

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

2022 HLPF Theme: “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

In focus SDG Goals: SDGs 4 on quality education; 5 on gender equality; 14 on life below water; 15 on life on land; and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

UNFPA is requested by the President of ECOSOC (PR of Botswana) to provide substantive inputs to the review of the 2022 HLPF theme and the SDGs undergoing in depth review from its vantage point. (see attached letter)

The responses below are framed around five guiding questions provided in the ECOSOC President’s letter. For the purposes of this submission, and in keeping with UNFPAs mandate areas as reflected in the ICPD Agenda, Nairobi Commitments and our UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025, as we review the theme, our responses are focused primarily on *SDG 5: Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women and girls (including targets SDG 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.6), and to a lesser extent on SDG 4- Quality Education, and SDG 17- Data and Partnerships. Examples of UNFPA collaborations with other UN entities are annexed to this document.*

Guiding Questions and Responses

Question (a) Progress, experience, lessons learned, challenges and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of in -depth SDGs bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic, environmental) and the interlinkages across the SDGs and targets, including policy implications of their synergies and trade-offs.

Overall

The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes the largest global public health crisis in a century, and has resulted in significant health, social and economic challenges. Movement restrictions since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, following significant surges in COVID cases in countries, have resulted in disruptions across all sectors including health, education, and employment resulting in decreases in women’s labour force participation, increases in women’s unequal share of unpaid care and domestic work, increases in incidents of violence against women and girls as well as harmful practices. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to undermine decades of social and economic progress.

SDG 5- and the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 affects women and men differently. Women make up a significant portion of frontline health workers and continue to do the majority of unpaid care work. Women and girls are more likely to be poor and living in vulnerable situations, making them more likely to bear the brunt of health, economic and social shocks such as COVID-19. As health, social protection and legal systems are weakened or under pressure, the pandemic makes existing inequalities for women and girls worse, placing them at higher risk of domestic violence, abuse and other forms of discrimination.

- **Women, including through civil society and grassroots organisations, are playing leading roles as crisis responders amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, not only as frontline healthcare workers but as unpaid caregivers, and community mobilizers.**

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

- **Through the Global Fund for Women, UNFPA supported grassroots feminist crisis responses to COVID-19 by investing in local women-led organizations to directly support communities they serve and ensure their continuity.** Furthermore, UNFPA leveraged partnerships with youth networks, religious and traditional leaders, and women's rights organisations to support risk communication, community engagement in primary prevention and stigma reduction. This was to ensure women and girls' agency, decision making and voice with a constant focus on their safety, dignity and rights.
- **To ensure that no one is left behind in accessing essential and lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services and commodities, UNFPA contributes to the prevention and control of the pandemic, to ensure the continuity of essential services for women, young people and vulnerable populations such as older persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI, ethnic minorities including Afro-descendants and indigenous people.** UNFPA developed specific guidance and provided platforms to raise the visibility of and address the challenges faced by these groups during the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery phase. Leveraging data and geospatial mapping for SDG visualization, and harnessing data from the COVID-19 Vulnerability dashboards to ensure that decision makers have the information to target needed interventions towards those most at risk and furthest behind.
- UNFPA works to protect frontline health and social workers, 70 percent of whom are women that need personal protective equipment PPE. In an unprecedented joint procurement collaboration with 11 UN agencies and two international NGOs, the participating agencies contributed to securing access to a sustainable supply of affordable PPE. UNFPA was able to procure PPE worth \$29 million for 101 countries in 2020¹. Women and girls were able to access SRH services, including antenatal care, family planning supplies, and social services related to GBV.
- **Estimates produced by UNFPA, Avenir Health, Johns Hopkins University and Victoria University in April 2020 suggested devastating impacts of the pandemic on the rates of gender-based violence worldwide.** Due to disruption of prevention and protection services and increased vulnerability and perpetration of violence during emergencies, 31 million additional cases of GBV were expected, with additional 15 million cases for every three months of continued lockdown.
- **The long-term impacts of the pandemic on gender-based violence against women and girls (SDG 5.2) still remain largely unknown.** School drop-out and negative coping mechanisms such as child marriage are likely to increase the risks of women and girls being subjected to gender based violence (GBV) in their lifetime. Furthermore, overwhelmed healthcare and social service systems and diminished capacity of civil society and local support groups due to shortage of funds and redirection of resources, leaves survivors of GBV without readily available essential services to escape the cycle of violence.
- **Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, UNFPA has supported GBV interventions across 150 countries to ensure delivery of survivor-centred response services, prevention programmes, coordination systems as well as the provision of technical support and advocacy to ensure laws and policies are human rights compliant.** UNFPA also supports the Joint UN Programme on the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence (Phase III forthcoming), the joint UN RESPECT framework roll out and the Spotlight Initiative. UNFPA also

