

Donor Advisory Group Meeting

Discussion Brief: Changing landscape in the UN – Donor Reflections

Background:

The UN is facing an unprecedented crisis of multilateralism and funding cuts. In March, the UNSG launched his UN80 Initiative on reform and restructuring of the UN system, with major implications for how the UN will operate in the future and for upholding international norms and principles, gender equality, and the human rights of those who are left out, locked out or left behind.

The UN80 reform process falls in three tracks: 1) Immediate efficiencies and cost savings for the UN Secretariat, 2) review of mandates given by Member States, 3) structural change and program realignment across the entire UN system, led by the UN80 Task Force. Under the Taskforce, seven different clusters have been established to identify efficiencies and develop proposals for structural changes. Suggested proposals include merging UN Women and UNFPA, establishing a single human rights entity, creating one consolidated humanitarian entity, and streamlining ECOSOC commissions, such as CPD and CSW, potentially shifting some of their work to the regional level. We expect that parts of the reform process will move quickly forward in the coming months.

At the same time, we are seeing opposition to SRHR gender equality and diversity unfold in new ways in multilateral spaces. At the WHO, opposition to technical discussions has been fierce, and within the UN system, there has been pushback by conservative forces such as UN the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls who is consistently attacking trans-rights and marginalized communities. Unlike traditionally conservative states that still respect multilateral norms, the U.S. and some allies now disrupt or undermine consensus-based negotiations over even references to the 2030 Agenda.

We also see new emerging geopolitical trends, with China playing an active role in defending the 2030 Agenda and positioning themselves in discussions around ‘population dynamics’, notably pushing for more focus on low fertility, as well as showing interest in the UNFPA ED position.

IPPF is intensifying its engagement across all U.N. spaces to defend, shape, push and hold governments accountable to defend human rights and international human law obligations. This includes providing technical support to Member States, amplifying the voices of IPPF Member Associations, partners and marginalized communities to anchor UN discussions in lived realities, and strengthening feminist movements through coordination with allied organizations.

In this context of change, IPPF, as a strategic partner to the UN and a recipient of donor support, seeks to better understand the perspectives and expectations of its core donors. This session will serve as an open dialogue on how global shifts and UN reforms may impact collaboration and shared goals, with a focus on what it is that we want to preserve going forward.

Discussion Questions

IPPF proposes the following guiding questions:

1. How are current global shifts and UN reforms shaping your government's approach to multilateralism and the UN system ?
2. What role do you see for a reformed UN in this multi crisis context?
3. In a rapidly evolving multilateral landscape—where opposition voices are increasingly coordinated and influential—what will you do differently to remain effective and resilient?
4. What are your key strategic priorities for multilateral engagement over the next 2–3 years?