

WHO's action on United Nations system-wide action plans

Progress towards achieving the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Report by the Director-General

1. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) is a unified accountability mechanism for all United Nations entities. The framework includes performance indicators (PIs) aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The UN-SWAP framework was strengthened in 2024 with more stringent benchmarks, aligned with the Secretary-General's Gender Equality Acceleration Plan. WHO's assessment against this framework combines self-evaluation with an independent expert review led by UN Women.
2. Under UN-SWAP 3.0, WHO's aggregate score is 72%, compared with 82% in 2024, assessed under the previous UN-SWAP framework. This difference is primarily attributable to the strengthened benchmark requirements introduced under UN-SWAP 3.0, rather than a deterioration of performance.
3. Notwithstanding the higher threshold, WHO recorded improvements in several areas assessed under the framework, including with regard to strategic planning, the advancement of gender equality results, leadership, audit, prevention and response to sexual misconduct, and stakeholder engagement. The figure and table below provide an overview of WHO's progress between the first ratings in 2018 and the latest ratings in 2025, against the higher benchmarks across most PIs in the revised UN-SWAP 3.0 framework.
4. With regard to results-based management, WHO exceeds requirements under PI.1, reflecting the Sustainable Development Goals-aligned analysis and objectives to address gender-related disparities that are embedded in the Fourteenth General Programme of Work, 2025–2028. Under PI.2, WHO meets requirements, with standardized guidance on data and reporting against gender equality-related results. Under PI.3, WHO exceeds requirements, including systematic reporting to governing bodies on Sustainable Development Goals-aligned indicators.

5. With regard to oversight, WHO exceeds requirements under PI.4, continuing to apply United Nations Evaluation Group standards across all evaluations. WHO also exceeds requirements under PI.5, with the internal audit function systematically integrating gender equality in individual audit engagements and assessing the implementation of WHO's policies. Recurrent or high-risk findings are regularly reported to WHO's governing bodies through the annual reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, ensuring transparency and follow-up.

6. With regard to accountability, WHO exceeds requirements under PI.6, which is anchored in WHA resolution WHA60.25 (2007) and its associated implementation plan. Under PI.7, WHO exceeds the requirements for leadership, reflecting senior-level commitment and an established cross-organizational coordination mechanism. WHO's rating for performance management under PI.8 is assessed as "approaches requirements", reflecting impacts on the delivery of some planned activities during the 2025 organizational realignment.

7. With regard to human and financial resources, WHO meets requirements under PI.9 through the application of a mandatory four-point gender equality marker. WHO has set clear financial targets for advancing gender equality, while under the revised UN-SWAP framework it is assessed as "approaches requirements" against the PI.10 benchmarks. WHO meets requirements for gender architecture under PI.11, including with regard to strengthened architecture and a network of focal points across the Organization.

