

## COMMENTS ON THE UNFPA DRAFT COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT FOR CHINA

*Second regular session 2025*

<b>Comments by Australia</b>	<b>UNFPA country/regional office response to comments</b>
<p>We welcome the CPD's reflections and learnings from an evaluation of achievements during the previous country programme cycle. Australia continues to suggest a greater focus on UNFPA's work with China to deliver development cooperation that adheres to international standards, is transparent, meets genuine needs and is financially sustainable.</p>	<p>UNFPA appreciates the feedback on the use of evaluation findings to inform the development of the new Country Programme. The new Programme is designed to be strategic and focused, with a shift towards providing upstream policy and advocacy support, further advancing demand-driven development cooperation to support achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs, in line with international standards, and diversifying funding and partnerships for sustainability of results.</p>
<p>Australia values the role UNFPA plays in promoting best practice and supporting progress towards implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving its SDGs. The CPD should make clear that all programming and policy support is firmly grounded in these globally-agreed frameworks.</p> <p>We recognise the potential value of South-South cooperation. UNFPA's support to South-South and third-party countries should be grounded in the 2030 Agenda and achieving its SDGs.</p> <p>We suggest applying a consistent approach throughout the document to globally agreed standards and terms drawn from the 2030 Agenda, and clarify where concepts are not UN approaches (for example, references to 'high-quality development' and 'shared prosperity'). The CPD should make a clear distinction when making reference to Chinese Government policies as opposed to UNFPA policies and positions. CPDs are factual</p>	<p>The new Country Programme is grounded in advancing the achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing that China faces persistent inequalities and emerging challenges that hinder the full realization of the country's commitments to the SDGs and ICPD agenda.</p> <p>The Programme will focus on upstream policy support and advocacy for the ICPD agenda and strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships to meet ICPD commitments. This will include supporting the generation and use of population data and evidence to inform national planning and the implementation of ICPD and SDG commitments; enhancing access to and delivery of high-quality people-centred sexual and reproductive health services, improving sexual and reproductive health and rights awareness, knowledge and life skills of young people and groups in vulnerable situations, and</p>

<p>documents, and should avoid promoting or endorsing specific programs or signature foreign policy initiatives of any country, donor or recipient.</p>	<p>strengthening capacity to address gender-based violence; and enhancing capacities to develop and deliver demand-driven and gender-responsive South-South and global cooperation initiatives for the advancement of the ICPD agenda and the SDGs in China and in partner countries, in line with international standards.</p> <p>UNFPA's 'Policy and Procedures for Development and Approval of the Country Programme Document' require that country programmes are developed based on national development plans and align with national development priorities. In line with this policy, the Country Programme, which is grounded in globally agreed frameworks, references national plans and priorities, outlining that the vision of China's 15th Five Year Plan (2026-2030) is to transition from high-speed growth to high-quality, people-centred development, and referring to the national development priority of advancing high-quality people-centred development and shared prosperity.</p> <p>While the CPD references national plans and policies, such references do not imply endorsement or promotion of the plans and policies by UNFPA.</p>
<p>Page 4 para 13 indicates the CPD was developed with a 'gradual exit strategy'. We welcome further information on what the sustainable transition plan is. This discussion would benefit from detail on how UNFPA's role will adapt as China graduates from ODA eligibility in the future, noting also that the timeframe of the CPD (2026-2030) covers the remaining period through to the end of the 2030 Agenda.</p>	<p>China is expected to graduate to high-income status during the period of the Country Programme for 2026-2030. The new Programme therefore shifts to providing upstream advocacy and policy support, rather than supporting the implementation of projects and programmes.</p> <p>Allocation of core resources to UNFPA China is based on the UNFPA Resource Allocation System, which guides allocations to all Country Offices through an established methodology. Given that China is expected to graduate to high-income status</p>

