



**Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme, the United Nations
Population Fund and the United
Nations Office for Project Services**

Distr.: General
9 July 2024

Original: English

Second regular session 2024
26 to 29 August 2024, New York
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Organizational matters

**Report of the annual session 2024
(3 to 7 June 2024, New York)**

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I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session 2024 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held from 3 to 7 June 2024.
2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its annual session 2024 (DP/2024/L.2) and approved the report of the first regular session 2024 (DP/2024/8).
3. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the first regular session 2024 appeared in document DP/2024/9, which was available on the [Executive Board website](#).
4. The Executive Board agreed in decision 2024/23 on the following schedule for future sessions of the Executive Board in 2024:

Second regular session 2024: 26 August to 29 August 2024.

Statement by the President of the Board

5. The President of the Board began by expressing gratitude to colleagues of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS for carrying out their important work with dedication and courage amid unprecedented events setting back progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. In complex circumstances, the annual session of the Executive Board provided a platform to collectively chart the course forward and empower organizations to deliver more successfully and efficiently. The President highlighted the midterm reviews of the strategic plans of UNDP and UNFPA as pivotal to assess progress and challenges, improve implementation and develop future strategic plans. Dialogues on the midterm reviews of the integrated resource plans and budgets would be equally important, including to bolster the mobilization and efficient use of resources. The President welcomed the session's thematic discussion with the Executive Director of UNOPS and other panellists. Other important items included a discussion of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on the review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women (JIU/REP/2023/7).

Joint segment

II. Update on the implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system

6. The UNDP Associate Administrator, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) and the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) updated the Board on progress on General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system, including the reform checklist.

7. A group of delegations said the United Nations working together was the only way to provide an effective offer tailored to each country. The group called on United Nations entities to increase collaboration and joint programming, moving towards integrated approaches. The group urged improvement in four areas: implementing the management and accountability framework; reducing compartmentalization in programming and planning; closer information sharing with resident coordinators; and applying dual reporting more consistently.

8. A delegation highlighted the role of resident coordinators and their increasingly supportive normative functions. The delegation further emphasized the role of contributors in reducing competition for funds and close alignment between United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks and individual entity country programme documents. The delegation appreciated improved alignment with the management and accountability framework; performance evaluations prioritizing system-wide approaches; implementation of the 1 per cent coordination levy; efficiency gains; and global shared services and the common back-office initiative.

9. In response to delegations, the UNDP Associate Administrator stated that all UNDP country programme documents fully align to cooperation frameworks. Based on a centrally assigned goal on contributions to country team results, UNDP had requested all resident coordinators to provide inputs to performance appraisals of resident representatives; UNDP also provided feedback on resident coordinator appraisals. Critically low core funding, however, remained a challenge and reason for resource competition.

10. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) stated that transfers between United Nations entities were the largest source of non-core funding for UNFPA. He suggested that Member States align funding practices at the country level to reduce competition. He hoped that the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review would reinforce the United Nations normative role on human rights, including, but not limited to, gender equality and disability inclusion.

11. The UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) underlined the vital role of resident coordinators in facilitating better collaboration among entities and promoting joint programmes. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review could recognize entity mandates and capacities; consider comparative advantages; and ensure effective use of resources and experience.

12. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/8 on the update of the implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

III. Internal audit and investigation

13. The UNDP Director, Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) presented the annual report on internal audit and investigations activities in 2023 (DP/2024/10); the UNDP Director, Bureau for Management Services provided the management response to the OAI 2023 Annual Report and the Annual Report of the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee. The UNFPA Director, Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OASIS) presented the report on internal audit and investigation activities in 2023 (DP/FPA/2024/6) and the annual report of the Oversight Advisory Committee (DP/FPA/2024/6/Add.1); the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) provided the management response. The UNOPS Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG), presented the annual report on internal audit and investigations activities in 2023 (DP/OPS/2024/4); the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) provided the management response.

14. The chairs of the UNDP Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee, UNFPA Oversight Advisory Committee and UNOPS Audit Advisory Committee all presented their respective annual reports for 2023.

15. A delegation appreciated improved transparency by UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS and their accountability functions, a result of continuous efforts.

16. A delegation applauded ongoing efforts at UNFPA to work with local partners while noting substantial risks. It strongly supported plans to proactively address this concern through contract revisions, training and policy support for implementing partners, and encouraged other organizations to adopt similar measures.

17. A delegation enquired about inadequate risk management as a recurring audit issue at UNDP and requested an update on an integrated risk management module and resources to improve Quantum's performance. Delegations asked why UNOPS had not provided a management response to a review of organizational culture and highlighted shortcomings in procurement, including in emergencies. One delegation noted challenges in the UNOPS culture transformation journey but emphasized a positive outlook.