¹ Pandemic Pivot: Achieving Transformative Results in the Covid-19 Pandemic (UNFPA, 2021)

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

developed under the kNOwVAWdata initiative a Decision Tree to support safe and ethical decision making around the collection of data.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic has had negative impacts on the rates of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child marriage (SDG 5.3).** There have been increased risks of girls undergoing female genital mutilation with resulting setbacks in meeting SDG target 5.3 by 2030. **UNFPA estimates there may be as many as 2 million cases of female genital mutilation by 2030 that would have otherwise been averted.**
 - The **UNFPA and UNICEF Joint Programme on FGM** is the largest global programme to accelerate abandonment of FGM provides care for its consequences. This programme works at the community, national, regional and global levels to raise awareness of the harms caused by FGM and to empower communities, women and girls to make the decision to abandon it. The Joint Programme has helped more than 3.2 million girls and women receive prevention, protection and care services related to FGM.
 - The **UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage** promotes the rights of adolescent girls to avert marriage and pregnancy and enables them to achieve their aspirations through education and alternative pathways. The Global Programme supports households in demonstrating positive attitudes, empowers girls to direct their own futures, and strengthens the services that allow them to do so. It also addresses the underlying conditions that sustain child marriage, advocating for laws and policies that protect girls' rights while highlighting the importance of using robust data to inform such policies.

Question (b) Assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “leaving no one behind” against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic and for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, within the respective areas addressed by your intergovernmental body.

Leaving no one behind, and visualising the SDGs with data.

To ensure that no one is left behind with regards to access to essential and life saving services and commodities, UNFPA contributes to the prevention and control of the pandemic, to ensure the continuity of essential services for women, young people and vulnerable populations such as older persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI, ethnic minorities including Afro-descendants and indigenous people, and developed specific guidance and provided platforms to raise the visibility of and address the challenges faced by these groups during the COVID-19 response and recovery. Leveraging data and geospatial mapping for SDG visualization, and harnessing data from the COVID-19 Vulnerability dashboards to ensure that decision makers have the information to target needed interventions towards those most at risk and furthest behind.

Humanitarian contexts

- **Countries facing long-running crises, fragility, conflict, natural disasters, displacement and other health emergencies are among those left furthest behind, and faced even greater negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.** Many displacement camps and informal settlements are densely populated and have poor access to running water, making infection prevention measures even more difficult. Shortages of health workers and poor access to critical sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services exacerbated the challenges women and girls face in these settings.
- **More than 50 per cent of all maternal deaths and up to 70 percent of gender-based violence occur in humanitarian and fragile settings affecting the most vulnerable groups including those left behind such as women and girls with disabilities and elderly and LGBTQI.**

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

Humanitarian crises exacerbate many of the prevailing gender inequalities that exist in societies, which can be seen in the disproportionate impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and girls.

- **As COVID-19 placed additional demands on humanitarian systems that were already straining to address an increasing number of complex emergencies with limited resources, early warning and anticipatory actions are critical to forestall disasters.** Linking preparedness, forecasting and early warning efforts with anticipatory action, response and recovery is crucial for protecting the most vulnerable to shocks and stresses, notably the impacts of future pandemics and climate change.

Question (c) Actions and policy recommendations in areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the implementation of the SDGs under review.