	<p>during the 2026-2030 period of the CPD, the Country Programme is designed with a gradual exit strategy from its current form and lays the foundations for a future revised typology of presence and engagement by UNFPA in and with China. More specifically, UNFPA will be transitioning its funding model to diversify funding, increase domestic resource mobilization and reduce reliance on agency resources, . UNFPA will review its country presence and evolve its model of engagement on this basis, in consultation with the Government and the Executive Board, based on UNFPA's policies and procedures.</p>
<p>Under the Monitoring and Evaluation section, the use of indicators and outcomes would be stronger if derived from international standards and agreed frameworks. This is necessary to inform data-driven and verifiable results. Results will be difficult to measure otherwise, and learnings will not be as applicable elsewhere.</p>	<p>The outcomes and outcome indicators in the Country Programme are derived from the UNSDCF, while the output indicators are designed to measure UNFPA-specific contributions to the Country Programme outcomes. UNFPA has developed metadata for the indicators, with definitions, targets and measurement tools, which will be further refined in line with international standards. An evaluation plan has been developed to accompany the country programme, and a monitoring and evaluation plan will help to ensure a robust approach to results-based management principles and standards, in line with UNFPA policies and procedures and UNSDCF guidance. The plan will mainstream learning to ensure high-quality, evidence-based technical and policy advisory support. UNFPA will also apply this approach in contributing to joint planning, programming, reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the UNSDCF.</p>
<p>Australia recommends all UN CPDs emphasise the importance of protecting human rights, especially vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities. We welcome more information on how UNFPA will apply</p>	<p>UNFPA is committed to promoting and protecting human rights across all areas of its work. The Country Programme is centred on advancing universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights by reducing inequalities,</p>

human rights safeguards in line with UNFPA's Social and Environment Standards.	promoting gender equality, and leaving no one behind. In line with UNFPA's Social and Environmental Standards for Programming, the Country Programme will be implemented in a manner that respects and promotes the realization of human rights and gender equality. It will provide upstream advocacy and policy support to address key human rights issues, including supporting access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, addressing gender-biased sex selection, and strengthening care for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. Across its modes of engagement – advocacy, policy and partnerships – the Country Programme will focus on reducing inequalities and reaching those left furthest behind, as well as populations in vulnerable situations.
<b>Comments by Germany</b>	<b>UNFPA country/regional office response to comments</b>
UNFPA's engagement with China is rapidly shifting toward a focus on policy dialogue, advocacy, and strategic partnerships. Additionally, it is important to recognize and support China's potential and role in South-South cooperation. Both priorities are well reflected in this Country Programme Document, which Germany supports.	UNFPA appreciates the feedback on how the Country Programme Document reflects shifting modes of engagement, with a focus on upstream policy, advocacy, and strategic partnerships and South-South cooperation.
It is however crucial that challenges within the country—such as the urban-rural divide in access to services—are clearly recognized. Strengthening policy engagement on these issues could be more prominently reflected in UNFPA's planned activities.	The Country Programme recognizes that despite significant development progress, China faces persistent inequalities and emerging challenges that hinder progress on the ICPD and SDG agendas. These include shifting population dynamics; gaps in access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health information, education and services for young people and vulnerable groups; gender-based violence and technology-facilitated gender-based violence; and skewed sex ratio at birth, among others. The Country Programme highlights rural

	and urban disparities and identifies that people living in remote regions, persons with disabilities and the growing elderly population are more at risk of being left behind in China. It also notes that addressing these inequalities will be critical to achieving the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs.
Throughout the CPD, there are several references to “people-centred” development. Such unclear concepts should be avoided – agenda 2030/SDGs provide clear guidance.	<p>In line with the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, the Country Programme advocates for a people-centred approach in advancing universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. This approach signifies the importance of prioritizing individual needs, preferences and rights in developing and implementing sexual and reproductive health services, policies and programmes.</p> <p>In addition, the Country Programme refers to people-centred development when outlining that the vision of China’s 15th Five Year Plan (2026-2030) is to “transition from high-speed growth to high-quality, people-centred development”, and in referring to the national development priority of “advancing high-quality people-centred development and shared prosperity”.</p>
<b>Comments by Sweden</b>	<b>UNFPA country/regional office response to comments</b>
Sweden takes note that the consultation process with Member States has not been sufficiently transparent surrounding the documents such as the UNFPA draft country programme (and to some extent the UNSDCF). The drafting process would have benefitted from early, close consultation with Member States and more opportunities to provide input along the way.	The development of the Country Programme has been informed by consultations with a range of key stakeholders, including Member States. The drafting process benefited from two meetings with Member States in Beijing, including: (1) a meeting convened by the UN Resident Coordinator with agency Representatives in February 2025 to discuss the UNSDCF and agency CPDs; and (2) a briefing on the CPDs, jointly convened by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, in May 2025 for members of the UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF Executive Boards. UNFPA is pleased that Sweden attended the