Responses

18. In response to delegations, the UNDP Director, Bureau for Management Services clarified that a risk module and dashboard were fully operational. Ongoing enhancements to support Quantum

included working with regional bureaux to identify training needs. A team of approximately 35 personnel and contractors supported Quantum and Quantum Plus for 10 agencies for an operational cost of approximately \$8 million, 20 per cent less than the \$10 million required for the previous Atlas system.

19. The UNDP Director, OAI, noted efforts towards a common approach to risk management across the organization. Of two long outstanding audit recommendations, one had been closed. The remaining recommendation was related to the recovery of a government contribution to local office costs from a Member State. Keeping the management team focused on recommendations included regular follow-up at least every six months.

20. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) underlined that UNFPA had strengthened the registration and management of implementing partners and introduced a new implementing partner agreement dashboard to tighten oversight. In 2023, UNFPA enhanced the integration of human resources and financial systems through Quantum Plus and Quantum human resources platforms.

21. The UNFPA Director, OAI, mentioned that UNFPA was tailoring standardized assessments of implementing partners to fit different contexts. He encouraged all agencies to use the UN Partners Portal.

22. The UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) stressed that UNOPS was dedicated to working with local partners and applying sustainability criteria anchored in financial regulations and rules. Working with local vendors could enhance competitiveness for United Nations tenders.

23. The UNOPS Director, IAIG said that UNOPS had set up a taskforce to strengthen emergency procurement processes. Investigation, sanctions and implementation dimensions were in place.

24. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/9 on the reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on internal audit activities and investigations in 2023, and management responses.

IV. Ethics

25. The UNDP Director, Ethics Office, presented a report on the activities of the UNDP Ethics Office in 2023 (DP/2024/11); the UNDP General Counsel, Office of Legal Services presented the management response. The UNFPA Ethics Adviser presented a report on the activities of the UNFPA Ethics Office in 2023 (DP/FPA/2024/7); the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) presented the management response. The UNOPS Director, Ethics Office presented the report on the activities of the UNOPS Ethics Office in 2023 (DP/OPS/2024/5); the UNOPS Chief of Staff presented the management response.

26. Delegations welcomed increasingly active outreach on ethics, urged strengthened whistleblower protections and enquired about assessing best practices in the United Nations. A delegation noted that greater levels of activities increased pressure on ethics office resourcing and encouraged the respective offices to engage with management and, if necessary, the Board if additional staff are required. A delegation requested details on the proactive outreach matrix and pilot ethics office risk index at UNDP, commending comprehensive reporting and swift action on accountability. The delegation asked about two matters referred for investigation at UNFPA and the scope of work on responsible personal social media use. Another delegation suggested an update on the UNOPS code of conduct and benchmarks to measure a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability.

27. In response to delegations, the UNDP Director, Ethics Office explained that the proactive outreach matrix and risk index exemplified the use of data to prioritize impactful activities. They helped to identify, for example, gaps in compliance with mandatory training. He outlined the emergence of a broader United Nations community engaged in discussions on benchmarking and best practices.

28. The UNDP General Counsel, Office of Legal Services noted that the pilot index was being reviewed and, if appropriate, would be expanded.

29. The UNFPA Ethics Adviser clarified that, while it was difficult to speak about specific cases, in the two matters mentioned, protective actions were taken.

30. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) emphasized the seriousness with which management regards the ethics function, noting the addition of a P4 post to the unit and the allocation of new resources. The social media policy applied to all personnel, regardless of contract status.

31. The UNOPS Director, Ethics Office stated that the whistleblower policy had been updated in 2022. A review of broader processes was part of a wider exercise on organizational culture. On benchmarks, UNOPS was part of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations and was looking at engagement surveys with questions on the culture of ethics.

32. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/10 on the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on activities in 2023, and management responses.

V. Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

33. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management), the UNDP Director, Bureau for Management Services and the UNOPS Director, People and Culture Group provided updates on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, in line with Executive Board decision 2023/9.

34. A group of delegations noted a report by the Secretary-General, which found that only 39 per cent of United Nations country teams have mechanisms to empower, encourage and protect staff who report cases. They asked what agencies were doing to increase this percentage, emphasizing inter-agency collaboration and joint capacity-building for implementing partners. They requested UNDP to elaborate on challenges in conducting risk assessments; UNFPA to detail additional capacity-building for implementing partners; and UNOPS to describe potential benefits from joint systems.

35. A delegation welcomed the news that UNOPS had joined the misconduct disclosure scheme, UNFPA was piloting it and UNDP was planning to join.

36. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) described increased staffing and resources for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and the first organizational strategy on the issue. UNFPA supported inter-agency tools to strengthen implementing partner capacities and co-led a module on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse in the UN Partner Portal. It had established an implementing partner review committee, rolled out the first phase of a bystander programme and increased consultations with communities to identify risks and foster accountability.

