

STRATEGIC NOTE

Viet Nam

2022-2026





Photo: UN Women/Hoang Bich Thao

INTRODUCTION

VIET NAM'S GENDER EQUALITY LANDSCAPE

COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Viet Nam has transitioned from one of the poorest countries to a lower middle-income one in one generation. With a population of 98.9 million, of whom 68 percent are between 15 and 64 years of age,¹ Viet Nam has improved significantly in poverty reduction, education and healthcare.² In 2022, Viet Nam's gross domestic product (GDP) growth was 8.0 percent.³ The agriculture sector has been a key contributor to growth and employment. But

Viet Nam still faces several development challenges, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A primary one is ensuring inclusive social development, particularly in rural areas and among marginalized groups. Climate change is a priority concern for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with Viet Nam ranked the 13th most-affected country by climate change from 2000 to 2019.⁴

1. UNFPA (2023). *World Population Dashboard: Viet Nam*. [Online](#) (accessed April 2023)

2. World Bank (2019). *Country Overview: Vietnam*. [Online](#)

3. World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data. [Online](#) (accessed July 2023)

4. David Eckstein, Vera Künzel, Laura Schäfer (2021). *Global Climate Risk Index 2021*. [Online](#) (accessed August 2023)



Photo: UN Women/Hoang Bich Thao

GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

Viet Nam has shown commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), through the adoption of a comprehensive legal framework on GEWE including: Law on Gender Equality; Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control; the National Strategy on Gender Equality; and the National Programme on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention; as well as through the implementation of other policies and programmes aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Significant progress has been recorded, such as parity in primary and lower secondary education enrolment rates, a significant reduction of maternal mortality and high female workforce participation.^{5,6}

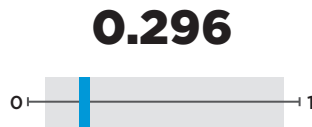
However, challenges persist in various areas. Patriarchal social norms and negative gender stereotypes are still

pervasive. Violence against women is a significant concern: In 2019, nearly two in three women reported having ever experienced one or more forms of violence perpetrated by a husband.⁷ Meanwhile, women's overrepresentation in the informal sector undermines their position in the economy and erodes their resilience to economic shocks. While climate change and natural disasters threaten the livelihoods, education and safety of rural, ethnic-minority and poor women and girls, with at least seven major storms and floods, flash floods or landslides being recorded each year, women are not actively engaged in climate change education and planning.⁸ Women also bear an additional burden of unpaid care and domestic work arising from disaster impacts. Furthermore, disasters increase risks of violence for women and girls.

5. UN Women, Australia's DFAT, ADB, and ILO. (2021). *Country Gender Equality Profile: Viet Nam*. Available [online](#). (Parity has been reached up to lower secondary education, however girls account for a greater percentage of enrolments at upper secondary level than boys, at 76.7% versus 67.7% respectively. Viet Nam recorded a significant reduction in maternal mortality rate: from 69 per 100,000 live births in 2009 to 46 in 2019).
6. ILO (04 March 2021). *Press release: COVID-19 widens existing gender inequalities, creates new gaps in Viet Nam*. [Online](#)
7. UN Women, UNFPA, GSO, MOLISA, Australia's DFAT. (2019). *National Study on Violence against Women in Viet Nam*. Available [online](#).
8. Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance. (2018). *Vietnam disaster management reference handbook 2018*. Available [online](#). (Although sex-disaggregated data on populations most affected by natural disasters is incomplete, it is estimated that overall, more than 1 million women needed humanitarian assistance following the droughts 2015-2017 compared to less than 500,00 men.)

