

Financing for Gender Equality

Toward a More Feminist United Nations

The Feminist UN Campaign brings together leading, feminist thinkers in civil society, philanthropy, academia and former UN staff around a shared agenda for women's rights and gender equality at the United Nations. These insights were first brought together in a flagship report, "Toward a More Feminist United Nations," published by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in September 2016. The report highlights both transformative and practical steps the Secretary-General, his staff and UN agencies can make in achieving gender equality across the UN system, in both its policies and practices. Specific recommendations on financing for gender equality are outlined below in this policy brief. To read the full report, please visit: <https://www.icrw.org/publications/towards-feminist-united-nations/>.

Insufficient funds are committed to gender equality in both programming by UN agencies, as well as within internal system operations and processes. UN Women never received the full \$1 billion budget for which activists initially campaigned.¹ However, this is not to imply that all gender equality efforts should be siloed at UN Women – to the contrary, these efforts are best managed when both mainstreamed and given direct attention. Other agencies can and should also play a role: they have larger budgets, but do not invest at the levels needed to achieve gender equality and uphold the rights of women and girls everywhere, nor do they empower the gender advisors they do have to participate in key decisions and processes.

What funds do exist for gender equality are too often compromised by their origins or structure – funds for gender equality should be core funded to ensure no strings are attached. A related problem is the series of traditions and unwritten rules that dictate *de facto* "ownership" of specific UN entities or roles by certain Member States based on donation levels. These practices benefit wealthier Member States, and lead to disproportionate geographic and wealth representation throughout the system. We are concerned by the over-earmarking of funds and by the growing influence of private (both corporate and private foundation) funds in the UN system, yet also recognize that these represent possible funding sources for gender equality and cannot be dismissed out-of-hand in the current system. We therefore recommend that the UN:

- Secretary-General, in collaboration with UN Women, convene a High-Level Panel on Financing Gender Equality that, annually, analyzes and presents the state of financing for women's rights and gender equality within the UN system, in countries worldwide and across philanthropic sectors. The Panel should include feminist economists, experts in gender-responsive budgeting, Ministers of Finance and Gender Equality and civil society representatives (especially those from the most excluded groups). This Panel could report to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the CSW could develop resolutions – based on evidence – to strengthen the amounts and nature of financing available in different sectors, countries and communities.
- Commit to full transparency by publishing funding sources for all agencies, positions and programs and, furthermore, commit to system-wide gender budgeting.
- Ensure that at least 30 percent of current spending is dedicated to women's rights programming and gender mainstreaming throughout the system. For agencies participating in the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP),² existing targets should be published and agencies should publicly report back on whether they have met them. For bodies and agencies that have avoided gender marker use, such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), new targets must be set, published and reported against.
- Secretary-General begin a campaign to increase funding for UN Women to \$1 billion both by encouraging Member State contributions and by pulling from the core general fund, to ensure it can fulfill its mandate. UN Women should also activate its national committees in private fundraising efforts, being careful not to cannibalize donations to feminist and women's rights organizations in civil society.
- Secretary-General challenge Member States who propose staff for his key positions to ensure they put forward equal numbers of qualified women and men.



- Increase funding for gender equality efforts of all other agencies, both by encouraging Member State contributions and by pulling from the core general fund.
- Promote greater transparency in spending by publishing how much the UN spends on key activities such as peacekeeping, with clear references to amounts dedicated to gender equality, gender mainstreaming, economic policy and to address the particular challenges faced by women in war, for example, and adopt gender budgeting at the Secretariat and agency level. This could be achieved by the gender SWAP and should apply to all UN agencies and bodies, including the 5th Committee, and make that data publicly available on a central platform.
- Reorient spending, once published, to ensure that a substantial amount of what was spent on peacekeeping and peace operations is designated to support women's participation and justice for women, as well as economic recovery to ensure women's economic activities and livelihoods are sustained and that women engage in peacebuilding and reconstruction, thereby wresting meaningful political power in post-conflict and fragile states.
- General Assembly pass a resolution committing Member States to separate their funding decisions from hiring practices and committing them to hold the UN accountable for modeling gender equality in hiring and promotions. A peer review or independent audit should be published annually to ensure compliance.
- General Assembly mandate a gender analysis of the 5th Committee to include both membership and funding priorities.
- Combat the *de facto* "ownership" of certain agencies and positions by certain Member States or private donors by making those contributions public. Some organizations, such as the World Food Programme, do publish contributions by donor governments, but all private donations are grouped together and should be disaggregated by type of funding source.
- Encourage more Member States to contribute to the general fund rather than earmarking their contributions to address this ownership issue.
- Publish contributions by private (corporate and foundation) funders, and/or provide agencies a mechanism to "scrub" those funds by channeling them through national committees or other funding mechanisms that could pool contributions and diminish donor control.
- Develop a pool of Member States willing to drop quid-pro-quo hiring practices in return for funding and stand by agencies that agree to make reforms.
 - Entities, as an interim step, publicly list on their websites and in reports which countries provided funding but required the hiring of their country nationals in return.
 - Ensure that secondments are made public to separate attempts to influence direct UN hires and secondments, which are temporary and may be an indirect way of increasing funds funneled into agencies, even if there is a concern that these may be linked to influence as well.
- Create binding regulations around constructive engagement of the private sector (corporate and philanthropic) at the UN.
 - Publish how much private sector organizations are funding UN agencies and activities, and report on the impacts of that funding, including as a percentage of total funds going to that activity.
 - Develop guidelines such as those that require that, for every donation a private foundation gives for women's rights at the UN, a similar sum should directly support feminist and women's rights organizations in civil society (see AWID report series, "Where is the Money for Women's Rights?").
 - Convene a donor conversation for foundations interested in funding a more feminist UN to discuss these and other recommendations.



1 UN Women (13 May 2015). Draft Integrated Budget 2016-17: Informal Briefing to the Executive Board.

<http://www2.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/executive%20board/2015/ibs/eb-2015-ib2eb-draft-integratedbudget2016-2017-pdf-en.pdf?v=1&d=20150513T223636>

2 In early 2012, the United Nations agreed on the landmark UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN-SWAP, to implement the gender equality policy of its highest executive body, the UN Chief Executives Board, chaired by the Secretary-General. Spearheaded by UN Women, the UN-SWAP for the first time assigns common performance standards for the gender-related work of all UN entities, ensuring greater coherence and accountability. See more at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability#sthash.Rd75S5O6.dpuf>