



**Executive Board of the  
United Nations Development  
Programme, the United Nations  
Population Fund and the United  
Nations Office for Project  
Services**

Distr.: General

14 July 2025

Original: English

**Second regular session 2025**

25 to 28 August 2025, New York

Item 7 of the provisional Agenda

**UNFPA – Strategic Plan, 2026-2029**

**United Nations Population Fund**

**UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029**

*Summary*

The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 is a roadmap for resilience and renewal, aimed at ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health, realizing reproductive rights, and accelerating the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), more than 30 years after its historic adoption in Cairo in 1994. As the last of three consecutive strategic plans leading to 2030, it reaffirms the UNFPA commitment to the ICPD vision: individual rights and choices – especially for women, adolescents and youth, and marginalized populations – are central to sustainable development.

Grounded in the ICPD Programme of Action, the Strategic Plan focuses on four interconnected outcomes:

- (a) Accelerating progress on meeting the unmet need for family planning;
- (b) Accelerating progress on ending preventable maternal deaths;
- (c) Accelerating progress on ending gender-based violence and harmful practices; and
- (d) Adapting to demographic change through evidence and rights-based policies.

The Strategic Plan addresses major global trends and polycrises through the lens of human rights. It strengthens the normative leadership of UNFPA and its operational capacity to support countries, particularly in fragile and humanitarian settings, while promoting the core principles of the ICPD.

UNFPA will work with partners across sectors to protect the gains made in recent decades and to use every opportunity to make advances and accelerate progress, where possible. Through country-led nationally owned strategies and programmes, an increased focus on leveraging sustainable financing and investment at scale and inclusive, evidence-based policy advocacy, the organization will help governments fulfill their commitments to achieving development and dignity for all.

The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 is not only a bridge to the end of the Sustainable Development Goal era, but a recommitment to the unfinished business of the ICPD, a global promise to ensure that every individual can live a healthy and productive life grounded in rights and choices.

## I. Overview

1. The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 is a roadmap for resilience and renewal. It is aimed at ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH), realizing reproductive rights, and accelerating the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). In a time of disruption and uncertainty, the Strategic Plan offers both continuity and confidence by responding to rising threats while unlocking opportunities to adapt, innovate, and lead. As the world nears the 2030 milestone, this strategic plan protects and builds on the progress made so far while addressing both persistent and emerging challenges that threaten to reverse gains in rights and sustainable development for all.

2. This strategic plan accelerates efforts to achieve the three outcomes of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025: (a) ending the unmet need for family planning; (b) ending preventable maternal deaths; and (c) ending gender-based violence (GBV) and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage. Recognizing the evolving global landscape, UNFPA has introduced a fourth outcome on population dynamics and demographic change into its strategic plan for 2026-2029. Changing patterns of fertility, mortality, ageing and migration are shaping the size, structure and distribution of populations which are intersecting with urbanization, climate change impacts, technology and inequality. Ensuring that countries are equipped with rights-based, gender responsive and evidence-informed policy solutions that promote inclusive and sustainable development is critical. The capacity to adapt in real time, particularly to navigate uncertainty while protecting services and ensuring rights and choices, is central to this strategic plan.

3. This strategic plan reaffirms role of UNFPA as a leader in advancing sexual and reproductive health and realizing reproductive rights (SRHRR) and promoting gender equality within a reforming and underfunded United Nations development system. It emphasizes the ability of UNFPA to operate effectively in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding (HDP) settings, ensuring that SRH and GBV services remain accessible in emergency and fragile contexts, and supporting systems strengthening and recovery across both areas. Data-driven decision-making, innovative financing models and strategic partnerships will be central to delivering impact at scale at a time of increased resource constraints.

4. SRHRR are not only a development priority; they are foundational to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Evidence shows that every dollar invested in family planning and maternal health can yield over 8 dollars in social and economic benefits, with the potential to generate up to \$660 billion in cumulative gains by 2050. UNFPA is a public health and population agency, and its mandate is unique within the United Nations system: as the lead agency on sexual and reproductive health, on population dynamics and on data for development, UNFPA has the mandate, reach and technical capability to deliver these high-return interventions at scale. As a normative leader, UNFPA helps to shape global policy agendas, to advance international human rights standards, and translate them into actionable guidance and accountability mechanisms at country level. Its proven effectiveness, efficiency and forward-looking agenda, equips UNFPA to meet today's challenges while also laying the groundwork for systems that are inclusive, resilient, and adaptive into the future, including alignment with current reform processes, notably UN80.

5. To uphold the principle of 'leaving no one behind', UNFPA will work to dismantle systemic barriers to SRHRR, and promote the right to be free from discrimination, violence and harmful practices, particularly for marginalized populations. This includes a focus, inter alia, on persons with disabilities, Afrodescendent and Indigenous peoples, older persons, people living in poverty, those affected by conflict or displacement, and individuals facing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, race, ethnicity, migration status, HIV status, or other intersecting factors. Adolescents and youth are a central focus of the Strategic Plan, not only as a priority population but as key agents of change. Their leadership, participation, and access to services are mainstreamed across all outcomes and outputs, recognizing their role in shaping inclusive, rights-based development.

6. Achieving the commitments outlined in this strategic plan is critical for accelerating progress toward the SDGs by 2030. While UNFPA work contributes to all 17 SDGs, the strategic plan directly supports SDG 3 on good health and wellbeing; SDG 5 on gender equality; SDG 10 on reducing inequalities; SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions; and SDG 17 on partnerships for sustainable development. By addressing the root causes of inequality and ensuring access to essential services, it also contributes to SDG 1 on ending poverty. The scale and diversity of today's generation of young people demand that their rights, needs and contributions are integrated throughout all dimensions of programming, policy and partnership.

UNFPA recognizes the interconnectedness of these Goals, emphasizing that achieving inclusive, resilient and peaceful societies is both a prerequisite for and a result of progress in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

7. The ability of UNFPA to deliver the ICPD Programme of Action and realize SRHRR depends on an agile and future-ready business model. Adding to the three outcomes of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, this strategic plan for 2026-2029 integrates a fourth outcome on programming related to population dynamics and demographic change into national planning, ensuring that countries are equipped to anticipate, plan for and navigate complex and rapid demographic shifts. Strengthening humanitarian preparedness and response capabilities including anticipatory actions in disaster risk reduction, will remain a key focus.

8. This plan articulates how UNFPA work can accelerate progress and remain responsive to emerging crises, particularly in fragile and humanitarian settings. This includes positioning UNFPA to continue to play an essential function in the United Nations humanitarian architecture and humanitarian response system while supporting the ambition of ongoing reform processes to deliver more cohesive, accountable and anticipatory support at country level. UNFPA capacity to continue to adapt in real time and to navigate uncertainty while protecting individual rights and choices is central to the roadmap for resilience and renewal articulated in this strategic plan.

9. This is therefore a strategic plan of renewed ambition, of adaptation, of evolution in response to a changing development and humanitarian landscape. To be sure, financial sustainability and predictability are central to the success of any strategic plan, which makes the anticipated reduction in resources to the core and non-core resources of UNFPA and to the budgets of many partners in the ecosystem in which UNFPA operates particularly concerning. The Strategic Plan is based on a realistic assessment of the emerging picture for UNFPA funding and will be underpinned by targets with a level of ambition and realism that are commensurate with the emerging financial scenario, combined with a commitment to continued efficiencies. At the same time, the needs of those that UNFPA serves will not change when UNFPA funding changes, and, if anything, those needs are likely to grow. To that end, UNFPA will expand its efforts to mobilize resources, including through domestic financing and leveraging public-private partnerships, and by further exploring innovative funding mechanisms to advance its mission and mandate.

10. These efforts are complementary but not a substitute for core resources or official development assistance (ODA), which remain essential to delivering on the SDGs, protecting the gains made, and reaching those most at risk of being left behind. Nonetheless, the shift from ‘funding’ to ‘funding and financing’ will be accelerated to enable UNFPA to scale up interventions, ensure robust national ownership and promote sustainability. At its core, this strategic plan recognizes that resilience is not only financial; rather, it is both strategic and programmatic and involves the full spectrum of UNFPA partners and stakeholders.