VIET NAM'S GENDER EQUALITY SNAPSHOT

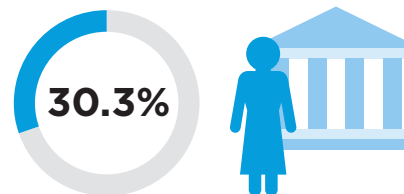
figure 1
Gender Inequality Index



UNDP (2022). Human Development Report.
(Note: Figure provided is for 2021)

figure 2
Proportion of Women National Assembly Deputies

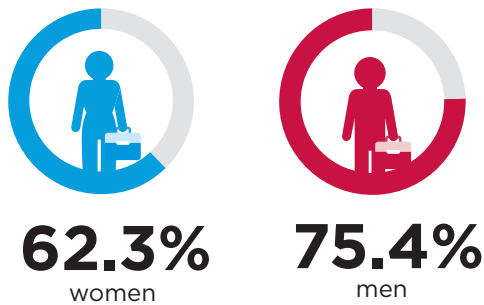
Governance and Participation in Public Life



ADB, Australian Aid, ILO, UN Women (2021). Country Gender Equality Profile Viet Nam (Note: Figure provided is for 2021-2026).

figure 3
Labor force participation rate by sex

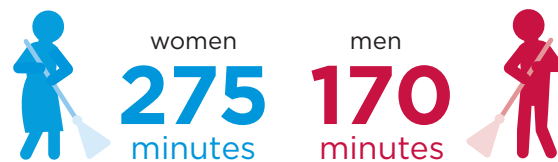
Women's Economic Empowerment



ADB, Australian Aid, ILO, UN Women (2021). Country Gender Equality Profile Viet Nam.
(Note: Figure provided is for 2020).

figure 4
Time spent per day on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex

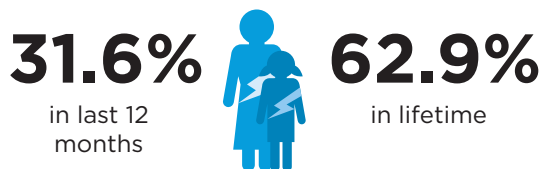
Women's Economic Empowerment



ADB, Australian Aid, ILO, UN Women (2021). Country Gender Equality Profile Viet Nam.
(Note: Data refers to 2016)

figure 5
Percentage of women aged 15 to 64 who have experienced any physical, sexual, emotional, economic violence or controlling behaviours by their husband

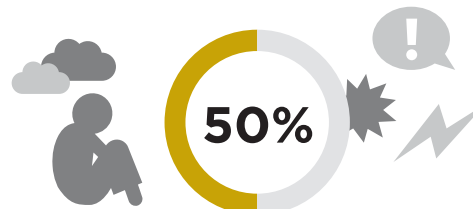
Ending Violence against Women



MOLISA, GSO and UNFPA (2020). Summary Report: Results of the National Study on Violence against Women in Viet Nam 2019 - Journey for Change.

figure 6
Proportion of LGBTQI people who reported experiencing discrimination or harassment at work

Ending Violence against Women



ADB, Australian Aid, ILO, UN Women (2021). Country Gender Equality Profile Viet Nam. (Note: Data is for 2015)

UN WOMEN STRATEGIC NOTE: A roadmap to gender equality

The Strategic Note (SN) articulates the multi-year strategy, rationale, envisioned results, targets, and resource requirements for a UN Women Office. In essence, the SN provides a roadmap for improving the lives of women and girls in the context where UN Women operates. It is developed in consultation with key partners and in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), UN Women's Strategic Plan and key national, regional, and global gender equality priorities. SNs are funded by a combination of core (loosely earmarked) and non-core resources (earmarked).

UN Women's SN is similar to a Country Programme Document (CPD) used by other UN entities.

UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS

In Viet Nam, UN Women has been at the forefront of advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment. With UN Women's support, Viet Nam amended its Labour Code in 2019, shifting the focus from protecting women at work to promoting gender equality in the workplace. For example, the amended Code includes an improved definition of sexual harassment at the workplace (Article 3), narrows the gaps in retirement age between men and women (Article 169) and recognises male workers' entitlement to paternity leave (Article 139), etc. To enable wider society to have their say in the National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) 2021-2030, UN Women also held a series of stakeholder consultation workshops with over 700 representatives from government and civil society, women with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ community. The result is a strategy that prioritizes strengthening responses to

gender-based violence, enhancing women's leadership in government, and improving access to postgraduate education for women. For the first time, the most recent NSGE addresses the needs of the LGBTQI+ community, signalling a major shift in the government's approach to gender equality.