37. The UNDP Director, Bureau for Management Services said a key priority at UNDP was fostering a culture of speaking up, including through capacity-building for managers and sessions for personnel. UNDP had issued additional guidance on risk assessment and work with implementing partners, was considering joining the UN Partner Portal and would continue working with sister entities on joint initiatives, including harmonized action plans, as feasible.

38. The UNOPS Director, People and Culture Group stated that the organization had appointed a P5 head of organizational culture and engagement, responsible for leading organizational culture initiatives, including the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse function, and was discussing effective impact-based reporting.

39. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/11 on the joint update on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

VI. Field visits

40. The President of the Executive Board, as a member of the delegation, presented the official report of the field visit of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFP and UNOPS to Uruguay in 2023 (DP/FPA/OPS/2024/1). He emphasized that the visit had underscored robust partnerships between Uruguay and the United Nations, which had advanced social protection, sustainable energy and infrastructure development.

41. The Executive Board took note of the official report of the field visit of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFP and UNOPS to Uruguay (DP/FPA/OPS/2024/1).

VII. Third-party assessment on governance and oversight functions of the Executive Boards

42. The JIU inspector presented the report on the review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women (JIU/REP/2023/7).

43. A group of delegations said that any decision on the report should be preceded by in-depth, inclusive and transparent debate, with sufficient time for all Board members to carry out internal consultations, and with active, meaningful participation by developing countries in governance and oversight. It was deemed premature to establish a formal process without appropriate safeguards to comply with the General Assembly mandate.

44. A delegation viewed the review as an opportunity to develop Board support for agencies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, stressing that entity governance structures were complex and Board oversight mechanisms lacked clarity and efficiency. Many issues required significant technical expertise; the JIU recommendations could provide pathways to fulfil duties and responsibilities. A delegation emphasized that improved governance would strengthen collective ownership, responsibility and purpose.

45. Another delegation endorsed establishing a working group to address joint recommendations to all three boards. A delegation said the recommendations provided a robust starting point for collectively assessing whether the development system was meeting its objectives.

46. A delegation stressed adhering to Member States' ownership and leadership, and called for a thorough assessment of how recommendations were applied. Future discussions could provide an opportunity to improve current monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and clarify the relationship between the Board and agencies. Against a widening gap in development resources, reform efforts needed to balance institutional governance and programme implementation to accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

47. A delegation expressed concerns about the feasibility of the recommendations. Administrative measures deriving from them should be submitted for Board deliberation after careful analysis of budgetary and organizational implications and an evaluation of effectiveness.

48. In response to delegations, the JIU inspector acknowledged that implementing the report could pose challenges. It would require trust among Member States. The Secretariat could guide initial steps for Board members to consider.

49. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/12 on the assessment of how the Executive Board executes its governance and oversight functions.

UNDP segment

VIII. Midterm review of the UNDP strategic plan, 2022-2025, including the annual report of the Administrator for 2023

50. The session considered the midterm review of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, including the annual report of the Administrator for 2023 (DP/2024/12), accompanied by the report of UNDP on the recommendations of the JIU in 2023 (DP/2024/12/Add.1) and the statistical annex (DP/2024/12/Add.2).

51. In his [statement](#), the UNDP Administrator highlighted the importance of development cooperation in a world facing widespread turmoil and disruption. He noted UNDP had a central role in delivering the United Nations development cooperation offer and pointed to examples of advancements made in part as a result of development cooperation, including the plummeting share of the world population living in extreme poverty and the increased rates of global Internet connectivity. Against this background, the Administrator called for challenging a one-sided prevailing narrative of failing development cooperation by demonstrating the fundamental contribution it had made to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and resolving significant and shared challenges. The Administrator pointed to the Summit of the Future as an important moment for articulating a vision for moving forward together despite differences and stressed that UNDP and the United Nations development mission were integral to the world's ability to move in the right direction.

52. The midterm review demonstrated that UNDP was on track to meet its strategic plan targets and ambitions. UNDP was continuing to transition from individual projects to systems approaches driven by integration and innovation. It had pivoted to new offers that countries embraced to support their own development decisions. The four moonshots had lent additional momentum, often bringing the entire United Nations system together and mobilizing UNDP to link its assets with diverse partnerships towards achieving these targets. UNDP might come close to realizing some moonshot targets and making a difference to what happens next in the world.