	<p>May 2025 consultation.</p> <p>UNFPA appreciates the feedback from Member States on these consultations, which have helped inform the CPD</p>
<p>On a general level, Sweden would like to see the UNFPA draft country programme more closely reflect established language regarding international law, including human rights.</p>	<p>The Country Programme is underpinned by the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The vision for the Country Programme is to support universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights by reducing inequalities and reaching those left furthest behind, as well as populations in vulnerable situations. The Country Programme makes extensive references to the ICPD Programme of Action and to sexual and reproductive health and rights. It also outlines the focus on providing upstream advocacy and policy support to address key human rights issues, including supporting access to quality sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services, preventing and responding to gender-based violence, addressing gender-biased sex selection, and strengthening care for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and people with disabilities, among other areas.</p>

Comments by United States of America	UNFPA country/regional office response to comments
<p>The United States opposes completion of the CPD for UNFPA in China. China will become a high-income country during the next cycle of this CPD, and we condemn allocation of UN development resources to China rather than developing countries with true need. At a minimum, the United States insists that each CPD include an exit clause for UNFPA to end programs and close country presence. The United States rejects the inclusion of China's foreign policy initiatives, especially the Global Development Initiative and the Belt and Road Initiative, in the CPDs for China. The United States seeks assurances that UNFPA is not, directly or inadvertently, promoting or advancing China's signature foreign policy or economic diplomacy initiatives.</p>	<p>Given that it is home to the world's second-largest population and given existing inequalities, development progress in China is critical to the global achievement of the SDGs. While China has experienced rapid economic growth over the past decades, progress has been uneven, with persisting inequalities that limit the achievement of development priorities. Addressing these inequalities and reaching the left-behind populations in China is necessary for accelerating global SDG progress during the critical final stretch to 2030.</p> <p>Allocation of core resources to UNFPA China is based on the UNFPA Resource Allocation System as reflected in the Strategic Plan, which was endorsed by the Executive Board, and guides allocations to all Country Offices through an established methodology. Given that China is expected to graduate to high-income status during the period of the 2026-2030 CPD, UNFPA will be transitioning its funding model to diversify funding, increase domestic resource mobilization and reduce reliance on agency resources, in line with the Business Model. Taking into account China's expected transition to high-income status, the new CPD is designed with a gradual exit strategy from its current form and lays the foundations for a future revised typology of presence and engagement by UNFPA in and with China. This is consistent with the practice in other countries undergoing similar transitions as they move up the income ladder.</p> <p>UNFPA collaborates with a range of middle-income countries to promote country-led South-South cooperation initiatives, and CPDs for these countries also reflect UNFPA support to South-South cooperation. As in the case of other countries, the</p>

	<p>China CPD promotes global partnerships and South-South cooperation, in line with international standards, and leverages funding to support the ICPD agenda and achievement of the SDGs in China and in partner countries, with a focus on advancing demand-driven South-South cooperation, in line with international standards, based on the needs and priorities of partner countries.</p> <p>UNFPA collaborates with a range of middle-income countries to promote country-led South-South cooperation initiatives, and CPDs for these countries also reflect UNFPA support to South-South cooperation. The China CPD promotes global partnerships and South-South cooperation to advance achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action and SDGs in China and in partner countries, in line with international standards. The CPD leverages funding for demand-driven and gender-responsive South-South cooperation, based on the needs and priorities of partner countries.</p> <p>Even as CPDs may mention national policy frameworks, UNFPA does not promote or endorse national policy initiatives of Member States.</p> <p>The China CPD references China's Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund under the Global Development Initiative. This reference is made in the context setting/programme rationale section. The CPD does not reference the Belt and Road Initiative</p>
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