

As-Is Analysis: A Baseline for the UNFPA - UN Women Strategic Merger Assessment

WORK PACKAGE 4 | Prepared by the UNFPA / UN Women Merger Assessment Task Team | 06 MARCH 2026

ORGANIZATIONAL SNAPSHOT

Core Mandates

UNFPA

Established by the United Nations General Assembly as a subsidiary organ under Art. 22 of the Charter in 1972 (Resolution 3019 (XXVII)) as the lead UN entity on population issues, UNFPA's mandate is to build knowledge and capacity to respond to population and development needs, promote awareness of population issues, and provide assistance tailored to country priorities. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) placed sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (SRH RR), including voluntary family planning, maternal health, gender equality and women's empowerment, at the heart of population and development. This reframing emphasized that population issues are not problems to be managed, but rather rooted in individual rights, choices and empowerment. Today UNFPA is therefore the UN's lead agency on sexual and reproductive health and rights, working to ensure every pregnancy is intended, every childbirth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled, while supporting countries with population data, demographic analysis and foresight and population-informed policies for sustainable development.

UN WOMEN

Established by the United Nations General Assembly as a subsidiary organ in 2010 (Resolution 64/289) as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UN Women was created to consolidate

and strengthen the UN system's work on gender equality. Its mandate encompasses three interlinked roles: supporting intergovernmental bodies in setting global norms and standards on gender equality and women's rights (normative); assisting Member States in implementing these standards through operational activities and partnerships with civil society (operational); and promoting coherence and accountability for gender equality across the UN system (coordination). Guided by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Women is the UN's lead entity working to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, leveraging a triple mandate that harnesses UN Women's expertise, institutional positioning, and partnerships to drive systemic change to ensure that local realities inform global intergovernmental standards and UN actions, and concrete results for women and girls are delivered.

Core Functions

UNFPA

UNFPA serves as the UN system's lead agency on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and population dynamics and demographic change; and on population data systems. Its core functions include providing technical expertise and policy guidance to governments, delivering essential reproductive health commodities, and supporting demographic data systems for evidence-based planning. UNFPA plays a critical role in humanitarian contexts as the global lead

for SRH coordination and gender-based violence (GBV) response within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Among other population data related responsibilities, it also hosts the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (CRVS) Systems, advancing rights-based demographic policies. Through its decentralized structure, UNFPA combines normative work with large-scale programme delivery across humanitarian and development settings, focusing on reproductive health and family planning, maternal and newborn health preventing and responding to gender-based violence, and demographic foresight and analysis.¹

UN WOMEN

UN Women is the UN system's lead entity on gender equality and women's empowerment, operating under a triple mandate: normative support, UN system coordination, and operational and programmatic work. Its core functions include setting global norms and standards, supporting intergovernmental processes such as the Commission on the Status of Women, driving system-wide accountability through mechanisms such as the UN-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard and hosting the UN System Wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) and delivering comprehensive, integrated policy advice and operational work that drives forward women's rights and agency across development, peace and humanitarian settings. It plays a crucial role in crisis contexts, leading the UN's work on issues of women, peace and security, and driving forward accountability for gender equality in humanitarian contexts, as the newest member of the IASC. UN Women coordinates and drives accountability for gender equality integration in UN Country Teams and humanitarian responses and serves as the UN's largest funder of national women's rights organisations, administering the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and leading initiatives such as the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the Elsie Initiative Fund. Operationally, it delivers programmes on women's leadership, economic empowerment,

freedom from violence, peace and security, and humanitarian action, leveraging partnerships with governments, civil society, the UN system and the private sector. Through its integrated global mandate, UN Women brings together normative leadership, system-wide coordination, policy advocacy and operational implementation to close the gap between global commitments and tangible impact on gender equality²

Governance

UNFPA

- **Executive Board, shared with UNDP and UNOPS, of 36 members**

Regional distribution: 8 African, 7 Asia-Pacific, 4 Eastern Europe, 5 Latin America & Caribbean, 12 Western Europe & Others).

- **Leadership:**

Executive Director Diene Keita; Deputy EDs for Programme and Management.³

UN WOMEN

- **Executive Board of 41 members**

Regional distribution: 10 African, 10 Asia-Pacific, 4 Eastern Europe, 6 Latin America & Caribbean, 5 Western Europe & Others, plus 6 top contributing countries).

