

STRATEGIC NOTE

# Ethiopia

2026-2030





Photo: UN Women/Tensae Yemane

# INTRODUCTION

## ETHIOPIA'S GENDER EQUALITY LANDSCAPE

### COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Ethiopia has made important progress in reducing gender inequalities and advancing the rights of women and girls, but significant barriers remain. There is a shortage of reliable data on the status of women, with 62.3 per cent of gender-specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators missing data as of December 2020.

In a 2023 survey, 71.6 per cent of Ethiopian women identified safety and security as their most significant concern. Scoping studies in Hawassa and Addis Ababa, conducted as part of UN Women's Safe Cities initiative, revealed that women and girls face daily sexual harassment and violence in public spaces.

A 2024 national study found that despite a marked decrease in female genital mutilation (FGM) over the past decade, 48.5 per cent of women have undergone FGM, with the Somali (83.5 per cent) and Afar (70.2 per cent) regions having the highest prevalence rates. Gaps in legislation and implementation, along with discriminatory social norms, continue to serve as root causes of violence against women and girls (VAWG). The Ethiopian Criminal Code does not recognize marital rape, and laws on sexual harassment do not cover hostile work environments where sexual favors are demanded. Access to services for survivors, including justice, remains limited; only 14 per cent of women attempted to seek help after experiencing violence, and more than half (55.2 per cent) were unable to obtain any support.



Photo: UN Women/Tensae Yemane

## ETHIOPIA'S GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

### GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

**Legal and Policy Frameworks:** In Ethiopia, gender equality is embedded within national development strategies, including the Ten-Year Development Plan (2021–2030), and supported by legal instruments such as the revised Financial Administration Proclamation No. 970/2016 and the Ministry of Finance's Gender-Responsive Budgeting initiatives. Recent efforts include piloting Gender-Responsive Budget Tagging and institutionalizing annual gender budget statements. Internationally, Ethiopia has ratified major conventions and, in 2025, the African Union adopted the Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG), which Ethiopia is expected to ratify.

**Persistent Barriers and Gender Gaps:** In Ethiopia, entrenched patriarchal norms, limited access to reliable gender-disaggregated data, and intersecting vulnerabilities—such as those faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and women with disabilities—exacerbate gender gaps. Data limitations impede effective monitoring, with 62.3 per cent of gender-specific SDG indicators lacking sufficient data.

**Violence Against Women and Girls:** VAWG remains a critical concern Ethiopia, though the prevalence, forms, and responses differ in important ways. In Ethiopia, armed conflict has intensified gender-based violence (GBV), with sexual violence employed as a tactic of destabilization. The 2024 study indicated a national GBV prevalence of 20.2 per cent, with significant underreporting due to stigma and limited access to support services. Legal frameworks criminalize various forms of violence, yet gaps persist—such as the non-recognition of marital rape and incomplete

coverage of workplace harassment. National strategies and Standard Operating Procedures have improved survivor support, but implementation and societal attitudes remain barriers.

**Women's Participation in Decision-Making:** Ethiopia achieved gender parity in ministerial positions in 2018, but this has since declined, with women holding 36 per cent of ministerial roles in 2025 and losing top positions such as the Presidency and Chief Justice. At sub-national levels, representation is lower, and voluntary quotas have not been institutionalized, making gains fragile. Crisis and conflict further marginalize women leaders, with exclusion driven by social and political pressures.

**Economic Empowerment and Access to Resources:** Ethiopia's Gender Development Index score of 0.14 signals a substantial gap in economic opportunities. Women face high unemployment, wage disparities, concentration in informal sectors, and limited access to credit and business licenses. The burden of unpaid care work is disproportionately borne by women and girls, and customary practices undermine legal rights to land and property despite legislative protections.

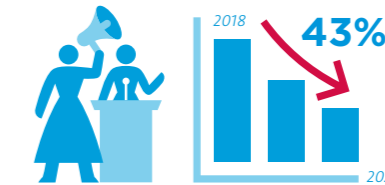
**Impact of Crises and Emergencies:** Ethiopia faces ongoing internal violence, hosting millions of IDPs and refugees. Women and girls in these settings are at heightened risk of violence, exploitation, and loss of livelihood, with limited access to humanitarian services and safe spaces. Climate-induced disasters further compound vulnerabilities, and women's participation in peace processes remains minimal despite evidence of their positive impact.

