

Opportunities/Issues based Coalition on: Harnessing Demographic Dividends through investments in Children, Adolescents, Youth and Women's Empowerment (Health, Education, and Employment) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹

An Issue Paper from the UN²

Background and Context

African Heads of States and Governments have shown their conviction that harnessing the demographic dividend will contribute to transforming the continent and attainment of sustainable development goals, the Agenda 2063 and other aspirations of the African Union³. They are determined to focus their efforts and engage in partnerships which empower the growing population of young people, including adolescent girls and young women with knowledge and skills and related social and economic assets to enable them participate actively in unleashing the immense potential of the continent.

Leaders across Africa have also recognized the potential that investing in children, adolescents, youth and women's empowerment can serve as a lever of resilience and stability -- addressing the root causes of poverty, inequalities, environmental degradation, gender based violence, discrimination, instability, vulnerability and insecurity, hopelessness, forced migration, crime, radicalization, exploitation and terrorism.

This is why in January 2016, at their 26th Ordinary Summit in Addis Ababa, the Africa Union Heads of State and Government decided that they will focus the 28th and 29th Ordinary Sessions in 2017 on "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in the Youth". The decision requested the African Union Commission (AUC) to work with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund, UNESCO, and other development agencies to "expedite the implementation of a continental initiative on Demographic Dividend for Africa and to develop a roadmap with key deliverables and milestones that was adopted during the 27th session of the AU Heads of State and Government Summit in June 2016, to guide Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on concrete actions to be undertaken in 2017 and beyond.

This Opportunity Issue based Coalition (OIBC 3) on "Harnessing Demographic Dividends through investments in Children, Adolescents, Youth and Women's Empowerment (Health, Education, and

¹ This title is fully aligned with the priorities of African leaders who recognized in 2016 that the demographic dividend lens offers a strategic basis for focusing and prioritizing investments in people in general and the youth and women in particular, in order to achieve sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, and to build "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, which is driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena

² OIBC-3 co-conveners: ILO, IOM, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO. Members: ECA, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNV, WFP

³ Such as the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025), the AU 2017 roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth which demands a paradigm shift in the organization and provision of education and training in Africa especially for the young people

Employment)” intends to support Member States to transforming the continent through attainment of sustainable development goals and the aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063.

Vision

The vision for the Opportunity/Issue-Based Coalition on Demographic Dividend, Youth and Women Empowerment (OIBC-3) underlying this issue paper is a stable and prosperous Africa where children, adolescents, youth and women have the opportunities to learn, grow, develop and contribute including through decent jobs and are effectively empowered, have voice, agency and can participate in the transformation of their societies into prosperous, peaceful, secure and healthy environments.

As part of the R-UNDSG engagement, OIBC 3 on Harnessing Demographic Dividends through investments in Children, Adolescents, Youth and Women's Empowerment (Health, Education, and Employment) supports Member States in the implementation and scaling up of ongoing successful evidence-based flagship initiatives on the continent. OIBC 3 joins African leaders in the conviction that harnessing the demographic dividend will contribute to transforming the continent and attainment of sustainable development goals and the aspirations of the African Union as spelled out in Agenda 2063. In doing so, it addresses challenges raised by high fertility and mortality rates, fragility and insecurity – including the impact of the COVID-19 – low employability of the youth and high informality of youth jobs, and low completion rates and gender disparities in education. The UN coalition provides technical expertise in various areas depending on the domain of mandate of each APF member, relying on inter-agency collaboration, and capitalizing on their respective added value for greater impact.

To advance towards a demographic transition based on healthy, educated and (self-) employed women and young people, OIBC 3 engages in initiatives to strengthen capacity to develop and implement development frameworks integrating Demographic Dividend, focusing on knowledge management, documentation of evidence, and development of DD programming guidelines and M&E frameworks. The UN coalition also reduces inequity in health service accessibility and utilization for adolescents, women, and youth through existing coordination mechanisms to strengthen country health systems in support of one national health sector strategic plan. It supports and strengthens successful initiatives on adolescents, women and youth empowerment in the continent, including evidence-based labor market policies and programs for decent employment. Finally, it strengthens distance-learning initiatives with a focus on vulnerable and marginalized children, women and young people, to provide a concerted regional approach in support of the AU response to COVID-19 and, in doing so, to support the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and the AU e-education strategy.

