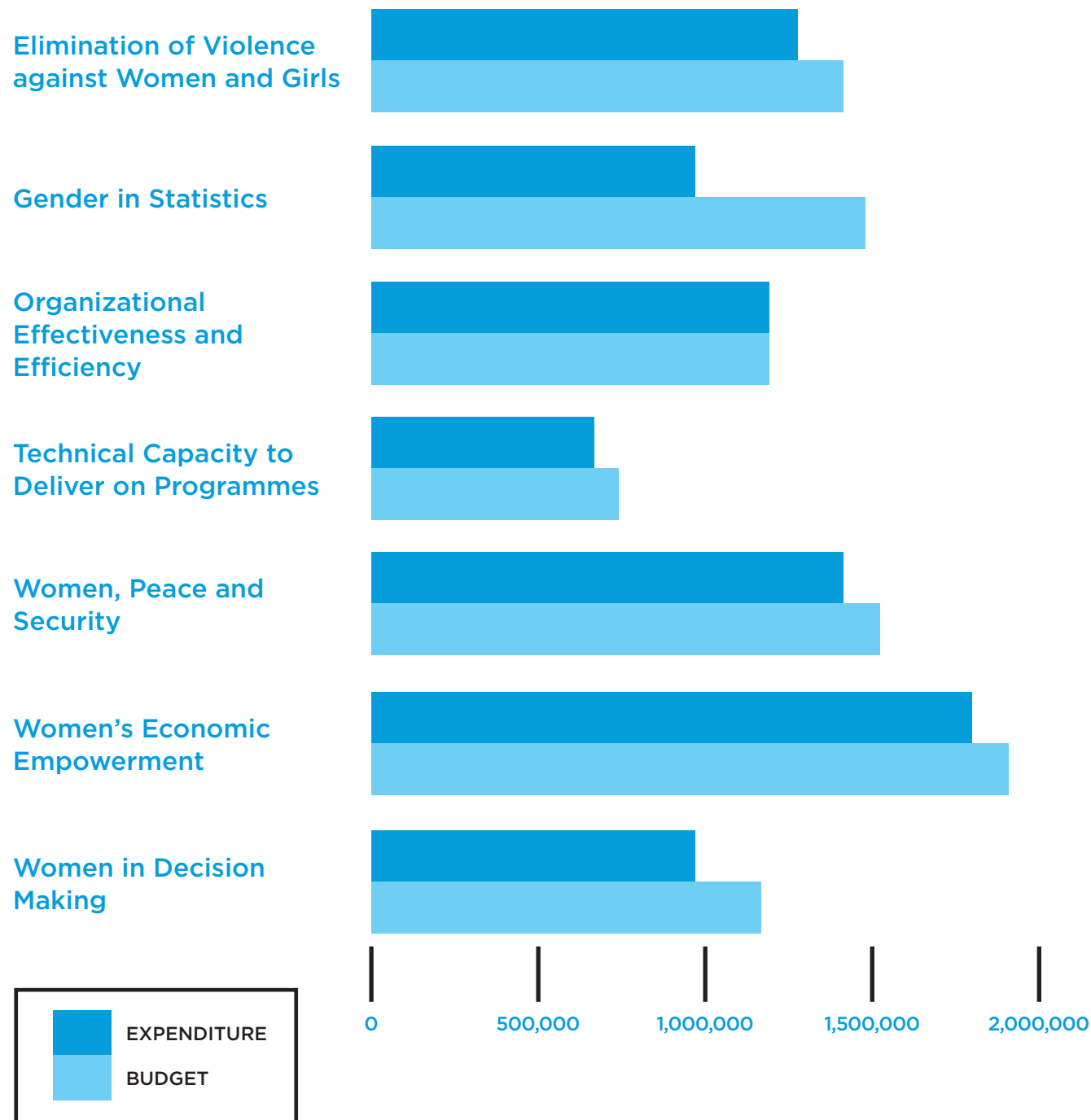
Further, gender equality and women's empowerment, including the "leave no one behind" principle, were prioritized in the UN Country Team visioning and strategic prioritization process in the development of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework through UN Women Kenya representation and coordination with regard to the UN Country Team and other UN agencies.