**figure 1**  
Gender Development Index (GDI)  
Comparison: Progress Needed to  
Reach Full Gender Equality



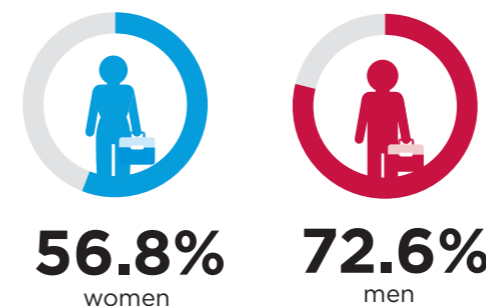
UN Women Ethiopia Gender Profile, 2024

**figure 2**  
Status of women's representation in ministerial  
positions since reaching gender parity in 2018  
Leadership and Political Participation



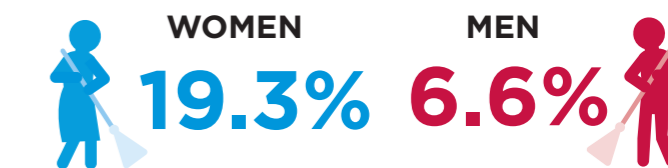
UN Women Ethiopia Gender Profile, 2024

**figure 3**  
Labor force participation by sex  
Women's Economic Empowerment



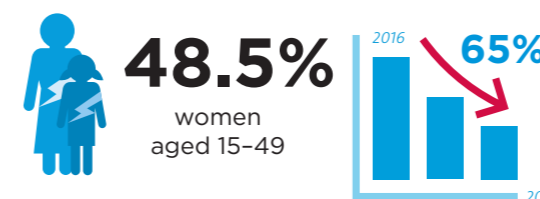
Ethiopia 2021 Labor Force and Migration Survey.

**figure 4**  
A Comparison of Unpaid Care and Domestic  
Work by Gender  
Women's Economic Empowerment



UN Women Ethiopia Gender Profile, 2024

**figure 5**  
FGM remains widespread, despite  
gradual declines  
Ending Violence against Women



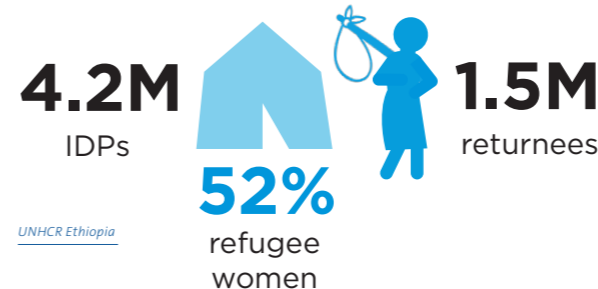
2024 survey by the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA)

**figure 6**  
Safety and security is a top concern for women  
reflecting widespread fears of violence, harassment, and  
insecurity in homes, communities, and public spaces  
Ending Violence against Women



2024 survey by the Network of Ethiopian Women's Associations (NEWA)

**figure 7**  
Ethiopia faces one of the world's largest  
IDPs and refugee crises  
Women, Peace and Security, Humanitarian  
Action, and Disaster Risk Reduction



UNHCR Ethiopia

**figure 8**  
Women are disproportionately affected by climate  
disasters  
Humanitarian Action, Disaster Risk Reduction, and  
Ending Violence against Women



UNDP Ethiopia, UN Women Ethiopia Gender Profile, 2024

## UN WOMEN STRATEGIC NOTE: A roadmap to gender equality

The Strategic Note (SN) articulates the multi-year strategy, rationale, envisioned results, targets, and resource requirements for a UN Women Office. In essence, the SN provides a roadmap for improving the lives of women and girls in the context where UN Women operates. It is developed in consultation with key partners and in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UN Women's Strategic Plan and key national, regional, and global gender equality priorities. SNs are funded by a combination of core (loosely earmarked) and non-core resources (earmarked).