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG 4)

Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (SDG 4.7)

- **The maintenance and further implementation of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum is critical to the achievement of sustainable development.** CSE promotes positive gender norms change to advance gender equality and human rights. For example, HIV and sexuality education that explicitly addresses gender equality and power relationships is five times more likely to reduce STIs and unintended pregnancy than education that ignores gendered power dynamics (80% vs. 17% effective).
- **In humanitarian and crisis settings, if delivery of multi-year and holistic comprehensive sexuality education is not feasible, it is fundamental to provide gender transformative, non-discriminatory sexuality information to young people.** CSE delivered in formal or non-formal settings has potential to significantly reduce GBV and harmful practices, including child marriage, FGM and gender-biased sex selection.

Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (SDG 5)

Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (SDG 5.2)

- Nearly 1 in 3, or 30%, of women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence or both.² **Alarming evidence shows how violence is affecting young women, as the highest rates (16%) of intimate partner violence in the past 12 months occurred among young women aged between 15 and 24 and over a quarter of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner at least once in their lifetime (since age 15).**³

² [Insert WHO source for data]

³ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

- The UNFPA geospatial dashboard⁴ provides disaggregated data on the prevalence of intimate partner violence disaggregated by age, education, employment and wealth, as well as at the sub-national level. This dashboard allows a high level of accessibility to available data to enable evidence-based and data-driven policies, laws and programmes that can be effectively targeted to yield results.

Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (SDG 5.3)

- **There is a need to increase FGM consideration in humanitarian preparedness and response systems and increase access to services for FGM survivors in humanitarian settings.** Evidence of the impact of humanitarian crises, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, on female genital mutilation (FGM) prevalence rates is increasing.
- **Child marriage is a human rights violation, affecting girls and women in every region of the world. At least 650 million girls and women alive today were married in childhood. The practice of child marriage is rooted in gender inequality and power imbalances between men and women** – and perpetuating child marriage practises sustains these gender imbalances by limiting opportunities for girls and women to realize their rights and full potential in terms of health, education, income, and other dimensions of social and political equality including full and effective participation and decision-making in public life and a life free from violence.

Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences (SDG 5.6)

We have witnessed how the pandemic affected the health and protection of women and girls in fragile contexts and complex crises. Life-saving sexual and reproductive health services were disrupted, inequalities deepened, and gender-based violence skyrocketed, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence and child marriage, along with the need for mental health and psychosocial support.

- **Realising gender equality and the empowerment of women requires that women are able to exercise autonomy over their bodies and make their own decisions about their health.** SDG Indicators 5.6.1 and 5.6.2., for which UNFPA is custodian, measures the legal and regulatory framework for sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as well as women's reproductive decision-making.⁵
- **To achieve SDG target 5.6 by 2030, unnecessary legal, medical, clinical and regulatory barriers to the utilization of sexual and reproductive health services must be removed, and changes in social norms and government policies that allow women and girls to fully exercise their reproductive rights must be prioritized.** The removal of discriminatory laws against women and girls is further underscored as one of the UNSG's five gender equality priorities, as articulated in his "Our Common Agenda" report, and this is essential to enable the achievement of SDG 5 by 2030.
- The numerous legal barriers and conflicting plural legal systems that prevent many women, and adolescents, from making autonomous decisions about their sexual and reproductive health must also be removed. These efforts must be part of our amplified efforts within the Decade of Action

⁴ <https://www.unfpa.org/geospatial-dashboard-intimate-partner-violence>

⁵ <https://www.unfpa.org/sdg-5-6>

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

to ensure that all women and men will be able to exercise their equal rights to sexual and reproductive health.

The data shows that women who have decision making over their SRHR are significantly less likely to have ever experienced intimate partner violence

- **Gender equality, women’s empowerment and overall decision-making in public and private spaces is closely correlated to womens’ abilities to exercise SRHR decision making, including their ability to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and HIV.** Women who have access to sexual and reproductive health knowledge and services will have better health outcomes. They are more likely able to identify how to prevent HIV, and other STIs. Pregnant women with access to SRH knowledge and services are also more likely to attend the recommended number of prenatal visits and have their most recent delivery with a skilled birth attendant.
- **The existence of an enabling legal, policy and programmatic environment, access to reproductive rights literacy, and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) for boys and girls,** in line with the International Technical Guidance, is critical to ensuring that women and adolescent girls are able to exercise bodily autonomy and SRHR.

