



# **The Future of the European Union in a Changing World**

## UNDP Strategy & Futures Team

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# KEY DRIVERS OF MULTILATERAL CHANGE

Identified from **UNDP's 2026 Landscape of Development Update**, which reviews the latest changes across 12 areas of global development – and highlights what to watch in the coming year.



## Multilateralism off the rails

International solidarity fragments

## Conflict cascades

Hot, cold, and new forms of war and violence on the rise

## From dependency to investment

National budget priorities shifting away from traditional aid

## Managed mobility

Migration – driven by many causes - is increasingly politicized

## Earth's bottom line

Planetary boundaries overshot as competition for resources intensifies

## Energy cross-currents

Renewables are growing, but not yet fast enough

## Digital sovereignty

Nations seek to control technology, infrastructure, identity, and ideas

## Debt dilemma

National debts balloon, and crowd out development

## Green money, grey areas

Sustainable finance incentives hold contradictions as well as promise

## Gender equality under fire

Gender equality is far off track and under pressure

## Uneven pathways to prosperity

Fragility and poverty are inseparable as development diverges

## Age of distrust

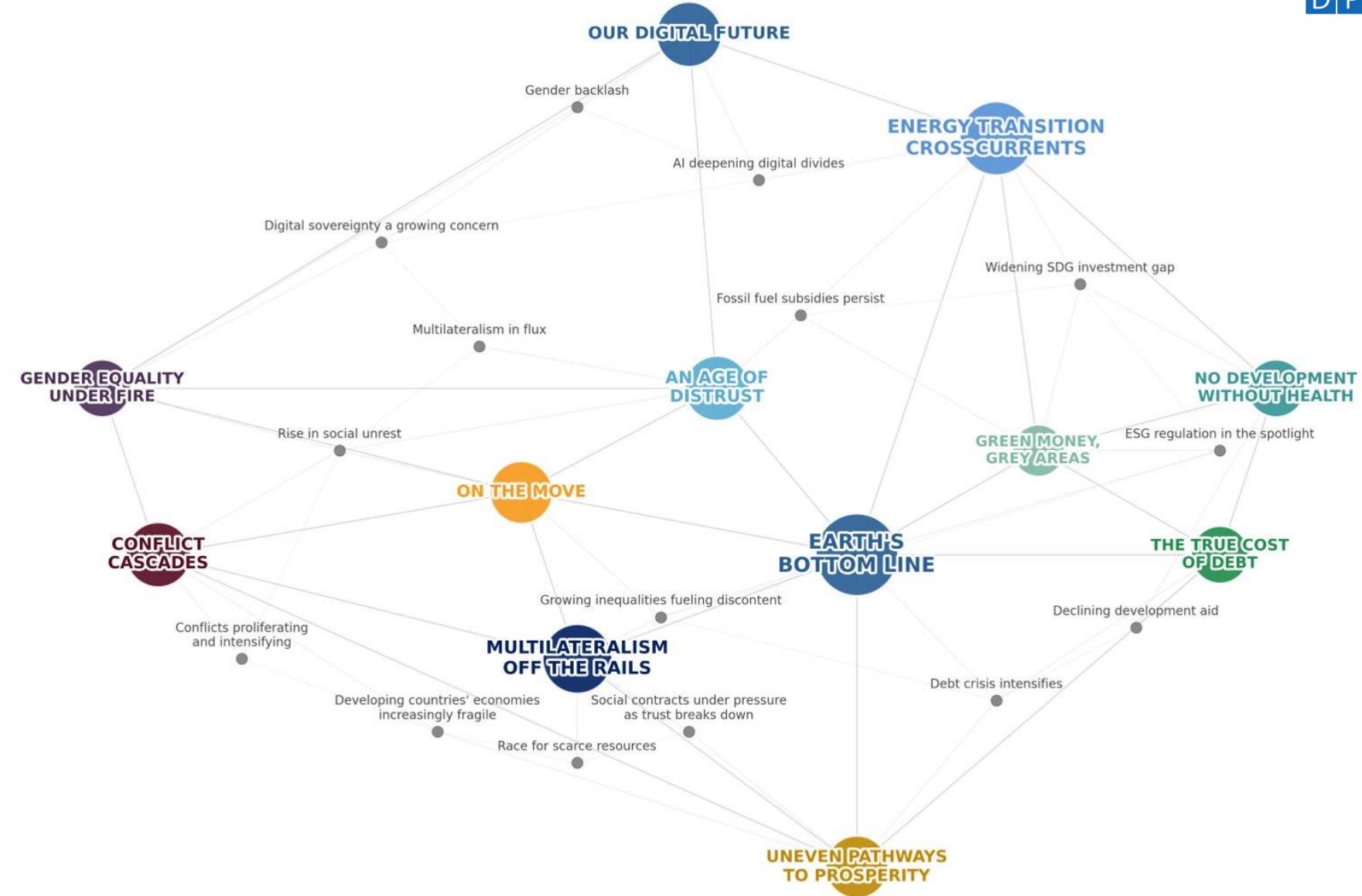
Trust is breaking down and grievance moves us inwards

# INTER-CONNECTED DRIVERS OF CHANGE

The intersecting nature of global trends – where each amplifies and transforms others – requires us to think and act systemically.

**We can no longer address challenges in isolation.**

Instead, we must pursue foresighted integrated solutions that recognize how environmental, social and technological developments compound and accelerate one another.



# THE LANDSCAPE OF DEVELOPMENT

The global development landscape, while challenging, is full of possibility

## UNEVEN PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY

Over 130 countries have now started calculating their national finance gap and drafting a national Biodiversity Finance Plan.

**Investing in nature and ecosystems could unlock \$10 trillion in business value and 395 million jobs by 2030.**

## CONFFLICT CASCADES

The global economic impact of violence reached \$20 trillion (12% of global GDP) in 2024.

**Every \$1 invested in prevention– in economic stability, and strong institutions–can save between \$26 and \$103 in possible conflict-related costs.**



## DIGITAL SOVEREIGNITY

One quarter of humanity (2.2 billion people) remains offline in 2025 – most of them women.

**Closing the gender digital divide could unlock \$1.5 trillion in lost GDP by 2030.**

## DEBT DILEMMA

3.4 billion people live in developing nations where governments spend more on debt service interest payments than on health or education.

**Yet, \$1 invested in women's health yields \$3 in economic growth.**

# UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029



UNDP works with countries to **expand people's choices for a fairer, sustainable future, as envisioned by the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.**



# LOOKING AHEAD



**Europe has been the anchor of rules-based cooperation in a world in crisis.**  
In this moment of multilateralism in flux, the EU can lead the future by:

## Investing in what works

Flexible funding that allows rapid response in complex settings

## Holding the line

On development investment when others are retreating

## Championing integrated approaches

Fragility, climate, conflict and poverty are interconnected and must be addressed together

Thank you