

UN WOMEN

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

1. Facts and figures

Type of organisation: UN agency with both a normative and an operational mandate

Established in: 2010

Headquarters: New York

Number of country offices: Has staff in 75 different sites, 15 of which are sub-regional offices and 12 are country offices.

Head of organisation: UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director Michelle Bachelet (Chile)

Date of Board meetings 2011: 24-25 January, 27-30 June, 5-7 December

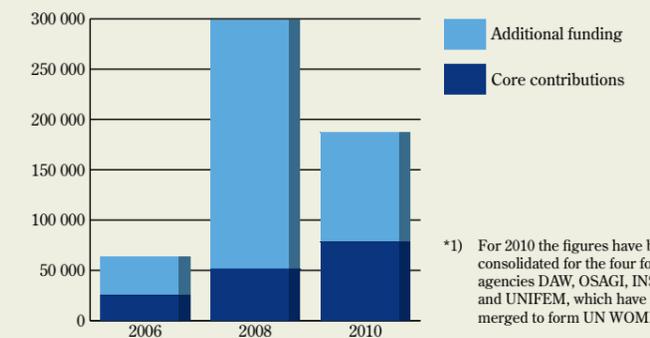
Norway's representation on Board: From 2010. Can expect to hold an Executive Board seat for five years.

Number of Norwegian staff: 2

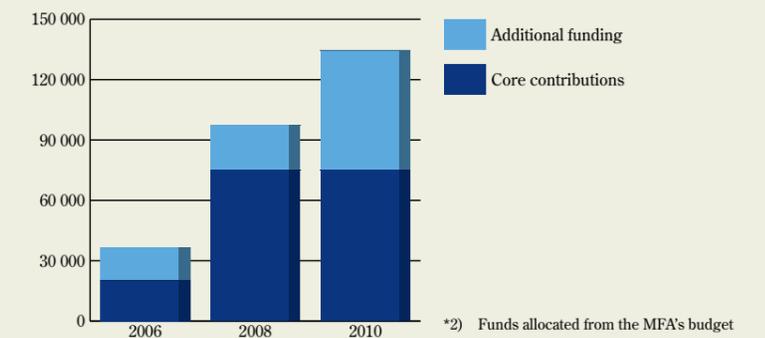
Responsible ministry: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

Website: <http://www.unwomen.org/>

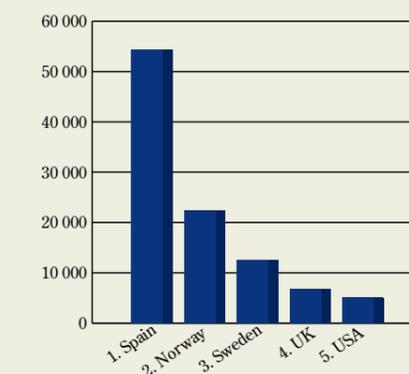
Total revenues^{*1)} (in US\$ 1000)



Norway's contributions^{*2)} (in NOK 1000)



Five largest donors (in US\$ 1000)



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<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/selected-topics/un>.

Mandate and areas of activity

UN Women, the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, was created by Resolution A/RES/64/289 on system-wide coherence, which was adopted by the 64th session of the UN General Assembly on 2 July 2010. The creation of the new agency was a merger of four former UN mechanisms: the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

The resolution charges UN Women with three main tasks: i) to support inter-governmental bodies in the UN system, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their further development of international policies and global standards in the field of gender equality; ii) to help Member States that request technical and financial support for the implementation of these standards, and to involve civil society as partners in this process; iii) to coordinate efforts to integrate a gender perspective throughout the UN system. Among other things, this entails holding the UN system accountable for its gender equality commitments and continuous reporting on progress. In other words, the new agency has both a normative and an operational mandate and is thus an innovation that comprises both secretariat functions and operational roles.

The UN Women Strategic Plan 2011-2013 was considered at an Executive Board meeting in June 2011. Norway supports the main thematic priorities proposed in the draft strategic plan: 1) to increase women's political power and participa-

tion; 2) to end violence against women; 3) to promote the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions; 4) to enhance women's economic empowerment and influence. Both the priorities and the strategic plan as a whole were adopted with the strong support of all the Member States.

Results achieved in 2010

The preparation of the strategy and its presentation at the Executive Board meeting in June this year is UN Women's most important achievement since becoming operational on 1 January 2011. The strategy is based on a comprehensive process of consultation with Member States and multilateral and regional organisations.