*UN Women's SN is similar to a Country Programme Document (CPD) used by other UN entities.*

## UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

UN Women Ethiopia has been at the forefront of supporting Ethiopia's commitment to implement international norms and standards on women's rights and to strengthen national legal and policy frameworks. Since becoming a Country Office in 2012, UN Women Ethiopia has worked in close collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, civil society organizations, UN entities, and other partners to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

Guided by its triple mandate: normative, coordination, and operational, UN Women Ethiopia ensures integration of global frameworks such as the SDGs into national development plans. Through the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, the Country Office provides advisory and normative support on gender mainstreaming across socio-economic sectors and evidence generation. UN Women also plays a key role in coordinating and mainstreaming gender equality, and leading on integrating Gender in Humanitarian Emergency response across the UN Country Team in Ethiopia.

The Country Office's work is aligned with Ethiopia's Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan (2020–2030): The Pathways to Prosperity, and UN Women's global Strategic Plan (2026–2029). It is further anchored in major international and African regional commitments, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW, Africa's Agenda 2063, the Maputo Protocol, and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. In the previous SN period, UN Women Ethiopia has focused on initiatives in the following areas:

- Leadership and political participation
- Ending violence against women and girls, including enhancing safe migration for women
- Gender-responsive planning and budgeting
- Women economic empowerment
- Women peace and security and humanitarian action
- UN system coordination

### UN Women Ethiopia's key achievements (2022-2025)

**30,000+ Survivors** of violence including women affected by conflict and other emergencies, **benefitted from essential services** (shelter, psychosocial counselling, legal aid, information and livelihood support).

**Second National Five-Year Strategy on Prevention and Response to Violence against Women and Children** adopted.

**New National Gender Policy** drafted; **First National Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy** finalized.

**11,500+ Women and girls** gained entrepreneurship and digital skills; **35+ Cooperatives** and a national WEE forum set up and functional.

**4,500+ Women** gained leadership and political skills, **230+** through mentorship; **2,800+** reached through community dialogues.

**New Gender-Inclusive Transitional Justice Policy** adopted; **First National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security** developed.

**16+ Ministries** assessed using a gender accountability tool; **First Gender Audit Manual** created to enhance gender-responsive auditing.

**340 Vulnerable women ex-combatants** equipped with skills and capital (USD 600+ each), enabling reintegration through income-generating livelihoods.

**6,400+ Women in drought-affected areas empowered** through 38 Village Savings and Loan Associations, climate-resilient assets, finance access, and crop insurance, to mitigate climate risks.

**+130,000 Crisis-affected women and girls** across five regions received **integrated protection and livelihood support**.

**Gender Budget Statements** endorsed by the **Ministry of Finance**; multiple ministries adopt and pilot **Gender-Responsive Budget Tagging**.

**1M+ People** were reached via UN Women Ethiopia Country Office **social media** platforms ([Facebook](#) and [X](#)).

To learn more about the work and results of UN Women Ethiopia visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

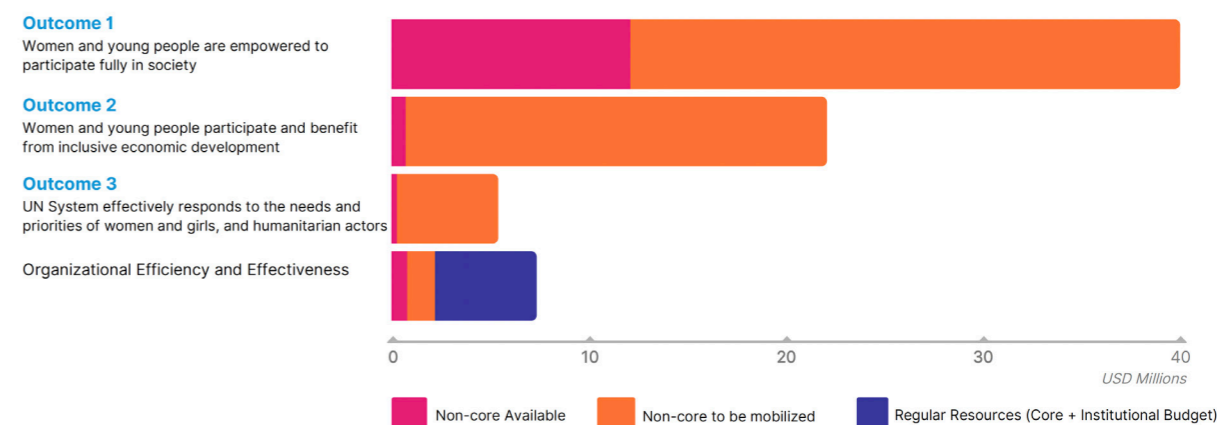
# ETHIOPIA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2026-2030