11. The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 is not only a roadmap for the next four years but also a bridge to the post-2030 development agenda. It aims to ensure the ICPD Programme of Action remains at the heart of global sustainable development efforts to 2030 and beyond. As new challenges emerge, UNFPA will continue to adapt, innovate and lead, ensuring that individuals can exercise their rights and make informed choices about their bodies, their lives and their futures. It is a practical roadmap, designed to foster resilience across the mandate, reinforce the moral imperative for equity and guide renewal in this period of polycrisis.

12. In this decisive and challenging moment, UNFPA stands ready to further accelerate action, deepen partnerships and continue to drive lasting change. The progress achieved in recent decades demonstrates that transformation is possible, but the urgency to act has never been greater. The next four years represent a critical opportunity to build on past gains, address emerging threats and uncertainties and create a world where every pregnancy is intended, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

## II. Context

### A. Global trends

13. As the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 draws to a close, rapid demographic shifts, increasing climate change, rising inequalities and technological advancements are reshaping global development. These dynamic trends present both challenges and opportunities for advancing the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While a minority of countries continue to experience high population growth and large youth cohorts, the majority of the world's population already lives in countries with slow, no or negative population growth. Population ageing is ubiquitous and will be most rapid in middle-income countries where the percentage of the population aged 65 or older will double over the next 30 years. Migration and urbanization are accelerating, with over 55 per cent of people living in cities today, a figure projected to reach 70 per cent by 2050. This trend is increasingly associated with the depopulation of rural areas. These shifts require coherent, integrated United Nations action aligned with national priorities, as called for in the 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

14. Accurate and timely demographic data, paired with foresight analysis, is essential for effective planning, policy formulation and resource allocation. It enables governments to anticipate future needs, target investments more equitably, and align services such as education, health, and social protection with population trends. Demographic intelligence is also vital to building climate resilience, inclusive urban planning, and sustainable public finance systems.

15. Rising inequalities continue to undermine progress on human development, human rights and the SDGs. Economic disparity, healthcare access gaps, and the digital divide disproportionately impact women, young people and marginalized communities. Conflict and climate-related disasters increase displacement, food insecurity, and health risks. Over half of maternal deaths now occur in fragile and humanitarian settings, while demand for SRH services in emergencies is growing despite declining funding.

16. Technology offers new opportunities and solutions, but innovation can deepen inequality leaving millions without essential information and services as the world increasingly moves online. Harmful narratives challenging gender equality are amplified online and must be addressed alongside the rise in technology-facilitated GBV.

17. Amid this complex environment, UNFPA is not only adapting to change, but also helping shape the future. Ongoing reforms have made the organization more agile, integrated and anticipatory. The ongoing recalibration of the business model will prioritize cost-effectiveness, innovation and catalytic action – including by leveraging financing and investment for the UNFPA mission and mandate, and ensuring resources are increasingly targeting the places with the highest burdens and focused on the populations at greatest risk of being left behind. This Strategic Plan, as a roadmap for resilience and renewal, affirms the readiness of UNFPA to deliver rights-based results at scale in both humanitarian and development settings.

### B. Progress made

18. The formative evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 identified both progress and opportunities that have informed the new strategic plan for 2026-2029. In 2024 alone, UNFPA-supported programmes reached over 10 million people with SRH services and more than 3.6 million with GBV protection in 59 crisis-affected countries. In 2024, investments in family planning increased voluntary contraceptive use and reduced adolescent pregnancy. In the 54 countries covered by the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, modern contraceptive prevalence rose by 5.7 percentage points between 2012 and 2023. UNFPA continues to be the world's largest provider of donated contraceptives to low-income and middle-income countries.

19. In 2024 alone, UNFPA-UNICEF joint programmes helped protect over 280,000 girls from FGM, and efforts to end child marriage reached more than 7.4 million adolescent girls with skills-building interventions.

20. These gains reflect country-led implementation, strong partnerships and long-term investment. Significant progress has been made, but access gaps remain.

21. Over 250 million women in developing countries still lack access to modern contraception. Maternal mortality has declined by 40 per cent globally since 2000, reflecting decades of investment in SRH systems

and services. However, this progress has been uneven, with fragile and conflict-affected settings continuing to bear a disproportionate burden. Persistent inequalities, weak health systems and discriminatory barriers still prevent many women, particularly adolescents and those facing multiple forms of discrimination, from accessing the information and services they need. These challenges underscore the urgency of accelerating progress toward meeting the unmet need for family planning and ending preventable maternal deaths.

22. GBV remains pervasive: one in three women globally experiences intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. The prevention and response work of UNFPA has achieved important results, but progress remains uneven. Harmful practices, such as child marriage and FGM, have declined in some regions, but overall progress has been too slow. Legal and institutional reforms, along with scalable social norm change strategies, are essential.

23. Although the integration of population data and analysis into policymaking has improved in recent years, national development policies, which are shaped by and respond to population dynamics and demographic change, need to be fully informed by a renewed commitment to individual rights and choices and to protecting bodily autonomy.

### **C. Key challenges and lessons learned**

24. The world faces a polycrisis – a complex intersection of economic instability, climate change and health emergencies amid social, technological and political shifts. Meeting these interconnected challenges requires stronger multilateral cooperation and a revitalized United Nations system. UNFPA leadership in advancing the full ICPD Programme of Action is central to this effort.

25. Financial constraints are a major concern. The ODA for population and reproductive health programmes has declined, even as these needs have grown. Rising geopolitical tensions and challenging policy environments risk further undermining sexual and reproductive health and rights and the gains made in recent decades. Evidence-based advocacy and policy engagement are critical in this context.

26. Nonetheless, multilateral frameworks offer powerful platforms for progress. The SDGs, the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2024 QCPR provide UNFPA and its partners with entry points for partnership, policy engagement and catalytic investment.

27. The midterm review of the previous strategic plan called for a more agile and accountable UNFPA. It highlighted the importance of data, foresight and evidence-based programming. Both the review and the formative evaluation confirmed the effectiveness of UNFPA while underscoring the need to further strengthen its financial sustainability and partnerships.

### **D. Comparative advantage and complementarity within the United Nations system**

28. The comparative advantage of UNFPA within the United Nations development system is both distinctive and unmatched.

29. The fact that United Nations and inter-organizational transfers are the top source of revenue for UNFPA is a testament to the role that the organization plays within the United Nations development system. It is a tangible sign of the crucial contribution and centrality of the organization and its mandate within the United Nations development system and the value of the comparative advantage of UNFPA in accelerating SDG progress.

30. UNFPA is the only United Nations agency with a formal mandate to address population dynamics, one of the most transformative megatrends of our time, while simultaneously advancing SRH as a cornerstone of human rights, gender equality, and inclusive and sustainable development.

31. As the custodian of the ICPD Programme of Action, UNFPA is uniquely positioned to uphold global commitments on SRHRR, support partner governments to foster rights-based and inclusive policy environments, and provide countries with the demographic intelligence, foresight and technical support needed to navigate profound social transformation.

32. Within the United Nations system, the normative role of UNFPA includes helping governments translate global agreements into standards and accountability frameworks, supporting legal and policy

reform, and promoting human rights-based approaches to SRH and population issues across the life course and in different country settings.

33. UNFPA serves as the United Nations system lead agency on population and housing censuses and on data for development – ensuring that data is not only available to monitor progress but to actually achieve development progress, including by identifying needs and enabling the targeting of resources to where they can have the greatest impact. From providing financial support and end-to-end technical assistance to population and housing censuses, to hosting the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, UNFPA-supported data for development efforts underpin progress towards the vast majority of the SDGs.

34. No other organization combines the particular normative authority, technical leadership and operational footprint of UNFPA. A trusted development partner in over 150 countries, UNFPA has built longstanding relationships through decades of engagement with governments, civil society and communities. This deep presence allows UNFPA to deliver context-specific solutions at scale, from policy reform to frontline service delivery, across the HDP continuum.

