



29 May 2025

Dear Tom,

We at UNFPA fully support the critical need for streamlining and efficiency within the humanitarian system, and we are fully committed to constructive participation in this important process.

I write to underline to you and our IASC colleagues UNFPA's position on two inter-related issues vital to the humanitarian reset and ask for your support on both.

1. GBV focus: our needed reforms shouldn't inadvertently diminish the focus on, and resources allocated to, gender-based violence. People, specifically women and girls, affected by crises need dignified and quality assistance for their protection. Any new system that emerges should retain women's and girls' specific needs as first-order priorities.

To this end, UNFPA is committed to upholding and investing in our provider-of-last-resort responsibilities for addressing GBV.

In our forthcoming Strategic Plan 2026-2029, we are strengthening our investments in our IASC mandate on GBV, as is also reflected in our improved business model.

2. Avoidance of a 'two-tiered' humanitarian system: I remain concerned about the potential reemergence of a two-tiered humanitarian system favoring larger agencies over specialized ones, inevitably leading to the de-prioritization of those focused mandate areas that are demanded by affected people and add unique value to humanitarian delivery in keeping with the principle of 'leaving no one behind'.

Mr. Tom Fletcher  
Under-Secretary-General  
for Humanitarian Affairs  
and Emergency Relief Coordinator  
Office for the Coordination  
of Humanitarian Affairs  
United Nations  
New York

cc: IASC Principals



While having a single protection cluster without designated areas of responsibility is not UNFPA's preferred approach, nor that of the partners and constituents we have discussed the issue with, I have instructed my team to be forward leaning to ensure an adequate outcome that meets the needs of women and girls.

In this regard, UNFPA is prepared to do its share in leadership of the Protection Cluster at global and country levels.

As we just heard during the European Humanitarian Forum, Member States are advocating for a reformed humanitarian system that is gender-responsive and keeps a priority response to GBV.

Other international and local partners, and particularly women-led organizations, have likewise expressed concern and anxieties about losing the space that, with cooperation from all IASC members, has only relatively recently been created, to measurably address and elevate prevention and treatment of GBV in every crisis response.

Our partners are demanding that the international community continue providing a specialized platform for effective, predictable and accountable humanitarian responses. They emphasize to us that GBV coordination is one of the few humanitarian coordination spaces where women-led organizations lead, co-design, and shape national response strategies.

With the recent de-funding of GBV coordination and programming, and the global pushback against gender and rights, it becomes more important than ever that our future humanitarian architecture includes these voices and that leadership.

The central premise we've set out in the humanitarian reset is indeed to create more people-centered responses and shift power to local actors with local expertise where feasible.

UNFPA's investment in its GBV programmes and coordination mandate for some 20 years has had remarkable beneficial impact, affecting millions of people across the world. Our strong relationships with government line ministries, and trusted partnerships with local communities, make us uniquely positioned to ensure robust delivery of integrated GBV and SRH services. We will continue to advocate with partners for increased investment in GBV.

In all contexts, GBV is the most frequently reported protection concern. An estimated 92 million people will need access to GBV prevention and response services in 2025.

This is not an issue that can be deprioritized, as per the IASC Principals reaffirmation during our meeting on 19 February.

While risk mitigation can be mainstreamed across all clusters, the delivery of lifesaving GBV services requires an operational response underpinned by specialized expertise and capacity - and one that has an equal seat at the table at all levels.



UNFPA has remained and will continue to be uncompromising and unwavering in responding to the needs of women and girls caught in crises, even when others cannot or will not – something we know and appreciate is of great importance to you, and to all of us.

Looking ahead, we are committed to working with you and other IASC partners to ensure that the needs of women and girls remain a priority in all humanitarian contexts – and we thank you and your team and all colleagues for your longstanding and vital support for this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'N Kanem'.

Dr. Natalia Kanem  
Executive Director