The UN Country Team and the Government of Ethiopia have agreed on a set of strategic development priorities, in line with the country's national development plan. These are set forth in the [UNSDCF 2025-2030](#). UN Women Ethiopia's SN contributes directly to two UNSDCF priority Outcomes and indirectly to the remaining three through a mainstreaming approach. It also includes a coordination outcome that serves as an enabler across development and humanitarian settings, while ensuring coherence within the

Humanitarian–Development–Peace (HDP) nexus. These are based on UN Women's expertise and comparative advantage in the country and are aligned with [UN Women's Strategic Plan 2026-2029](#). Through the implementation of its SN, UN Women contributes to the realization of SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

figure 9

### SN 2026-2030 RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS



AS A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN CONVENES AND INFLUENCES A RANGE OF PARTNERS FOR A GREATER AND LONG-LASTING IMPACT



Photo: UN Women/Tensae Yemane

# Ethiopia achieves gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and the full enjoyment of their human rights.

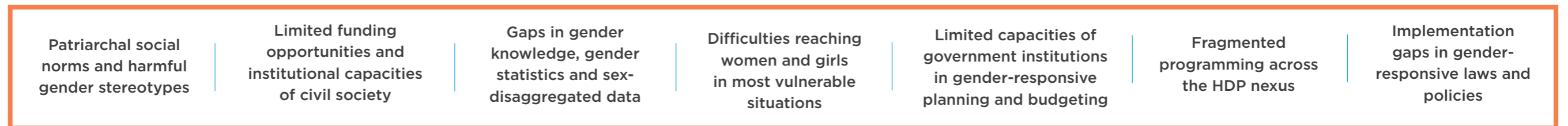
**COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTION**  
(priority results)



**UN WOMEN SOLUTIONS ACROSS PRIORITY RESULTS**



**CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**



# UN WOMEN ETHIOPIA'S STRATEGY

## OUTCOME RESULT 1:

Women and young people are empowered to participate fully in society. (UNSDCF Outcome #5]

UN Women will drive systemic and institutional change to expand women's and girls' opportunities, agency, and participation - particularly for those facing intersecting vulnerabilities. Building on its triple mandate, UN Women will strengthen national frameworks, community systems, and institutional accountability to address discriminatory norms, GBV, and gendered risks across development, humanitarian, and peace contexts.

UN Women will reinforce national and community mechanisms to prevent and respond to VAWG by engaging education systems, faith and traditional leaders, media, and feminist movements to transform harmful norms. It will expand proven models - including Safe Cities and HDP aligned GBV prevention and services - to increase survivors' access to quality, coordinated support. Investments in GBV prevention and administrative data will strengthen evidence-based policymaking and improve service delivery standards.

## OUTCOME RESULT 2:

Women and young people participate and benefit from inclusive economic development. (UNSDCF Outcome #2]

UN Women will advance inclusive and resilient economic development by removing structural barriers to women's economic participation and strengthening governance, institutions, and market systems. Through its triple mandate, UN Women will drive policy reform, expand access to skills and resources, and foster an enabling environment for women's leadership in emerging and green economies.

UN Women will enhance women's leadership and representation across political, peacebuilding, humanitarian, and recovery processes. This includes supporting implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security; increasing women's participation in multi-sectoral governance; and advancing political parity. UN Women will also support conflict-affected women and girls to rebuild livelihoods and exercise agency in shaping local and national decision-making.

UN Women will support government partners to adopt and implement gender-responsive policies, national strategies, and institutional reforms. This includes strengthening accountability across sectors, embedding gender analysis into national planning and budgeting, and improving coordination among government, civil society, and UN entities. By translating global norms into national action, UN Women will promote sustainable, system-level change that advances gender equality nationwide.

