UN 8O Reform Initiative Shadow Executive Summary I Of II – 7-30-2026

Alternative Options for Strategic Diversification of Financing and Partnerships for UN Women

Strengthening the Voices and Visibility for Women and Girls in The UN Architecture

The global environment for women and girls requires a fundamental shift: **from viewing gender equality as a specialized issue to recognizing it as a central pillar of global governance, sustainable development, economic growth, peace, health, and innovation.** As the United Nations considers institutional reform, the guiding principle must be clear: **women and girls cannot become less visible, less influential, or less resourced as a result of restructuring. They must be positioned in a stronger, more visible, and more authoritative space within the UN system.**

At a time when progress on women's rights is facing growing resistance, reform must protect decades of advancement while creating a stronger model for the future. Consolidation, efficiency, and coordination are important objectives; however, they must not come at the expense of dedicated expertise, accountability, political leadership, or global advocacy for women and girls.

Women and girls are not a separate secondary development category. They are central to achieving every major global priority, including the Sustainable Development Goals, climate action, digital transformation, artificial intelligence governance, health equity, economic growth, peace and security, and humanitarian response. The future UN architecture must reflect this reality by ensuring that gender equality has stronger leadership, stronger financing, and stronger integration across the entire system.

The financial reality reinforces this argument. Investments dedicated specifically to women and girls represent only a small proportion of overall global development financing and UN expenditures. The challenge is not that gender equality receives excessive resources; the challenge is that current investments remain insufficient compared with the scale of global need and the economic and social returns generated by advancing women's equality.

The case for institutional reform is both legitimate and necessary; however, efficiency, cost savings, and organizational coherence **should not outweigh the strategic importance of maintaining a strong, visible, and independent institutional voice for women and girls**. At a time of growing global backlash against gender equality, reform should reinforce, not diminish, the leadership, agency, and influence of women within the United Nations system.

Respectfully, the opportunity before Member States is not simply to reduce duplication, but to create a more powerful model that combines UN leadership, government commitments, civil society expertise, philanthropic investment, and responsible private-sector partnerships. See following Content and Paper II

Comparing Budgets and Annual Financing Scale and Partnerships

The UN system operates through a combination of assessed contributions, voluntary government contributions, multilateral financing, philanthropic support, and partnerships with the private sector. The table below illustrates the scale of financing across major UN areas and **highlights the relatively negligible investment dedicated specifically to advancing women and girls.**

The following figures are approximate and intended to illustrate scale differences. Detailed financing analysis and references are provided in Paper Three: Financing the Future.

Area / Organization	Approximate Annual Financing Scale	Primary Focus
UN Regular Budget	~$3.7 billion	Core UN operations and mandates
UN Peacekeeping Operations	~$5–6 billion annually	Peace and security operations
UN Development System	Tens of billions annually through agencies and programs	Development, humanitarian, and country programs
World Health Organization (WHO)	~$6–7 billion biennial program budget	Global health systems, disease prevention, health equity
UN Women	Approximately $500–600 million annual resources (varies by year)	Gender equality, women's empowerment, global advocacy
UN Development Program (UNDP)	Approximately $5 billion+ annual programming scale	Poverty reduction, governance, resilience, development
UNICEF	Approximately $8 billion+ annual income	Children, health, education, protection
Global philanthropic foundations	Tens of billions annually globally	Health, education, innovation, development
Private-sector sustainability investments	Hundreds of billions globally	ESG, climate, workforce, innovation, social impact

The comparison demonstrates that dedicated investments for gender equality remain unacceptably modest compared with the scale of global financing directed toward other priorities. Strengthening women's institutions is therefore not a financial burden; it is a strategic investment.

UN Women 2025 Budget Breakdown and Spending

In 2025, UN Women's total resources were $638.44 million, with $401.72 million allocated to field-based program expenses and split between core (regular) resources and non-core (other) resources and distributed across several key impact areas.

Main Impact Areas and Spending: Field-based expenses in 2025 allocated as follows. These figures represent the total program expenses for the year, combining both core and non-core funding. UN Women's 2025 budget was heavily invested in women's economic empowerment and women, peace and security initiatives, with significant allocations to ending violence against women and governance participation. The majority of funding came from non-core resources, indicating reliance on voluntary contributions alongside regular UN budget support. See Citations and References.

1. Governance and participation in public life – $82,134,642

2.Women’s economic empowerment – $81,312,494
3.Ending violence against women – $94,334,453
4. Women, peace, security, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction $143,935,855

Expanding the Financing Model: Global Partnerships with Private Sector

The future of global governance requires innovative financing models that complement government contributions while maintaining UN accountability and independence. Several existing models provide important lessons.

1. UN Global Compact (UNGC): Corporate Engagement for Sustainable Development

The United Nations **Global Compact demonstrates how the private sector can align investment with global priorities through principles-based partnerships**.

