

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 the first United Nations system-wide accountability mechanism for gender equality and women's empowerment. Launched in 2018, the UN-SWAP framework 2.0 includes 17 performance indicators aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These indicators focus on institutional processes and actions at the individual entity level, establishing a common self-assessment method to advance towards the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment.
2. In 2024, WHO's performance in UN-SWAP was rated as "meets" or "exceeds" requirements in 82% of 17 performance indicators. This represents a modest increase in WHO's score from 81% in 2023, and steady progress from its initial and subsequent scores of 35% in 2018, 47% in 2021 and 63% in 2022. The Figure and the Table provide an overview of WHO's progress between the first ratings in 2018 and the latest ratings in 2024.

Figure. WHO's performance in UN-SWAP (2018–2024)

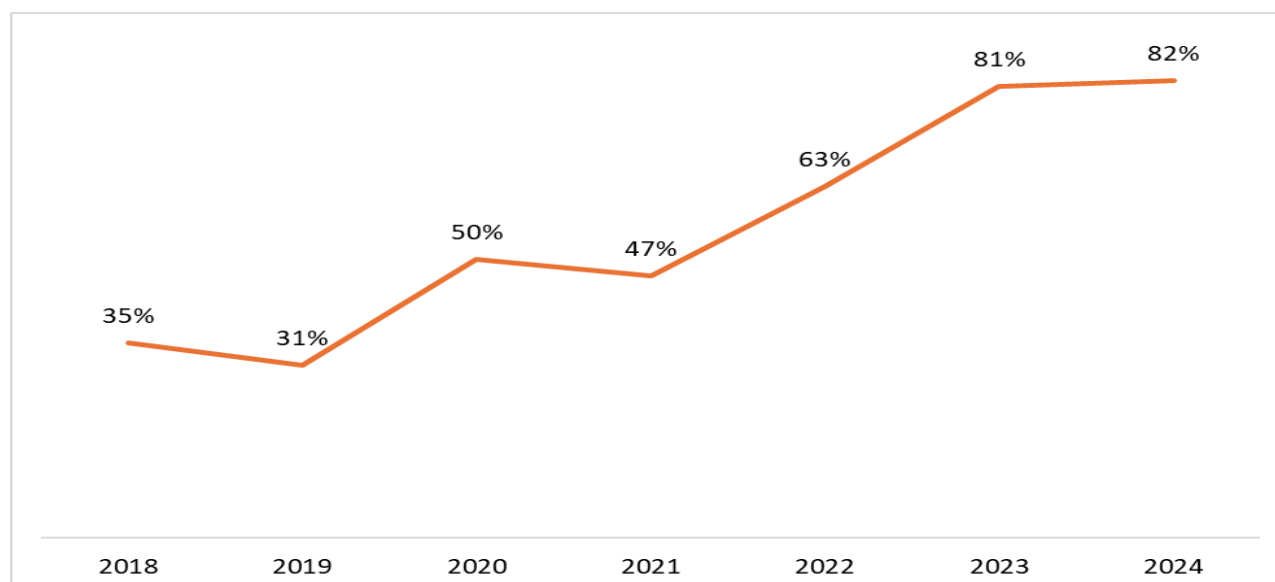


Table. WHO's performance in UN-SWAP 2.0

Performance indicators (PIs)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<i>Results-based management</i>							
PI.1: Strategic planning of gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
PI.2: Reporting on gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets
PI.3: Programmatic gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Meets
<i>Oversight</i>							
PI.4: Evaluation	Meets	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
PI.5: Audit	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
<i>Accountability</i>							
PI.6: Policy	Meets	Meets	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Exceeds
PI.7: Leadership	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets
PI.8: Gender-responsive performance management	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
<i>Human and financial resources</i>							
PI.9: Financial resource tracking	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets
PI.10: Financial resource allocation	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
PI.11: Gender architecture	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets
PI.12: Equal representation of women	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
PI.13: Organizational culture	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
<i>Capacity</i>							
PI.14: Capacity assessment	Approaches	Missing	Missing	Missing	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
PI.15: Capacity development	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
<i>Knowledge, communication and coherence</i>							
PI.16: Knowledge and communication	Approaches	Approaches	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
PI.17: Coherence	Approaches	Approaches	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
Meets or exceeds	6/16 (35%)	5/16 (31%)	8/16 (50%)	7/16 (47%)	10/16 (63%)	13/16 (81%)	14/17 (82%)

Results-based management indicators

3. This category includes three indicators: PI.1 (Strategic planning of gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results); PI.2 (Reporting on gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results); and PI.3 (Programmatic gender-related Sustainable Development Goals results).

