Words Have Consequences

How agreed or contested language in UN resolutions impact laws and social norms within individual member states

"Sexual and reproductive health" (SRH) language accepted in a nonbinding UN resolution Increases precedent for the same language to be proposed again as "accepted"

Language accepted as a binding mandate by UN agencies

UN agencies lobby for future acceptance of similar language

Resolution cited by experts, rapporteurs, treaty bodies as evidence of evolving human rights standards

Donor countries insist agencies interpret the language to include abortion, SOGI, CSE

Human rights language becomes increasingly suspect due to its distorted interpretation Treaty bodies urge nation to change its laws to conform to their newfound treaty "obligations"

UN agencies incorporate abortion/SOGI/CSE advocacy into their in-country aid projects

Government ministries change their programming language to align further with UN priorities, funding

Advocacy groups seek out sympathetic plaintiffs to bring test cases to challenge national laws

Nation is pressured to change its laws, norms, culture to accept abortion, SOGI, CSE

Activist courts within the nation cite UN resolutions, treaty body opinions in rulings on controversial issues



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