53. The Administrator spotlighted the midterm review findings and lessons, such as how the Climate Promise had brought the United Nations system together to support more than 100 countries. This illustrated how UNDP had enhanced what it offered to countries as part of the United Nations. Record levels of delivery year after year testified to demand. Investments in the Strategic Plan enablers – strategic innovation, digital and development finance – had all delivered strong returns. Over 70 per cent of new projects had a digital component, and new offers on digital had inspired partnerships across the United Nations. The sustainable finance hub had become a source for innovations, from insurance markets to bond issuances. On development in crisis, UNDP had rethought its role. The Administrator highlighted the novel use of Special Drawing Rights for a massive local development effort in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as an example of how UNDP could enable decisions that deliver extraordinary benefits.

54. Furthermore, continued efficiency gains had freed millions of dollars for programming. Investments in staff had improved transparency, accountability, motivation and skills development. A “UNDP Listens” engagement survey had over 11,000 respondents, almost half the entire UNDP workforce; over three quarters highlighted that they were very satisfied with working at UNDP. The midterm review found that, on average, the most engaged offices outperformed on delivery.

55. The Administrator highlighted that even as UNDP continued to deliver, it had seen a 15-year low in core funding. This reality was reflected in the results of the engagement survey, which indicated that staff physical and mental health was affected by often excessive workloads. Trying to keep an organization functioning while chronically underinvesting in what makes it most effective was a grave concern. Work on innovation, digital, energy and finance had demonstrated enormous returns from very small investments, yet now the organization could only carry forward what had already been established. The Administrator described a business model review initiated

to examine how the organization creates, finances and delivers value. UNDP would put before the Board some contradictions between certain outdated rules and regulations and expectations that UNDP should operate as a modern, agile, transparent and adaptive organization. The Board could then decide how UNDP should evolve as a financially viable proposition. The Administrator concluded by thanking UNDP staff for being extraordinary people.

56. Members of the Bureau of the Board thanked the Administrator for his remarks and made the following comments: The sound approach of UNDP to development was appreciated as was its ability to adapt and coordinate with other agencies. The upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review was a chance to learn and correct as needed. They further welcomed the strategic plan as a critical opportunity to maintain ambition in policy and action and called for rapid advances in implementing the recommendations of the JIU report. While paying tribute to the progress UNDP was making, Board members stressed flexible funding to respond to diverse needs. The UNDP integrator function and the UNDP ability to attune itself to Member States had had an impact; UNDP should sustain its ambition. Progress towards the moonshot of moving 100 million people out of multidimensional poverty was commended, while more information about adjustments to further improve access to services and financial inclusion was requested. A hope for further strengthening the Accelerator Labs was expressed. Bureau members highlighted the opportunity costs of continued declines in regular resources, urged new models of financing and welcomed the business model review. They asked how UNDP planned to deepen efforts to address systemic risks and root causes of vulnerability and requested more information on institutionalizing the portfolio approach.

57. A group of delegations commended significant progress on life-saving interventions for vulnerable people in crisis or post-crisis settings that foster socioeconomic inclusion and social cohesion. Successes underscored the effectiveness of the integrated approach. The group lauded the UNDP commitment to rapid digitalization for inclusive development and urged increased support for countries lagging on digital public goods and infrastructure. UNDP could further contribute to poverty reduction by creating sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities.

58. A group of delegations appreciated the integrated programming approach, steadfast commitment to digital transformation, efforts to expand energy access and initiatives to mobilize development finance. UNDP was positioned to drive structural economic transformation; enhance productive capacities; leverage science, technology and innovation; build resilience against shocks and strengthen means of implementation. The group expressed concerns regarding the shortage of financing, especially major cuts to regular resources.

59. A group of delegations looked to strategic support in implementing the outcomes of the Summit of the Future, with UNDP leveraging its integrator function within the United Nations. The group commended commitments to innovative financing solutions, climate financing, digitization and advancing development in crisis settings. Poverty eradication efforts were highly needed and must remain a core focus. The group stressed predictable, available regular resources for UNDP to fulfil its mandate in an efficient, independent manner. In looking towards the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the group emphasized shifting from process-oriented reforms to impact-driven acceleration of Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

60. Delegations endorsed the evolution of UNDP from a project aid provider to a strategic partner that co-creates integrated development solutions as indispensable to addressing multidimensional challenges. Integrated programming was both sustainable and impactful. Leveraging partnerships and cross-linking issues achieved better results and used resources more effectively. Delegations expressed gratitude for UNDP leadership in strengthening national and regional development efforts and said that it should continue to support building consensus for development cooperation as the basis for efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. One delegation indicated that the case for strengthening effective multilateralism had never been stronger.

61. Delegations highlighted how UNDP had surpassed goals to support marginalized communities and made gains on human rights and gender equality. They welcomed efforts to drive forward South-South cooperation and suggested more could be done on science and innovation. They

applauded UNDP support for the integrated national financing frameworks and the link to climate action, and welcomed a forthcoming report on integrating climate and development as the basis for action-oriented nationally determined contributions.