To improve planning, coordination and programming for gender results within the UN system, UN Women Kenya, working with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and the UN Gender Working Group, rolled out the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard assessment. The results and action plan of the gender scorecard are timely in informing the design of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in the first quarter of 2022 through the identification of additional opportunities to mainstream gender.

Additionally, the inclusion of credible qualitative and quantitative gender data in the upcoming planning of Kenya's Medium-Term Plan IV process was ensured through support to the production of the Country Gender Equality Profile, which UN Women supported jointly with the UN Gender Working Group, the State Department for Gender and the European Union. The key findings and recommendations will be disseminated and implemented through webinars, seminars, workshops and brown bag meetings to secure various partners' commitment to the priority actions.



# Financial Report 2021



**Total income: US\$9,549,743**

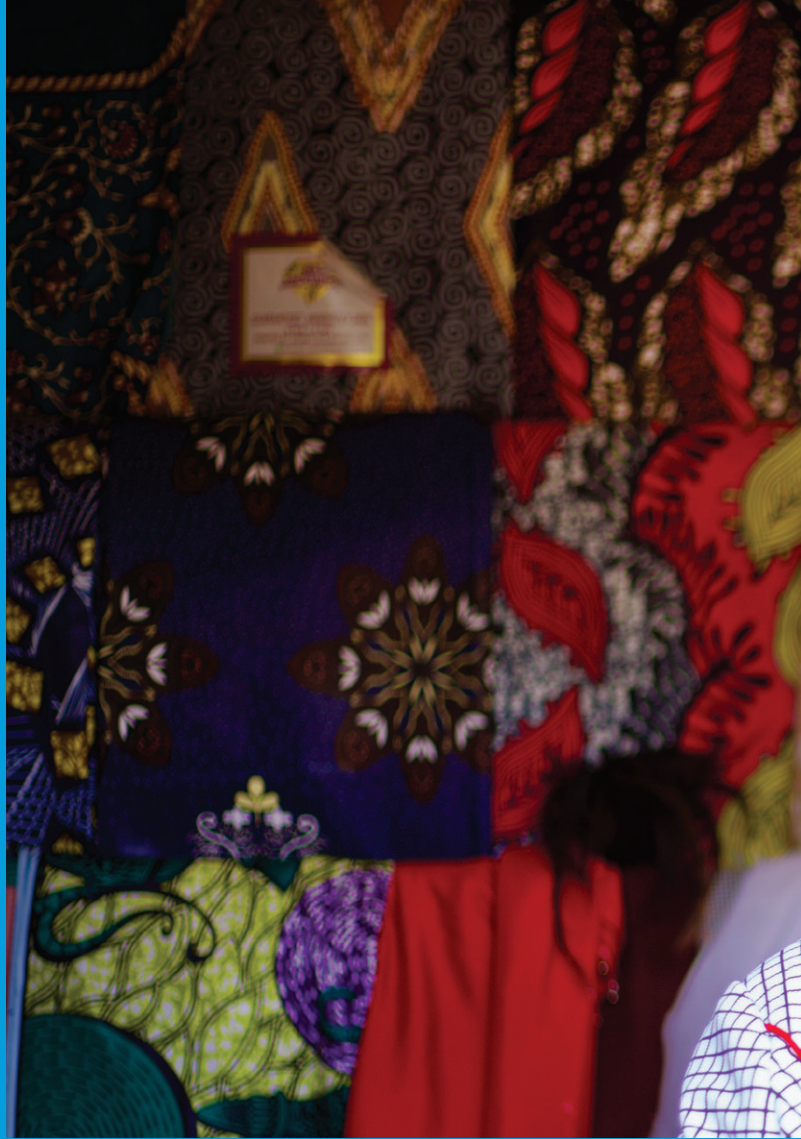
**Total expenditure: US\$8,391,595**

Income sources/donors:

- Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundation
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (Canada)
- Government of Finland
- Government of Germany
- Government of Japan
- Irish Aid
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Italy)
- Korea International Cooperation Agency
- United Nations COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- UN Women regular sources
- Unilever PLC
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Population Fund







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