UN Women will support implementation of the first National Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy and related policies by strengthening coordination across government, development partners, and UN entities. To implement this outcome, UN Women, together with other UN entities in the Economic Development and Green Jobs and Energy Result Group, will focus on removing structural barriers to women's economic participation, such as

investing in changing social norms and practices and promoting positive masculinity; skills training; and access to productive resources and finance for green and decent jobs. Promotion of more accountable and gender responsive economic governance will serve as enablers for achieving the expected results. Investments in digital inclusion, care infrastructure, and innovative financing will further reinforce the enabling environment for women's economic empowerment.

UN Women will expand women's access to skills, technologies, finance, and market opportunities across key value

chains, green and decent jobs, and resilient agriculture. This includes scaling digital and STEM pathways such as the Ethiopia component of the African Girls Can Code Initiative, promoting women's leadership in economic recovery in conflict-affected areas, and strengthening their economic resilience through climate-smart and market-oriented interventions. Partnerships with public and private actors will improve access to care, energy, and time-saving technologies, enabling women to participate and lead in economic transformation.

## OUTCOME RESULT 3:

UN System effectively responds to the needs and priorities of women and girls, and humanitarian actors.

UN Women will drive system-wide coherence on gender equality across development and humanitarian action, filling coordination gaps and ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is integrated into all UN planning, implementation, and accountability mechanisms.

Through its convening role and technical mandate, UN Women will strengthen the capacity of the UN Country Team, promote accountability, and ensure UN-led responses address the distinct needs and priorities of women and girls.

UN Women will build the technical capacity of UN Country Team members to apply gender-responsive approaches across sectors, including through joint programming, training, and advisory support. It will strengthen accountability using standardized tools such as the UN Country Team System-Wide Action Plan (UNCT-SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard and the Gender Equality Marker. In close collaboration with the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office, UN Women will support the roll-out and implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP). In humanitarian settings, UN Women will enhance cluster capacities by equipping actors with gender analysis skills, supporting adherence to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) standards, and

ensuring women's organizations meaningfully participate in decision-making. Regular gender analyses and sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data generation will further strengthen the quality and inclusiveness of UN responses.

UN Women will ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is embedded in all key UN systems - including the UNSDCF processes, coordination mechanisms, planning cycles, and monitoring frameworks - as well as in humanitarian response tools. It will lead and co-lead coordination platforms, advocate for a dedicated UN Gender Theme Group aligned with global standards, and expand joint programmes to deliver coherent, cross-pillar results.

In humanitarian coordination, UN Women will sustain national and sub-national Gender in Humanitarian Action working groups, working closely with the Humanitarian Country Team, produce annual IASC Gender Accountability Framework reports, issue Gender Alerts, and strengthen inter-agency efforts on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Through these efforts, UN Women will reinforce system-wide accountability, coherence, and gender-responsive action across the UN system in Ethiopia.

UN WOMEN DRIVES RESULTS ADVANCING NORMATIVE STANDARDS, COORDINATING ACTION ACROSS THE UNITED NATIONS, AND OPERATING ON THE GROUND THROUGH ACTIVE PROGRAMMING.

## UN WOMEN'S Comparative and Collaborative Advantages

UN Women Ethiopia's comparative advantage lies in its unique ability to leverage its triple mandate - normative, coordination, and operational - to bridge grassroots realities with national policy and institutional reforms. As the UN system's lead agency on gender equality, UN Women is strategically positioned to drive system-wide coherence and influence policy reform at scale. Its convening power enables it to bring together government, civil society, development partners, and UN entities around shared priorities, while its technical expertise ensures robust, evidence-based gender analysis informs national decision-making. UN Women excels in translating global norms into national policies and institutional mechanisms, prioritizing transformative, system-level change over fragmented service delivery. This positioning allows UN Women Ethiopia to anchor gender equality within national frameworks and deliver sustainable, countrywide results.