- **Leadership:**

Executive Director Sima Bahous; Deputy EDs for Resource Management and Programme Results.⁴

OVERLAP IN MEMBERSHIP BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS

Historically, this overlap has ranged from 12 to 19 Member States over the past 15 years. Currently, 14 Member States serve on both boards, including major donors. Collectively, these overlapping countries account for approximately 54% of UNFPA's total contributions and 53% of UN Women's funding.⁵

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Current Strategic Plans

UNFPA

- The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 centers on advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, realizing reproductive rights (SRHR) and accelerating implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action with a heightened focus on addressing inequalities within and between countries and leaving no one behind – across the humanitarian, development, peace continuum. It is structured around four outcomes: Ending the unmet need for family planning; Ending preventable maternal deaths; Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices; Adapting to demographic change through rights-based policies.
- Six outputs guide implementation: Data, analysis and foresight; policy, advocacy and accountability; sustainable financing and investment; social and gender norms; quality of care and services; and humanitarian action and preparedness.

UN WOMEN

- The Strategic Plan 2026–2029 prioritizes gender equality and women’s empowerment, anchored in three systemic outcomes: Norms and standards that uphold women’s rights are protected and implemented; Institutions are accountable with financing, data, and practices that advance equality; Women and girls can exercise agency and access quality services, resources, and assets.
- Four thematic impact areas guide implementation: women’s leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and women, peace and security/humanitarian action.

SDG Alignment

The top 3 SDG focus areas for each entity are outlined here. UNFPA: SDG 3 (Health), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 13 (Climate Action). UN Women: SDG

5 (Gender Equality), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).⁶

UNFPA

Top 3 SDG Focus Areas	Share of Expenses (Of total expenses)
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	40%
SDG 5: Gender Equality	31%
SDG 13: Climate Action	6%

UN Women

Top 3 SDG Focus Areas	Share of Expenses (Of total expenses)
SDG 5: Gender Equality	77%
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	7%
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	4%

Source: UN CEB Financial Statistics and IATI/SDG

Both UNFPA and UN Women demonstrate alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, though their mandates lead to different programmatic approaches and areas of emphasis. UN Women’s alignment is reflected through its triple mandate (normative, coordination, and operational) and system-level accountability mechanisms; UNFPA’s alignment is reflected through its technical, operational and normative work across SRHR and population data and demographic foresight and analysis.

UNFPA and UN Women operate at different scales and with different cost structures. There is limited duplication and high complementarity. UNFPA programmes are fewer, larger, and predominantly national in scope, consistent with a delivery and systems mandate. UN Women programmes are more numerous, smaller, and often multi-scope (national, regional, global), consistent with a normative, coordination and operational mandate. In 2024, UNFPA and UN Women played distinct but mutually reinforcing roles in advancing gender equality, women’s rights, and reproductive health across development and humanitarian contexts.⁷

UNFPA functions primarily as a large-scale operational and service-delivery actor, including in humanitarian settings. UNFPA’s executed programme expenditure was approximately two to three times larger than UN Women’s, reflecting

its mandate for service delivery, commodities, and humanitarian operations.

UN Women functioned primarily as a normative, policy, and operational systems-change actor, working across institutions, laws, and accountability mechanisms. UN Women's expenditure profile is smaller in absolute terms but spread across a larger number of catalytic interventions aimed at systemic change.

UNFPA's 2024 expenditure clusters around five core pillars:

- Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH). Maternal health, family planning, obstetric care, and SRH commodities; the single largest share of expenditure.
- Humanitarian SRH and GBV in crises. Life-saving SRH services and GBV response in conflict, displacement, and disaster contexts; a structurally elevated share.
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response. Operational GBV services, risk mitigation, and coordination, often embedded within humanitarian and health programmes.
- Adolescents and Youth. Adolescent SRH, prevention of early marriage, and youth-focused health and protection interventions.
- Population Data, Policy, and Systems. Census support, demographic analysis, and population dynamics to inform national planning and policy.

UN Women's 2024 expenditure clusters around five complementary pillars:

- Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW). Prevention, survivor-centred approaches, legal reform, and institutional capacity; the largest single thematic area.
- Women's Leadership and Political Participation. Leadership pipelines, electoral participation, governance reforms, and decision-making power.
- Women's Economic Empowerment. Livelihoods, care economy, social protection, access to finance, and economic rights.

- Women, Peace and Security / Humanitarian Action. Gender equality in crisis response, localization, and women's participation in peace and security processes.
- Normative Coordination and Accountability. UN system coordination, gender mainstreaming, standards-setting, and accountability mechanisms.