UN Women supported the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to update the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, ensuring that it directly addresses gender differences by ensuring women are able to participate in, lead, and benefit from climate change programmes.

UN Women coordinated efforts for a gender-responsive new cooperation framework between the UN and the Vietnamese government (2022-2026).

UN WOMEN VIET NAM KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (2017-2021)

8 KEY PIECES of national legislation, policies and strategies were developed or strengthened with UN Women's support, to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Viet Nam.

MORE THAN 26,000 VULNERABLE WOMEN in 10 provinces received cash grants and essential care packages during the COVID-19 pandemic. These packages introduced a gender-sensitive response to emergencies.

MORE THAN 1,550 learners built their business skills in 2021 through an e-learning course targeting informal-economy entrepreneurs.

662 SURVIVORS of gender-based violence accessed better care through the Peace House Shelters or hotline managed by Viet Nam Women's Union during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MORE THAN 73 MILLION PEOPLE were reached by messages that promote gender equality and activities around social norms change, through offline and online platforms.

To learn more about the work and results of UN Women Viet Nam, visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

VIET NAM'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The UN Country Team (UNCT) and the government of Viet Nam have agreed on a set of strategic development priorities. These are set forth in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\)](#) and are based on the Viet Nam context analysis: a shared understanding of key national priorities, opportunities, risks, and persisting inequalities. UN Women

Viet Nam's Strategic Note pursues **three priorities** contributing to the achievement of the UNSDCF and national priorities. These have been decided collectively with other UN Agencies and partners, based on what UN Women is uniquely positioned to contribute to. They are also aligned with [UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#).

figure 7

VIET NAM RESOURCES 2022-2026



Data displayed are indicative estimates based on expected resource requirements and available funds as of December 2022. For more up-to-date resources data please visit our [Transparency Portal](#).

AS A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS,
UN WOMEN CONVENES AND INFLUENCES A RANGE OF
PARTNERS FOR A GREATER AND LONG-LASTING IMPACT

IMPACT

Women and girls fully participate in and benefit from gender-responsive sustainable development and live in peaceful societies, free from violence

COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTION
(priority results)

A SAFER AND CLEANER ENVIRONMENT

Improve state and non-state capacity to develop and implement **gender-responsive humanitarian, disaster risk reduction and climate change action** in line with relevant global frameworks

SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Equip the private sector with sustainable, **inclusive and responsible business models and practices** aligned with the Women's Empowerment Principles

A MORE JUST, SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Improve state and non-state capacity to **strengthen the social, institutional and legal environment** for gender equality and freedom from discrimination

UN WOMEN SOLUTIONS*

Increase the **capacity, productivity, profitability, and sustainable resilient livelihood models** of government partners and women-owned micro business

Equip state and non-state actors with knowledge, skills and tools to **transform social norms, policies and laws** to eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination

Promote **evidence-based mechanisms** to expand public and private finance for gender equality

Support the **UN System's accountability in advancing commitments on gender equality** and women's empowerment

CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Data do not reflect the intersecting/cross-cutting issues on GEWE affecting the most vulnerable groups.

Women's participation in and leadership of climate change initiatives is limited.

Women and girls fall behind in terms of green and digital skills, opportunities and information; and LGBTQI persons suffer from systemic discrimination.

Policy makers and implementers lack sufficient capacity for gender mainstreaming, including in public planning and financing.

Negative and traditional social norms sustain boy/male preference, the use of violence against women, and the burden of care work on women.

Lack of coordination on the response to GEWE issues, and the insufficient space of CSOs to demand accountability or influence policy making.

*UN Women solutions are aligned to UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

UN WOMEN'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

UN Women Viet Nam's comparative advantage resides in its mandate to lead, coordinate and promote accountability for GEWE results across the United Nations in Viet Nam. UN Women has a demonstrated technical expertise required to operationalize GEWE international normative frameworks into national policies, laws, and institutional arrangements. UN Women's technical and analytical capacity in the development of the Country Gender Equality Profile provides a clear, evidence-based pathway for gender equality programming over the next five years.

