United Nations University
Centre for Policy Research

Moving from Crisis Management to Resource Mobilization in the UN80 Process

Discussion Paper

Michael Franczak
Maleeha Abrar

April 2026

UNU CPR
GGI Global Governance Innovation
german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

United Nations University
Centre for Policy Research

About the authors

Maleeha Abrar is a public policy researcher and economist-in-training with a passion for evidence-based policy. She holds a Master of Public Policy from Northeastern University and a BSc (Honors) in Economics from Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), and brings research experience spanning the United Nations, applied development economics in Pakistan, and independent empirical inquiry. She aspires to pursue doctoral study in economics.

Dr. Michael Franczak is a Senior Researcher in Multilateralism and Global Governance at United Nations University – Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) and an expert on climate and development finance and reform of the international financial architecture. Michael also holds appointments as a Visiting Fellow at Perry World House, University of Pennsylvania, and as an Adjunct Assistant Professor of History at Columbia University. Prior to joining UNU-CPR, he was a Research Fellow at the International Peace Institute, where he supported small-island States in UN Climate Change negotiations, and served as a consultant for the UNFCCC. He held postdoctoral fellowships at Yale and Penn and is the author of Global Inequality and American Foreign Policy in the 1970s (Cornell University Press, 2022).

Disclaimer

ISBN: 978-92-808-6667-4 © United Nations University 2026.

Citation: Michael Franczak and Maleeha Abrar, “Moving from Crisis Management to Resource Mobilization in the UN80 Process”, GGI Platform Discussion Paper (New York, United Nations University, 2026).

United Nations University
Centre for Policy Research

Contents

The context: "imminent financial collapse"

As the United Nations (UN) passes its 80th anniversary, it faces one of the most severe financial challenges in its history. In a January 2026 letter to Member States, Secretary-General António Guterres warned that the UN is on an "untenable" trajectory and at risk of "imminent financial collapse". He laid out a stark choice: Member States must either pay their assessed contributions in full and on time or agree to a fundamental overhaul of the UN's financial rules. The warning came amid record arrears – roughly $1.57 billion in outstanding dues at the end of 2025 – and budget rules that require the UN to return unused credits even when the underlying contributions were never received, creating what the Secretary-General has described as a "Kafkaesque cycle".[1]

The UN's liquidity crisis coincides with a larger collapse in Official Development Assistance (ODA), upon which many UN functions depend. While earlier OECD projections suggested a decline of roughly 9–18 per cent, preliminary 2025 data now indicate a much sharper contraction: ODA from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members fell by 23.1 per cent in real terms between 2024 and 2025, the largest annual drop on record, reflecting mounting fiscal pressures and a reorientation of donor spending priorities.[1]

The UN80 reform process unfolds against this background. Guy Ryder, Under-Secretary-General for Policy and Chair of the UN80 Task Force, told Member States in June 2025 that the UN system was expected to contract by roughly 30 per cent that year, compared to a 2023 peak of $68.5 billion.[2] According to Ronny Patz, a veteran observer of UN finances, "2025 funding levels could return where they were in 2016. Considering inflation and cost increases over these past ten years, this would be well below [the] real 2016 level."[3]

So far, intergovernmental negotiations have largely centred on efficiencies and prioritization, while the UN General Assembly has approved a $3.45 billion 2026 budget, including the abolition of nearly 2,900 posts.[3] But the UN's financial challenge is about more than money; it is also about power. How the UN is funded shapes its capacity to act, which functions are protected or expanded, and which Member States can meaningfully participate in global governance. The strategic question for UN80 is not simply how much funding is needed, but how – and from where – more funding can realistically be mobilized.

There is substantial precedent for innovation. International organizations, including many within the UN system, have long experimented with alternative funding strategies, including revenue-generating services, pooled funds, taxes and levies, institutional bonds, in-kind services, and more. These mechanisms illustrate

[1] OECD, "A historic decline in foreign aid: Preliminary 2025 ODA data", 9 April 2026. Available at https://www.oecd.org/en/data/insights/data-explainers/2026/04/a-historic-decline-in-foreign-aid-preliminary-2025-oda-data.html.
[2] United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC), "General Assembly: Update on the UN80 Initiative - Informal Meeting of the Plenary, 79th Session", UN Web TV, 25 June 2025. Available at https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1r/k1rtsyd5f5.
[3] Ronny Patz, "Reforming the UN during a financial crisis: a foreseeable failure to align money, mandates, and majorities?", GGI Briefing 1 (Brussels, Global Governance Institute, 2025). Available at https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/630b0421cd31598bbf8f31e7/686e7ceefe65fcf4e0288c9e_GGI_Briefing_1-2025_PATZ_Reforming_the_UN_during_a_Financial_Crisis.pdf.

non-traditional ways organizations have raised, leveraged or attracted resources, often in response to external fiscal pressures or political constraints.

This discussion paper explores these funding models through short case studies, highlighting how the models emerged, where they succeeded or fell short, and what lessons they offer for UN80. It concludes with recommendations for UN institutions, Member States, civil society and other stakeholders on how to explore alternative funding strategies in ways that are both politically and institutionally feasible. In an era of constrained public budgets and growing global demands, innovation in institutional finance – not just development finance – will be critical for the UN to sustain its mandates, preserve legitimacy and remain effective in addressing twenty-first century global challenges.

Table 1: Innovative resource mobilization strategies

Case	Description	Challenges	Scale	Lessons
Revenue-generating services				
ITU (Public Utility)	Cost-recovery fees for managing scarce global public resources (spectrum, satellite filings).	Must preserve neutrality and legitimacy while charging users; pricing must manage demand without excluding smaller actors.	**Medium** – Hundreds of millions annually if applied across technical standard-setting agencies.	Capture value where firms depend on UN technical standards and coordination platforms.
WIPO (Global Transactions)	Fee-based global IP system providing standardized international registration services.	Requires embedded legal infrastructure and global uptake.	**High** – ~$500 million+ annually (≈95% of WIPO revenue).	Innovative industries can finance global public infrastructure when services are indispensable.
UNCTAD (Digital Public Goods)	Hybrid financing (donor funds, user fees) for sovereign debt management software.	Cost recovery is ongoing challenge; high upfront and maintenance costs.	**Low** – Sustained by voluntary support; limited fee recovery in low-income markets.	Digital public goods generate partial revenues; require subsidy but provide high value.
Pooling and derisking				
CERF (Pooled and Anticipatory)	Pre-arranged pooled funding with trigger-	Depends on voluntary	**High** – ~$500–600 million annually;	Treat emergency response as standing