Both UNFPA and UN Women report annually to the Chief Executives Board (CEB) using the gender equality marker (GEM). According to recent CEB reporting, over 90% of UN Women's programmatic resources are spent on activities with gender equality and empowerment of women (GEWE) as the principal objective, compared to approximately 70–75% for UNFPA, with the remainder recorded as a significant objective. This indicates that both entities align with gender equality objectives, with UN Women's work focused on delivering comprehensive results through its normative, coordination and programming work, while UNFPA combines gender-principal interventions through its technical, operational and normative work.

UNFPA: In 2024, UNFPA allocated USD 1.247 billion to its six core outputs under the Integrate Results and Resources Framework. These investments were distributed as follows: USD 73.1 million (5.9%) for policy and accountability; USD 589.6 million (47.3%) for quality of care and services; USD 212.5 million (17.0%) for gender and social norms; USD 98.9 million (7.9%) for population change and data; USD 177.2 million (14.2%) for humanitarian action; and USD 95.9 million (7.7%) for adolescents and youth. Together, these allocations reflect UNFPA's focus on strengthening health systems, advancing SRHR and gender equality, improving demographic data, responding to humanitarian crises, and supporting adolescents and youth.

UN Women: In 2024, UN Women allocated USD 389.4 million to its four thematic outputs under the Integrated Results and Resources Framework. This included USD 80.0 million (20.5%) for governance and participation in public life; USD 80.9 million (20.8%) for women's economic empowerment; USD 93.4 million (24.0%) for ending violence against women; and USD 135.1 million (34.7%)

for women, peace and security, humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction. Together, these allocations reflect UN Women's focus on prioritizing integrated solutions that tackle root causes of gender inequalities, support systemic changes, and leverage UN Women's triple mandate to translate norms and standards on gender equality into lasting, meaningful change.

OPERATIONAL MODEL

UNFPA operates through a decentralized structure comprising headquarters, regional, multi-country, representational, and country offices. Headquarters provides strategic leadership, coordinates interagency work, communication, resource mobilization and strategic partnerships, global policy development, and corporate services, including finance, HR, ICT, and oversight. Regional offices act as intermediaries, offering technical and operational support to country offices and engaging with regional intergovernmental bodies, along with a focus on compliance and risk. Subregional offices strengthen programme implementation in specific clusters, while representational offices focus on advocacy, resource mobilization, and partnership engagement in donor capitals. Country offices lead programme delivery at the national level, working with governments, civil society, private partners, and UN Country Teams to deliver the Executive Board approved Country Programme Documents aligned with the UNFPA Strategic Plan and focusing on sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning, maternal and newborn health, GBV prevention and response, population dynamics and demographic change, and strengthened data systems. Multi-country offices manage programming in clusters of states, typically Small Island Developing States. Across its network, UNFPA combines technical expertise with deep local engagement, ensuring its programmes are both globally aligned and responsive to national and community-level priorities.

UN Women operates under a decentralized structure comprising headquarters, regional offices, multi-country offices, representational and country offices. Headquarters provides global leadership on

gender equality, supports Member States to develop global normative frameworks, and coordinates UN system accountability through mechanisms such as UN-SWAP, IANWGE and hosting the Secretariat of the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan.⁸ It also manages corporate services, resource mobilization, communication and partnerships, develops global policy and programming guidance for country offices, and supports intergovernmental processes such as the Commission on the Status of Women. Regional offices provide technical and policy support to country offices, UNCTs/HCTs and UN Women stakeholders, lead regional advocacy, and engage with intergovernmental bodies and regional organizations. They also oversee programme quality and compliance and facilitate knowledge-sharing across countries. Country offices lead programme delivery at the national level on women's leadership, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and WPS/humanitarian response, and advanced through levers such as institutional strengthening, gender data and statistics, gender budgeting, and coherent policy advice. In addition, they work closely with governments, civil society, and UN Country Teams to integrate gender equality into national policies and development, peace and security and humanitarian response frameworks. Two multi-country offices manage programming in clusters of smaller states, ensuring alignment with global standards and regional priorities. UN Women's historic partnerships with women's rights organizations and movements ensure its programmes are both globally aligned and responsive to national and community-level priorities. Across global operations, UN Women serves as a bridge-builder among diverse actors and leverages the Entity's triple mandate to close the distance between normative commitments and tangible changes in the lives of women and girls and to ensure that local realities inform global intergovernmental standards.