35. As the global lead on GBV coordination within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and technical lead for SRH in the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for SRH in Crisis Situations, UNFPA provides critical support to humanitarian actors through coordination, capacity-building and deployment of expertise and supplies. UNFPA plays a leading role in advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace and Security agendas, particularly through its work on GBV in emergencies and youth engagement in crisis and recovery settings.

36. UNFPA is the United Nations system lead agency for reproductive health commodity procurement and supply chain management, delivering lifesaving contraceptives and maternal health supplies to the ‘last mile’ in both humanitarian and development contexts. This role takes on a renewed importance in light of the impact of funding cuts on other actors in this sector.

37. The UNFPA capacity to work at the intersection of human rights and population dynamics, and across the HDP continuum, sets it apart from United Nations and non-United Nations actors alike. Its integrated mandate enables it to help countries transform demographic change into inclusive, equitable, rights-based development. The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 brings that comparative advantage together in a roadmap for resilience and renewal amid complex global challenges.

38. As custodian of the ICPD Programme of Action, UNFPA collaborates closely with other United Nations entities to advance shared goals on SRHRR, gender equality, population dynamics and youth empowerment. It partners with UNICEF, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to strengthen SRHRR, including through comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). UNFPA works with UN-Women to accelerate gender equality and with UNICEF to eliminate harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage, and with UNDP and the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) to advance the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. In support of demographic foresight and inclusive policy planning, UNFPA collaborates with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and works with UN-Habitat to help align urban development with demographic realities. Across the HDP continuum, it coordinates with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to deliver lifesaving GBV and SRHRR services and strengthen resilience. These strategic partnerships reinforce the ability of UNFPA to deliver cohesive, rights-based results across the United Nations system, grounded in its comparative advantage and commitment to leaving no one behind.

39. UNFPA is also a highly engaged and collaborative partner across the United Nations development system. It works closely with the Resident Coordinator system, supporting country-level leadership and contributing to planning, coordination, joint programming and pooled funding under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). UNFPA representatives have served as Acting Resident Coordinators in select contexts, reflecting both institutional credibility and trusted leadership. UNFPA co-chairs results groups, participates in inter-agency platforms, and helps shape collective delivery in alignment with national priorities. Between 2021 and 2025, the proportion of UNFPA country offices reporting an improved strategic alignment and strengthened support for the normative

mandate of UNFPA increased significantly. These efforts underscore that the comparative advantage of UNFPA is reinforced by system-wide complementarity and consistent engagement across the United Nations system.

### **III. Expected development results**

40. The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 aims to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and realize reproductive rights for all, while accelerating implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. This will be achieved by tackling persistent and widening inequalities, responding to global challenges, and empowering women, adolescents and youth, as well as marginalized populations, through rights-based and people-centred development. UNFPA will contribute directly to the 2030 Agenda, especially SDGs 3, 5, 10, 16 and 17, and ultimately SDG 1, while aligning with the principles of human rights, universality and ‘leaving no one behind’.

41. The main target groups are women; adolescents and youth, especially adolescent girls; and marginalized populations. UNFPA will apply a life-course approach, recognizing that people have different and evolving needs throughout their lives.

#### **E. Principles**

42. At its core is the promise of the 2030 Agenda to ‘leave no one behind’ and ‘reach those furthest behind first’. This requires removing systemic barriers and expanding access to lifesaving SRHR and GBV services, especially for the most marginalized. UNFPA commits to addressing inequalities, upholding bodily autonomy and promoting evidence-informed decision-making in all contexts, including in humanitarian settings.

43. In humanitarian settings, UNFPA actions will be guided by the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, ensuring that lifesaving services are delivered in accordance with international humanitarian standards.

44. UNFPA programming is human rights-based and promotes policies and practices that respect, protect and fulfill the rights of individuals to make decisions about their bodies, their lives and their futures, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The Strategic Plan reaffirms the institutional commitment of UNFPA to anti-racism and non-discrimination as cross-cutting imperatives. Recognizing that systemic discrimination undermines development, UNFPA integrates these principles across its operations, programming, and partnerships. These values are further operationalized through a culture of accountability, transparency and ethical conduct, ensuring rights-holders’ voices shape decisions and that UNFPA remains effective, responsive and trusted.

45. These principles are supported by the strong UNFPA commitment to data, evidence, research and foresight to guide policy and programme design. Strengthening systems for data collection, disaggregation, analysis and utilization ensures interventions are targeted, effective and accountable.

#### **F. The four Strategic Plan outcomes**

46. The architecture of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 is designed to build on previous achievements while responding to emerging global challenges with greater agility, integration and accountability. The Strategic Plan is structured around four key outcomes, with the first three replicating the three transformative results from the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025: (a) ending the unmet need for family planning; (b) ending preventable maternal deaths; and (c) ending GBV and harmful practices; it also introduces a new fourth outcome (d) focused on demographic change and population dynamics. This fourth outcome recognizes the critical role of population dynamics in all their complexity in shaping sustainable development and building climate resilience. It prioritizes the identification of rights-based policy options for countries to manage demographic change effectively. UNFPA work under this outcome also reaffirms that population policy must not only anticipate and support countries through demographic shifts but also protect and expand individuals’ rights and choices.

47. The four outcomes in the new Strategic Plan are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Ending gender-based violence and harmful practices contributes to addressing the unmet need for family planning

and preventing maternal deaths. Addressing the unmet need for family planning is critical to reducing preventable maternal deaths. Interventions to reduce preventable maternal deaths and address the unmet need for family planning also contribute to ending gender-based violence. Further, ensuring that countries can analyse and respond to population trends in a rights-based manner enhances their ability to address these challenges holistically and sustainably and drive equitable and sustainable development progress for all.

### **Outcome 1. By 2029, the reduction in the unmet need for family planning has accelerated**

48. Universal access to family planning is foundational to realizing SRHRR, gender equality and sustainable development. Yet millions, especially unmarried women, adolescents, marginalized populations, and those in fragile settings, continue to face persistent barriers to accessing modern contraception.

49. UNFPA reaffirms its commitment to ending the unmet need for family planning. It will intensify efforts to expand voluntary, rights-based, affordable, high-quality family planning information, services and supplies, free from coercion and discrimination. UNFPA aims to reverse stagnating trends, support sustainability, address emerging challenges and scale up high-impact, context-responsive interventions to ensure no one is left behind.

50. Family planning enables people to achieve their fertility aspirations, manage pregnancy timing and spacing, and prevent unintended pregnancies that may lead to unsafe abortion or infertility. It is a key enabler of women's empowerment, supporting their health, education and full participation in society. These benefits underpin both individual well-being and national socio-economic planning in response to shifting trends.

51. In humanitarian contexts, UNFPA will ensure continuity of family planning services, supply delivery and technical support to national and humanitarian partners. Efforts will be adapted to crisis settings and prioritize women, adolescents and displaced populations.

52. UNFPA will help countries strengthen health systems and supply chains to ensure uninterrupted access to quality-assured contraceptive and maternal health commodities, especially through the UNFPA Supplies Partnership. It will contribute to building sustainable markets and financing for lifesaving reproductive health supplies and promote the integration of family planning into primary health care and universal health coverage frameworks, with emphasis on domestic resource mobilization.

53. UNFPA will strengthen partnerships with governments, civil society, global health initiatives and the private sector to mobilize financing, boost accountability and scale up sustainable solutions nationally and locally. Adolescents and youth will be prioritized as essential partners in forging sustainable solutions. UNFPA will work to expand access to adolescent-friendly SRH services that are confidential, non-discriminatory and based on autonomy, choice and informed consent. These efforts will be complemented by stronger demand-side actions: CSE, community engagement and investments in norms that support informed, healthy decision-making.

54. UNFPA will promote positive masculinities and engage boys and young men in challenging harmful gender norms and fostering equitable relationships. It will support youth leadership through digital innovation, intergenerational dialogue, and rights-based advocacy. Young people will be meaningfully engaged, and not just reached, in shaping solutions and advancing development.