So far, UN Women has established strategic partnerships within the UN with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN-HABITAT and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) with a view, among other things, to strengthening efforts to institutionalise coordination of activities. This work will continue in the second half of 2011.

A separate evaluation unit has been established and targets have been set for focus on results. The Executive Board expressed the opinion that results-related work in particular must be further developed and improved to make it possible to measure results in the longer term. The results of these efforts are to be reported to the next ordinary annual Executive Board meeting in 2012.

2. Assessments: Results, effectiveness and monitoring

UN Women was created in 2010 and there are therefore no evaluations of the organisation's results, effectiveness and monitoring at this time. However, there are reviews of UNIFEM, which contributed around 90 per cent of the new organisation's budget funds and staff. A 2010 review by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and a 2008 review by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) both concluded that UNIFEM's internal effectiveness was poor. The organisation reported on objectives, but often focused on activities rather than results. Nor was there sufficient linkage between the results achieved and the allocation of funds. Norway has played a leading role in calling for strengthened performance management in UNIFEM. UNIFEM had an internal evaluation unit, but it was difficult to determine whether the unit actually functioned as an independent control body. According to SIDA, UNIFEM had better auditing procedures, in which they adopted the UNDP's audit system.

UN Women also intends to use the UNDP's audit system and the UNDP ethics office. This appears to be a sensible use of resources. Norway has nevertheless suggested to UN Women that they should establish their own ethical guidelines and communicate them clearly within the organisation.

With regard to results achieved at country level (external effectiveness), both reviews point out that UNIFEM was particularly adept at building strategic partnerships to promote its objectives both locally and globally. DFID and SIDA also

agree that UNIFEM's results reporting could be better and that UNIFEM had a tendency to set overly high, ambitious goals and thus spread its resources too thin. Norway has repeatedly raised with UNIFEM the same issue of the need to strengthen its results reporting and to prioritise quality rather than quantity by limiting its activities to fewer countries.

DFID's review is critical of UNIFEM's ability to demonstrate that they actually delivered on the goals they set, while SIDA describes UNIFEM as relatively good at delivering results at country level, despite the agency's relatively limited size and budget. The DFID review points out that UNIFEM lacked the necessary influence to get the rest of the UN system to systematically mainstream a cross-cutting gender perspective in their operations. Norway agrees with the assessment of UNIFEM's limited impact, but like DFID considers that there is significant potential for positive change as a result of the creation of UN Women.

Norway's experience with UNIFEM at country level has also shown that the agency has had limited influence and capacity in many places. Norway has played an active role for several years in efforts to strengthen UNIFEM's position and resources and to improve UNIFEM's mechanisms for achieving results and control and reporting systems. Work was in progress in the spring of 2011 on providing UN Women with a better framework, and as member of the Executive Board Norway was actively involved in this process.

3. Norway's policy towards UN Women

Women's rights and gender equality are among the main priority areas in the Government's policy. Norway wishes to focus attention on both gender equality as a goal in itself, and as a crucial prerequisite for achieving other development, security and foreign policy goals. Norway therefore gives high priority to cooperation with UN Women. Norway wishes to play a constructive role as partner to the new agency, not least in its capacity as member of the Executive Board, by actively supporting the agency's mandate and role. Our goal is for UN Women to help ensure that the UN system as a whole delivers better results. This must be done by establishing good procedures for monitoring and reporting on progress, based on performance indicators and tracing of budget funds allocated for women's empowerment and gender equality. Norway therefore plays an active, critical role in driving the ongoing UN reform process.

In order to operate as effectively as possible, UN Women must select a few main areas in which it provides operational support to national authorities, civil society and international

organisations, instead of spreading itself too thin and too widely. Women's political and economic empowerment, the women, peace and security agenda, which includes women's participation, and protection and integration of a gender perspective – both in peace time and during and after conflicts – are natural priority areas. Gender equality cannot be achieved by focusing solely on women. The agency must actively participate in the growing focus on men's roles in gender equality work. The design and implementation of programmes must also reflect the fact that gender-based discrimination can be exacerbated by other factors, such as age, ethnic background, indigenous status, disabilities or sexual orientation.

The organisation must also clarify the questions of role-sharing, cooperation and delimitation of its activities in relation to central parts of the UN system, and establish formalised mechanisms for dialogue with women's and other organisations that promote women's rights and gender equality. This includes building alliances with global and local stakeholders that focus on men's roles in promoting gender equality.