Delivery Architecture

- UNFPA has 121 country offices globally covering its work in 150 countries (it has 2 multi-country offices in the Pacific and the Caribbean)
- UN Women has 85 country offices, and 2 multi-country offices, and delivers programmes in 109

countries. Through its grant making facilities, UN Women funds programming in 140 countries. Combined, there are 206 country offices across 131 countries with significant overlap in terms of locations.⁹

Programme Delivery Modalities

- UNFPA delivered around 30% of its expenses through partners in 2024 and around 70% directly. A substantial portion of UNFPA direct expenses is in “supplies” delivered through its supply chain to its programmes and to partners.
- UN Women delivered around 25% through partners and around 75% directly.¹⁰

Human Resources

- UNFPA has approximately 3,569 staff (16% HQ, 84% field);
- UN Women has approximately 1,308 staff (25% HQ, 75% field). In addition to staff both entities rely heavily on affiliated personnel.
- UNFPA has 2,340 affiliated personnel (consultants, service contract holders, and UN Volunteers) engaged for programme delivery and technical support.
- UN Women engages around 2,600, reflecting both its service contract holders at country level and short-term expertise for normative and coordination functions.¹¹
- Gender parity is achieved at the leadership level for both entities.¹² Across the broader workforce, UN Women maintains a higher proportion of female staff at approximately 70% while UNFPA’s workforce is approximately 52% female.¹³

Core Systems

- Both UNFPA and UN Women rely on Results-Based Management (RBM) frameworks for strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting, using Integrated Results and Resources Frameworks (IRRF) aligned with their respective strategic plans. Implementation differs.
- UNFPA applies RBM primarily as an

operational tool for programmatic planning and performance monitoring, organizational efficiency and effectiveness, and accountability and compliance.

- UN Women integrates RBM across its broader normative and coordination mandates, using it for programme delivery and to drive system-wide accountability, including compliance with UN-SWAP on gender equality.
- This means RBM serves primarily as a programmatic function for UNFPA, while for UN Women it is also a strategic mechanism shaping norms, inter-agency coordination, and operational performance monitoring.

For enterprise operations, both entities use Quantum ERP, a UNDP-led cloud-based platform, for finance, human resources, and procurement. Quantum replaced the legacy Atlas system.

UNFPA launched Quantum+ in late 2023, a modern Results and Resources Planning and implementing partner risk management system fully integrated with Quantum and the UN Partner Portal. It streamlines planning from the strategic plan to partner workplans, automates budgeting and payments, provides real-time analytics, and will introduce AI-assisted work planning in late 2025. For overall risk management, UNFPA plans to roll out the enterprise risk management module, integrated in Quantum+, in 2026.

In 2025, UN Women launched the Performance and Results Integrated System for Management (PRISM), its new corporate platform for planning, monitoring and reporting results. Fully integrated with Quantum and building on Quantum functionality, PRISM links results and financial data streamlines planning from the Strategic Plan to Strategic Notes, Workplans and Projects, introduces standardized project management workflows and dashboards, and enhances transparency through consolidated monitoring and external reporting via UN Women’s Transparency Portal. PRISM embeds enterprise risk management and aligns risk controls with planning, monitoring and reporting to strengthen organizational oversight. Partner oversight for UN Women relies on the Partner and Grant Agreement

Management System (PGAMS).

FINANCIAL HEALTH

Total Contributions (2024)

- Total contributions received by UNFPA totaled \$1.65 billion in 2024, continuing a growth trend of 3.8% on average per year since 2021 (when contributions was \$1.48 billion), with earmarked contributions representing 77% of revenues.
- UN Women has had a growth trend in contributions received since its establishment in 2010, reaching a total of \$592.5 million in 2024.
- In 2024, total revenues representing value of new agreements signed and other revenues stood at \$520 million, decreasing on average by 8.6% yearly since 2021 (\$681 million), with earmarked contributions representing 73% of revenues.

Total Expenses (2024)

- UNFPA \$1.53 billion, with \$1.1 billion (74.5%) country expenses. In 2024, programme expenses constituted 48.1% development assistance and 51.9% humanitarian assistance. (UNFPA Statistical and Financial Review 2024, Executive Board Annex).
- UN Women \$669.0 million total gross expenses in 2024, with \$470 million country and regional expenses, and 75% as development assistance.

Programme Expenses by Pillar (2024)

- UNFPA 48% Development Assistance, 52% Humanitarian Assistance.
- UN Women 75% Development Assistance, 14% Humanitarian Assistance, and 11% Global and Specialized Assistance.¹⁴

Expenses by Type and Regional Structure (2024)

- In 2024, UNFPA reported total expenses of \$1.53 billion, with approximately 83.4% allocated to global, regional and country programmes and 16.6% to institutional budget and corporate activities. The largest shares of programme

and institutional budget (total of \$1.48 billion) went to country and regional offices activities (\$1,177.5 million, 79.4%), with the remainder as global activities (\$304.5 million, 20.6%; of which \$117.6 million, or 8%, include reproductive health commodities procured for distribution to country offices). Regional spending distribution (gross expenses): Asia and the Pacific (\$281.6 million, 23.9%), East and Southern Africa (\$254.9 million, 21.7%), Arab States (\$229.2 million, 19.5%), West and Central Africa (\$202.4 million, 17.2%), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (\$114.0 million, 9.7%), Latin America and the Caribbean (\$95.4 million, 8.1%).