	based disbursement for rapid and anticipatory response.	replenishment; donors must accept reduced control.	could expand with multi-year capitalization.	global liquidity, not ad hoc appeals.
Pandemic Fund (Catalytic Co-financing)	Uses grants to incentivize and leverage co-financing from MDBs and countries for preparedness investments.	Shared governance (WHO and World Bank) balances expertise with oversight, but not all risks are insurable.	**High** – ~$2 billion core capital leveraging ~4x in co-financing.	Donors are more willing to fund prevention when risks are pooled and leveraged.
IFFEd (MDB Guarantee Platform)	Donor guarantees expand MDB lending capacity by reducing risk rather than providing cash.	Guarantees stretch balance sheets but rely on long-term donor credibility and MDB balance sheets.	**High** – ~$350 million in guarantees/grants leveraging ~7x financing.	Balance-sheet engineering unlocks scale, but only with stable capital backing.
Taxes and levies				
Unitaid (Airline Solidarity Levy)	Nationally collected air travel levy earmarked for global public good (HIV/AIDS prevention).	Redistributing tax revenues beyond borders remains political and legal sticking point.	**Medium–High** – ~$300 million annually; G20 adoption could reach $1–3 billion/year.	Feasible via coalitions of the willing, but difficult to universalize or scale globally.
IOPC Funds (Oil Industry Levy)	Mandatory, rules-based contributions from industry tied to activity, embedded in international legal frameworks.	Requires strong legal predictability to sustain "polluter pays" legitimacy and industry compliance.	**Medium–High** – Hundreds of millions today; multi-sector expansion could reach billions.	Industry levies can succeed when paired with binding legal frameworks and predictable rules.
UN Secretariat (1% Coordination Levy)	Internal charge on earmarked contributions to fund Resident Coordinator system.	Internal fees risk fragmentation and added transaction costs if not system-wide and transparent.	**Medium** – ~$60 million annually, but redistributive rather than additional.	Useful for stabilizing functions, but not a substitute for adequate core funding.
Capital market access				

Gavi (IFFIm Vaccine Bonds)	Frontloads funding by issuing bonds backed by long-term donor pledges.	Depends on credible pledges; interest costs reduce net resources over time.	**High** – $10 billion+ raised; scalable where pledges are creditworthy.	Converting future pledges into present capital requires credible repayment streams.
Climate Investment Funds (Capital Recycling)	Uses loan reflows and future contributions to raise new capital via structured finance mechanisms.	Demands strong treasury capacity (World Bank), asset base, and legal structure.	**High** – ~$11 billion pledged and partially recycled for reinvestment.	Recycling can work for mature funds with strong portfolios and oversight.
IFAD (Sustainable Development Bonds)	Direct bond issuance by a highly rated UN entity to finance development lending.	Requires high credit rating (AA+) and sophisticated financial management.	**High** – $1 billion + issued; expandable to several billions with balance-sheet strength.	Market access depends on creditworthiness and legal structure, limiting replicability.
Innovative member contributions				
UNICEF (Digital In-Kind Contributions)	Mobilizes digital assets (software, data, platforms) as contributions to shared global infrastructure.	Governance and dependency risks in large tech partnerships; valuation transparency required.	**Medium** – Hundreds of millions equivalent in digital assets annually at low marginal cost.	In-kind contributions can become system assets but need active governance to avoid fragmentation.
UN-Habitat (City Contributions)	Engages cities and subnational actors as co-financiers and project partners.	Formalizing cities as contributors may raise sovereignty sensitivities among Member States.	**High** – If 1,000 major cities gave ~$1 million/year, >$1 billion annually.	Expands the base of contributors but requires careful institutional design.
AfDB / IDB (SDR Recycling)	Channels IMF reserve assets into MDB balance sheets to expand lending capacity.	IMF rules and voluntary participation limit scale; depends on loans from major SDR holders.	**High** – Recycling 5–10% of $650 billion SDR allocation could mobilize $30–60 billion +, amplified via hybrid capital.	The constraint is political, not financial – liquidity exists but must be unlocked.

Case studies in innovative resource mobilization

Revenue-generating services

In the case studies below, the UN acts as a service provider, generating revenue from technical functions and "natural monopolies" that the global economy requires for stability.

The Public Utility Model – International Telecommunication Union

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) demonstrates how UN entities can generate revenue by charging for technical coordination functions for which they provide a natural monopoly. Facing rising development demands and funding constraints in the 1970s and 1980s, in 1994 ITU adopted major reforms that expanded private sector participation, including through new membership fees which gave large and small firms a chance to participate in ITU discussions.[4]

A second key moment came at the 1998 Plenipotentiary Conference, when ITU moved to strengthen cost-recovery for its radiocommunication services, particularly satellite network filings and frequency coordination. These services had been provided free of charge since 1963, but growing demand, a mounting backlog and a surge in paper filings had begun to strain the system.[5] Introducing fees helped manage demand, clear processing delays and resource the administrative and technical functions required to govern increasingly scarce spectrum and orbital resources.

This shift formalized the principle that users of global public resources would pay for the services required to manage them. It also came at the right time, positioning ITU as an essential service provider for the Internet and digital age. Today, 21 per cent of ITU revenue comes from cost-recovery services, such as satellite network filings, publications and data services, while fees paid by Member States, Sector Members, Associates and Academia make up the rest.[6] These arrangements allow participation from both large technology firms and smaller companies, while helping to stabilize finances when member contributions fluctuate.

