



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS

Feminist Advocacy at the UN

US Policy Changes at the UN Harm Our Country

The US Women's Caucus wishes to express our utmost concern and utter dismay over the recent announcement of the US Administration's new policies related to the United Nations and its agencies. We seriously question the wisdom and the intent in Executive Order 14199 to withdraw US participation and financial support from 66 international organizations.

- Much of the United States' global power and influence today comes not only from economic and military power, but also stems directly from US participation in the UN and these international organizations.
- We disagree with labeling these organizations as "wasteful, ineffective and harmful" or misaligned with US interests. Like the UN itself, many of the organizations cited were created by the United States and enjoy overwhelming bi-partisan support. They have fostered an incalculable amount of peace, prosperity, and goodwill for decades.
- Funding and participation at these UN and other organization cannot and must not, be hastily cast aside without Congressional approval and without weighing the serious consequences to the many long-standing interests of all US stakeholders.

Why Is the US Abandoning Previous US Policies on UN Resolutions?

The new Executive Order, coupled with the "Explanation of Position with Respect to all Resolutions under the UNGA80 Third Committee" issued by the US State Department on Dec 19, marks a **total abandonment of foreign policy priorities by the US government which have maintained the current world order for 80 years**. The bedrock foundation of that system of peace and order is the UN Charter, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and respect for international law. These principles of continuity cannot be casually and arbitrarily pushed aside at the whim of one Administration.

As Americans we are appalled that, despite previous support, the US now says it will no longer participate in organizations designed for development, research, and social programs such as DESA, ECOSOC, the Peacebuilding Commission, and the UN Democracy Fund.

- No longer endorsing resolutions supporting even basic human right goals such as the "Call for Concrete Action on the Total Elimination of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia" or the resolution calling for the "Enhancement of International Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights" seems incomprehensible.
- Likewise, the idea that the US will not endorse resolutions supporting the rights of children, minorities, or marginalized groups that the US has long supported such as the elderly, indigenous, and disabled allegedly because these are "only a "performative exercise" or worse, somehow impinging and threatening our national sovereignty, is nonsensical.

- These changes are drastic departures from previous standards that go against what the United States has continually supported and endorsed for decades. They will leave the US as an outlier among nations, no longer the world's leader with high ideals or the enviable example for other countries.

As women we expect better from our government. Words should match deeds. The US has set on a course that is failing its own stated commitments to women. The credibility of the current Administration is completely undermined by the enormous gap between stated policy toward women and the very concrete actions it has recently taken that impede rather than support women's rights.

- **Current US policy** states that "it is the policy of the US to support and promote efforts that reinforce respect for the dignity of women, advance women's equality, support optimal health outcomes for women, promote and protect their inherent human rights, oppose violence against women and girls and advance programs for women and girls that empower women and girls."
- **In practice, however, the Administration has**
 - eliminated DEI programs and the word "gender" from all government programs and documents.
 - thwarted every effort to allow women to have full sexual and reproductive healthcare choices.
 - refused to endorse resolutions regarding the Beijing Platform for Action.
 - planned to withdraw from UN Women, the UN agency whose sole mission is ensuring women's rights and improving the lives of women and girls around the world.

As human beings on this fragile earth, we find the policy to withdraw from the Climate Change framework (UNFCCC) as well as other organizations devoted to finding solutions to climate problems deeply troubling and unacceptable. The Administration's disregard for global climate issues and indifference toward the environmental fate of other countries, our children, and future generations is extraordinarily narrow-minded and short-sighted, with potentially devastating consequences for the world.

Reconsider These Policies -- The Stakes Could Not Be Higher

Given the drastic potential short- and long-term worldwide impact of these radical policy changes, we urge decision-makers and the US State Department to urgently reconsider them. Now is NOT the time to recklessly destroy the respect, credibility, and influence that the US has garnered at the UN and other international agencies. Do not deliberately destroy the bridges of peace, the links of prosperity and trust, that have taken decades to build within the UN and international organizations. Those destructive policies are NOT in our national interest.

Leverage US leadership now to collaborate with the UN and other organizations to pursue reforms rather than withdraw and allow other countries less committed to human rights and international law to take our place in global institutions.

Choices made now will affect generations to come.

US feminists collaborating to advance human rights and gender equity for women and girls worldwide
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