- UN Women reported \$669.0 million gross expenses, with \$469.9 million (70.1%) incurred by country and regional offices, including \$114.7 million of expenses incurred by UN Women partners including civil society organizations. Expenses of \$186.0 million (27.8%) related to global programmes and oversight activities, with \$13.1 million related to normative activities funded by allocation from the UN Regular Budget. Among regions (gross expenses), Asia and the Pacific received the largest allocation (\$134.5 million, 28.6%), followed by East and Southern Africa (\$82.4 million, 17.5%), Americas and the Caribbean (\$65.7 million, 14.0%), West and Central Africa (\$63 million, 13.3%), Europe and Central Asia (\$64 million, 13.5%), and Arab States (\$61 million, 13.0%).
- This distribution reflects UNFPA's strong field presence and humanitarian programming, while UN Women maintains a higher share for global normative and coordination work.

Donor Concentration

- Both UNFPA and UN Women exhibit donor concentration. In 2024, UNFPA's top five government contributors, the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, and Sweden accounted for nearly 45% of contributions (\$1.66 billion total).
- UN Women's top five government donors, Sweden, Germany, Canada, Finland, and Japan provided over 25% of contributions received

(\$593 million in 2024). This concentration highlights reliance on a limited number of major partners for a significant share of resources.

Donor Base Breadth

- In 2024, UNFPA's donor base comprised more than 175 contributors, including approximately 125 governments and intergovernmental entities, alongside more than 50 non-governmental partners such as foundations and private sector organizations.
- UN Women had 177 financial partners, of which roughly 140 were governments and multilateral institutions, and 37 were non-governmental actors, including foundations and corporate partners.
- While both agencies maintain diverse partnerships, the majority of funding continues to come from Member States.

Quality of Funding

- In 2024, UNFPA's core contributions represented 23% of total income. This is the same as in 2023 (\$384 million in 2023 and \$376 million in 2024). The remaining 77% consisted of non-core resources, the majority earmarked for specific themes or countries. UNFPA's thematic funds (the modality closest to core funding) received 19% (or \$238 million) of total non-core funds (\$1.284 billion), and funding from UN pooled sources was 17% of non-core funding in 2024.
- UN Women's core share of contributions received was 26%. This was \$ 164.1 million in 2023 and \$ 151.8 million in 2024). The remaining 74% of contributions received consisted of non-core resources, the majority earmarked for specific themes or countries, and annual allotments from the United Nations regular budget, funded from the assessed contributions of Member States to the United Nations. This was \$388.3 million in 2023 for non-core resources and grew to \$429.9 million in 2024. Funding from UN pooled sources was 26% of non-core funding received in 2024. UN Women has consistently led the UN system in being the agency with the largest percentage of its funding managed through

joint programming. UN Women's second most flexible funding is Strategic Note (SN) funding for specific countries and accounted for \$43.8 million of non-core contributions in 2024.

- Earmarked funding dominated overall contributions for both entities, constraining predictability and long-term planning and increasing transaction costs. UN Women also receives funding from the UN regular budget for its normative work; in 2024 this amounted to \$10.79 million.¹⁵

Cost Recovery

- Both UNFPA and UN Women operate under the harmonized Joint Cost Recovery Policy, which sets differentiated indirect cost recovery overhead rates applied on non-core contributions (8% standard; 7% thematic funds and EU framework agreements; 5% programme government contributions) and requires full recovery of direct and indirect costs. In practice, effective recovery rates reflect the net effect of the approved differentiated rates, averaging 7.3% for UNFPA and 7.0% for UN Women.
- Management cost shares differ: for UNFPA, management costs account for approximately 9.7% of total planned use of resources (mid-term review).
- For UN Women, the management share is 7.8%, with the remainder of the institutional budget dedicated to programmatic and development effectiveness functions, UN coordination, independent oversight, and evaluation.¹⁶

PROGRAMMATIC PERFORMANCE & PARTNERSHIPS

Coverage

During 2024, UNFPA had expenses across 150 countries; UN Women across 83 countries. Many of these countries are served by both agencies, including fragile and crisis settings such as Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Ukraine working side by side on complementary mandates.

