

Building a Stronger Future for Women and Girls — Regardless of the Institutional Outcome

While many valuable papers explain why UN Women should remain an independent entity, below are some constructive recommendations that could strengthen outcomes regardless of the final decision taken by Member States.

If UN Women remains independent, these recommendations can strengthen its effectiveness.

If a merger proceeds, these recommendations could help protect women and girls during the transition.

Recommendation 1

Measure success by impact, not by structure.

The success of any institutional arrangement should not be judged by the number of agencies or administrative savings.

It should be measured by real improvements in the lives of women and girls.

Examples include:

- more women in leadership
- reduced violence against women
- improved maternal health
- greater economic independence
- better education
- stronger digital inclusion
- greater participation in peacebuilding
- improved wellbeing across generations

If these outcomes improve, the reform has succeeded.

If they decline, the structure has failed regardless of financial savings.

Recommendation 2

Create an Independent Women's Rights Protection Council.

Regardless of whether a merger occurs, an independent advisory body composed of civil society, youth representatives, indigenous women, women with disabilities, academia and regional experts should oversee whether commitments under:

- CEDAW
- Beijing Platform for Action
- ICPD

continue to be fully respected.

This council should publish an annual public assessment independent of management.

Recommendation 3

Protect funding for women and girls.

One of the greatest risks during institutional reform is that programmes lose funding while administrative restructuring receives priority.

A protected funding mechanism should guarantee that resources intended for women and girls cannot be diverted during transition.

Recommendation 4

Keep expertise close to the communities.

Whether merged or not, specialized technical teams should remain dedicated to their areas of expertise.

Local country offices should continue working with women's organizations without interruption.

Women should never experience delays because institutions are reorganizing internally.

Recommendation 5

Use Artificial Intelligence responsibly.

Any new organization should use AI to improve efficiency without replacing human judgement.

AI could help:

- monitor programme performance
- identify emerging risks
- translate information into many languages
- improve access for rural women
- reduce administrative burden

However, decisions affecting women's rights must always remain under human oversight.

Recommendation 6

Build one digital platform.

Women often struggle to navigate different UN systems.

Whether one entity or two, there should be one digital gateway where governments, NGOs and women can easily access:

- funding opportunities
- technical guidance
- partnerships
- learning resources
- reporting tools

Recommendation 7

Protect institutional memory.

Whenever organizations change, valuable experience can disappear.

A structured knowledge transfer programme should preserve expertise developed over decades and mentor the next generation of women leaders.

Recommendation 8

Make civil society a permanent partner.

Civil society should not only be consulted during reform.

It should become a permanent strategic partner in monitoring implementation and proposing improvements.

Women's organizations are often the first to identify emerging challenges and should have an ongoing voice.

Final Reflection

Whether the future brings one institution or two, our common goal remains unchanged:

Every decision should leave women and girls stronger, safer, healthier, more empowered and better represented than before.

Institutional reform is only meaningful if it produces better lives—not simply different organizational charts.