Insert theory of change here.

Underlying principles

The guiding principles of OIBC3 are as follows:

- *Partnership*: stronger multi-sectoral coordination between the agencies of the African Union, the United Nations system and other partners is essential to ensure that the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063
- *Integration in national plans*: The Demographic Dividend Roadmap is mainstreamed and integrated into the national planning frameworks of member States and contributes positively to African development.

- *Inclusion:* Based on the recommendation of the Committee of Development Policy (CDP) for United Nations entities and member states will leave no one behind in their strategic frameworks and will translate that concept into action.
- *Multi-sectoral convergence and coherence:* Partners supporting different but complementary government programs and projects targeting population groups (e.g. women, adolescents) in the same geographic areas will work together to promote holistic and multi-sectoral convergence and coherence to maximize the use of increasingly scarce resources while leveraging partner comparative advantages.
- *Use of evidence in policy decision making:* Evidence-based decision making and building on synergies among members' relative strength and mandates will guide improvements in governance and collaboration between UN agencies and the AU in this coalition.
- *Scale and Sustainability of Innovations:* In all that we do, scaling up and sustainability of innovations by governments will guide accelerated socio-economic transformation.

Key strategic direction of OIBC-3

In order to leverage the comparative advantage of the membership of the coalition and ongoing flagship programme, OIB3 coalition will focus their effort in key intervention areas that will help to address underlying challenges that limit the prospect for harnessing the DD in Africa. These key areas of intervention are outline below:

- 1) Strengthen integration of Demographic Dividend dimensions into regional and national development frameworks through priority focus on policy advice, knowledge management, documentation of evidence, and development of DD programming guidelines and M&E frameworks
- 2) Strengthening delivery modalities within the health system through innovation, application of new technologies and resilience building to improve equitable access to integrated health services for adolescents, women, and youth.
- 3) Strengthening the employability of women and youth through evidence based and inclusive labor market policies, scale of new services sector modalities through innovation and use of modern technology aimed at increasing decent employment, empowerment and entrepreneurship for women and youth.
- 4) Strengthen equitable delivery and resilience of education, distance-learning and skills development systems with focus on vulnerable and marginalized children, adolescents, young people and adult women.

Operational and coordination Arrangements

The issue paper is designed to encourage funding mechanisms that are regarded by countries as helpful in facilitating a more strategic approach by UNDS entities, to be more collaborative and more focused on agreed priorities. Such mechanism should stem from a platform for coordination between the UN agencies, offer low transaction costs, promote country ownership and the alignment of funding with strategy, and encourage accountability between donor and recipients.

OIBC 3 financing plan will provide advisory capacities for funding initiation, dialogue with governments and other non-UN actors on financing flows, financial instruments and joint financing architectures. Levels of coordination and clarification of roles among UN agencies, governments and regional institutions is also very important to demonstrate the siloes are melted down.

UNFPA, ILO, UNESCO and WHO will co-lead the implementation. UN collaborating agencies should include ECA, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNV, WFP, and other relevant agencies that are working in operationalizing Demographic Dividend will be considered for inclusion

OIBC 3 will coordinate their activities with relevant OIBCs and task teams that can complement the strategic interventions outlined in this concept note.

Partnership and collaboration institutions

Capitalizing on and building long-lasting partnerships with stakeholders at the local, national, regional and global level is critical. It is in line with a whole-of-societies approach to the most pressing development challenges, brining governments, social partners, civil society, private sector, regional and national Academic or research Institution, women and youth representatives, among others, together. This also implies to prioritize local social and economic development and engage community-based, civil society grassroots organizations as equal partners, beyond their capacities to deliver services and implement programs.