UNFPA Results

In 2024, UNFPA reached 54 million women, adolescents, and youth with SRH services, contributing to the prevention of 18 million unintended pregnancies and 7.5 million unsafe abortions. Its interventions averted 39,000 maternal deaths and protected 290,000 girls from female genital mutilation (FGM). In humanitarian contexts, UNFPA supported about 3,500 health facilities in 55 countries and 11,000 mobile clinics in 39 countries, with 824,900 births assisted in UNFPA-supported facilities in 37 countries. UNFPA provided technical and/or financial support to 156 programme countries during the 2020 round of Population and Housing Censuses ensuring the enumeration of 4.23 billion people. UNFPA also engaged approximately 500,000 men and boys through SRHR and gender-transformative programmes in over 60 countries, promoting shared responsibility in family planning and GBV prevention.¹⁷

UN Women Results

Between 2022–2024, UN Women supported the adoption, revision or repeal of 325 laws, resulting in 2.9 billion women and girls in 83 countries having better legal protection of their human rights. Over 16,600 organizations in 95 countries had improved capacities to serve women. UN Women invested \$219.6 million in civil society organizations, including local women-led organizations and networks. Since 2021, 265.7 million women and girls were covered by peace and security plans supported by UN Women. Through UN Women-supported programmes, 21 million women in 79 countries (many survivors of violence, internally displaced women, and refugees) accessed information, goods and resources including protection and employment support. Through its campaigns, UN Women mobilized over 2 million individuals via HeForShe in 2024 which sparked around 3 billion gender-equality conversations and engaging 300,000+ employees across organizations.¹⁸

UNFPA Partnerships

UNFPA partners with governments; CSOs (youth-led, women-led, faith-based, advocacy); parliamentarians; UN entities; technical alliances;

private sector actors (pharmaceutical, logistics, fashion, food industry, creative industry, telecommunications); academia; and public health institutions enabling large-scale SRH service delivery and investments in population data systems. In recent years, more than 42% of UNFPA's humanitarian funding has been directed annually to local partners, of which 38% has been allocated to women-led organizations.¹⁹

UN Women Partnerships

UN Women has cultivated broad partnerships across governments, the UN system, civil society, including women- and youth-led organizations, the private sector, philanthropies, and other key actors. Recognized as a bridge-builder among diverse stakeholders, UN Women advances gender equality through initiatives such as Generation Equality and systematic engagement with Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAGs) at global, regional, and national levels. Partnerships with grassroots and women-led organizations are a comparative advantage, positioning UN Women as a leading advocate for women human rights defenders and civic space. The organization's private sector strategy drives measurable change through alliances like the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), HeForShe, and the Unstereotype Alliance, which influence corporate practices, promote leadership accountability, and advance gender equality across value chains and industries. UN Women's communications and global brand -underpinned by a data-driven, audience-first strategy- have made it the leading voice on gender equality within the UN system with over 15 million followers on social media. This visibility translates directly into influence, trust and stakeholder reach, and the organization's global brand strength.

National Committees

UN Women benefits from 13 National Committees that mobilize private-sector resources and champion gender equality. UNFPA has its National Committee "USA for UNFPA" for fundraising in the USA; the Individual Giving Strategy of UNFPA prioritized corporate investment in the global programme to reach the general public for its first cycle (2022–2025) and has decentralization in selected markets

through additional national operations as a key priority for its upcoming cycle (2026–2029).

Parliamentarians

UNFPA leverages parliamentarians, parliamentary networks, national committees and groups to advance ICPD commitments and SRHR by engaging them as strategic partners in policy development, budget scrutiny, programmatic oversight, and advocacy for increased and sustained resource mobilization. Through targeted technical support, evidence-based briefings, and sustained engagement with committees, caucuses, and networks, UNFPA strengthens legislative capacity to enact rights-based laws, champion domestic financing for SRHR, and ensure accountable and effective implementation of national commitments. UN Women works closely with parliamentary networks across countries leveraging strategic relationships to advance women's political participation and women's leadership, alongside unlocking domestic financing for GEWE and ensuring accountable delivery of national commitments.

Pooled Funds and UN System Roles

Both agencies access pooled funding (e.g., Spotlight Initiative, humanitarian pooled funds) and hold complementary UN system leadership roles. UN Women leads the majority of UNCT gender theme groups, plays a central role in humanitarian coordination through Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) mechanisms in HCTs, leads UN-SWAP and gender scorecards, manages the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and hosts the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the Elsie Initiative Fund. UNFPA leads GBV coordination and SRH in humanitarian settings and is the UN system's lead agency for censuses, surveys, and population data systems.