For UN80, the lesson is highly relevant at the dawn of the AI era. The UN already provides essential public data and technical standards to large tech companies, for example in humanitarian and environmental

[4] George A. Codding, "The International Telecommunication Union: 130 Years of Telecommunications Regulation", *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy*, vol. 23, No. 3 (1995), p.509. Available at https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?params=/context/djilp/article/1717/&path_info=24_23DenvJIntlL_Poly501_1994_1995_.pdf.
[5] International Telecommunication Union, *Resolution 91: Cost recovery for some ITU products and services. In Final Acts of the Plenipotentiary Conference* (Minneapolis, 1998), pp. 253–256. Available at https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/opb/conf/S-CONF-ACTF-1998-PDF-E.pdf.
[6] Non-State members, defined collectively as sector members, associates and academia, contributed 9.9 per cent of ITU's total budget in 2024. These contributors include private companies, other organizations, and academia, mainly paying through membership fees for different degrees of engagement. See ITU, "How is ITU funded?", 2024. Available at https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backgrounders/Pages/how-is-itu-funded.aspx.

forecasting. In some cases (e.g. Google Earth), the UN is both a contributor and paid subscriber. In emerging sectors such as AI and geospatial data, the UN could move toward revenue-sharing or licensing models, capturing value from private firms that rely on UN legitimacy, data and standard-setting authority.

The Global Transaction Model – World Intellectual Property Organization

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) represents the gold standard of UN self-financing. Fee-based services linked to global Internet Protocol (IP) registration systems generate roughly 95 per cent of WIPO's income, with the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) alone accounting for the majority of revenue.[7]

The PCT model shifts financial responsibility from taxpayers to firms and innovators that benefit from centralized IP protection and filing infrastructure. Established in 1970 and entered into force in 1978, it was designed to simplify the process of filing patent applications across multiple jurisdictions. Instead of filing separately in each country, applicants can submit a single "international" application through the PCT, which is then recognized by participating States and processed through a standardized procedure.[8] Like the ITU model, revenue flows are tied directly to demand for global public infrastructure rather than voluntary Member State contributions. Crucially, these service fees also finance WIPO's broader programme budget, including its development agenda and technical assistance activities for developing countries.[9]

This model reflects sustained global demand for trusted, neutral coordination platforms. The lesson is that where the UN provides essential global transaction infrastructure, users can finance it. A potential application could be a Global Green Technology Registry, charging licensing or registration fees to finance climate technology transfer and deployment in developing countries.

The Digital Public Goods Model – UN Conference on Trade and Development

The Debt Management and Financial Analysis System (DMFAS) emerged directly from the sovereign debt crises of the late 1970s and early 1980s, when many developing countries lacked basic systems to track public liabilities. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) launched the software in 1981 to help governments monitor and manage rapidly expanding external debt portfolios following oil shocks, rising interest rates and balance-of-payments crises. What began as a donor-supported technical tool has evolved into a quasi-subscription service now used by dozens of countries and public institutions.[10]

The programme is financed through a hybrid structure: multi-donor trust funds support core software development and global technical support; beneficiary countries pay annual maintenance fees and one-time development contributions; and country-specific projects are financed through bilateral or multilateral trust

---

[7] World Intellectual Property Organization, *Annual Financial Report and Financial Statements: Year to December 31, 2023* (May 2024). Available at www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/about-wipo/en/budget/pdf/wipo-financial-statements-2023.pdf.
[8] World Intellectual Property Organization, "The PCT System – Overview and Possible Future Directions and Priorities", Memorandum by the Director General, February 2 2017. Available at https://www.wipo.int/documents/d/pct-system/docs-en-memo.pdf.
[9] In 2006 and 2007, nearly 80 million Swiss francs of WIPO's regular budget (mostly funded by income from WIPO's services to the private sector) will have been dedicated to work in support of developing countries and of countries in transition. Each year, however, additional technical assistance and capacity-building projects are made possible. See Joe Bradley, "Mobilizing Extra Resources for Development", *WIPO Magazine*, 24 September 2007. Available at https://www.wipo.int/en/web/wipo-magazine/articles/mobilizing-extra-resources-for-development-35922.
[10] The DMFAS Programme was established in 1981 with a small team. Its initial focus was on the development of a computer-based debt management information system. Originally focusing on central government and government guaranteed external debt, over time the DMFAS software expanded its scope to incorporate domestic debt instruments, following evolution of the borrowing practices of developing countries. See UNCTAD, "DMFAS History", n. d. Available at https://unctad.org/dmfas/DMFAS_History.

funds, increasingly funded directly by middle income users.[11] This model positions the UN as a neutral, lower-cost alternative to private financial software vendors and firms while generating modest, but predictable service-linked revenue.

DMFAS demonstrates that the UN can operate as a mission-driven provider of global public digital infrastructure. For UN80, this suggests a pathway to scale revenue-sustaining UN digital platforms. For example, UN80 could mandate a system-wide review to identify high-demand digital public goods, such as climate data reporting platforms, carbon market registries or public finance transparency tools, that could be delivered through subscription-plus-donor financing models, with tiered or subsidized pricing to protect access for low-income countries.

Blending, pooling and derisking

These case studies demonstrate how the UN's role can shift from a direct spender to a risk manager to multiply institutional investment.

The Pooled Anticipatory Model – Central Emergency Response Fund

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a humanitarian pooled fund established by the UN in 2006 to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to people affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts.[12] Its core value lies in speed: CERF allocations are pre-positioned and can be disbursed far faster than traditional appeals, making it one of the UN's most effective instruments for immediate life-saving response.

Starting with the establishment of the first Anticipatory Action (AA) framework in Somalia in 2019, CERF has been at the forefront of advancing AA and is today the largest contributor to AA frameworks globally.[13] Its commitments have scaled rapidly, from $48 million in 2020 to over $120 million in pre-arranged funding by late 2024, supporting frameworks across climate shocks (droughts, floods, storms) and disease outbreaks such as cholera.[14]

To help meet the growing demand for pre-arranged financing, including in places that may otherwise not have been supported by CERF, the Climate Action Account was launched at COP28. Contributors include a widening group of Governments – such as Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Australia, Chad, Denmark, Germany, Monaco and Portugal – as well as over 100 individual and corporate donors via the website, climaterelief.un.org. Importantly, these resources are additional, representing funding that would not otherwise have flowed to CERF.