55. UNFPA will provide technical and policy support to help countries align national laws with international rights standards and implement recommendations from international human rights mechanisms such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Universal Periodic Review.

56. With over 122 million displaced people and 11 million pregnant women projected to need aid in 2025 alone, UNFPA will intensify efforts to maintain contraceptive access for displaced people. It will ensure that the MISP is delivered at the onset of emergencies and that family planning remains central across the HDP continuum, including through the organization's 'no regrets' policy in humanitarian settings. It will also position family planning as essential to GBV risk reduction in emergencies.

57. Accelerated progress will be driven by better data systems, real-time analytics and disaggregated indicators to identify and respond to unmet need for family planning. By 2029, progress under this outcome will reflect a world where more women, adolescents and youth can make informed reproductive choices with



full access to information, means and support. This is vital for advancing SRHR, autonomy and inclusive development.

## **Outcome 2. By 2029, the reduction of preventable maternal deaths has accelerated**

58. Preventable maternal mortality and morbidity remain profound and avoidable injustices, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings. In 2023, an estimated 260,000 women died from pregnancy-related or childbirth-related complications: a more than 40 per cent decline since 2000. However, this global progress masks significant disparities. The maternal mortality ratio averaged 504 deaths per 100,000 live births in 17 conflict-affected countries, compared to a global average of 197 per 100,000 live births. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for only about 30 per cent of all births but for 70 per cent of maternal deaths. For every woman who dies, another 20-30 women suffer severe complications, often leading to disability, social exclusion and painful health conditions, including obstetric fistula. The leading causes of maternal mortality and morbidity – haemorrhage, hypertensive disorders, indirect complications, and unsafe abortion – vary by region, underscoring the need for context-specific, rights-based responses. Priority should go to those left furthest behind, including adolescent girls, women with disabilities and those in fragile or humanitarian settings facing intersecting discrimination. Universal access to respectful, high-quality maternal health care is essential.

59. The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 reaffirms the commitment of UNFPA to ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths, with a focus on health, resilience, rights, and wellbeing. Anchored in its Strategy for Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health and Well-Being, 2025-2030, UNFPA will scale up efforts to ensure that all women can access quality maternal and newborn health (MNH) care.

60. UNFPA will support countries to strengthen national health systems and ensure essential services are integrated into health benefits packages under universal health coverage. UNFPA will work to deliver integrated, high-quality and woman-centred MNH care before, during and after childbirth. This includes ensuring access to comprehensive SRH interventions, in accordance with the ICPD Programme of Action: prevention of unintended pregnancy; comprehensive post-abortion care;<sup>1</sup> antenatal care, ensuring births attended by skilled health personnel; emergency obstetric and newborn care; respectful maternity care; and postnatal follow-up.

61. In humanitarian settings, UNFPA will prioritize lifesaving MNH services, including emergency obstetric care, safe delivery kits and essential medicines. It will strengthen surge capacity and coordination to ensure timely, high-quality care for pregnant and postpartum women in crises.

62. UNFPA will support legal, policy and financing reforms to ensure that MNH services are accessible and rights based. Strengthened national data systems, real-time analytics and maternal and perinatal death surveillance will guide investments to improve equity, quality, targeting, accountability and systems strengthening.

63. UNFPA will expand midwifery models of care and integrated SRH services and scale up access to quality-assured, best-priced reproductive health supplies, including contraceptives and maternal health commodities, through the UNFPA Supplies Partnership, which serves as a global market influencer. It will promote integrated care to address key drivers of maternal mortality, including non-communicable diseases, through strong primary health care platforms. Health promotion and prevention efforts will be strengthened through outreach and trained community health workers with SRH competencies.

64. Across the HDP continuum, UNFPA will ensure continuity of MNH care, including MISP deployment in emergencies and resilience-based programming in protracted crises. It will strengthen prevention and preparedness through readiness assessments and disaster risk reduction strategies. UNFPA will also help countries address risks associated with heat stress and environmental shocks, affecting MNH, especially in low-resource, climate-vulnerable settings. These actions will support climate-resilient health systems and improve readiness for emerging threats.

65. UNFPA will work with partners across and beyond the United Nations, including UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank, and partner in global health initiatives, to strengthen coherence, align investments and coordinate efforts through platforms and alliances like Every Woman Every Newborn Everywhere (EWENE)

---

<sup>1</sup> Support in this area will be in line with WHO guidance and consistent with paragraph 8.25 of the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs.

and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH). In line with the Lusaka Agenda for Transforming Health Financing, UNFPA will support nationally led efforts to meet global commitments.

66. Young women, especially adolescent girls, continue to face disproportionate risks to their reproductive and maternal health. In 2023, an estimated 210,000 adolescent girls and young women (aged 15-24 years) acquired HIV globally – four times higher than the global target for 2025. Though new infections among this group have declined by 63 per cent since 2000, progress remains uneven and too slow. Pregnancy and childbirth complications continue to be a leading cause of death among older adolescent girls in many low- and middle-income countries. The Strategic Plan prioritizes adolescent-responsive maternal health services, efforts to shift harmful social and gender norms, and the use of multisectoral interventions to delay marriage and prevent early and unintended pregnancy, support pregnant and parenting adolescents and integrate psychosocial support. Ensuring that young people are both reached and meaningfully engaged in shaping solutions will be critical to achieving lasting impact.

67. By 2029, progress in reducing preventable maternal deaths will be driven by stronger systems, resilient services and robust data, and by enabling policies that ensure women and girls survive and thrive before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth. Fulfilling this outcome marks a step toward the right to life, health and dignity, and toward building inclusive, just and future-ready societies.

### **Outcome 3. By 2029, the reduction in gender-based violence and harmful practices has accelerated**

68. GBV and harmful practices, including child marriage, FGM, son preference and coercion, are among the most pervasive human rights violations globally. They undermine bodily autonomy, threaten well-being and block women and girls from exercising their agency. As both drivers and consequences of inequality, they stem from discriminatory norms and unequal power structures. Accelerating progress is critical to achieving SDG 5, especially related to targets 5.2, 5.3 and 5.6.

69. UNFPA reaffirms its commitment to eliminating GBV and harmful practices, so that all individuals, especially women and girls, can live free from violence, coercion and discrimination. It will support partners to scale up comprehensive, survivor-centred interventions that strengthen prevention, support marginalized groups, expand access to inclusive services and case management, and promote legal and social change, including in addressing technology-facilitated GBV.

70. The organization will prioritize the integration of GBV and SRHRR programming, recognizing their shared drivers and mutual impact. This includes joint service delivery and prevention strategies, such as CSE and working with men and boys to shift harmful norms. Integration across HDP settings will expand access for survivors and improve resource efficiency.

71. In humanitarian contexts, UNFPA will continue to prioritize its leading role on GBV and deliver survivor-centred services, including case management and psychosocial support. It will also address reproductive violence (such as coercion, mistreatment in care and rights violations) by integrating GBV into SRHRR policies and systems.

72. UNFPA will strengthen partnerships across the United Nations system and continue supporting joint programmes, including the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, as well as the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls. It will also deepen engagement with the United Nations development system and align with pooled funding and inter-agency strategies. It will continue contributing to coherence through mechanisms, such as the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Gender Equality Action Plan and the Global Action Plan, as well as platforms like the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

73. Based on evaluations of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, UNFPA will advance seven strategic pathways: (a) legal and policy reform; (b) prevention of GBV and harmful practices; (c) support for women's agency and SRHRR; (d) equitable access to survivor-centred services; (e) humanitarian preparedness and response; (f) youth leadership, especially adolescent girls; and (g) stronger gender and GBV-related data systems.

74. UNFPA will intensify efforts to eliminate FGM and child, early and forced marriage, focusing on high-prevalence contexts through multisectoral strategies that combine community engagement, education, health services and legal reform. Building on evidence from the joint UNFPA-UNICEF programmes, it will

expand access to girl-centred services and strengthen enforcement of protective laws. These efforts will prioritize those most at risk, including those in humanitarian and fragile settings, and will be informed by robust data systems and participatory research.