Civil Society Engagement

The Gender Review (2023)²⁰ highlights that civil society engagement must go beyond consultation to meaningful participation and influence, particularly for women's rights organizations and youth-led groups. Mechanisms to protect CSOs from reprisals and compensate them for contributions should be considered. In contexts with limited civic space,

engagement approaches should be adapted to ensure safety and feasibility, including through discreet consultations, intermediary representation, or digital platforms while recognizing and valuing CSO contributions. Both agencies actively champion the protection of civic space across the UN system and other multilateral platforms. On behalf of the UN System, UN Women drives direct funding to civil society organizations through the UN Trust Fund on Ending Violence Against Women, the Elsie Initiative Fund, and the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund.

SWOT ANALYSIS

UNFPA

Strengths

- Global authority on sexual and reproductive health and rights, population and data, population dynamics and demographic changes (fertility, aging urbanization and migration) including censuses, and CRVS, fertility, aging, providing foundational evidence for governance, planning, and SDG monitoring, anchored in the International Conference on Population and Development.
- Highly decentralized operational footprint, with 121 offices supporting programmes in over 150 countries across development, humanitarian, and fragile contexts.
- Strong financial performance and growth, with 2024 revenues of some USD 1.7 billion and successful diversification of funding through IFIs, domestic financing, and private sector partnerships.
- Extensive ecosystem of public and private partners, enabling advocacy, innovation, and co-investment at scale.
- Relatively strong core funding base, with 23% core resources supplemented by USD 238 million in flexible thematic funding, supporting predictability and strategic programming.
- World's largest multilateral procurer of maternal health medicines and largest provider of

donated contraceptives to developing countries, delivering significant economies of scale and global public goods.

- In humanitarian contexts, global lead for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and provider of last resort for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) programming in emergencies,
- Advanced digital and management systems, including cloud-based Quantum/Quantum+ ERP, automated partner monitoring, and AI-enabled results-based management.
- Confirmed institutional performance, with 2024 MOPAN findings validating strong internal controls and UNFPA's successful transformation into a leading development–humanitarian organization.

Weakness

- According to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) review of management and administration in UNFPA (JIU/REP/2023/1), governance and oversight constraints exist stemming from a shared Executive Board with UNDP and UNOPS, limiting the depth and frequency of UNFPA-specific strategic guidance and organizational oversight.

Opportunities

- Rising global crises and humanitarian needs increase demand for UNFPA's mandate, particularly rapid-response SRH and GBV services in fragile and conflict-affected settings.
- Demographic transitions (including aging, declining fertility, urbanization, migration) position UNFPA as a key technical advisor to middle- and high-income countries.
- UNFPA has a significant opportunity to leverage its mandate as a global leader in the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda by strengthening youth-led movements and facilitating participatory mechanisms that engage young people as critical agents of change and essential partners in sustaining peace.

- Expansion of innovative financing models, blended finance, and private sector co-investment to reduce reliance on traditional donor cycles.
- Donor withdrawal from population data and reproductive health commodities heightens the strategic importance of UNFPA's role as a global provider of last resort.

Threats

- Funding concentration among a small number of major donors, exposing UNFPA to geopolitical volatility and fiscal retrenchment.
- Growing political polarization around SRHR, including risks of rollback on contraception, bodily autonomy, and comprehensive sexuality education.
- Overlapping humanitarian, climate, and conflict crises, placing sustained pressure on staff capacity and risking trade-offs between emergency response and long-term development quality.
- Lack of consensus on elements of the SRHR mandate, requiring continuous political engagement to sustain consensus and safeguard normative gains.

UN WOMEN

Strengths

- Strong normative authority on gender equality, anchored in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and UN Women's role as Secretariat to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), linking global standard-setting with country-level evidence and experience.
- Triple mandate (normative, coordination, and operational) making UN Women the only UN entity solely mandated to advance the rights of all women and girls across the full GEWE spectrum.
- Decentralized global presence, with over 83 Country Offices enabling contextualized programming while influencing national, regional, and global policy agendas.

- System-wide convening and coordination role, bringing together governments, UN entities, civil society, and the private sector to mobilize political commitment, joint programming, and accountability.
- Trusted partner of feminist and women-led civil society, including women human rights defenders, reinforcing legitimacy and impact at grassroots and policy levels.
- Leadership in gender data and statistics, through the Women Count programme, supporting national statistical systems, closing gender data gaps, and advancing innovation (AI, geospatial and citizen-generated data).
- High-visibility global brand and communications reach, with industry-leading digital engagement, strong public trust, and influential goodwill ambassadors amplifying advocacy and normative influence.
- UN system lead on Women, Peace and Security, mandated by the Security Council, with over one-third of programme resources invested in crisis and conflict-affected settings.