"The climate crisis demands bold collective action, big ideas, and relentless innovation," explained Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. "The CERF Climate Action Account is a critical tool for this effort, offering a global safety net to address growing climate-

[11] UNCTAD, "Our Financing", n. d. Available at https://unctad.org/dmfas/Our_financing.
[12] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Fact Sheet* (2012). Available at https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/121003_CERF_FactSheet.pdf.
[13] OCHA, "Anticipatory Action", n. d. Available at https://cerf.un.org/anticipatory-action.
[14] OCHA, *CERF at the Forefront of Anticipatory Action* (20 November 2024). Available at https://www.unocha.org/attachments/05b6207f-a1ca-40d0-9654-adc7461017a5/CERF%20at%20the%20Forefront%20of%20Anticipatory%20Action.pdf.

related humanitarian needs."[15]

CERF shows how the UN can move from a reactive funding model to a standing global risk facility – pooling resources, pre-arranging finance and disbursing automatically when shocks are known. The UN could explore similar pooled, trigger-based funds in other areas (e.g. health, food security or debt shocks) and by opening structured entry points for private capital.

The Catalytic Co-Financing Model – Pandemic Fund

Recognizing the need to address chronic underinvestment in pandemic preparedness and resistance capacity, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors requested in April 2022 that the World Bank explore the establishment of a new financing mechanism. The Pandemic Fund is designed to multiply scarce donor grants by mobilizing much larger co-financing flows from countries, development banks and partners.[16] Early funding rounds demonstrate strong leverage effects: approximately $885 million in grants has mobilized around $6 billion in additional financing, for a 1:7 ratio.[17] The Fund's model explicitly incentivizes both external co-financing and domestic investment, requiring implementing entities and recipient countries to bring additional resources and policy commitments. And as a Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) within the World Bank, the Fund balances technical health leadership (via the World Health Organization (WHO) and technical agencies) with strong financial oversight.

The Pandemic Fund also reflects hard lessons from the earlier Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility. According to the World Bank, "the PEF's design was unique in that payments could go directly to governments and pre-approved frontline responder organizations (such as WHO and the United Nations agency for children (UNICEF)) and it could do so either through its cash window or, once triggered, through its insurance window".[18] However, its strict trigger conditions meant that no payouts were made during major outbreaks such as Ebola in the DRC or the early phase of COVID-19, except to investors, who received tens of millions in interest payments.[19] Instead of late-stage payouts, the Pandemic Fund prioritizes ex ante investment, simplified grant financing and incentives for sustained system-building, particularly in surveillance, laboratories and health workforce capacity.[20]

For UN reform, this model suggests that financial engineering works best – that is, it is more sustainable for donors and more impactful for affected countries – when it is focused on preparedness and resilience rather than rapid response. The UN could apply this approach to climate and biodiversity by establishing catalytic investment platforms for adaptation, ecosystem protection and resilience-building, thereby reducing future loss and damage.

---

[15] OCHA, *Climate Action Account* (April 2025). See https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/CERF_Climate_Action_Account_May2025.pdf.
[16] See The Pandemic Fund, "Background", n. d. Available at https://www.thepandemicfund.org/background.
[17] The Pandemic Fund, "The Pandemic Fund for a Resilient World", Fact Sheet (World Bank). Available at https://www.thepandemicfund.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/The%20Pandemic%20Fund%20-%20Fatcsheet%20V4.pdf.
[18] World Bank, "Brief: Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility", n. d. Available at https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/pandemics/brief/pandemic-emergency-financing-facility.
[19] Anna Gross, "Critics Take Aim at 'Failure' of Bond Designed to Fight Disease", *Financial Times*, 10 March 2020. Available at https://www.ft.com/content/a6239e12-5ec7-11ea-b0ab-339c2307bcd4.
[20] World Bank, *Building Pandemic Resilience: The Time is Now: The Pandemic Fund Investment Case 2025-2027* (2024). Available at https://www.thepandemicfund.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/Investment%20Case.pdf.

The MDB Guarantee Model – International Finance Facility for Education

Launched in 2022, the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) demonstrates how donor guarantees can substitute for direct cash aid while still expanding total lending capacity. Instead of providing full grants upfront, donors provide partial cash and balance-sheet guarantees, allowing Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to raise larger volumes of capital in markets (a leverage ratio of 1:7). IFFEd's unique combination of guarantees and grants creates a dedicated pool of concessional capital for education, which is more affordable than existing MDB or commercial financing.[21] Crucially, it expands access to affordable financing for lower-middle-income countries that are often excluded from concessional aid but face high market borrowing costs. In practice, small paid-in capital contributions can unlock very large financing flows because guarantees reduce risk for MDB investors.

Nick Vaughn, Head of Finance at IFFEd, notes that the guarantee-based model is transferable and could be applied anywhere MDBs make loans.[22] Indeed, the G20 Independent Review of Multilateral Development Banks' Capital Adequacy Frameworks (2022) recommended exploring IFFEd's guarantee-based model for other challenges.[23] The Asian Development Bank took up this call and modelled its Innovative Finance Facility for Climate in Asia and the Pacific on IFFEd.[24] For the UN, a similar guarantee platform could work with MDBs to finance climate change adaptation projects and other areas where investment returns are small but social returns are large.

Taxes and levies

The case studies below show both the promise of automatic, rules-based revenue and the political and legal challenges of putting it in place.

The Solidarity Levy Model – Unitaid

Unitaid's airline ticket solidarity levy is the most prominent example of an innovative tax mechanism dedicated to financing global public goods. Launched in 2006 and championed by France and Brazil (with early support from Chile), the levy adds a small surcharge to airline tickets, with higher rates for business- and first-class passengers.[25] Participation for governments is voluntary – hence the "solidarity" – but once adopted nationally, the charge is automatically applied to tickets sold within that jurisdiction. As of 2024, the Governments of Cameroon, Chile, Congo, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Niger and South Korea have joined France in implementing the tax, while Norway allocates part of its tax on CO_2 emissions.[26]

The charge is collected at the point of sale by airlines and remitted to national authorities, which keeps administrative costs low and reduces political friction. In France, the levy is collected by the Directorate

---

[21] IFFEd. "How Does It Work?", n. d. Available at https://iff-education.org/how-does-it-work.
[22] Interview with Nick Vaughn, New York, 17 July 2025.
[23] Expert Panel on the Independent Review of Multilateral Development Banks' Capital Adequacy Frameworks, *Boosting MDBs' Investing Capacity: An Independent Review of Multilateral Development Banks' Capital Adequacy Frameworks* (2022). Available at https://www.dt.mef.gov.it/modules/documenti_it/rapporti_finanziari_internazionali/rapporti_finanziari_internazionali/CAF-Review-Report.pdf.
[24] See https://www.adb.org/news/features/qa-innovative-finance-facility-climate-asia-pacific-if-cap.
[25] See The Brookings Institution, "Airline Solidarity Contribution", Brookings Global Health Financing Initiative Snapshot Initiative (2007). Available at https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/airline.pdf.
[26] Simon Black, Ian Parry, Sunalika Singh and Nate Vernon-Lin, "Destination Net Zero: The Urgent Need for a Global Carbon Tax on Aviation and Shipping", IMF Staff Climate Notes, No. 2024/003 (2024). Available at https://www.imf.org/-/media/files/publications/staff-climate-notes/2024/english/clnea2024003.pdf.