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17)

- **The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact national data collection.** At a moment when there is urgent need for up-to-date population data for COVID-19 response and recovery , censuses and surveys have been postponed or delayed.
- Prior to COVID-19, a majority of UNFPA programme countries (83) were scheduled to conduct their 2020 round censuses in 2020 and 2021, with only 21 scheduled for 2022. These countries would ideally now be focusing on data analysis and utilisation for development. However, due to COVID-19, only 21 programme countries managed to successfully implement the census in 2020 and 2021, with a majority shifting to 2022 and beyond. UNFPA is now facing enormous demand for support with as many as 60 programme countries now attempting to conduct censuses in 2022, and another 20 planning for 2023.
- Although changes in the levels of reporting (administrative data) can be provided, it is context specific and highly variable. Availability of alternate and online services, level of capacity of existing services, accessibility to digital technology including mobile phones, and movement restrictions are all variables which define whether reporting increases or decreases. In settings where there are fewer barriers to freedom of movement and where lifelines are still accessible to women and girls, we are likely to see an increase in those seeking services.

Question (d) Policy recommendations, commitments and cooperation measures for promoting a sustainable, resilient and inclusive recovery from the pandemic while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda; (Focus on SDG 4, 5, 17, COVID recovery, LNOB)

- **Promoting and protecting human rights, including civic space as called for in the UN Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights, will enable civil society to tailor responses to the needs on the ground, build trust, promote accountability and amplify the voices of those not heard.** Meaningful and inclusive public and civil society participation is crucial to the SDGs and one that requires open civic space.

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

- **Discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes must be transformed to unlock progress to achieve the SDGs.** Supporting community-based women's rights organizations and fully engaging men and boys in challenging harmful norms as allies, is required to achieve gender equality. Policies to advance SDG implementation and acceleration should be based on detailed and disaggregated data that identify vulnerabilities, exposure to discrimination and specific deprivations including overlapping deprivations among women, children, indigenous peoples, youth, rural populations, older persons, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ individuals and others.
- Ensuring the voices and leadership of women to prevent and respond to crises. Women are the experts, they are on the ground before, during and after humanitarian crises to support their families and communities. They have an intimate understanding of the lives of the women and girls in their communities and the risks they face. Thus, partnering and prioritizing investment in women-led organizations is crucial, as they understand their communities' needs and are the ones providing front-line support to women and girls and achieving SDGs in fragile and humanitarian contexts.
- **A holistic approach to data collection and analysis is required to enumerate and capture the situation of those most at risk of being left behind,** governments need to adapt, from making household surveys more inclusive of all populations, to exploring innovative data collection methods such as geo-referencing population data during censuses and surveys and conducting specialized surveys to capture groups missing from routine data sources.
- **Creating an enabling environment for multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder partnerships at all levels, including youth-led organizations and women's organizations, is required to accelerate the realization of the SDGs.** Of the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis, the most significant has been interdependence and the need for stronger collaborative action. Ensuring that everyone is protected and can recover requires a range of partners working together across sectors and issue areas, and harnessing their respective expertise, innovations and financial resources to help transition to an inclusive and sustainable future.
- **South-South and triangular cooperation can holistically address the needs of women, adolescents and youth, while addressing structural inequalities that threaten their rights, health and well-being.**
- **Leveraging the inter-linkages and interconnections between the SDGs,** is critical to accelerating progress in the Decade of Action and enhancing our collective impact for an inclusive, resilient and green recovery from the pandemic.

Question (e) Key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2022 HLPF.