75. In high-fertility settings, GBV notably both drives and results from limited reproductive autonomy, linked to harmful norms, child marriage and poor access to family planning. UNFPA will promote integrated approaches that connect the GBV response with SRH to empower women and advance sustainable development.

76. UNFPA will provide technical and policy support to help countries align legal frameworks with international human rights standards and implement recommendations from monitoring mechanisms like the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Universal Periodic Review. It will also work to expand access to multisectoral services (health, psychosocial support, legal aid and shelter), with priority given to those most at risk, including women and girls with disabilities, Afrodescendant and Indigenous women, displaced persons and those in crisis-affected settings.

77. Data and evidence underpin UNFPA programming across the HDP continuum. UNFPA supports national surveys, geospatial tools, civil registration and vital statistics systems, the Gender-based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) and initiatives such as kNOwVAWdata and the Centre of Excellence on Violence against Women. It will strengthen national capacity to analyse and use disaggregated data to improve programmes, track progress and elevate survivor voices.

78. Transforming harmful social and gender norms is central to preventing GBV. UNFPA will integrate GBV prevention into youth programming, including trauma-informed CSE and education-sector engagement. It will work with gatekeepers (community leaders, religious and traditional leaders, families, men and boys) to foster supportive environments and promote gender equality. Empowering women and girls to claim their rights, make informed choices and lead decision-making will be central to all prevention efforts.

79. UNFPA will advocate for increased public financing based on investment cases and in partnership with civil society, feminist movements, as well as women-led and youth-led organizations. It will deepen private-sector engagement, particularly with technology actors, to prevent GBV, address technology-facilitated GBV and expand innovative, survivor-centred solutions.

80. In humanitarian contexts, UNFPA will maintain its leadership on GBV coordination within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). This includes the delivery of GBV services, the provision of the MISP, delivery of critical services, such as mental health and psychosocial support, and the integration of GBV into disaster risk reduction. UNFPA will also work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, including in digital spaces, and strengthen local capacity to lead and sustain services. Aligned with the localization agenda, UNFPA will continue to channel a significant percentage of its humanitarian funding to women-led and local groups, ensuring swift and context-specific responses that uphold international standards. It will continue investing in GBV data systems across the HDP continuum to support evidence-based action.

81. UNFPA will partner with women-led and youth-led organizations to promote gender equality through expanded GBV services and by advancing the agency and autonomy of women and girls. Adolescents will be engaged in shaping GBV prevention and response, including via CSE. UNFPA will address rising technology-facilitated GBV through rights-based law reform and data-driven prevention and response. It will adapt programming for both youthful and ageing populations, ensuring rights and protection across generations.

82. By 2029, reduced GBV and harmful practices will be reflected in stronger laws, inclusive services and empowered communities advancing rights and dignity for all. This will be essential to gender equality, social cohesion and safer, more just societies.

#### **Outcome 4. By 2029, adaptation to demographic change has strengthened the resilience of societies for current and future generations, while upholding individual rights and choices**

83. This outcome focuses on upstream policy support by UNFPA and its role in shaping long-term strategies for managing demographic change. It also reflects the leadership of UNFPA in demographic foresight and rights-based policy. UNFPA distinguishes between demographic intelligence and adaptation to demographic change. Demographic intelligence (such as disaggregated data, population projections and foresight analysis) supports national decision-making and accelerates progress across all four Strategic Plan

outcomes. However, adaptation to demographic change is also an area of specific focus in this outcome 4: a long-term policy objective that equips countries to respond to demographic trends in ways that uphold rights, equity and sustainability. While demographic intelligence is an essential input across all of the work of UNFPA, adaptation reflects a specific area of support, helping countries integrate population dynamics into inclusive and rights-based national policies and planning frameworks.

84. UNFPA supports countries to use data and the ICPD Programme of Action to anticipate demographic change and turn demographic challenges into development opportunities – ensuring policies reinforce, rather than undermine, individual rights and choices.

85. The UNFPA work under this outcome also reaffirms that population policy must not only anticipate and support countries through demographic shifts but also protect, respect and enhance individuals' rights and choices. The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 affirms that individual rights and reproductive autonomy are not separate from demographic or population health objectives; rather, they are foundational to them. Rights-based population policy enables countries to plan and adapt to demographic shifts effectively by ensuring that people can make informed, voluntary choices about their bodies, their lives and their futures. Adaptation to population dynamics and inclusive development are best achieved by putting autonomy, equity and rights at the heart of demographic policies – while also advancing human rights, promoting gender equality and ensuring no one is left behind.

86. In realizing outcome 4, UNFPA is guided by the ICPD programme of action and the primacy of supporting individual rights and choices in population policies. All assistance provided to countries in navigating demographic change will always be grounded in international human rights norms, including the principles of voluntary, informed choice and non-discrimination. UNFPA engagement in demographic policy aims to empower people and not to manage populations, reinforcing that equity, autonomy and rights must never be compromised for the sake of quantitative population goals.

87. The demographic foresight work of UNFPA is central to its efforts in supporting governments to anticipate change, reduce fragility and plan inclusive futures. The world is undergoing profound demographic change, with shifts in population size, fertility, ageing, migration and mortality intersecting with other global megatrends, such as urbanization, climate change, the rise of digital technologies and growing inequality. These dynamics place pressure on health, education and social protection systems, but also present opportunities for inclusive, sustainable development.

88. UNFPA will help countries anticipate, adapt to and capitalize on demographic trends through the improved use of disaggregated population data, supported by new data technologies. As the lead United Nations system agency on population dynamics, UNFPA will partner with governments, academia and civil society to integrate analysis and projections into national development strategies. Support will include technical assistance, policy dialogue, forecasting tools and stronger data systems.

89. The organization will promote the integration of demographic foresight into broader health, education, and socio-economic policy frameworks to better align national resources and systems with population patterns and trends and enable resources to be directed to the places and populations with the greatest need. This includes supporting countries to situate demographic analysis within broader macroeconomic aspirations, such as labour market strategies, social protection systems and sustainable growth. This also includes the use of National Transfer Accounts to help countries analyse the economic implications of changing population age structures and align fiscal policies with demographic realities. Demographic forecasts can also inform planning in sectors, such as water resources, food security, urban infrastructure and disaster risk reduction, helping countries to strengthen climate and development resilience.

90. UNFPA will support countries in addressing changing population age structures and promoting inclusive planning that addresses the needs of all age groups. In youthful societies, it will back efforts to realize the first demographic dividend through investments in young people. In contexts with ageing populations, it will promote planning that reflects the rights and contributions of older persons. Across all settings, UNFPA will advocate strategies that are responsive through the life-course and reflect the needs of women, young people and marginalized groups, based on human rights.

91. The organization will use demographic and megatrend analysis to help countries identify the links between demographic change and sustainable development and to position population dynamics in global development policy fora. On climate change, it will support countries to use demographic and geospatial data to assess vulnerability, plan for mobility and integrate SRHRR and gender equality into climate adaptation

strategies. Disaggregated, spatial data will also enhance climate risk assessments and equitable resource targeting.

92. UNFPA will support the integration of migration policies within the range of possible solutions to address demographic change, informed by disaggregated migration data, and to ensure planning reflects the rights and needs of migrants, displaced people and host communities, including in access to SRH services. It will also work with countries to address urbanization by supporting disaggregated data analysis across the rural-urban continuum, identifying service gaps, and working with partners to promote inclusive, gender-responsive urban services, especially for SRH, family planning, maternal health and GBV prevention.

93. UNFPA will promote balanced, evidence-based narratives about demographic change, addressing misinformation and misconceptions that have contributed to policies in some low-fertility and high-fertility contexts. It will advocate for population policies that uphold reproductive rights and gender equality, in line with the ICPD Programme of Action.

94. UNFPA will advance multilateral cooperation on population issues through regional and global platforms and peer learning. Its work under outcome 4 aligns with the UN 2.0, the 2024 QCPR and the Pact for the Future, which emphasize foresight, data and innovation for inclusive, sustainable development – and reflects the organization’s ongoing commitment to enhancing effectiveness and efficiency.