General for Civil Aviation which transfers it not to the general budget, but to a dedicated "Solidarity Fund for Development" managed by the French Development Agency. In 2023 the French tax raised around €370 million, €210m of which was channeled towards Unitaid. According to the Government of France, "no impact has been observed on French air traffic or on tourism following the establishment of the airline-ticket levy".[27]

Unitaid's solidarity levy demonstrates how rules-based, high-volume transaction levies can raise new resources without diverting ODA. It has inspired replication attempts, including UNITLIFE's pursuit of an extractives micro-levy and work by the Global Solidarity Levies Task Force, but these and other efforts to establish new levies (such as for the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage) have not succeeded.[28] Revenue remains concentrated among a small number of contributors, particularly France, and reliance on a single sector may expose funding streams to shocks, as evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic. For UN80, the lesson is that it is possible to establish targeted levies – collected nationally and redistributed internationally – to help pay for global public goods, but they require dedicated North-South coalitions, and developed country first-movers, to succeed.

The Industry Levy Model – International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds

The International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds provide a rare example of a global industry levy embedded in international law and administered through a multilateral framework. Established in the wake of the 1967 Torrey Canyon oil spill and codified through the 1971 Fund Convention and subsequent protocols, the system is financed directly by the oil industry rather than through State budget contributions. Specifically, any entity in a Member State that receives more than 150,000 tons of contributing oil in a given calendar year is required to pay levies into the Fund, creating a mandatory, rules-based financing mechanism linked to activity in the sector.[29]

Måns Jacobsson, who served as IOPC Funds Director from 1985 to 2006, explained: "When the Fund Convention was adopted… [it] created an innovation in international law. The IOPC Fund is, basically, a mutual insurance company for oil pollution incidents set up by governments but financed by oil interests."[30] A key reason the model gained industry acceptance is that contributions are paired with clear and predictable rules: shipowner liability is capped, compensation procedures are standardized, and financial exposure is shared across the sector. This reduced uncertainty for industry while ensuring that large, infrequent spill costs could be covered collectively.

The IOPC Funds have informed similar mechanisms, including the International Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Fund, and proposals in global plastics treaty negotiations, such as the Ghana Financing Resolution, which calls for levies on plastic producers and importers based on production and market share.[31] Replication for plastics and other areas will require similar trade-offs between industry contributions and regulatory certainty. For UN80, the lesson is that industry levies become politically viable when paired with

---

[27] See Government of France, *Airline Ticket Levy: A Contribution to International Cooperation for Development and Biodiversity* (Convention on Biological Diversity). Available at https://www.cbd.int/financial/interdevinno/france-airlineticketlevy.pdf.
[28] Simon Mundy, "The search for targeted taxes to fund climate action", *Financial Times*, 18 November 2024. Available at https://www.ft.com/content/f881003c-0c29-4e84-8410-7cd525e1ec4d.
[29] IOPC, "Oil Reporting and Contributions", IOPC Funds. Available at https://iopcfunds.org/oil-reporting-and-contributions/.
[30] International Maritime Organization, *International Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS Convention)* (1996). Available at https://www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-on-Liability-and-Compensation-for-Damage-in-Connection-with-the-Carriage-of-Hazardous-and-Noxious-.aspx.
[31] United Nations Environment Programme, *Report on Ghana's Financing Needs and Capacity for Effective Environmental Governance* (2022). Available at https://resolutions.unep.org/resolutions/uploads/ghanafinancing.pdf.

liability clarity, harmonized rules and insurance-style framing rather than punitive taxation.

The Internal Levy Model – UN Secretariat

The UN coordination levy was created during the 2018 UN development system reform to address a structural financing gap: Member States wanted a stronger independent Resident Coordinator system but resisted funding it through assessed contributions. The 1 per cent levy on tightly earmarked non-core contributions emerged as a political and financial compromise, embedding coordination costs directly within the UN development funding model while avoiding increases in the regular budget.[32]

Since its operationalization, the levy has become an important but imperfect funding stream, yielding around $60 million per year (in 2023) but falling short of original projections and varying with implementation by Member States and partners.[33] The UN has found that contributors do not apply the levy consistently, and agency-administered collections can add administrative costs and reduce net funds available for programming.[34]

For UN80, the lesson is that internal levies are most effective when designed to shape funding behaviour, not just raise revenue. Future models could use tiered fees, rebates for flexible or multi-year funding or predictability incentives to shift donor behaviour toward more strategic, system-supportive financing while stabilizing core coordination functions.

Bonds and capital markets

The case studies below demonstrate how securitizing future pledges and recycling capital can help access the depth of global markets.

The Aid Securitization Model – Gavi (via the International Finance Facility for Immunisation)

In 2002, as countries struggled to meet Millennium Development Goal commitments, United Kingdom (UK) Chancellor Gordon Brown sought a way to accelerate financing. Aid flows were predictable but slow, and traditional budgeting could not generate sufficient upfront resources for global health goals. The idea was to borrow against future aid pledges to unlock immediate funding. In partnership with Goldman Sachs, the UK Treasury applied structured finance techniques – typically used in mortgage-backed securities – to international aid, leading in 2006 to the creation of the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm).[35]

IFFIm's core innovation is frontloading: transforming predictable future contributions into immediate