Building on the results from the previous SN (2017-2021) and closely aligned to the priorities of Viet Nam's most recent Socio-Economic Development Plan and its NSGE, this SN prioritises the areas of work where UN Women's support is most needed for the fulfilment of gender equality commitments. Especially, the 2030 Leave No One Behind development agenda, the implementation

of recommendations from the national Beijing+25 review report and forthcoming 30-year appraisal, and the CEDAW Committee recommendations issued in 2015 and partner consultations.

To deliver results for women in all their diversity with a particular focus on rural, poor, ethnic minority, migrant, and HIV-positive women and girls, those living with disabilities, and LGBTQI persons, UN Women will focus on the following crosscutting areas: (1) gender-responsive normative frameworks, policies and institutions; (2) financing for gender equality; (3) positive social norms; (4) women's equitable access to services, goods, and resources and markets; (5) voice, leadership and agency of women and girls; (6) production, analysis and use of gender statistics and data; (7) UN system coordination for gender equality.

Photo: UN Women/Hoang Bich Thao



UN WOMEN VIET NAM'S STRATEGY

PRIORITY RESULT 1:

A safer and cleaner environment

In the next five years, UN Women will enhance key national actors' capacity, including that of the government and civil society organizations (CSOs) to influence frameworks on humanitarian assistance, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change. In coordination with other UN agencies, our efforts ensure these laws, policies, and strategies address the needs of women and girls while following the global standards set in relevant frameworks (e.g. Sendai Framework in DRR9). This will be supported by strengthened access and use of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data. The data collected, will further give insights into alarming emerging issues, such as violence against women and girls in humanitarian crises; or climate change's impacts on vulnerable populations, including women and girls living in rural areas, in poverty, and/or with disabilities. Finally, it is UN Women's commitment to ensure the meaningful participation of gender advocates and CSOs in the decision-making process related to DRR, climate change, and humanitarian action. Their participation will be ensured through sustained mechanisms, platforms and/or coalitions as well as capacity building sessions.

PARTNERS

Key partners are: The UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labour Organization, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Viet Nam's Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and General Statistics Office, Viet Nam Women's Union, and CSOs working with rural, poor and women living with disabilities most vulnerable to climate change.

9. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Available [online](#).*

UN WOMEN
DRIVES RESULTS
ADVANCING
NORMATIVE
STANDARDS,
COORDINATING
ACTION ACROSS THE
UNITED NATIONS,
AND **OPERATING**
ON THE GROUND

PRIORITY RESULT 2:

Sustainable, inclusive and gender-responsive economic transformation

To achieve this priority result, UN Women will support private companies in Viet Nam to apply the Women's Empowerment Principles which guide business on how to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. These principles help create a strong business community that promotes women's fair recruitment and equal pay for equal work, the acquisition of skills and career opportunities, clear pathways for leadership and zero-tolerance policies on sexual harassment. Through capacity building, key national institutions will be able to design, implement and monitor non-discriminatory policies and programmes that support women-owned micro businesses. Furthermore, women entrepreneurs, women-owned micro businesses and women-led cooperatives will have greater access to information, finance and resources, including e-commerce,

skills training and advanced technologies for energy-efficient and environmentally friendly production. UN Women is committed to upscale its existing work with key actors and relevant line ministries to promote evidence-based options and mechanisms, thus expanding public and private finance in Viet Nam's gender equality agenda.

PARTNERS

Key partners include: Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Planning and Investment; Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; Viet Nam Women's Entrepreneurs Council; Viet Nam Women's Union; National Agriculture Extension Centre, and the Department of Cooperative and Rural Development and Department of Crop Production, both under the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development.

PRIORITY RESULT 3:

A more just, safe, and inclusive society

To achieve this priority result, UN Women will provide its gender expertise to support the government in strengthening key pieces of legislation that promote gender equality, such as the Gender Equality Law, the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control, Land Law, Law on Cooperatives, Marriage and Family Law, Law on Social Insurance, State Budget Law, the Gender Affirmation Law, and the National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security. Throughout, UN Women will focus on increasing the rights of women and girls most at risk of being left behind. UN Women will strengthen the capacity of CSOs and the government to review, plan, design and monitor the implementation of international frameworks on gender equality in Viet Nam.