95. By 2029, UNFPA work will ensure that more countries will use population estimates and projections to guide forward-looking sustainable development planning. Progress will include assessing the sustainability of social protection systems, aligning service delivery with population change, integrating population dynamics into sectoral plans and building national capacities for foresight. These efforts will strengthen adaptation and protect the rights and choices for current and future generations.

96. The introduction of a fourth outcome in the Strategic Plan, 202602029 reflects a strategic response to evolving global needs, ensuring that the UNFPA mandate remains relevant and forward-looking. While financial constraints persist across the international development landscape, this new outcome on population dynamics is not a departure from UNFPA core priorities but a means of reinforcing them. By strengthening data systems, advancing rights-based policy environments, and promoting anticipatory planning, outcome 4 creates the conditions for greater impact under the first three outcomes. UNFPA will continue to prioritize efforts that accelerate progress on family planning, maternal health and the elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices, while also supporting countries to address demographic change in ways that protect and expand individual rights and choices. This approach reflects a commitment to integrated, cost-effective programming grounded in national ownership, human rights and inclusion.

## **G. The critical importance of adolescents and youth**

97. Adolescents and youth are central to all four Strategic Plan outcomes. UNFPA will support their healthy and productive transition to adulthood and engage them as leaders and agents of change. As the largest-ever generation of young people comes of age, their participation will be vital to advancing rights, driving innovation and accelerating progress on the SDGs. UNFPA work aligns with the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations, which call for protecting youth rights and promoting their role in shaping long-term development. By investing in adolescent health, education and rights (especially SRHRR) UNFPA will help young people realize their potential and contribute to more inclusive, equitable and resilient societies.

## **H. Outputs**

98. UNFPA will contribute to the four Strategic Plan outcomes through six interconnected outputs. As in past strategic plans, each output supports all outcomes in a multidimensional relationship.

99. *Data, analysis and foresight.* Disaggregated data are essential for identifying inequities, projecting needs and monitoring and achieving progress towards the ICPD Programme of Action and the SDGs. UNFPA will help countries strengthen data systems that reflect demographic change and megatrends. In collaboration with other United Nations entities, UNFPA will ensure population data and foresight analysis inform rights-based policies across sectors. UNFPA will support the 2030 round of Population and Housing Censuses (2025-2034) through technical and financial assistance, including census technical advisers, digital technologies and knowledge-sharing across programme countries.

100. Anchored in systems strengthening, this output supports resilience and renewal. UNFPA will scale predictive analytics, real-time monitoring and adaptive programming to improve responsiveness and decision-making, especially in fragile settings.

101. *Policy, advocacy and accountability.* Integrating SRHRR, gender equality and demographic foresight into primary health care and universal health coverage packages, financing schemes and accountability systems is vital to advancing the four Strategic Plan outcomes. This output promotes national compliance with human rights obligations and strengthens legal and accountability frameworks, including for disaster risk reduction and resilience. In collaboration with other United Nations entities, UNFPA will help ensure strong legal environments and effective monitoring systems to implement rights-based commitments.

102. UNFPA will also support the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, including national action plans aligned with United Nations Security Council resolution 2250, to promote the leadership, protection and meaningful participation of young people in contexts of crisis and recovery.

103. *Leveraging sustainable financing and investment.* UNFPA will lead efforts to mobilize sustainable financing for achieving the ICPD Programme of Action and accelerating progress towards SRHRR. This output focuses on strategic engagement with governments, international financial institutions and the private sector to expand and diversify funding. Through advocacy, technical assistance and innovative financing, in collaboration with other United Nations entities and international financial institutions, UNFPA will coordinate efforts to close persistent financing gaps.

104. The focus will be on securing long-term financing and investments embedded in national development plans and aligned with the SDGs. These efforts will also support HDP transitions by sustaining investments in systems, supplies and community-based services. This new output reflects a strategic shift in response to a changing aid landscape. As traditional funding declines and global needs grow, UNFPA must mobilize diverse, sustainable financing and investment for its mission and mandate. Informed by the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 and evolving business model, this output emphasizes catalytic action, country-tailored engagement and smarter resource use. By enhancing its convening power, UNFPA will ensure SRHRR, gender equality and population change are meaningfully resourced in national policies and budgets. To operationalize this output, all UNFPA offices and staff are expected to view the leveraging of public finance (including domestic budget allocations and public investment frameworks) as a core responsibility embedded in their approach to programming.

105. *Social and gender norms.* Transforming discriminatory norms is essential to achieving gender equality, eliminating GBV and harmful practices and expanding access to rights-based services. This output targets the structural inequalities that shape behaviours and limit individual agency. In collaboration with other United Nations entities, UNFPA will strengthen individual, community and institutional capacity to challenge harmful norms and empower those left furthest behind. In humanitarian contexts, this includes GBV prevention through community engagement, peer models and survivor-informed approaches.

106. *Quality of care and services.* This output seeks to improve the availability, affordability, and equity of SRH services and support for GBV survivors across all contexts, including in humanitarian settings. Humanitarian service delivery results and indicators will be tracked under this output. UNFPA will help operationalize life-course approaches to care, including mental health and psychosocial support, while strengthening the health workforce. In collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women, UNAIDS, WFP, WHO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IOM, UNFPA will strengthen systems and remove barriers, especially for adolescents, persons with disabilities and those in humanitarian settings.

107. *Humanitarian action and preparedness.* UNFPA leadership before, during and after crises is central to protecting the rights and choices of women and girls. This output emphasizes preparedness, anticipatory action and coordination of lifesaving SRH and GBV interventions in fragile and humanitarian settings. In line with the ongoing ‘humanitarian reset,’ UNFPA will continue to fulfill its role as provider of last resort for GBV and SRH services, ensuring that essential interventions are delivered even in the most complex and under-resourced settings.

108. While service delivery indicators are tracked under ‘quality of care and services’, this output focuses on the UNFPA role in coordinating and enabling timely and principled action, supporting transitions across the HDP continuum and aligning with inter-agency humanitarian frameworks. UNFPA contributes to resilience through HDP transitions and alignment with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. It will also strengthen the leadership and agency of women and youth in crisis and peacebuilding contexts,

in line with the Women, Peace and Security and Youth, Peace and Security agendas. UNFPA will sustain its leadership in GBV coordination and emergency response as a core contribution to peace and security.

109. In line with its comparative advantage, UNFPA will continue to lead integrated, gender-responsive action across the HDP continuum. Partnerships with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UN-Women, IOM, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) are central to this work.

## **I. Context-specific approaches and national pathways to change**

110. National ownership is a core principle guiding all UNFPA programmes. In every country, UNFPA work is aligned with national priorities, embedded, where possible, in national systems, and delivered in close partnership with governments and stakeholders.

111. UNFPA will apply context-specific approaches in its programming to achieve the four Strategic Plan outcomes and accelerate progress on the transformative results at the country level. These approaches will help country offices and partners: (a) prioritize the most impactful and high-demand strategies; (b) align resources with national priorities, balancing equity, effectiveness and efficiency; and (c) identify strategic entry points for acceleration, while promoting adaptive learning and knowledge exchange.

112. These approaches will also promote South-South and triangular cooperation, enabling knowledge exchange and the adaptation of locally proven solutions across countries facing similar demographic and development contexts. Innovation and transformation will be catalytic enablers across these approaches, helping scale up solutions, strengthen resilience and adapt programming to fast-changing contexts, including through digital tools, financing innovations and locally led models.

113. The context-specific approaches are primarily identified based on an analysis of the relative burden of each outcome at the country level. They are also aligned with relevant global frameworks. For example, context-specific approaches for ending preventable maternal deaths are consistent with the maternal health transitioning framework and clustered based on the latest maternal mortality data.

114. Further details on these approaches are presented in the Strategic Plan annex 3 on theory of change.

## **IV. Where and how UNFPA will deliver the results**

115. The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 will be delivered through a recalibrated business model that enhances how UNFPA serves women, adolescents and marginalized populations in a changing global context. It reflects a renewed commitment to high-impact, rights-based results with greater focus, agility and accountability. The model will guide UNFPA on where and how it operates to remain responsive and effective in supporting country-led priorities and national ownership.