[32] United Nations Development Coordination Office, "Funding the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system", Technical Note (United Nations publication, 2023). Available at https://un-dco.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/RC%20system%20funding%20-%20Technical%20Note.pdf.
[33] United Nations Sustainable Development Group, "Funding of the Resident Coordinator system", 2024. Available at https://unsdg.un.org/2024-unsdg-chair-report/rc-system-funding.
[34] Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, "Remarks at the First Plenary Meeting of the Resident Coordinator System Funding Model and of the Funding Compact", New York, 27 October 2023. Available at https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/deputy-secretary-general/statements/2023-10-27/deputy-secretary-generals-remarks-first-plenary-meeting-of-the-resident-coordinator-system-funding-model-and-of-the-funding-compact-delivered.
[35] Georgia Levenson Keohane and Saadia Madsbjerg, "The Innovative Finance Revolution: Private Capital for the Public Good", *Foreign Affairs*, Special Issue (2015). Available at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/sites/default/files/rockefellerinnovativefinancespecialissue.pdf.pdf.

liquidity. Donor governments make legally binding long-term pledges (often extending 20 years or more), which serve as collateral for issuing "vaccine bonds" in capital markets. Investors purchase these bonds, providing upfront cash that is repaid over time through donor contributions. Since its launch, IFFIm has raised over $10 billion in bond issuances and transferred more than $6 billion to Gavi – around one-sixth of its budget – supporting vaccine delivery, health system strengthening and rapid responses to crises such as Ebola and COVID-19. By enabling earlier and more flexible access to funds, IFFIm has helped expand vaccine coverage and improve efficiency in procurement and delivery.[36]

For UN80, IFFIm shows that innovative finance works when financial markets can rely on predictable, multi-year donor commitments that are credible and enforceable enough to serve as collateral. This allows capital markets to provide upfront financing at scale. Frontloading can speed and expand funding for global public goods, but it depends on sustained donor reliability and strong governance to maintain investor confidence. It also requires adapting UN financial rules – particularly those governing the return of unspent funds – so that multi-year commitments can remain intact and usable as collateral rather than being reabsorbed annually, otherwise the predictability that markets depend on is undermined.

The Capital Recycling Model – Climate Investment Funds

The Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) were created in 2008 as a collaborative initiative between donor and recipient countries to pilot low-carbon and climate-resilient development through MDBs. Housed at the World Bank and implemented through regional MDBs such as the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank, CIFs comprise the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and the Strategic Climate Fund, which includes programmes on resilience, forests and renewable energy. Originally designed as a transitional mechanism ahead of the Green Climate Fund, CIFs included an explicit sunset clause tied to that transition.[37]

A major recent innovation is CIF's entry into capital markets through the CIF Capital Market Mechanism (CCMM), created in 2024 as a separate legal entity to enable bond issuance. CCMM allows CIF to raise capital from institutional investors by securitizing future donor contributions and loan reflows from CIF's existing portfolio. Because CIF itself lacks legal personality, CCMM uses a contractual pass-through structure, with the World Bank acting as Trustee for CIF and treasury manager for CCMM.[38] In 2025, CIF issued a $500 million debut green bond, which was six times oversubscribed, signaling strong investor confidence. [39]

According to the World Bank, "Innovative legal structuring was essential to overcome these challenges and adapt traditional securitization principles and technologies to suit CTF's profile."[40] CIF is a financial intermediary fund without legal personality, and its underlying loan portfolio is made up of MDB-originated

---

[36] Gavi, "International Finance Facility for Immunisation: Flexible financing provides funds when needed", 25 March 2025. Available at https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/what-iffim.
[37] Alexandra Tracy, "Climate Investment Funds and Green Climate Fund - where do they go from here?" Environmental Finance, 18 June 2021. Available at https://www.environmental-finance.com/content/analysis/climate-investment-funds-and-green-climate-fund-where-do-they-go-from-here.html.
[38] Climate Investment Funds, "CIF Capital Market Mechanism (CCMM): Frequently Asked Questions", n.d. Available at https://www.cif.org/sites/cif_enc/files/knowledge-documents/ccmm-website-faq_final.pdf.
[39] Virginia Furness, "Climate Investment Funds Secures $500 Million Debut Bond for Clean Energy Transition", *Reuters*, 14 January 2025. Available at https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/climate-investment-funds-secures-500-million-debut-bond-clean-energy-transition-2025-01-14/.
[40] Shirmila Ramasamy, "Innovative finance – How securitization tools can mobilize private capital for climate finance", 3 February 2025. Available at https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/psd/securitization-tools-can-mobilize-private-capital-for-climate-fi.

loans governed by differing policies rather than uniform market-standard terms. This diversity made traditional securitization difficult. As a result, CCMM relies on a bespoke legal architecture and a pass-through mechanism rather than transferring ownership of the underlying assets. These legal arrangements are central not only to functionality but also to how rating agencies, regulators and investors assess the structure.[41]

The key lesson is that capital recycling can transform successful funds into self-sustaining financing platforms, though tailored legal and financial structures are required. A UN80 objective could be to explore similar issuance models (including pass-through structures) for other high-performing vertical funds to expand global financing capacity.

The Capital Market Access Model – International Fund for Agricultural Development

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was established in 1977 as a specialized UN agency following the 1974 World Food Conference, with a unique funding model: 50 per cent of its budget would come from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, and 50 per cent from OECD.[42] Over time, IFAD has evolved from a donor-dependent agency into a development financier using blended finance, concessional lending and capital market instruments.

In 2022, IFAD became the first UN fund – and outside the World Bank Group, the only UN body – to tap international capital markets with sustainable bonds. Backed by an AA+ credit rating, IFAD has issued 12 bonds through private placements, surpassing $1 billion by late 2025. Purchased by pension funds, asset managers, central banks and insurers across Europe, Africa and Asia, these bonds finance projects that enhance food security, climate resilience, market access and rural livelihoods in over 90 countries.[43]

"It's not humanitarian – it's an investment opportunity," said IFAD Associate Vice President Federica Diamanti. "We see that with $1, there are at least $2 to $4 economic returns for investing in the agrifood system." Investor interest in sustainable bonds remains high: in February 2025, S&P Global projected that sustainable bond issuance would reach $1 trillion worldwide, marking the fifth consecutive year at or above that level. In 2024, sustainable bonds accounted for 11 per cent of the global bond market and are expected to grow in 2025.[44]

For UN80, the key lesson is that UN agencies can leverage strong creditworthiness and blended finance structures to mobilize large-scale, predictable private capital aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To address limitations associated with smaller, fragmented issuances, the UN could explore pooling or bundling approaches – such as coordinated, multi-agency "Mega SDG Bonds" – to reach larger issuance sizes, attract major institutional investors and reduce borrowing costs.