Fig. WHO's performance on UN-SWAP: 2018–2025

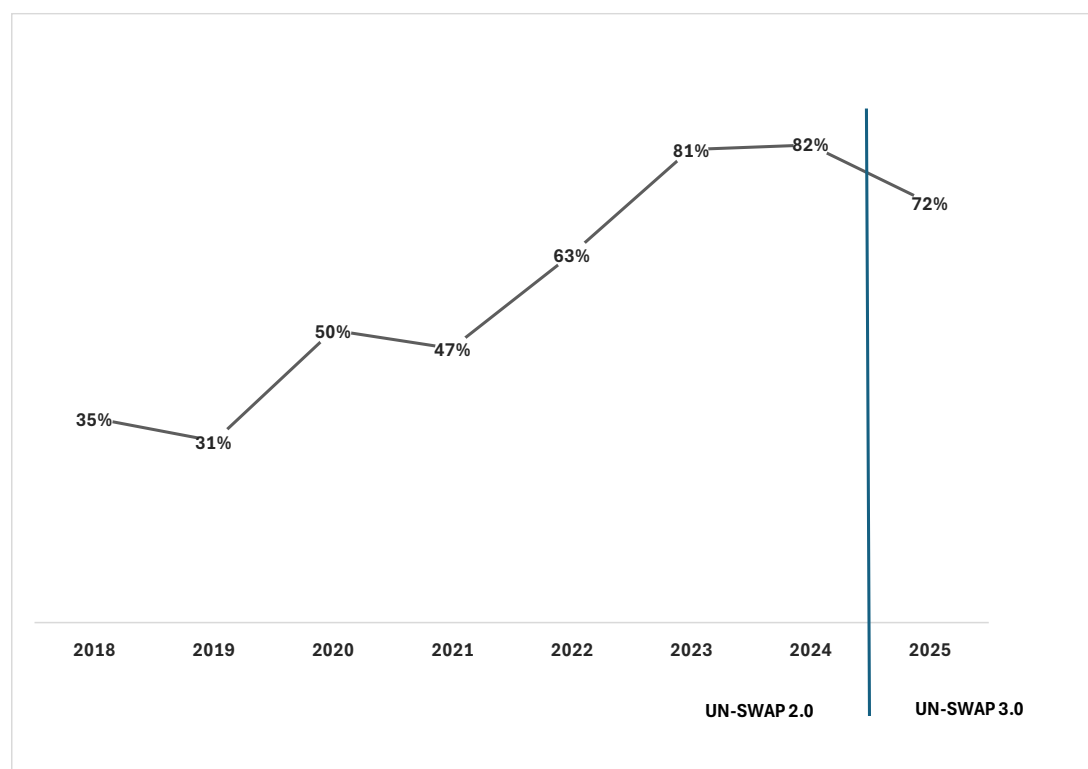


Table. WHO's performance against UN-SWAP performance indicators

	UN-SWAP 2.0							UN-SWAP 3.0	
Performance indicator (PI)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Indicator benchmark/ requirement
Results-based management									
PI.1: Strategic planning of gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Higher
PI.2: Reporting and use of data on gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets	Higher
PI.3: Achievement of gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Meets	Exceeds	Higher
Oversight									
PI.4: Evaluation	Meets	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Similar
PI.5: Audit	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Higher
Accountability									
PI.6: Policy	Meets	Meets	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Higher
PI.7: Leadership	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Higher
PI.8: Gender-responsive performance management	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Approaches	Higher
Human and financial resources									
PI.9: Gender equality marker	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets	Higher
PI.10: Financial targets	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Higher
PI.11: Gender architecture	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Higher
Capacity									
PI.12: Capacity development	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Higher
PI.13: Organizational culture	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Approaches	Higher
PI.14: Protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (PSEA) and sexual harassment (SH)	New indicator in the UN-SWAP 3.0 framework							Exceeds	New
PI.14: (former): Capacity assessment	Approaches	Missing	Missing	Missing	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds	Replaced by PSEA indicator	N/A
PI.15: Equal representation of women	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Higher
Knowledge, communication and coherence									
PI.16: Knowledge management and communication	Approaches	Approaches	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Meets	Higher
PI.17: Interagency engagement	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Similar
PI.18: Stakeholder engagement	New indicator in the UN-SWAP 3.0 framework							Exceeds	New
Meets or exceeds	6/16 (35%)	5/16 (31%)	8/16 (50%)	7/16 (47%)	10/16 (63%)	13/16 (81%)	14/17 (82%)	13/18 (72%)	

8. With regard to capacity, WHO approaches requirements for PI.12 under the revised framework; in 2025, WHO introduced mandatory training through collaboration with UN Women. WHO's 2025 rating for organizational culture under PI.13 is assessed as approaches requirements, reflecting the impacts of organizational realignment on the delivery of some planned activities. WHO exceeds requirements for the new indicator on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PI.14), reflecting a comprehensive and resourced approach to the prevention and response to sexual misconduct. WHO is assessed as approaches requirements under PI.15. While progress has been observed in some areas, equal representation of women across all levels of the Organization has not yet been achieved. WHO continues to address this through its human resources policies and workforce planning, and reports on these through other existing accountability mechanisms.

9. With regard to knowledge, communication and coherence, WHO meets the revised UN-SWAP 3.0 requirements. Under PI.16, WHO has established organizational mechanisms to support the generation, dissemination and use of knowledge on gender equality, including standardized guidance and communication approaches. These arrangements support consistent internal and external engagements. Under PI.17, WHO exceeds requirements. WHO participates consistently in relevant United Nations interagency mechanisms, including the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. Through these platforms, WHO contributes technical inputs and aligns its work with system-wide approaches. Under PI.18, a new indicator under UN-SWAP 3.0, WHO exceeds requirements, maintaining structured engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

10. WHO's aggregate score in 2025 reflects the application of the revised UN-SWAP 3.0 benchmarks. If the reporting was assessed against the same framework used in previous years (UN-SWAP 2.0), the aggregate score for WHO in 2025 would be equivalent to 82% (no change from 2024).

11. WHO remains committed to accelerating progress in 2026 to meet the heightened ambitions of the UN-SWAP 3.0 framework and this progress will be reflected in subsequent reporting to governing bodies.

Action by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee

12. The Committee is invited to note the report on WHO's performance against the revised UN-SWAP 3.0 framework, including the impact of strengthened benchmarks on the 2025 aggregate score, and to provide guidance in respect of the question set out below.

- What steps may the Committee wish to recommend to encourage the continued strengthening of the organizational enablers required under UN-SWAP 3.0, including through performance management, capacity development and organizational culture change, in order to accelerate progress against the heightened benchmarks?