116. The business model is driven by changing financial prospects and ensures alignment with ongoing United Nations reform processes, including UN80. Declines in core and non-core resources, increased earmarking and tighter fiscal space require UNFPA to prioritize, adapt and innovate. The organization will seek to shift how it structures teams and delivers support, focusing on its comparative advantage and the areas of systemic impact.

117. UNFPA will tailor its operational approaches by country typology<sup>2</sup> to match local needs and capacities and to ensure resources are increasingly focused on the places with the highest burden and the populations at greatest risk of being left behind. In ‘tier 1’ countries (those lagging furthest behind on the first three outcomes, many of which are least developed countries), UNFPA will seek to maintain a strong in-country presence, delivering integrated policy, programmatic and technical support. In fragile and humanitarian contexts, it will sustain lifesaving interventions and leverage its leadership roles in GBV and SRH coordination to support preparedness and rights-based, gender-responsive service delivery.

---

<sup>2</sup> In the Strategic Plan, ‘country typologies’ refer to external characteristics such as income level, fragility or demographic profile, while ‘tiers’ are internal UNFPA classifications based on progress toward the first three outcomes. While there may be overlap (e.g., some fragile settings may fall into tier 1), the two terms are not interchangeable.

118. In ‘tier 2’ countries with mixed progress, UNFPA will combine targeted programming with increasing upstream policy and financing support, often with a lighter footprint. In ‘tier 3’ settings, the expectation is a progressive shift from downstream service provision towards more upstream policy work, increasingly supported by differentiated and agile operating modalities. Where cost-sharing is possible, UNFPA may also provide fuller technical and programmatic support, including nationally led or co-financed interventions. This approach affirms the relevance of the UNFPA mandate across diverse settings while enabling differentiated pathways and financing models. More generally, across middle-income countries, UNFPA engagement will focus increasingly on upstream support (including demographic foresight, legal and policy reform, public financing for SRHRR and integration of rights-based approaches into national systems), in line with national priorities and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

119. Across all settings, the evolving business model will reinforce the normative and convening roles of UNFPA: low-cost, high-impact levers for rights-based, data-driven policy environments. UNFPA will also strengthen its “line of sight” from Strategic Plan results to country plans and impact, supported by improved performance management and accountability.

120. Innovation and transformation are integral to the agile business model of UNFPA, driving programme design, resource mobilization and adaptive operations. They serve as catalysts to amplify impact, expand reach, improve quality and shift systems toward rights and equity.

## **V. Organizational effectiveness and efficiency**

121. As part of its future-fit recalibration, UNFPA will strengthen organizational effectiveness and efficiency (OEE) as a core pillar of the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 and the corresponding Integrated Budget, 2026-2029. Drawing on evaluations and lessons learned, it will accelerate transformation to meet partner needs. Guided by the UN 2.0 agenda and its “quintet of change” (innovation, data, digital, foresight and behavioural science), UNFPA will enhance agility, strengthen accountability and scale up delivery. These efforts are also fully aligned with UN80 and the Secretary-General’s broader vision for a modernized United Nations system.

### **A. OEE Output 1. Improved programming for results**

122. UNFPA will improve programming quality, coherence and impact through stronger results-based management, strategic alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and enhanced application of programme principles. Updates will include: (a) integrated technical and programme support with stronger quality assurance; (b) ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI); (c) integration of social and environmental safeguards; (d) cost-effective, evidence-informed interventions; and (e) improved results-based management. Tools and guidance will be streamlined for unified programming across the HDP continuum, including the Gender-based Violence Information Management System and other emergency data tools.

123. UNFPA will systematically apply ‘leaving no one behind’ approaches, addressing barriers, such as discriminatory narratives, shrinking civic space, insecurity, data gaps and humanitarian fragility. Progress will be monitored using the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

124. UNFPA will deepen engagement with adolescents and youth, guided by Youth2030, the Compact for Engaging Young People in Humanitarian Action and the Pact for the Future. Youth participation, leadership and capacity development will be scaled up across all levels. UNFPA will also strengthen gender-sensitive and age-responsive programming, improve resource tracking and continue to lead rights-based programming for women, adolescents and youth across the United Nations system.

125. UNFPA will prioritize disaggregated data generation, analysis and use to strengthen programming and address rising inequalities to deliver on the United Nations system’s commitment to ‘leaving no one behind.’ Knowledge management will be embedded throughout the programme cycle, supported by strategic partnerships and secure AI-powered tools for learning and evidence dissemination. The organization will institutionalize inclusive innovation (by, for and with women and youth) to scale up proven solutions and drive transformative change. It will also further institutionalize foresight to support anticipatory planning and long-term development alignment.



126. UNFPA will also strengthen its supply chain capacity and capability to meet the rising demand in humanitarian contexts and for third-party procurement. Improved data systems will ensure transparency and accountability, reinforcing trust in the operational reliability of UNFPA.

127. UNFPA will strengthen its evaluation function, in line with the 2024 Evaluation Policy, reinforcing independence and quality at all levels. Priorities include youth engagement, ethical safeguards and an increased focus on joint and system-wide evaluations.

128. UNFPA will adopt a risk-informed, capacity-based approach to enhance the effectiveness of its implementing partnerships, striking a balance between flexibility, accountability and value for money. It will tighten oversight of implementing partnerships through expanded due diligence, capacity assessments, monitoring, audits, and targeted risk mitigation where vulnerabilities are greatest. UNFPA will strengthen its fraud risk management with decisive action when threats emerge.

129. UNFPA will use its results-based management experience to catalyse sustainable financing and investment for the ICPD agenda, in line with its financing strategy. This includes evidence-based policy dialogue and support to align resources with national development priorities. South-South and triangular cooperation will remain a key modality for knowledge exchange and resource mobilization.

130. Humanitarian effectiveness remains a core priority. UNFPA will: (a) strengthen surge and preparedness mechanisms; (b) deepen partnerships with local, women-led and youth-led organizations, and (c) apply robust monitoring, learning and adaptation systems; and (d) ensure the availability of flexible humanitarian funding via the UNFPA Emergency Fund and the Humanitarian Thematic Fund. A defined risk appetite and “no regret” approach will underpin timely and principled delivery. Priorities include MISP, MNH care, contraceptives and GBV services, supported by expanded operational capacity in supply chain management, partner coordination and human resource or surge deployment.

131. UNFPA will maintain a ‘whole-of-organization’ approach to protection from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and harassment. It will apply global standards, leverage SRHRR and GBV expertise and ensure the application of universal protection frameworks. The Ethics Office and the Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS) will shore up efforts to uphold and ensure accountability and transparency through robust, independent oversight, investigations and ethical guidance.

## **B. OEE Output 2. Optimized management of resources**

132. UNFPA will continue to strengthen its internal systems to enable more agile, transparent and effective resource management. Particular attention will be given to humanitarian leadership and operational readiness in crisis settings.

133. To respond to a funding environment increasingly shaped by non-core contributions, UNFPA will strengthen the integration of programme planning and budgeting. Capacity development will support country offices in developing fully costed proposals aligned with the 2024 Cost Recovery Policy, which will enhance the ability to flexibly allocate direct costs across funding sources.

134. UNFPA will strengthen human resources management by aligning staffing with strategic priorities, improving talent acquisition and retention and promoting a dynamic, results-oriented, and values-driven workforce, all within the context of the recalibrated business model and the broader United Nations reform agenda.

135. Environmental sustainability remains a priority. UNFPA will build on progress under its environmental efficiency strategy – aiming for a 45 per cent reduction of emissions by 2030 – having already reduced operational emissions by 25 per cent, compared to 2010. Actions will include reduced travel emissions and increased renewable energy use in field operations. Operational efficiency will be further strengthened through participation in shared United Nations services, common back offices and joint premises. These efforts support system-wide coherence, reduce duplication and create economies of scale. UNFPA will continue to report through the United Nations Secretary-General’s annual reporting process.