---

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ross B. Talbot, "The International Fund for Agricultural Development", *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 95, No. 2 (1980), pp. 261–276. Available at https://doi.org/10.2307/2149367.
[43] IFAD, "IFAD Surpasses the US$ 1 Billion Mark in Sustainable Bonds", 30 September 2025. Available at https://www.ifad.org/en/w/news/ifad-surpasses-the-us-1-billion-mark-in-sustainable-bonds.
[44] Elissa Miolene, "How IFAD issued $1 billion in sustainable bonds", *Devex*, 1 October 2025. Available at https://www.devex.com/news/how-ifad-issued-1-billion-in-sustainable-bonds-110968.

Innovative member contributions

The following case studies demonstrate how participation can be redefined through flexible contributions from diverse actors.

The Digital In-Kind Model - UNICEF

UNICEF has transformed traditional in-kind contributions through a Digital Public Goods (DPG) framework, shifting from physical donations to high-leverage digital assets such as open-source software and data models. Through the Office of Innovation and its Venture Fund, UNICEF incubates, certifies and scales digital solutions for children and communities worldwide. The agency is also a founding member of the Digital Public Goods Alliance and is the only UN entity capable of receiving and investing digital assets via its Crypto Fund.[45]

Under the DPG model, vetted digital tools are added to a global registry against rigorous standards and can be freely adopted by countries, eliminating redundant research and development and licensing costs.[46] An early example is Primero, a platform for child protection, gender-based violence monitoring and humanitarian case management. Piloted during the 2014 Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, Primero has now been deployed in over 40 countries, offering modular functionality adaptable to local contexts while maintaining global standards.[47] Other UNICEF-supported DPGs include RapidPro for large-scale health and social messaging, Oky, a reproductive health education app, and Bebbo, a digital parenting support tool. These platforms are freely accessible, interoperable and designed for local adaptation.

Primero shows that digital infrastructure can be long-term in-kind capital for the UN, provided it is invested, governed and maintained strategically. A UN Digital Commons Fund could allow Member States to co-finance, co-own and co-govern shared digital platforms – identity, data exchange, payments – turning digital contributions into durable, reusable and scalable assets. By shifting the UN's role from a purchaser of proprietary services to a steward of shared digital infrastructure, the system can replace fragmented, vendor-locked projects with a unified, self-sustaining global digital estate.

The Cities Co-Financing Model – UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat has developed a blended contribution model combining voluntary national contributions with project-linked financing from development banks, the private sector and city and regional governments.[48] Within this architecture, the Cities Investment Facility (CIF) represents a shift toward structured co-financing with subnational actors and private capital.

Established in 2020, CIF is a multi-stakeholder platform designed to unlock capital flows to sustainable urban infrastructure by moving projects from concept to financial close. It operates through three integrated pillars: a Cities Investment Portal that markets projects to investors, an advisory platform that supports

---

[45] UNICEF, *2024 State of the Digital Public Goods Ecosystem* (2024). Available at https://www.unicef.org/digitalimpact/media/826/file/DPG-Ecosystem-2024.pdf; UNICEF Office of Innovation, "The UNICEF CryptoFund", n. d. Available at https://www.unicef.org/innovation/stories/unicef-cryptofund.

[46] UNICEF, *2024 State of the Digital Public Goods Ecosystem*.

[47] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Digital Impact Alliance, *Digital Public Goods for the SDGs: Case Studies* (UNDP, 2023). Available at https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-04/Digital%20Public%20Goods%20for%20the%20SDGs%20-%20Case%20Studies.pdf.

[48] UN-Habitat, *Funding Status as of 31 August 2025: Acquisition Report to Member States* (UN-Habitat, 2025). Available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2025/10/acquisition_report_to_member_states_-_august_2025.pdf.

feasibility, SDG impact verification, bankability and Investment Vehicles that deploy blended finance and development capital to move projects toward construction financing.[49]

By combining donor feasibility funding with private investment structures, CIF addresses the biggest constraint in urban finance: the shortage of bankable SDG-aligned projects. The model allows UN-Habitat to crowd in private and subnational finance while maintaining SDG alignment and oversight. It also introduces early elements of cost-recovery through service and development fees tied to successful project preparation and financing outcomes.

For UN80, CIF points toward a structural shift: treating cities as both implementation partners and financial stakeholders. A UN Cities Membership Tier could institutionalize this relationship, enabling predictable annual city contributions and unlocking large-scale urban capital flows while retaining the primacy of national governments in governance and decision-making.

Special Drawing Rights as Hybrid Capital Model – African Development Bank and Inter-American Development Bank

Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) are an international reserve asset created by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1969 to supplement member countries' official reserves and bolster global liquidity. They are not a currency per se, but a potential claim on freely usable currencies of IMF members. Their value is anchored to a basket of five currencies (US dollar, euro, Chinese renminbi, Japanese yen and British pound).[50] Only IMF members and a limited number of "prescribed holders" – currently around 15 entities, including certain MDBs and regional central banks – are legally permitted to hold SDRs.[51]

Economists and developing countries have long proposed linking reserve creation to development, but advanced economies structured SDRs as universal, quota-based assets, leaving low-income countries with a small fraction of global allocations.[52] Recently, new channels have emerged to put SDRs to work beyond their reserve function. The IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust recycles SDRs from wealthier members into concessional financing for vulnerable States, linking them to climate and pandemic resilience.[53] Donors have also channeled SDRs through purpose-built IMF Administered Accounts, for example, to support Ukraine in 2022–23.[54]