62. Delegations noted remaining challenges, such as effectively integrating gender perspectives into all programmes, addressing gender disparities both within the organization and in crisis contexts, and addressing intersecting forms of discrimination. Key areas to support included gender-responsive social protection; structural transformation, including via the green economy; stronger engagement on women's inclusion in labour markets; and enhanced assistance in addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Delegations requested further clarity on efforts to bridge the climate-security divide and on integrated programming in the digitalization portfolio. They queried if support for digitalization included issues around equality and human rights. They welcomed efforts to generate investment-ready project pipelines and de-risking tools, and emphasized that increased private-sector involvement could deliver needed financing.

63. Delegations suggested reflecting both achievements and limitations in the midterm review to allow board members to better understand challenges, risks and areas for improvement. Additionally, delegations appreciated robust risk management frameworks and called for further reflection on risks beyond the quality of funding. Delegations highlighted resilience to financial constraints and donor flexibility in filling gaps while maximizing the impact of resources. They commended the business model review to introduce greater certainty in UNDP work.

64. Delegations lauded UNDP for making remarkable efforts to reduce administrative costs and improve management effectiveness. They appreciated transparency in responding to the recent data breach and allegations of mismanagement related to the Iraq Funding Facility for Stabilization, asking for more information on how UNDP assessed and learned from these matters, and on prevention and risk mitigation measures. Delegations stressed the critical contribution of the Executive Boards to the success of the United Nations development system through implementing the JIU report recommendations.

65. In response to delegations, the Administrator noted the importance UNDP placed on integrating foresight in its operations. He reaffirmed commitment to engaging with the Board on the JIU recommendations, agreed with a suggested joint briefing with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on election work, and further elaborated on the business model review. The Administrator referred to the enormous potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area; welcomed work on the programme of action for the landlocked developing countries; and reiterated strong commitment to the small island developing States.

66. The Administrator appreciated the repeated acknowledgement that UNDP responded closely to national development priorities, adding that 25 per cent of revenue now came from programme countries. The UNDP vision today was to continue to strengthen its value as a strategic development partner, thereby enhancing its relevance across diverse contexts. He described a new platform aimed at leveraging fiscal policies for gender equality and increasing demand for the Gender Seal programme. In its digital initiatives, UNDP focused on fundamental rights and the protection of data and privacy. On funding, it participated strongly in joint funds and emphasized thematic models. On the humanitarian-development nexus, a forthcoming strategy for internally displaced people would focus on deployment of country-level United Nations capacities.

67. The Administrator described diversified engagements with the private sector that were growing exponentially. Most focused on expanding space for private sector capital investment and partnerships, not on creating alternative funding for UNDP. He said UNDP was viewed by many as a credible partner in verifying bonds, developing digital public infrastructure and de-risking renewable energy infrastructure investments. Being an integral part of programme countries' ability to attract private sector investments should be a yardstick.

68. The Administrator detailed a robust risk management system. Regarding collaboration with other United Nations organizations, he emphasized extensive networking across countries and globally, and the full alignment of all UNDP country programmes with United Nations sustainable

development cooperation frameworks. The Administrator acknowledged challenges with regular resources despite an extensive country presence. UNDP was committed to dispelling perceptions that investing a dollar in its initiatives was less efficient than elsewhere, and pledged to present compelling arguments and scenarios. He stressed that chronically underinvesting in each other would not address current development challenges and advocated for a new consensus. Finally, he noted a commitment to continue engagement in many aspects of the Summit of the Future, including in strengthening development cooperation.

69. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/13 on the midterm review of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, including the annual report of the Administrator for 2023.

IX. Gender equality at UNDP

70. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the item, and the UNDP Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support presented the annual report on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2022-2025 (DP/2024/15).

71. A Vice-President of the Bureau congratulated UNDP on its successful work on gender equality. As a cross-cutting development organization, UNDP could address many issues fundamental to progress, from energy to livelihoods to the environment. The Vice-President stressed the need for the United Nations to coordinate efforts on gender equality, including through the resident coordinators, given the active engagement of numerous agencies on this issue.

72. A group of delegations welcomed the increased collaboration of UNDP with civil society and enhanced support for women's human rights defenders. It stressed the importance of coordination and joint programming. The group appreciated emphasis on the care economy and support for structural reforms, including through work on fiscal policy. The group asked about support for gender equality in elections, women's economic empowerment through better paid jobs and more women in decision-making in UNDP offices in crisis settings.

73. A group of delegations expressed interest in a more substantive update on how UNDP was building equitable partnerships with women's rights organizations to reach those most in need. They requested UNDP to prioritize interventions to transform norms, values and power structures. Referring to recent survey results showing that women staff members rated workplace equality and empowerment slightly lower than men, the group asked what UNDP was doing to cultivate an inclusive, equal organizational culture.