The UN Coalition will build on existing global, regional and in-country partnerships and coordination mechanisms involving African Governments, UN agencies, NGOs, Bilateral and Multilateral Donors. Three such coordination platforms that bring together all education actors at the regional level is the SDG4 Platform and at country level, the Global Partnership for Education for the coordination of development assistance and the Global, Regional and In-Country Clusters for the Coordination of Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Transitions. Each of these Coordination mechanisms have clear terms of reference and support systems that accompany governments in sector-wide strategic planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans and programs.

Way forward

Phases	Period
Phase 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share the draft of the Issue Paper with focal points from other UN agencies to solicit their inputs 	April, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Validate the Issue Paper at the RUNDG retreat 	12 May, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identification and establishment of coordinating bodies of the OIBC 3 and finalization of the concept paper 	May 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather additional information from collaborating UN Agencies serving as members of the OIBC in order to establish areas of collaboration/to coalesce around for 2020 – 2021, (in the first instance), which demonstrate the added value of the UNDS system. 	July 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop the Work Plan based on information gathered by UN Agencies 	July, 2020
Phase 2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Translate the Issue Paper into DD Support documents with budget and timeline 	August, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Validation of the documents 	July, 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implémentation 	-

Annex 1: Rapid mapping of ongoing flagship programs across the member of OIBC-3

Scale-up and sustain ongoing successful evidence-based flagship initiatives: Support the implementation of successful initiatives for children, adolescents (especially vulnerable adolescent girls), youth and women's empowerment on the continent. Since the development and the launch of the AU roadmap on DD, several regional initiatives have been developed and are under implementation. One of these initiatives is the Sahel Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project (SWEDD) which aims to strengthen women empowerment in order to harness the demographic dividend. **Strategies of this project include** the strengthening of gender equality interventions to support the region's demographic transition by keeping girls in school, delaying their age of marriage and motherhood, equipping them with knowledge fostering their access to reliable information and competences to manage themselves and their body, and strengthening their opportunities to actively participate in the labor force. **The significant progress made in the implementation of the SWEDD project led to a demand** for temporal and special extension of the project in the continent that requires additional investments and scaling-up partnership, As the project **will cover many countries** in the continent, the **UN Coalition can be a principal actor in providing technical expertise to build on youth-led initiatives** and key interventions in the various areas of the project depending on the domain of mandate of each sister agency. This will help to develop inter-agency collaboration, so as to capitalize on each agency's value added for greater impact.

In the context of the transformation agenda, **the Adolescent Health Flagship program** is an initiative launched in 2017 by the World Health Organization with the objective of **guiding and supporting countries and partners in the implementation of evidence-based effective interventions to improve the health and well-being of adolescents in the African Region.** To implement the initiative, the World Health Organization is working in close collaboration with other UN agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UN-Women, UNESCO).

The **Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) Guidance** developed by WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS UN women, UNESCO and the World Bank is used, three years after its launch, by 36 countries in the African Region to plan, implement and increase access to quality services for adolescents. It is expected that increasing adolescents' access to protective policies and preventive interventions by health and other sectors will prevent unnecessary death and illness due to road traffic injuries, communicable and non-communicable diseases, violence, suicide and maternal conditions – major killers of adolescents worldwide. Through the AA-HA! Guidance, there is a great opportunity to **strengthen partnership at regional and country level, to improve programming, implementation of high impact interventions for adolescents, monitoring and evaluation,** to strengthen multisectoral approach and inform the development of national policies and strategies.