136. Digital transformation will underpin operational improvements. UNFPA will expand the use of accessible and secure digital tools to improve data collection, strengthen decision-making and enhance accountability. Information privacy and personal data protection will remain central to all digital initiatives.

### **C. OEE Output 3. Expanded partnerships and strategic communications for impact**

137. Advancing the four Strategic Plan outcomes requires strong partnerships, effective communication and broad support. UNFPA will enhance global communication capabilities to strengthen its brand, engage key audiences and promote change through an “audience-first” approach. Digital platforms and partnerships will expand visibility, influence and reach.

138. In response to declining flexible funding and increased earmarking, UNFPA will pursue a three-pronged resource mobilization strategy: (a) grow core (regular resources) contributions; (b) diversify the donor base (including the private sector, individuals and international financial institutions); and (c) increase programme country contributions. UNFPA will also engage Member States on the funding compact 2.0 to enhance predictability, efficiency and alignment.

139. UNFPA will expand private-sector partnerships to support financing, innovation and results. Country and regional teams will be equipped to build alliances with businesses, foundations and philanthropies, unlocking new modalities for impact. UNFPA is also aligning with the 2024 QCPR and the ‘One UN’ approach by integrating its priorities – including on sexual and reproductive health and rights, population dynamics, gender equality and youth – into joint programmes, regional dialogues, common funds and inter-agency frameworks.

## **VI. Anticipated risks and measures to manage them**

140. In alignment with the UNFPA enterprise risk management policy and its commitment to the Executive Board, the Strategic Plan integrates risk considerations to ensure that programming and institutional strategies align with the organization’s risk appetite. Risks are identified and addressed through structured enterprise risk management processes, with risk-informed decisions embedded in programme design and implementation.

141. Looking ahead, UNFPA anticipates interlinked risks that could slow or even derail progress toward the four Strategic Plan outcomes. These include: volatile donor funding and increased earmarking, which threaten financial sustainability; rising conflicts, humanitarian emergencies and climate-related disasters, which disrupt supply chains, endanger staff and limit access to services; political and social push-back (sometimes driven by misinformation) against SRHR; and persistent capacity gaps, including weak national supply chains and inadequate infrastructure, which delay delivery of essential goods and services.

142. To manage these risks, UNFPA is broadening its funding base, strengthening domestic resource mobilization and piloting innovative financing mechanisms, while pursuing internal efficiency gains to maximize impact. Emergency readiness is supported through pre-positioned supplies, staff training and robust contingency planning, coordinated closely with humanitarian partners across the HDP continuum. Evidence-based advocacy, reputation-management initiatives and support for inclusive legal and policy reforms help safeguard SRHR. Targeted capacity-building, inter-agency collaboration and joint programming with national partners strengthen local systems and ensure programme continuity, even in the most challenging contexts.

143. UNFPA will continue to enhance risk-informed decision-making at all levels, supported by digital tools, regional and headquarters risk committees and foresight capabilities. These efforts will help the organization remain resilient, adaptive and accountable as it accelerates progress toward the four Strategic Plan outcomes.

## **VII. Tracking progress and managing accountability towards the Strategic Plan results**

144. Monitoring and evaluation of the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 will reinforce the recalibrated business model by supporting a culture of accountability, performance and results delivery. A key shift will be from output-level alignment to outcome-level accountability, with all business units understanding their roles in achieving results and impact. Monitoring and evaluation will not only track progress but guide adaptive learning and inform decisions across contexts. The upgraded enterprise resource planning platform of UNFPA will support these efforts, enhancing efficiency, data integration and financial oversight.

145. Key priorities include:

- (a) Monitoring outcome- and impact-level indicators, in collaboration with United Nations partners that share common and complementary indicators;
- (b) Strengthening staff capacity and supporting joint monitoring of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, using the Development Coordination Office (DCO) systems to track effectiveness and efficiency, in line with the 2024 QCPR;
- (c) Monitoring key risks and assumptions, especially financial risks and funding gaps that may affect delivery;
- (d) Prioritizing national data systems, where possible, and enhancing UNFPA platforms to interface with the UN-Info platform;
- (e) Strengthening real-time monitoring to enable adaptive programming and responsiveness in rapidly changing settings;
- (f) Providing annual progress reports aligned with United Nations system-wide approaches, emphasizing accountability for results and performance;
- (g) Strengthening the evaluation function to assess acceleration pathways across country contexts and inform implementation of the Strategic Plan. A midterm review and summative evaluation will draw on thematic, country and internal evaluations.

146. The updated accountability framework of UNFPA, presented to the Executive Board in June 2025, reflects its unwavering ‘zero tolerance’ approach against any form of wrongdoing and consolidates systems for ethics, oversight, risk management, performance and ‘accountability to affected populations’ into a unified, organization-wide architecture. It defines four levels of accountability: (a) individual; (b) management; (c) programmatic; and (d) organizational; and sets out shared responsibilities for staff, leadership, partners and oversight bodies. The framework promotes a values-driven, results-focused culture of transparency, with mechanisms for control, oversight, feedback and continuous learning. It positions accountability as a driver of effectiveness, integrity and trust.

147. Organizational culture remains central to the ability of UNFPA to deliver results and uphold the highest standards of integrity, effectiveness and inclusiveness. As UNFPA and the wider United Nations system evolve in response to current funding constraints, emphasis will be placed on embedding a values-driven, results-focused and rights-based culture that fosters innovation, accountability, collaboration and care. This includes sustained investment in leadership, staff well-being, ethical conduct and inclusive workplace practices.

## **VIII. Resources for achieving the Strategic Plan commitments**

148. The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 is a roadmap for resilience and renewal. It charts a course for delivering on the ICPD Programme of Action in a rapidly changing world, where fiscal constraints and geopolitical uncertainty demand sharper prioritization, creative partnerships and strategic use of resources. Central to this renewal is sustained investment in the existing three transformative results, each yielding powerful and lasting returns for individuals, families and societies.

149. To fully realize the national-level goals articulated in the Strategic Plan, an estimated global resource gap of more than \$22 billion per year must be addressed between 2026 and 2030. The total available resources of UNFPA for the 2026-2029 cycle, based on conservative estimates, is approximately \$5.6 billion, well below what is needed to meet global demand and deliver transformative results.

150. The Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 calls on the international community to act not only as a funder, but as a catalyst for systems-level investment in the ICPD Programme of Action and SRHRR. UNFPA will help catalyse this by:

- (a) Leveraging ODA and enhancing domestic public resources as the most sustainable source of financing;
- (b) Influencing development cooperation frameworks to prioritize SRHRR;

- (c) Mobilizing innovative financing instruments, including blended finance, impact investing, individual giving and results-based funding;
- (d) Expanding strategic public, private, and philanthropic partnerships to unlock new capital and delivery capacity.

151. In parallel, UNFPA will seek to protect and grow its programme funding through strengthened resource mobilization, cost-efficiency and a sharper country-level focus on high-impact, scalable interventions. The organization will maintain a strong share of resources for global and regional programming and preserve its Emergency Fund at \$10 million per year, to ensure responsiveness in crisis settings. Additional income will be directed to country-level programmes, where it can have the greatest impact. Concurrently, the institutional budget will ensure that essential corporate functions, fiduciary oversight and overall organizational effectiveness are sustained within the prevailing resource constraints.

152. By aligning financial ambition with strategic focus, the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 offers a credible, costed pathway for results, even in a resource-constrained world.

## IX. Elements of a decision

153. The Executive Board may wish to:

- (a) Take note of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029, contained in document DP/FPA/2025/9, and its annexes, available on the UNFPA website;
  - (b) Note with appreciation the transparent and consultative process undertaken by UNFPA in developing its new strategic plan;
  - (c) Welcome the efforts undertaken by UNFPA to align its strategic plan with General Assembly resolution 79/226 on the 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;
  - (d) Endorse the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2026-2029 and request UNFPA to provide updated baselines and targets for the integrated results and resources framework of the new Strategic Plan at the annual session of the Executive Board in 2026.
-