With thousands of participating companies worldwide, UNGC provides a framework for businesses to support:

- Women’s leadership and Equity
- Responsible business practices.
- Access to Technology and AI
- Sustainable development goals.
- Human rights commitments.
- Climate and social impact initiatives.

A strengthened gender financing model will expand corporate investment in essential and strategic advancement of women’s development, equity and development :

- Women’s economic empowerment.
- STEM education
- Workforce development.
- Women's safety and freedom from violence or harassment
- Women entrepreneurs.
- Digital inclusion.
- Health innovation
- Artificial Intelligence

2. UN Internet Governance Forum (IGF): Technology and Digital Inclusion

The Internet Governance Forum demonstrates the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships involving governments, technology companies, academia, and civil society. As artificial intelligence and digital technologies reshape society, women and girls must not be left behind. Technology companies represent a significant opportunity for strategic partnerships to advance gender equality while supporting responsible innovation. Future investment models should support women’s access to digital tools. AI literacy and education. Ethical AI development. Digital health solutions. Closing gender data gaps.

3. COP Processes: Climate Finance and Gender-Responsive Private Sector Investment

The UN climate process demonstrates how global challenges can mobilize large-scale financing through government commitments, financial institutions, and private-sector investment. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Conference of the Parties (COP) processes have increasingly recognized the importance of gender-responsive climate action. Similar approaches can be applied to women and girls through:

- Gender-responsive investment funds.
- Public-private innovation partnerships.
- Climate entrepreneurship programs for women.
- Financing mechanisms supporting women-led solutions.

4. WHO and Global Health Partnerships

The World Health Organization provides a strong example of how global health priorities can be advanced through partnerships among governments, foundations, research institutions, and private-sector organizations. Such models inform future investments in:1 Women's health. 2. Maternal health. 3. Aging and chronic ailments. 4. Digital health. 5. Gender-specific medical research.6. Gender-based Medical Training. Major global health partnerships have demonstrated that:

- Innovation accelerates when multiple sectors collaborate.
- Private-sector expertise can expand access and scale.
- Philanthropic investment can catalyze solutions.

Recommendations

Strengthening Visibility and Voices of Women and Girls – Without Subsuming Women into the UN Gender Architecture

1. Elevate Women and Girls Within UN Leadership Structures by

- Maintaining a visible, authoritative institutional home for gender equality.
- Ensuring women's priorities are represented at the highest levels of UN decision-making.
- Strengthening accountability for progress on gender equality commitments.

2. Reform Through Elevation, Integration, Not Absorption

- Increase collaboration across UN agencies while preserving specialized expertise.
- Embed gender equality across all UN priorities.
- Ensure women's rights are not diluted within broader mandates.

3. Create a New Financing Compact for Women and Girls - Develop a diversified financing strategy. The goal should be additional resources, not replacement of public commitments. Including:

- Government contributions.
- UN system resources.
- Philanthropic partnerships.
- Private-sector investment.
- Social impact financing.
- Innovation funds.

4. Establish and Utilize Stronger Private-Sector Partnership Models

Develop transparent frameworks that allow responsible engagement with: Technology companies. Healthcare companies. Financial institutions. Global corporations. Foundations. Priority investment areas should include women and girls' needs in the areas of Women's health. AI and digital inclusion. STEM education. Entrepreneurship. Economic empowerment

5. Measure Success Through Impact - Future reforms should be evaluated through measurable outcomes for Women and girls – not just generic, disaggregated gender goals to improve health outcomes for women and girls, increased economic participation. Greater representation in leadership. Increased access to technology and education. Stronger protection of women's rights.

Conclusion - *The future of women and girls in the United Nations system must be defined by greater influence, stronger visibility, and increased investment*.

Reform provides an opportunity to create a more effective and innovative system. However, success cannot be measured only by administrative efficiency or financial reduction. The true measure of success is whether women and girls emerge from reform with a stronger voice, greater authority, and increased ability to shape global decisions. Women and girls must not become collateral damage in institutional reform. They must become a central driver of the next generation of global governance.

Citations

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Appendix A: These examples demonstrate that diversified financing is not a departure from multilateralism; it is an evolution of it. The United Nations has already developed the governance tools, partnership models, and institutional safeguards needed to mobilize broader resources. The next step is to apply these proven approaches strategically across the UN system while preserving the authority of Member States and protecting the Organization's core mandates.

Member States remain at the top of the governance structure, while diversified financing expands the resource base without shifting authority. That is the core message you want decision-makers to take away.

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Contributions   (World Bank,     (Gates,         (Technology,      Research,
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                    Independent Oversight • Public Reporting
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                          UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
       UN Women • UNDP • UNICEF • WHO • UNFPA • UNEP • FAO • WFP • Others
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                      MEASURABLE GLOBAL PUBLIC VALUE
       Human Rights • Gender Equality • Peace • Health • Climate • AI
       Education • Economic Opportunity • Resilient Communities • SDGs
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