UN Coalition could also use **the Harmonization for Health in Africa (HHA)** which is a **regional coordination mechanism aiming at harmonizing and aligning health development partners** to country processes in strengthening health systems in order to accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in the context of SDGs. HHA mechanism is guided by the Paris Declaration, Tunis Declaration on value for money, sustainability and accountability, and the SDG3 Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All. In 2017, the HHA Regional Director, including from WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UN Women, and IOM, **renewed**

their commitment to optimize joint efforts to improving reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health; achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in addition to health system strengthening within the framework of African Union Agenda 2063 (The Africa We Want). **Modalities of collaboration include joint analytical work; joint planning and implementation support which partners would normally undertake as individual agencies as well as joint monitoring.** Since its creation, **synergies and dynamics created between HHA partners in response to the country needs has brought several achievements** through joint high-level advocacy actions including promoting the dialogue between Ministries of Health and Ministries of Finance, parliamentarians, and public-private collaboration; joint generation and dissemination of knowledge, guidance and tools; experience exchange between countries; joint resource mobilization for health; joint technical capacity building and technical assistance to countries particularly in developing national health development plans. **Building on HHA experience, UN coalition could use it to take forward the health system component of demographic dividend agenda in Africa** in support to countries for greater coherence and impact. Partners would harness their respective collaborative advantage, in compliance with their respective mandates. HHA partners includes WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UN Women, IOM, and ITU as core members.

Another strong contribution to the OIBC's objective is its **Strategic Framework for the Education Emergency Response to COVID-19 in Africa**, which aims to provide a concerted regional approach in support of the AU response to COVID-19 and, in doing so, to support the continuity of learning through radio, TV and digital channels and, ultimately, its e-education strategy and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA). The OIBC's Strategic Framework contributes to learning continuity beyond school closure, mitigating adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, preparing a safe, health and effective return to schools, guided by the best interest of the child, while also looking at medium and long term development of alternative learning pathways, and in particular digital learning, communication technology infrastructures, and planning for resilient and best prepared education systems. In complement to the Strategic Framework for the Education Emergency Response to COVID 19 is the new (April 2020) Framework for the Re-opening of Schools developed jointly by UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank and WFP. This framework facilitates decision making on when and how re-open schools in adherence to COVI-19 public health guidance.

The Strategic Framework rests on key principles to ensure strong partnerships and coordination among its members and other actors, to give priority to the health, safety and wellbeing of learners, parents, caregivers, teachers and other education personnn, to ensure the right to education at all levels, through a sector wide approach and paying attention to most vulnerable and marginalized populations, to promote the adaptation to available technologies and infrastructures, and to work for the preparedness and resilience of national education systems. Priority Action Areas cover Regional coordination, Mapping of existing interventions across the region, Adaptation of educational resources, Data and monitoring, sharing promising practice and strengthening country response capacities, Communication and harmonized messages, and Children's health and health education for children and their parents. The Strategic Framework is operationalized through short, medium and long term activities at regional and national levels.

The Strategic Framework, implemented in synergy with other major initiatives such as the Our Right, Our Lives, Our Future Programme, which aims at reducing in new HIV infections, early and unintended pregnancy, gender-based violence, and child marriage, offers a powerful contribution to harness the demographic dividend.

Ongoing Assessments, Analyses and Evidence-Generation for Policy Decision Making: The UN Coalition will support the African Union and countries to conduct a progress review to analyze the demographic and socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and on the education and empowerment of children, adolescents, youth and women in the region, with a particular focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups. The socio-demographic and security context of the continent which is characterized by an increasing number of conflict affected countries, disease outbreaks and other health-related emergencies including COVID-19, environmental threats and the intensification of migration, requires a collective response from the Member States and the UN system to socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 and the main factors of conflict, instability, humanitarian and health-related crisis from a human security perspective. **The UN Coalition can support the regional institutions and countries in the formulation and the implementation of a regional research project that can be used to inform the implementation of the existing regional and national initiatives in a human protection perspective.**

The UN Coalition will, in collaboration with OIBC-1 flagship initiative, and by building on the work of the Systems' Strengthening Working Group of the SDG4 Platform, accelerate measures to address the data systems-related challenges in education. The coalition can also expand its support for disaggregation of health, education and other social sector data according to age and sex and supporting further analysis to identify how intersection of gender, equity and rights and other social determinants affect women, girls and boys differently. This will help in effectively addressing these cross-cutting aspects and further identify how to target interventions that will ensure girls, women and young people are able to contribute maximally towards measures to enable governments to reap the demographic dividends.