74. Delegations called on UNDP to include the promotion of LGBTQI+ rights in its gender equality strategy; address the gender digital divide and technology-facilitated gender-based violence; and advance gender equality within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. In looking at development more holistically and innovatively, they supported integrating gender equality as a core element of portfolios and programmes. Continuous institutional learning should involve exchanges with sister agencies.

75. In response to delegations, the UNDP Associate Administrator noted that senior management routinely reviewed gender equality from internal and programmatic perspectives. There was ongoing work with staff to apply standards of equity, inclusion and diversity. UNDP had reached gender parity across its staff with more women than men at the senior management level. He described close collaboration with other agencies on gender equality with clear divisions of labour. On LGBTQI+ issues, he noted robust internal support for staff and external programmes to leave no one behind. Despite specific budget allocations for the gender equality strategy, declining regular resources had an impact; a thematic funding window on gender remained significantly underresourced.

76. The UNDP Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support highlighted that every electoral assistance programme had a gender component. On collaboration with other agencies, he described recent coordination with UN Women on addressing backlash against gender equality. Renewed work with civil society remained critical. UNDP in 22 countries helped advance women's roles in

reconciliation and peacebuilding mechanisms. It supported countries to integrate measurable gender equality goals into national digital strategies and mitigate online risks.

77. The UNDP Director, Gender Equality stated that gender discriminatory norms were widespread and required a long-term focus, investment and intentional integration in every intervention. UNDP was investing in analytical skills to identify and define norms across different areas of work. Care economy work was key to address power imbalances and change norms. Leadership courses now required participants to examine their biases, driving internal and external change. These efforts were extended to partners, including ministries to drive a new generation of policies integrating social norms change. She described innovative work with men and boys, focusing on transformative approaches to masculinities, and said that around 500 UNDP male staff were actively driving organizational change for gender equality.

78. The Executive Board took note of the annual report on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2022-2025 (DP/2024/15).

X. UNDP country programmes and related matters

79. The UNDP Associate Administrator presented the first one-year extension of the country programmes for Liberia, the 18-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, the two-year extension of the country programme for the Republic of the Congo and the second six-month extension of the country programme for Rwanda (DP/2024/21).

80. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extension of the country programmes for Liberia, and approved the 18-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, the two-year extension of the country programme for the Republic of the Congo, and the second six-month extension of the country programme for Rwanda, in accordance with its decision 2014/7.

XI. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

81. The UNDP Chief Financial Officer presented the midterm review of the UNDP integrated resources plan and the integrated budget, 2022-2025 (DP/2024/13), prepared in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/22. He welcomed the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the midterm review of the UNDP integrated resources plan and the integrated budget, 2022-2025 (DP/2024/14), and took note of its recommendations.

82. A delegation said the ACABQ report was published less than 48 hours before the Board meeting, leaving delegations without time to review it, and requested a joint briefing with the ACABQ within 30 days.

83. A delegation appreciated an insightful midterm review, a balanced budget for the seventh consecutive year, the increase in programme expenditure and the unqualified audit opinion. Avenues for improved reporting included more transparency on interest earned on the financial resources of developing countries transferred to UNDP, with a suggestion that these countries determine the use of such resources. The delegation reiterated concerns over declining regular resources, proposing an in-depth discussion on impact. Another delegation encouraged voluntary contributions to regular resources and continued dialogues with prospective donors.

84. In response to delegations, the UNDP Chief Financial Officer said that the organization had received the ACABQ report late and expressed readiness to discuss it with the Board. He took note of the suggestion for treatment of interest earned, which was currently as mandated by Executive Board decision 2011/33 and in accordance with UNDP financial regulations and rules. He thanked Board members for support on regular resources.

85. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/14 on the midterm review of the UNDP integrated resources plan and the integrated budget, 2022-2025.

XII. Evaluation

86. The UNDP Director, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) introduced the annual report on evaluation for 2023 (DP/2023/16), the evaluation of UNDP support to private sector development and structural transformation (DP/2023/17) and the evaluation of UNDP support to ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation (DP/2023/19). The UNDP Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, provided management commentaries to the annual report on evaluation for 2023, the management response to the evaluation of UNDP support to private sector development and structural transformation (DP/2023/18), and the management response to the evaluation of UNDP support to ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation (DP/2023/20).

Annual report on evaluation, 2023

87. A delegation encouraged UNDP to continue strengthening decentralized evaluations, stating that a culture of learning was key to improvement. It suggested more inclusivity in developing and implementing decentralized evaluations, and welcomed the integration of evaluations into decision-making and planning.