- **Reaffirm the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reiterate the importance of the principles recognized therein, including leaving no one behind, and its comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals and targets that are integrated and indivisible, balancing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.**
- **Acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have significant impacts and is undermining decades of development efforts and reinforcing pre-existing obstacles to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, exacerbating structural inequalities, gaps and systemic challenges and risks. Regret that the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have adversely affected recent progress on gender equality.⁶**
- **Recognize that, through our global interdependence, interconnectedness and solidarity, the world is only as strong as its weakest health system and reaffirm that health is a precondition**

⁶ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/28467E_2021_58_EN.pdf

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

for, and indicator and accelerator of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.⁷

- **Recognise the role of women and girls in COVID response and recovery, the disproportionate impact that the pandemic has placed on them, including the rising rates of gender based violence, increased risk of poverty, disproportionate burdens of unpaid care work disrupted access to life saving sexual and reproductive health and rights services, and underscore the urgent need for the global community to mainstream gender transformative and gender responsive approaches across and COVID recovery and sustainable development policies.**
- **Reaffirm the call for increased action to strengthen health systems to achieve universal health coverage that includes access to affordable, quality essential health services, including financial risk protection and access to safe, effective, quality, affordable and essential medicines, diagnostics, vaccines and other health technologies for all.**

Further proposed key messages and possible contributions:

SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG4.7: Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

- Reaffirm that children, adolescents and youth are important agents of change and underline the necessity of investing in them with a view to addressing multidimensional deprivations, ending intergenerational poverty, harnessing the demographic dividend and empowering them to build a more prosperous future.
- Recognizing that addressing the needs of adolescents and youth is a critical lever to engage young people as leaders and agents of change, and to leave no one behind, call for targeted investments to strengthen the capabilities of adolescents and youth, to engage safely in protecting themselves and their communities from the COVID-19, and to contribute meaningfully to inclusive recovery efforts, and to the achievement of the SDGs in the Decade of Action.
- Stress the need to provide adolescents and youth with an enabling environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities, including to support countries to reap the demographic dividend.
- Commit to ensuring that youth education, skills development and employment are at the centre of national priorities to enable them to fulfil their potential as active members of society, particularly due to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Commit to including youth perspectives in the development and assessment of strategies and programmes designed to address their specific needs and underscore the importance of supporting young people's participation in the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda.

SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda remains crucial. National responses to the COVID 19 pandemic must be gender-responsive and integrate women's

⁷ <https://www.un.org/pga/73/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2019/07/FINAL-draft-UHC-Political-Declaration.pdf>

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

participation and leadership and ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls without discrimination.

- Reaffirm that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the SDGs and targets and recommit to targeted and accelerated action to remove all barriers to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and the realization and full enjoyment of their human rights.

SDG 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

- Call for the elimination of structural barriers, discriminatory laws and social norms that impede women's equal economic opportunities and create inequalities in women's access to services, including health services, labour force participation, entrepreneurship, pay, working conditions, and social protection.

SDG 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

- Reaffirm commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and harmful practices.
- Commit to strengthening survivor-centered approaches to prevent and respond to gender-based violence against women and girls, and to strengthen protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

SDG 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

- Stress that harmful practices represent a denial of the dignity and integrity of the individual and a violation of human rights.
- Recognize that harmful practices often seek to coercively control women and girls and their sexuality, and are often interconnected with each other, as well as with other forms of violence, discrimination and subordination of women and girls.
- Recognize that harmful practices encompass a range of abuse which results in economic and social coercion, physical and psychological damage, disability and even death and that harmful practices, including FGM and child marriage, as well as other practices such as gender biased-sex selection or son-preference, are driven by harmful social and gender norms and are integrally linked to gender equality.

SDG 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

- Recognize that women and girls undertake a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work and that such uneven distribution of responsibilities limits women's ability to participate in decision-making processes and occupy leadership positions, and poses significant constraints on women's and girls' completion of, or progress in, education and training, on women's entry and re-entry and advancement in the paid labour market and on their economic opportunities and entrepreneurial activities. We stress the need to recognize and adopt measures to reduce, redistribute and value the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men within the household and by prioritizing, inter alia, sustainable infrastructure, social protection policies and accessible,

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

affordable and quality social services, including care services, childcare and maternity, paternity or parental leave.