Weaknesses

- Funding model constraints, despite a relatively high core funding share (28%), the majority of resources remaining earmarked, limiting flexibility and long-term strategic planning.
- More limited humanitarian operational footprint compared to traditional humanitarian agencies, reflecting its relatively recent inclusion in the IASC, despite its leadership role on WPS and crisis-related gender analysis.

Opportunities

- Integrated country-level delivery, leveraging the triple mandate to connect global norms, UN system coordination, and operational programming in support of Member State priorities.
- Role as the largest flexible funder of feminist civil society, through mechanisms such as the Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and

the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, reaching over 140 countries and territories.

- Catalytic system-wide leadership, including stewardship of UN-SWAP, GEAP, and co leadership of Joint Programmes, reinforcing coherence and accountability across the UN development system.
- Networked multilateralism and partnerships, enabling UN Women to co-create, co-implement, and co-finance solutions with governments, the private sector, and civil society at scale.

Threats

- High concentration of donor funding, with approximately half of resources coming from a small number of partners, increasing exposure to geopolitical and fiscal shifts.
- Global normative pushback against gender equality, threatening hard-won policy and rights gains.
- Risk of superficial engagement or "pinkwashing", requiring continued vigilance to ensure advocacy partnerships translate into meaningful, systemic change rather than symbolic commitments.

ANNEX 1: SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

	UNFPA	UN Women
Year established	1967 as a trust fund; 1972 as a subsidiary organ	2010
HQ location	New York, USA	New York, USA
Executive Board members	36	41
Total revenue (2024)	\$1.66B	\$521M
Core funding share (2024)	23%	26% of unearmarked voluntary contributions and additional 2% of funding from UN regular budget
Earmarked funding share (2024)	77%	72%
Countries covered	150+	109 (83 Country offices / programmes. The remainder UN Women manages through its Regional Offices.)
Country offices	121 country offices. Multi-country offices manage programming in clusters of states, typically small Island Developing States.	85 country offices
Staff	3,569 staff (16% HQ, 84% field)	1,308 staff (25% HQ, 75% field)
Affiliated personnel	2,340 affiliated personnel (consultants, service contract holders and UN Volunteers)	2,600 (service contract holders at country level and short-term expertise for normative and coordination functions)
Primary mandate	Sexual & reproductive health, population dynamics and demographic change, population data systems (censuses, CRVS and surveys), GBV	Supports intergovernmental bodies setting global norms and standards on gender equality and women's rights (normative); assisting Member States implement these standards (operational); and promoting coherence and accountability across the UN system (coordination) across impact areas of women's leadership, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and women, peace & security / humanitarian action, gender data and statistics.
Key partnerships	Ministries of health, ministries of planning, ministries on youth and gender, humanitarian actors, the private sector (global business and SMEs), philanthropies and foundations, civil society, parliamentarians, grassroots movements - feminist and youth movements	Gender ministries/ministries of social affairs, normative bodies, private sector, civil society, UN system
ERP system	Quantum (via UNDP) + Quantum+	Quantum (via UNDP)
Strategic plan cycle	2026-2029	2026-2029
Top donor concentration	Top 5 donors ≈ 45% of total funding	Top 5 government donors ≈ 25% of total funding

ANNEX 2: LOCATIONS (EXCLUDING FIELD PRESENCES)

	UNFPA Locations	UN Women Locations
Headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York (HQ) • Geneva • Nairobi • Copenhagen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York (HQ) • Nairobi • Bonn
Regional offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cairo (Arab States) • Bangkok (Asia & Pacific) • Johannesburg (East & Southern Africa) • Istanbul (Eastern Europe & Central Asia) • Panama City (Latin America & Caribbean) • Dakar (West & Central Africa) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nairobi, Dakar (Africa) • Panama City (Americas & Caribbean) • Cairo (Arab States) • Bangkok (Asia & Pacific) • Istanbul (Europe & Central Asia)
Subregional offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingston (Caribbean) • Suva (Pacific) • Subregional hub in Almaty (Central Asia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-Country Offices • Barbados (Caribbean) • Fiji (Pacific) • Clusters in Latin America, Pacific and Africa
Liaison / representational offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addis Ababa • Brussels • Berlin • Copenhagen • Geneva • London • Seoul • Tokyo • Washington D.C • UNFPA office in Oman covering GCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geneva • Brussels (EU) • Addis Ababa (AU) • Washington D.C. • Tokyo • Copenhagen (Nordic) • Abu Dhabi (GCC)

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