Support National Planning: Support the development of DD programming tool and M&E Framework to guide countries in the formulation and implementation of national development frameworks that fully integrate DD. As it becomes clear that the demographic dividend will be a central issue for the whole continent in the coming decades, the UN coalition should support regional institutions in the development and the use of a demographic dividend programming Guide and an M&E Framework. This programming tool will heavily rely on data provided by the countries and the recommendations and conclusions drawn for every operational step can be of use and adapted by countries in the region based on specific contexts.

Within overarching regional approach, through OIBC-3, UNDS will then support individual Governments to develop national Demographic Dividend strategies and frameworks tailored to country-specific challenges, institutional structures and capacities, guided by national human rights. This will involve institutional and context assessment and analysis to guide design.

Knowledge management and sharing platform on children, adolescents, youth and women's empowerment: Support the identification, documentation and dissemination of good practices on children, adolescents, youth and women's empowerment in the continent. This will include the strengthening of national capacities to develop a culture of the documentation and sharing of good practices on Youth and Women's Empowerment in the continent. Countries in the region should have easy access to this documentation of these effective, successful and evidence-based practices and programs in order to replicate them. While some national development plans have been designed and successfully implemented, they are not well documented and shared with other countries.

Sound education policies and sector wide planning. Education in itself is an empowering right and one of the most powerful tools by which economically and socially marginalized children and adults can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully in society. The UN Coalition will support education programmes that lay foundational learning competencies for children as well as raise literacy levels, develop skills for life and for work, promote success in STEM, and equip all learners – in and out of school, from urban and rural areas – with the means to face GBV, outbreaks, adolescent pregnancy and environmental issues are critical for the region. The Coalition will promote skills-based lifelong quality education, including science, technology and innovation for all children, adolescents, youth and women – including migrants, refugees and displaced people. It will strengthen the capacities of governments and civil society organizations to plan for contingencies and crises responses, including the strengthening of systems for greater efficiency, resilience and social cohesion sustained recovery. Education creates an enabling macroeconomic environment that facilitates job creation and access to decent employment, to ultimately ensure increased the productive workforce and lead to higher growth and rising income.

Youth Employment: Scaling up action and evidence on decent jobs for Africa's youth. The ILO recognizes the importance of multi-stakeholder work in Africa to advance sustainable development and social justice for all. Young people are at the center of most interventions to create sustainable solutions for a fairer future that includes more and better jobs. The ILO's concrete value added to the region is its ability to identify and implement evidence-based solutions that multiply the impact of decent work.

Furthermore, the UN coalition can play a key role in advancing the ILO-led operationalization of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth on the African continent. The Global Initiative is the first-ever comprehensive UN system-wide effort to promote youth employment worldwide and a core means of supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Youth Strategy.

With 23 UN entities at its nucleus, the ILO leverages the expertise and resources of this alliance of governments, social partners, youth and civil society, the private sector, regional institutions, parliamentarians, foundations, academia and the media to take action on decent jobs for youth across eight thematic priority areas: digital skills for youth; quality apprenticeships; youth in the rural economy; green jobs for youth; youth entrepreneurship and self-employment; youth transitioning to the formal economy; youth in fragile situations; and young workers in hazardous occupations. Target groups will be young women and men in the age bracket of 15 to 34 years (representing 33.9% of the total African population), workers in the informal economy and migrant workers, with a particular emphasis on interventions in fragile states and fragile situations.

The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth can serve as the anchor for coordinated multi-stakeholder action of the UN coalition on youth employment in Africa. This includes sharing best practices and analyses, leveraging resources and taking innovative, evidence-based action to increase the quantity and quality of job opportunities for young people. Synergies with sub-regional initiatives will be ensured. For example, the Youth Entrepreneurship and Self-employment Declaration, adopted by partners of the Global Initiative in Western Africa in 2018 provides a framework for UN partners and beyond to further collaborate on the UN support plan for the Sahel.