SDG 5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

- Recognize that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and women’s full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and decision-making in public life as well as the elimination of violence are essential for achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and ensuring the wellbeing of all. It recognizes that women and girls play a vital role as agents for sustainable development.
- Recognize that women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life requires that young women and adolescent girls are ensured inclusive and meaningful participation both as a way to secure a better future, and to ensure that all voices are heard.
- Acknowledge that women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, requires first that they have a voice as participants, as leaders, and activists, on issues that have a direct impact on their lives, such as education, health, economic development and conflict resolution, policy outcomes are likely to be harmful and ineffective and to lead to the violation of women’s rights. Their meaningful participation also depends on their full access to social protection, sustainable infrastructure and public services, in particular health and education. That is especially the case for women and girls who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women who are indigenous, have disabilities, are poor, belong to ethnic or racial minorities and migrant women. For women to participate and take decisions on an equal footing with men, more efforts are needed to ensure that universal health coverage reforms prioritize the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls across the life course.⁸

SDG 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

- Recommit to ensuring by 2030 universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes, and recognize that meeting these objectives will greatly contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as other SDGs.
- Recognize that to achieve SDG5 by 2030, legal, medical, clinical and regulatory barriers to the utilization of sexual and reproductive health services must be removed, and changes in social norms and government policies that allow women and girls to fully exercise their reproductive rights must be prioritized, and these efforts must be part of our amplified efforts within the Decade of Action to ensure that all women and men will be able to exercise their equal rights to sexual and reproductive health.

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (SDG 17)

Enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and

⁸ ([SG Report](#), paragraph 23)

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts (17.18)

- Recognize the importance of quality statistical data for inclusive development, and in that regard call for the timely completion of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses; improved civil registration and vital statistics; and encourage use of National Transfer Accounts, and tools such as Population Situation Analysis (PSA), and efforts to ensure the integration of population dynamics within national development planning. Affirm data is a critical accelerator for delivering on the SDGs within the Decade of Action, and that leveraging existing data and innovative techniques and analyses enables identification of pockets of deprivation, and effective targeting of resources and interventions to ensure no one is left behind.
- Recommend to strengthen national statistical capacities to address the data gaps and provide high-quality, timely, reliable, disaggregated data and statistics that fully integrate the Sustainable Development Goals in our monitoring and reporting systems.
- Encourage international cooperation supporting statistical capacity-building in developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable countries, which face the greatest challenges in collecting, analysing and using reliable data and statistics to accelerate the pace and scale of sustainable development interventions.

**Annexes: 1. Field Examples of UNFPA collaboration with other UN agencies;
2. Relevant UNFPA resources.**

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

Annex 1: Field examples of UNFPA's collaboration with other UN agencies

- **In the Asia-Pacific Region**, UNFPA and UN Women, conducted a big data analysis, which assessed internet searches related to violence against women and help-seeking rose significantly during COVID-19 lockdowns in eight Asian countries, buttressing evidence of the particular dangers faced by women confined to homes or restricted in their movements. The study covered eight countries: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand and highlights that search related to physical violence increased significantly between October 2019 and September 202 and searches using help-seeking keywords increased in almost all countries. Evidence shows help-seeking searches increased in all countries except for India and Indonesia. That is, victims of VAWG or those close to victims are actively searching for information on what to do when they face abuse from their partners or other perpetrators and/or want to help. The magnitude varies across countries. From October 2019 to September 2020, Malaysia had the highest increase (70%) followed by Nepal (47%), Thailand (29%) and Singapore (29%). Different degrees of controlling behaviors by abusers may be affecting women's ability to seek help on-line. although so too did online campaigns to support access to online service provision.
- **In East and Southern Africa region**, UNFPA and UN Women conducted a joint study, to determine opportunities and constraints for gender equality and women's empowerment in the region highlighted key issues in relation to gender-based violence. Although it cannot be considered a prevalence survey by any means it highlighted that in 5 of the countries, namely Ethiopia, Malawi, South Africa, Mozambique and Uganda, between 45% of women in Mozambique and 79.8% in Uganda believed that the incidence of GBV had increased since the onset of COVID-19.
- **In Lebanon**, after the implementation of a hotline, the number of women and girls seeking support more than doubled between March and April compared to the first two months of the year. Data also shows however, that restrictions on mobility, lack of information, increased isolation and fear of infection have led to dramatic decreases in the ability of women and girls to report incidents of violence and seek services. In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, we witnessed a 50% decrease in reports of GBV between February and March 2020.