---

[49] UN-Habitat, *Cities Investment Facility (CIF) Brochure* (UN-Habitat, 2025). Available at https://citiesinvestmentfacility.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/UN-Habitat-RPD-brochure-EN.pdf.
[50] IMF, "Special Drawing Rights (SDR decision-making)", 2025. Available at www.imf.org/en/Topics/special-drawing-righ.
[51] IMF, "Questions and Answers on Special Drawing Rights", 23 August 2021. Available at https://www.imf.org/en/About/FAQ/special-drawing-right. List of holders: European Central Bank; Bank of Central African States (BEAC); Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO); Eastern Caribbean Central Bank; Bank for International Settlements (BIS); Latin American Reserve Fund (FLAR); Arab Monetary Fund (AMF); African Development Bank (AfDB); African Development Fund (ADF); Asian Development Bank (ADB); Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); European Investment Bank (EIB); Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); International Development Association (IDA); Islamic Development Bank (IsDB); Nordic Investment Bank (NIB); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
[52] Park explains: "In this sense, the Group of Ten made a concession to the developing countries. Even if no link plan were to be built into the SDR system, inclusion of the LDCs in the system was indeed a major improvement over the limited-group approach." See Y. S. Park, "The Link Between Special Drawing Rights and Development Finance", Essays in International Finance, no. 100 (International Finance Section, Department of Economics, Princeton University, 1973), pp. 6-7. Available at https://ies.princeton.edu/pdf/E100.pdf.
[53] IMF, "Resilience and Sustainability Trust". Available at https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/Resilience-and-Sustainability-Trust.
[54] Kateryna Hanina and Drazen Rakic, *IMF Lending to Ukraine: State of Play and the Road Ahead* (European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Economic Governance and EMU Scrutiny Unit, 2024), p. 3. Available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2024/760264/IPOL_IDA%282024%29760264_EN.pdf.

A further innovation involves placing SDRs as hybrid capital on MDB balance sheets. In 2024, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) proposed that sovereign SDR holders lend SDRs to MDBs, where they would count as high-quality hybrid capital.[55] Analyses suggest one SDR could generate three to four times that value in MDB loans, expanding climate and development finance without straining credit ratings.[56] The IMF has signaled openness, though so far, no major shareholders have committed to contributing.[57]

Structural and political realities constrain SDR mobilization: allocations favour large economies, holders are limited and recycling is voluntary. To translate SDRs into meaningful finance for global public goods, the UN should focus on generating a "coalition of the willing" among SDR holders, from both developing and emerging economies, to pilot the AfDB-IDB proposal.

[55] IDB, "SDRs and Hybrid Capital", n. d. Available at https://www.iadb.org/en/news/sdrs-and-hybrid-capital.
[56] Risk Control Limited, "Analysis of SDR-Based Hybrid Capital for MDBs", n. d. Available at https://www.riskcontrollimited.com/insights/analysis-of-sdr-based-hybrid-capital-for-mdbs.
[57] IDB, "IDB and AfDB Welcome IMF Executive Board's Decision Approving Use of SDRs for Hybrid Capital Instruments", 15 May 2024. Available at https://www.iadb.org/en/news/idb-and-afdb-welcome-imf-executive-boards-decision-approving-use-sdrs-hybrid-capital-instruments. An analysis by the firm Risk Control determined that the "credit quality of SDR-based hybrid capital is extremely high", while one SDR could generate three to four times that amount in MDB loans "depending on balance sheet conservatism".

Conclusions and recommendations

The UN80 process is unfolding at a moment of institutional stress but also strategic choice. The UN must use this inflection point to modernize how it mobilizes and manages resources.

The evidence from across the UN system and wider multilateral architecture is clear: institutions that adapt financially during periods of constraint strengthen both their resilience and their relevance. The cases examined in this paper demonstrate that innovative resource mobilization already exists, inside the UN system and beyond. But it succeeds only where financial design aligns with mandate, political incentives and institutional capability.

Five recommendations emerge from this report:

1. Reform financial rules. Legacy regulations requiring the return of unspent balances – especially when contributions were never received in the first place – inhibit planning and investment and undermine institutional confidence. The UN cannot responsibly pilot new financing mechanisms, make digital investments or build leverage platforms if Member States do not guarantee predictable baseline funding. Stability is the precondition for innovation.

2. Capture value from functional monopolies. Several UN entities provide indispensable functions – technical standards, registries, software – but revenue models are uneven. A UN80 workplan could identify revenue-generating services and fees for emerging industries where the UN is providing an important service. The relationship with major technology firms deserves particular scrutiny. AI companies rely on UN data, humanitarian standards and global legitimacy while mobilizing enormous private capital. If AI represents a new industrial revolution, decisions taken in the next few years will shape global governance for generations. The UN should ensure it captures fair value where its public goods underpin private profit.

3. Institutionalize leverage and risk-pooling. Small amounts of public capital can mobilize multiples in investment, as demonstrated by the Pandemic Fund, IFFEd and Climate Investment Funds. This only works in investable sectors and where the lending institutions are of sound financial health, meaning promised public funds from donors must be forthcoming. UN80 should review the possibility of expanding guarantee-based platforms for climate, health and food security, and standardize capital recycling across successful funds. With these actions, it could explore a "UN Leverage Platform" based on the IFFEd model to crowd in MDB and private finance.

4. Advance coalition-based levies and industry contributions. Unitaid and the IOPC Funds demonstrate that rules-based revenue tied to high-volume activity is possible despite political resistance. The UN can pursue these levies, with caveats. Targeted solidarity levies can succeed when launched by coalitions of willing States, but they also require (and depend on for revenues) developed country first movers. Industry levies, meanwhile, require legal clarity and liability frameworks to operationalize the polluter pays principle.

5. Expand the contributor base beyond Member States. UNICEF in-kind frameworks and UN-Habitat city co-investment models illustrate multi-actor funding from subnational governments, industry, philanthropy and capital markets. As these actors step up, the UN can structure participation to

create predictable, multi-channel financing while maintaining system-wide governance. This could include a voluntary Cities Contribution Tier, giving contributors specialized access to UN agencies and functions while reserving voting rights for Member States.

Innovation in development finance has transformed how global challenges are funded. Innovation in institutional finance must now do the same for the UN itself.

United Nations University
Centre for Policy Research

About GGI

The Global Governance Innovation Platform helps UN Member States design new multilateral institutions and reform existing ones. Through interactive mapping and data visualization, we identify and showcase innovative governance models and mechanisms that can be adapted to address urgent global challenges and collective action problems.

About UNU-CPR

The United Nations University Centre for Policy Research is a think tank within the United Nations that carries out policy-focused research and capacity-building on issues of strategic interest and importance to the UN and its Member States. The Centre prioritizes urgent policy needs requiring innovative, practical solutions oriented toward immediate implementation and sustainability over the long term.