The ILO relies on state-of-the art tools to identify the conditions of young women and men in the labour market and their school-to-work transition as well as changes over time. Knowledge is shared regularly through policy and practice briefs, books, and notably the “Global Employment

Trends for Youth” flagship report, published on a biennial basis. Similarly, the ILO builds youth employment evidence and supports its uptake by policymakers and practitioners. Ongoing efforts to build evidence include the multi-funder research initiative on boosting youth employment for Africa’s youth. The research initiative was launched by partners of Decent Jobs for Youth in 2018 to fund action oriented research as well as a series of School to work transitions surveys and knowledge dissemination fora under selected thematic areas of the Global Initiative (Quality apprenticeships, youth in the rural economy). At country level, the ILO supports governments and local partners to stimulate labor demand, improve education and training policies, and design effective solutions to ensure positive transitions into decent work.

Activities at the continental level will focus on the design of continent-wide strategies, policies and programmes as frameworks for action for the eight AU-recognized Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and for constituents at the regional and national levels. Regional activities will prioritize the exchange of knowledge and experiences (intra-African South-South cooperation), the establishment of joint institutions, and the facilitation of partnerships and joint ventures. National-level activities will aim at implementing concrete projects, programmes and policies that directly benefit the priority target groups.

The UN Coalition can make use of its vast expertise and experience in the area of decent work and more specifically of the ILO’s network of Bureaus and Decent Work Teams on the African continent. In addition, the coalition will make full use of the ILO’s tripartite structure to ensure broad ownership, buy-in and sustainability.

Partnership with the African Union, African RECs and Pan-African institutions is central, as well as with IFIs and development partners, inter-ministerial coordination committees, social dialogue institutions, parliamentarians, academia, private sector and civil society organizations. Deliverables will be identified at continental, regional and national level. A timeline and results-framework will be established, which includes the specific outcome, SDG indicators, data source, baseline and target.

Generation Unlimited (GenU). A global multi-sector partnership, GenU strives to transform outcomes for young people worldwide. GenU’s ambition, focus, and unique value have been shaped by a clear understanding of the opportunity young people present, the challenges they face, and the landscape of support that currently exists. By grounding its strategy in this analysis, GenU seeks to tailor its focus to the areas with most unmet need.

- The opportunity: What is the potential of young people worldwide? What are their ambitions? How can tapping into this potential change society?
- The challenge: What barriers do the world’s 1.8 billion 10-24 year olds face in becoming productive and engaged members of society?
- The landscape: What efforts are being made at the national and global levels to overcome young people’s challenges? Where are the key gaps?

Generation Unlimited seeks to meet the urgent need for expanded education, training and employment opportunities for young people, aged 10 to 24, on an unprecedented scale. As an accelerator for scale and for better education, skills, entrepreneurship and employment outcomes, GenU contributes to operationalizing the United Nations Strategy on Youth and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the challenges that exist – or perhaps because of them – leaders around the world are responding positively to GenU’s mission and asking how they can help. Politicians, CEOs, foundation heads and civic leaders are recognizing that forging innovative collaborations with young people at the center is the best way forward. With leadership from

UNICEF, the World Bank, the Governments of Ireland and the Netherlands, Dubai Cares, Unilever and others, GenU is developing a powerful approach to bridge education and training to employment and entrepreneurship on a massive scale.

Spotlight initiative. The European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) have embarked on a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) - The Spotlight Initiative. The Initiative is so named as it brings focused attention to this issue, moving it into the spotlight and placing it at the center of efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

An initial investment in the order of EUR 500 million was made, with the EU as the main contributor. Other donors and partners were invited to join the Initiative to broaden its reach and scope. The modality for the delivery is a UN multi-stakeholder trust fund, administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, with the support of core agencies UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women, and overseen by the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General.