**Ferdowsa says: "I no longer wait for someone's hand, I build my own path."**

I live with my husband, nine children, and mother. Lacking education and jobs, we struggled. I depended on my husband, doing occasional cleaning and fruit-selling to feed my children daily. Training taught me about saving; our cooperative now saves half of our livestock earnings, and shares the rest with members. For the first time I can say I'm no longer living in a survival mode. Today I am economically independent, building a better future for my family and community.

[Read more](#)

**Asma says "If I get more land, I'll expand farming."**

Asma spent five years in a flood-prone IDP camp. She volunteered her land for a demonstration garden to learn climate-adaptive agriculture. Project experts rehabilitated the land, and she began growing drought-tolerant, early-maturing vegetables. Previously unfamiliar with farming, Asma now feeds her family and earns about 12,000 birr (USD 100) monthly from sales, recognizing agriculture's value in sustaining livelihoods.

[Read more](#)

**Saron shares, "I see a young girl's eyes light up when she writes her first line of code."**

Saron, selected for INSA's Cyber Talent Center, has turned her passion for technology into purpose. As a final-year Computer Science and Engineering student, she mentors girls in STEM, leading digital literacy workshops. Her apprenticeship in cybersecurity at INSA allows her to protect digital spaces while advocating for inclusive tech policies. Overcoming gender biases in a male-dominated field, Saron empowers others, proving mentorship and opportunity can transform futures.

[Read more](#)

**Kidist, a project coordinator, is SASA! "The Community broke its silence on VAWG and started to act, even when perpetrators were family members."**

SASA! is a proven community mobilization approach to prevent GBV through local activism, media and advocacy, communication materials, and training. Its name, meaning "NOW" in Swahili, reflects its focus on urgent action. SASA! transforms harmful norms by raising awareness of VAWG, encouraging community intervention, and promoting support for survivors. Where the community once denied VAWG, it now stands with survivors rather than blaming them. Household relationships have also improved, with men increasingly sharing domestic and childcare responsibilities.

[Read more](#)



Photo: UN Women/Fikerte Abebe

## Becoming a funding partner

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 calls for transformative, collaborative action. Strategic, innovative, and efficient funding partnerships are essential to realize UN Women's vision of a gender-equal world, articulated in the Strategic Note.

## How can funding partners engage with UN Women's SN?

Partners may provide **SN direct funding**, which is softly earmarked by geography (regional or country SN). These funds are flexible and catalytic; they enable UN Women to choose the highest-impact use of the funds in the country in which it operates. SN funding is also predictable, as commitments are often made for the full SN time span, better enabling transformative results for women and girls.

Importantly, SN direct funds strengthen UN Women's ability to respond to emerging needs in response to unforeseen contextual changes, including humanitarian needs (e.g., to prioritize the safety of women and girls in a crisis or in response to the adverse effects of natural disasters).

Furthermore, these funds can be reallocated when emerging evidence suggests a new approach is needed to produce the desired result more efficiently or effectively. They can be used for diverse types of costs and can therefore draw funds to areas that are often unfunded—yet crucial—such as advocacy for behavioural change, UN Coordination, etc., supporting the organization's effectiveness.

Funding partners may also provide **project funding**, which is tightly earmarked for a specific project or initiative in the SN. These funds are not flexible. Reporting on the use of such funds is done against the specific project but not against the full SN.

SN funding represents an ambitious, targeted, and smart investment in gender equality and women's empowerment.

To learn more about UN Women Ethiopia's funding partners landscape visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

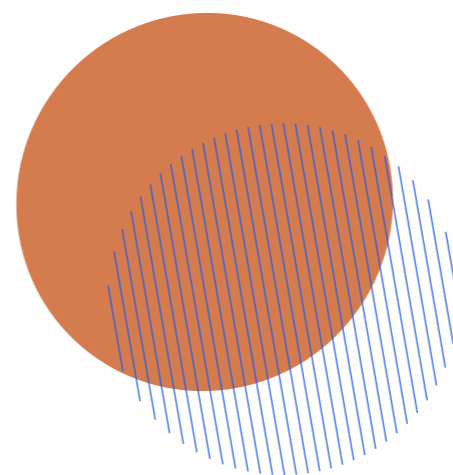


Photo: UN Women/Tensae Yemane



Photo: UN Women/Tensae Yemane

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

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

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



UN WOMEN ETHIOPIA

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