Annex 2: Relevant UNFPA Resources***1. Evidence to End Gender-based Violence (SDG 5.2)***

Interactive dashboards are providing a visual presentation of population data. In 2021, two data analysis publications captured the latest insights: [Prevalence Rates, Trends and Disparities in Intimate Partner Violence](#) was published in February, and [Mapping UNFPA Leadership in Gender-Based Violence: Getting to Zero](#) was published in November. The UNFPA [geospatial dashboard on Intimate Partner Violence \(IPV\)](#) features national data for 119 countries around SDG Indicator 5.2.1, along with sub-national data and disaggregated data on IPV by age, place of residence, employment, education, and household wealth. In addition, a new Population Data Portal will be live in early 2022 and a new dashboard based on UNFPA gender-based violence (GBV) programming data will be launched in March on International Women's Day.

2. Population Data (SDG 17.18, 17.19)

UNFPA became the new institutional host of the [Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics](#) (CRVS) in 2021, thereby enhancing UNFPA capacity to support national efforts to develop and scale-up sustainable CRVS systems that work for all, especially women and girls. Without birth, marriage, divorce, and death registration, women and girls may fall through the cracks. CRVS data also provides

UNFPA submission to 2022 HLPF Thematic Review of progress

insight into reproductive health outcomes. UNFPA supports CRVS efforts in many countries, such as the digital [iCivil birth registration pilot](#) in Burkina Faso in 2021.

With the rollout of the 13th UN Population Inquiry, the Technical Division welcomes new data and an expansion from 107 to 142 countries covered in the questionnaire. The data will inform an update of SDG reporting figures and country profiles, in particular data in the UNFPA publication on [measuring SDG target 5.6](#).

In other support for population data and analysis, UNFPA and Statistics Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding for ongoing collaboration. Also this year, as an example of support for population data, the National Bureau of Statistics completed fieldwork and started data processing and analysis for the [South Sudan Population Estimation Survey 2021](#) with UNFPA support.

3. [Female Genital Mutilation \(SDG 5.3\)](#)

Ending female genital mutilation by 2030 continues to drive UNFPA, UNICEF and partners in the next phase of the joint global programme, which launched in 2021 and is presented in the new Phase IV programme document, [Delivering the Global Promise: End FGM by 2030](#). The February 2021 social media campaign and [High-Level Event](#) broadcast the launch. The new phase is informed by [a joint evaluation](#) of the programme 2018 to 2021 and energized by forward-looking initiatives such as the [UNFPA FGM HackLab](#) soliciting ideas and solutions from youth as well as a [global youth roundtable](#). The annual [Performance Report](#) showcases progress despite the heightened risk of this harmful practice under the pandemic, with 120,605 girls saved from this harmful practice and some 80 million messages on ending FGM disseminated digitally in 2020.

Read more: [FGM Elimination and COVID-19: Sustaining the Momentum](#)

4. [Bodily Autonomy \(SDG 5.6\)](#)

Lead technical contributors from UNFPA's Technical Division are deeply engaged in the research and development of flagship UNFPA publications. In 2021, TD provided data, research and case studies that informed the State of World Population report, [My Body is my Own](#), focused on bodily autonomy. The report is available in five languages to [download](#) or view [online](#). TD produced a related Technical Brief, [Bodily autonomy: a cornerstone for achieving gender equality and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights](#), which provides a conceptual framework, explains the term and addresses implications for programming and States' obligations. The brief supports UNFPA Country Offices in advancing bodily autonomy in their work. On the same topic, UNFPA unveiled a set of five-year [commitments](#) at the [Generation Equality Forum](#) (GEF) in Paris, where it co-led the [Action Coalition](#) on Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

Read more: [My Body is my Own: Claiming the right to autonomy and self-determination](#)