With UN Women's support, the government will be able to design and implement evidence-based strategies that target youth, men and boys to prevent violence against women. Additionally, UN Women will support the development of guidelines and coordination structures to provide quality essential services to women survivors of violence.

PARTNERS

Key partners include: Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam Women's Union, Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Development and the National Assembly.

BECOMING A FUNDING PARTNER

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 calls for transformative, collaborative action. Strategic, innovative, and efficient funding partnerships are essential to realize UN Women's vision of a gender-equal world, articulated in the SN.

HOW CAN FUNDING PARTNERS ENGAGE WITH UN WOMEN'S SN?

Partners may provide **SN direct funding**, which is softly earmarked by geography (regional or country SN). These funds are **flexible** and catalytic; they enable UN Women to choose the highest-impact use of the funds in the country in which it operates. SN funding is also **predictable**, as commitments are often made for the full SN time span, better enabling transformative results for women and girls.

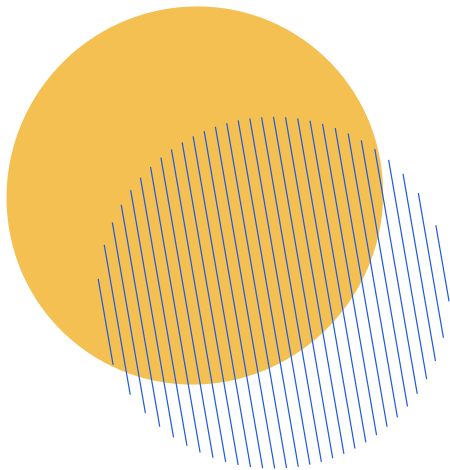
Importantly, SN direct funds strengthen UN Women's ability to respond to emerging needs in response to unforeseen contextual changes, including humanitarian needs (e.g., to prioritize the safety of women and girls in a crisis or in response to the adverse effects of natural disasters).

Furthermore, these funds can be reallocated when emerging evidence suggests a new approach is needed to produce the desired result more efficiently or effectively. They can be used for diverse types of costs and can therefore draw funds to areas that are often unfunded—yet crucial—such as advocacy for behavioural change, UN coordination, etc., supporting the organization's effectiveness.

Funding partners may also provide **project funding**, which is tightly earmarked for a specific project or initiative in the SN. These funds are not flexible. Reporting on the use of such funds is done against the specific project but not against the full SN.

SN funding represents an ambitious, targeted, and smart investment in gender equality and women's empowerment.

To learn more about UN Women Viet Nam's funding partners landscape visit our [Transparency Portal](#).



UN SYSTEM COORDINATION

UN Women has a unique mandate to coordinate across the UN system on matters related to gender equality, and to promote its accountability in this work. It chairs the UN Gender Theme Group (GTG), is Secretariat to the Informal Ambassadors and Heads of Agencies Group on Gender Policy Coordination, and participates in the Human Rights Thematic Group. As the chair of the GTG, UN Women will oversee the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan developed to implement the recommendations of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. As part of these recommendations, UN Women will support the revision of the gender

analysis in the UN's Common Country Analysis to enable UN programmes to address the needs of women and girls in Viet Nam, and the application of the Gender Marker to the UNSDCF 2022-26, so that gender-equality investments in programmes and projects are appropriately tracked.

As the Secretariat to the Informal Ambassadors and Heads of Agencies Group, UN Women advises the work on gender equality of UN agencies and development partners. The Secretariat is instrumental to successful advocacy efforts because it provides significant entry points for high-level political engagement.

JOINT PROGRAMMING

OUR JOINT PROGRAMMES:

Joint Programme on Ending Violence against Women and Children 2021-2025 (UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UN Women)

Joint Programme to Empower Women for Climate-Resilient Societies 2018-2022 (UN Women and UNEP)

Joint Programme on Financing for SDGs 2022-2024 (UNDP, UNICEF, UNEP, Resident Coordinator's Office and UN Women)

Joint Programme on HIV 2019-2023 (UN AIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Health Organization, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and UN Women)

Joint Programme on Safe and Fair Migration 2019-2023 (International Labour Organization and UN Women).

**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A
GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO
ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING
THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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