

Recommendations for Strengthening Gender Equality in the Context of UN Reform (UN80)

May 2026

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1. Background and Rationale

As discussions advance on the UN80 Initiative, a reform process aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system at the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, growing pressure on the international agreements related to gender equality and the human rights of women and girls has become increasingly evident.

In recent years, the United Nations has faced shrinking resources across multiple areas, including gender equality, alongside weakening institutional foundations in relevant entities. At the same time, some Member States have promoted efforts to revisit existing international agreements concerning the rights of women and girls, raising concerns about the rollback of established commitments.

The seventieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) also reflected shifts in multilateral practice, including the adoption of its outcome document through voting rather than by consensus.

Particular attention should be given to institutional reform proposals regarding the UN entities including the merger between UN Women and UNFPA, as such changes may affect technical expertise, resource allocation, and organizations working to advance gender equality and uphold the rights of women and girls. These reforms therefore require careful and evidence-based consideration.

2. Recommendations

Japan has advanced efforts to implement its commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In addition, Japan's Development Cooperation Charter identifies the promotion of inclusive societies, including through gender mainstreaming, and the realization of fairness as guiding principles, and has supported these objectives through multilateral engagement, including with and through the United Nations.

Given the challenges outlined above, a more strategic and sustained approach is required to advance gender equality and safeguard the human rights of women and girls.

We therefore call on the Government of Japan to prioritize the following in relation to the UN80 reform process:

(1) Position Gender Equality as a Cross-Cutting Priority

Ensure that gender equality remains clearly positioned as a cross-cutting priority within UN reform processes and prevent any rollback of internationally agreed commitments, including the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

(2) Safeguard Institutional Effectiveness and Technical Expertise

Maintain and strengthen technical expertise, human resources, and financing dedicated to gender equality across the United Nations system, while reinforcing accountability and system-wide coordination across the UN system to ensure effective implementation at country level.

(3) Strengthen Civil Society Participation and Financing

Guarantee meaningful participation of women's organizations and civil society organizations in decision-making processes related to the UN80 reform agenda and institutional arrangements, and expand direct and sustainable financing for these actors.

(4) Exercise Caution Regarding Institutional Integration

Ensure that any institutional reform, including a possible merger between UN Women and UNFPA, does not weaken the UN's capacity to advance gender equality. Ensure that efforts to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights are not limited to women and girls, and that adequate expertise and resources are available to support these objectives.

We further call on the Government of Japan, through coordinated engagement among relevant divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—including Global Issues Cooperation Division, Global Health Strategy Division, Gender Mainstreaming Division—to ensure that gender equality is explicitly reflected in policy formulation concerning the UN80 Initiative.

Japan should also maintain and communicate consistent commitments through international frameworks such as the G7 and G20.

Finally, to ensure that the UN80 Initiative does not contribute to any regression in gender equality, we urge Japan to continue playing a constructive and proactive role in the international community and to sustain its contribution to advancing gender equality globally.

Supported by the following organizations (as of 12 May 2026)

JOICFP (Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning)

Plan International Japan

JAWW (Japan Women's Watch)

Africa Japan Forum (AJF)

Nijiuro Diversity

Space Allies

Women's Group Wing

Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (Hurights Osaka)

Japanese Association of International Women's Rights((JAIWR)

YouToo

Women's Eye

The National Women's Committee of the United Nations NGOs

Certified NPO Organization N Project - People·Streets·Towns

Okayama Communication Network of the. World Conference on Women

aware

BPW Japan (Japan Federation of Business and Professional Women)

Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs(SDGs Japan)

OP-CEDAW Action

International Women's Year Liaison Group

Kansai NGO Council

IKOKO Aichi: A Network for Life, Body, Mind and Dignity

SOSHIREN (Women's Network for Reproductive Freedom)

Japan Institute of Supplier Diversity and Inclusion

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Transgender Network Japan (T-Net)

Mimosa Executive Committee, a bridge for women's human rights between France and

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Japan Alliance for LGBT Legislation (J-ALL)