4. In 2024, WHO continued to meet requirements for PI.1. The Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025 (GPW 13) includes one high-level result (outcome) on gender equality and women's empowerment that contributes to meeting the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. The outcome indicators of GPW 13 are disaggregated by relevant inequality measures, such as sex, age and location. Approved in 2024, the Fourteenth General Programme of Work, 2025–2028 (GPW 14) builds on GPW 13 by integrating gender equality objectives. Key advances include a stronger focus on cross-sectoral policies and a specific outcome level indicator on advancing gender equality in and through health.

5. Concerning PI.2, WHO maintained its score to meet requirements in 2024. The WHO Results Report to the governing bodies demonstrates the progress made towards the triple billion targets, including improved access to quality health services irrespective of gender, age or disability status. The annual *World Health Statistics* report uses sex-disaggregated data to monitor health equity, and sex-disaggregated data are systematically used across WHO's strategic plans and technical reports. The number of outcome indicators that provide sex-disaggregated data increased from 13 to 18 out of a total of 46 indicators relevant for sex disaggregation. A further four indicators are specific to women's health.

6. WHO began reporting on PI.3 for the first time in 2024 and was rated as meeting requirements. In addition to GPW 13, WHO contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 5 through various programmes on responding to gender-based violence and harmful practices, improving sexual and reproductive health, recognizing unpaid care, and promoting women's leadership, gender parity and gender responsive policies.

Oversight indicators

7. The two performance indicators in this category are PI.4 (Evaluation) and PI.5 (Audit). WHO exceeded requirements for PI.4 in 2024. The norms and standards on the integration of human rights and gender equality by the United Nations Evaluation Group were applied in all evaluations. The evaluations were assessed according to the following scoring criteria: (i) integration of gender equality and empowerment of women is included in the scope of analysis and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures the collection of related data; (ii) gender-responsive methodology and data analysis techniques are selected; and (iii) evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis. In 2024, 63% of the 11 corporate evaluations were rated as meeting requirements of all three scoring criteria.

8. WHO continued to meet requirements for PI.5 in 2024. The audits conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight of headquarters, regional offices and technical programmes at WHO country offices highlight the effectiveness of internal controls related to gender equality and women's empowerment. The annual report of the Internal Auditor to the World Health Assembly presents the relevant findings on gender equality and women's empowerment,¹ and on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Accountability indicators

9. This category includes three performance indicators: PI.6 (Policy), PI.7 (Leadership) and PI.8 (Gender-responsive performance management).

10. Concerning PI.6, WHO progressed from meeting requirements to exceeding them in 2024. The Roadmap of the WHO Secretariat to advance gender equality, human rights and health equity, 2023–2030 was launched in 2023. A steering committee comprising senior leadership at the three levels of WHO has been established to oversee the Roadmap's implementation. The WHO Gender Parity Policy (2023–2026) and corresponding implementation plan for 2024–2026 are being implemented. WHO's human resources business intelligence dashboard provides insight on a real-time basis across all regions and headquarters and offers measurements on the "gender parity indicator for all workforce" and the "number of women as heads of offices". WHO's business management system will serve as an opportunity to capture additional voluntary

¹ See document A77/23, paragraph 45.

disclosures about staff members' personal characteristics. The Sex and Gender Equity in Research guidelines have also been endorsed as WHO policy to facilitate a more systematic approach to the integration and reporting of sex and gender dimensions in research and data.

11. WHO continued to meet requirements for PI.7 in 2024. The Director-General continues to stand for gender equality and zero tolerance of gender-based violence. Heads of Offices and WHO Representatives take steps to foster an inclusive culture, including by making training programmes on gender equality and diversity available to all staff, incorporating gender parity goals into performance evaluations, and holding themselves and their teams accountable for progress.

12. WHO exceeded requirements for PI.8 in 2024. The performance evaluation assesses how well staff members demonstrate the mandatory competency of "respecting and promoting individual and cultural differences". All vacancy notices include references to the WHO Values Charter and a statement on WHO's commitment to zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse. The Global Award Policy recognizes exceptional contributions to gender and diversity goals. Over 50% of the awards in 2024 were based on contributions to gender, equality and diversity, and leadership in modelling WHO values.

Human and financial resources indicator

13. This category includes five indicators: PI.9 (Financial resource tracking), PI.10 (Financial resource allocation), PI.11 (Gender architecture), PI.12 (Equal representation of women) and PI.13 (Organizational culture).

14. Concerning PI.9, WHO continued to meet requirements in 2024. A mandatory gender marker is being implemented to quantify expenditure on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. It builds on the best practice of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and is aligned with the United Nations country teams gender equality marker. The marker will be able to report WHO's financial contributions using the gender equality marker in 2026, following the financial closure of the biennium 2024–2025.

15. WHO continued to approach requirements for PI.10 in 2024. The programme budget translates the general programme of work into WHO's strategic deliverables and budget requirements. WHO uses a twin-track approach to mainstreaming gender into interventions and undertaking targeted interventions, both of which are tracked through outputs with programmatic and gender specific contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. WHO maintained its rating as meeting requirements for PI.11. A global gender, rights and equity network holds monthly meetings to build capacity and exchange best practices. The network's focal points play a key role in ensuring that gender equality, human rights and health equity considerations are integrated into relevant programmes and capacity-building efforts according to the respective technical or geographical contexts. The WHO's staff orientation package now includes a session on gender equality, human rights and health equity.

17. WHO continued to approach requirements for PI.12 in 2024. The representation of women in international professional and higher-graded staff holding long-term appointments varies. In grade D2 positions women comprise 30.30% of the total appointments, while in grade D1 the percentage of women is 34.00%. At P-6 level, women constitute 34.00% of the appointments, while at P-5 level the percentage is 47.46%, indicating a higher proportion of women. At P-4 level, women account for 44.40% of the appointments. Women have the highest representation at P-3 level, constituting 57.77% of the total appointments.

18. WHO continued to meet requirements for PI.13 in 2024. The Respectful Workplace Programme institutionalizes organizational culture efforts, contributing to respect, inclusivity and fairness across WHO. Human Resource policies already allow for parental leave, flexible working arrangements and other policies for inclusion. The Integrity Hotline offers a confidential channel for reporting concerns related to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. WHO ensures full and equal rights for women with disabilities. Guidance and support for mental health and work efficiency issues are provided, alongside individual support for mental health-related concerns. WHO is also developing an organizational culture change strategy.

Capacity indicators

19. This category contains two indicators: PI.14 (Capacity assessment) and PI.15 (Capacity development). Concerning PI.14, WHO exceeded requirements in 2024. The first-ever Organization-wide capacity assessment in 2022 gauged the knowledge, skills and capacity-building needs of the workforce concerning gender equality, health equity and human rights. Based on the assessment results, a capacity development plan was established to ensure that staff members can fulfill their responsibilities to take evidence-based, gender-responsive, human rights-based and equity-oriented actions.

20. WHO continued to approach requirements for PI.15 in 2024. Training sessions were offered to WHO staff to introduce key gender, rights and equity concepts and tools, and guidance on conducting gender, equity and rights analyses. Systematic advocacy is continuing for the gender course to become a mandatory training requirement for the entire WHO workforce.

Knowledge, communication and coherence indicators

21. This category contains two indicators: PI.16 (Knowledge and communication) and PI.17 (Coherence). Concerning PI.16, WHO exceeded requirements in 2024. The WHO's communications strategy was revised and now includes an analysis of user personas, thus providing data disaggregated by sex and insights into current audiences. WHO has also been placing a stronger emphasis on gender and disability inclusion across all communication efforts.

22. Concerning PI.17, WHO exceeded requirements. WHO consistently provides support on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment to the rest of the United Nations system at the country, regional and global levels. WHO has collaborated closely with the United Nations and humanitarian partners and contributed to addressing system-wide challenges and gaps. WHO also co-leads with World Vision International a system-wide training workstream to improve and harmonize the training offered to all agencies.

23. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has commended WHO on several recent achievements, including the introduction of an outcome on gender equality in GPW 14, the strengthening of sex-disaggregated data reporting, and the establishment of a steering committee to track performance on gender equality and women's empowerment.

24. Following the launch of the UN-SWAP 3.0 framework in 2024,² a baseline report was compiled. Reporting under the UN-SWAP 3.0 framework will become a mandatory requirement as of 2025. The UN-SWAP 3.0 framework contains new benchmarks for accountability indicators and

² [UN-SWAP 3.0 framework and technical guidance](#) (accessed 26 March 2025).

two additional indicators on stakeholder coordination and on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The UN-SWAP 3.0 framework incorporates many elements of the United Nations System-wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, for which some additional reporting is required. A clear and targeted action plan for WHO's full implementation of that Plan, and for the UN-SWAP 3.0 framework's new benchmarks and indicators, will be needed. While the changes and current resource constraints may affect the ability to compare past and future WHO UN-SWAP scores, WHO remains committed to redoubling its efforts to meet these heightened ambitions for the Organization's contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Action by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee

25. The Committee is invited to note the report and provide guidance in respect of the following question.

- What approach should the Secretariat take to meet the heightened ambitions of the UN-SWAP 3.0 framework in the current circumstances?