Evaluation of support to private sector development and structural transformation

88. A delegation noted UNDP improvements in private sector programming, including through organizational learning, and appreciated programme adaptability to different contexts. The delegation encouraged UNDP to leverage local networks and localization portfolios to support small businesses; use broader programming to enable private sector engagement; and coordinate efforts to empower women in the private sector.

89. A delegation stressed that private sector engagement should not come at the expense of regular resource contributions from Member States but was an important complement to the trillions needed by developing countries to implement the 2030 Agenda. The delegation stressed diverse private sector challenges in developing countries and asked how UNDP tailored its support. Another delegation asked about integrating market-based approaches and better facilitating private-sector partnerships.

90. In response to delegations, the UNDP Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support agreed on differentiating among diverse contexts. The business model review was examining matters further, including to address internal regulations and rules. Since most economic activity occurred in the private sector, its intersection with government was extremely important. UNDP could play a role at that intersection and support different categories of private sector actors.

Evaluation of support to ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation

91. A delegation expressed support for work on nature conservation and enhanced ecosystems and biodiversity, appreciating UNDP technical expertise and capacity for innovation. The delegation acknowledged support to local governments and the impact of the small grants programme in building local institutional capacity to address environmental issues. Mobilization of intersectoral support and finance for achieving biodiversity and conservation objectives at scale was urged. Another delegation asked about support for national biodiversity plans.

92. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/15 on UNDP evaluation.

XIII. United Nations Capital Development Fund

93. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the item, and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) Executive Secretary presented the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2023 (DP/2024/22).

94. A group of delegations welcomed a commitment to initiate reforms and noted that stable leadership was essential for regaining trust. It encouraged UNCDF and UNDP leadership to

proactively brief the Board on relevant investigations. The group commended UNCDF for ongoing implementation of audit recommendations, and welcomed measures to improve risk management and clarify the relationship with UNDP. Concern was expressed about how UNCDF staff perceived audit findings, with a request to improve communication. The group encouraged UNCDF to invest in a meaningful corporate scorecard consistent with results-based management and noted concern about the ongoing crisis in regular resources. A more structured reflection on current institutional challenges and concrete actions to address them would be welcome. The group continued to value UNCDF for innovative approaches to bridging the financing gap.

95. A group of delegations said that worsening financial gaps and narrowing fiscal space made UNCDF capital assistance critical for the least developed countries. The group commended important contributions to inclusive, sustainable economic transformation and welcomed reforms while noting disappointment in declining regular resources.

96. A delegation said that UNCDF had a unique capability to attract private sector finance, enhance technical support to the least developed countries, broker partnerships with development finance institutions and the private sector, and work with countries traditionally overlooked in capital markets. Another delegation appreciated the fund's capacity to facilitate smaller transactions and provide patient, risk-tolerant capital.

97. In response to delegations, the UNDP Associate Administrator clarified that the disciplinary processes for previous UNCDF staff had concluded; the Bureau had been briefed.

98. The UNCDF Executive Secretary emphasized engaging staff in shaping future directions and immediate action to implement audit recommendations. He underlined how reforms should be situated within broader discussions on the international financial institutions and geared towards positioning UNCDF as an industry lead on risk management, fiduciary oversight, agility and the deployment of financial instruments in high-risk settings. He looked forward to strengthening partnerships with sister United Nations organizations, starting with UNDP to build on an already sound platform.

99. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/16 on the midterm review of the UNCDF strategic framework, 2022-2025, and the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2023.

XIV. United Nations Volunteers

100. The UNDP Associate Administrator and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Executive Coordinator presented the UNV report of the Administrator (DP/2024/23).

101. A group of delegations commended UNV for its ability to provide support in emergency and crisis settings. They emphasized the duty of care and ensuring volunteers' safety, and lauded commitment to gender parity and equal representation. On disability inclusion, it recognized UNV as a source of diversity for the United Nations and commended efforts to leave no one behind.

102. A group of delegations recognized the proclamation of 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, an important opportunity to acknowledge volunteers as a global force for change.

103. Several delegations said that 2023 marked the seventh consecutive record year for UNV. They recognized meeting all strategic framework indicators, significant efficiency gains and successful digital transformation. They pointed to how the midterm review of the strategic framework 2022-2025 reaffirmed UNV as a common service to the United Nations.

104. Delegations welcomed simplified work processes that reduced deployment times; contributions to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; and the strategic use of the Special Voluntary Fund to conduct research promoting volunteerism and to drive innovation. They expressed eagerness to build on strong partnerships in commemorating the International Year and urged particular attention to volunteers with disabilities.

105. The UNV Executive Coordinator appreciated continued confidence in UNV, which allowed

it to experiment and innovate. He welcomed recognition of the Special Voluntary Fund, given its crucial catalytic role. The duty of care for volunteers remained a paramount priority. UNV was working continuously to make disability inclusion a new normal in the workplace. He spotlighted a new initiative promoting volunteerism for intergenerational dialogues where senior and youth volunteers would work hand-in-hand to address development needs.

106. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/17 on the United Nations Volunteers programme: annual report of the Administrator.

UNFPA segment

XV. Annual report of the Executive Director

107. The Board considered the integrated midterm review and progress report on the implementation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/FPA/2024/4 [Part I]), the statistical and financial review, 2023 (DP/FPA/2024/4 [Part I, Add.1]) and the report on the recommendations of the JIU in 2023 (DP/FPA/2024/4 [Part II]).

108. In her opening remarks ([available on the UNFPA website](#)), the UNFPA Executive Director remarked that the Programme of Action of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was not an outdated agenda but an unfulfilled one. At a moment of diverse demographic trends, complicated by climate displacements and other challenges, it was imperative to heed the ICPD call to focus on people and their dignity and human rights.

109. The thirtieth anniversary of the ICPD marked a continuum of significant achievements: Fewer women died giving birth; modern contraception was more widely available. Gains in women's rights and bodily autonomy sprang from investments in sexual and reproductive health and rights. Investment, collective action and political will continued to make a big difference in fulfilling the ICPD agenda.

110. In the first two years of its strategic plan, UNFPA helped avert more than 31 million unintended pregnancies and 9.5 million unsafe abortions. It assisted 2.4 million safe deliveries in humanitarian-affected countries and trained approximately 200,000 midwives. While UNFPA had achieved strategic plan outputs, global progress towards the plan's three transformative results had ground to a halt. Since 2016, annual reductions in maternal deaths had flatlined. Progress in meeting the need for family planning had stalled. The situation, however, would have been even worse without UNFPA.

111. Conflict, the climate crisis and the lingering effects of the pandemic had caused social and economic disruptions, compounded by the increasing pushback against agreed reproductive rights and worsening inequalities. Women and young people with disabilities, migrants, people living with HIV, and LGBTQI+ and gender-diverse people continued to experience discrimination and exclusion in seeking sexual and reproductive health care. The Executive Director emphasized that no one was unreachable. If someone seemed hard to reach it meant people had not tried hard enough. Only systems that worked for those on the margins would work for everyone.

112. UNFPA continued to strengthen capacity to deliver in humanitarian settings. In 2023, it reached 14.4 million people with sexual and reproductive health services and nearly 6 million with gender-based violence prevention, risk mitigation and response services. Emergency preparedness, anticipatory action and pre-positioned supplies were increasingly integrated into regular operations to ensure efficient humanitarian responses.

113. UNFPA was committed to upholding the highest standards of accountability and transparency. It had reinforced its oversight function and continued to prioritize a strong evaluation function. The Executive Director described the relocation of some headquarters functions to Nairobi, underlining high rates of staff placement and efforts to ensure business continuity. The move was expected to strengthen support for country and regional offices, including in their

normative role. A robust team would remain in New York to focus on global normative work.

114. The Executive Director noted with concern a decline in regular resources even as non-regular resources remained stable. However, there was funding growth from the international financial institutions and the private sector and through pooled funds, with the last demonstrating commitment to United Nations coordination. UNFPA continued to work hard on donor visibility, with a 92 per cent increase in donor mentions in social media posts in 2023. She stressed that much more was needed to reach the three zeros, pointing to the midterm review and UNFPA evaluations as offering ample evidence to guide accelerated efforts.

115. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean presented UNFPA work in the region. With partners, UNFPA was leveraging its normative and technical role to bridge the region's equity gap. It was using data and innovation to accelerate progress for women and girls left behind, including in humanitarian contexts. She pointed to several countries that were successful on the three transformative results; they could serve as testing grounds for policy innovation.

116. Members of the Bureau thanked the Executive Director for her remarks. A Vice-President of the Bureau underlined UNFPA trust and credibility, critical in mobilizing donor support. Results were not just about figures: There were human beings and lives behind them. UNFPA changed lives around the world, as demonstrated in its midterm review, while maintaining high standards of accountability. A second Vice-President lauded strong results in supporting adolescents and young people and encouraged UNFPA to extend existing successful approaches to improve maternal and newborn health. He requested careful consideration of risks and mitigation in the move to Nairobi. A Bureau member asked about how the lack of data was impacting programmes and how UNFPA could work with programme countries on this issue.

117. A group of countries commended UNFPA for its tireless efforts to reach populations left furthest behind. It noted significant efforts still needed to guarantee universal access to comprehensive reproductive health services and integrate population concerns into development strategies. This required strengthening partnerships with donors and recipient governments, engaging the private sector, expanding the donor base and exploring innovative financing mechanisms. Improved resource allocations focused on high-impact areas and reaching those most in need were crucial. Continuously improving accountability mechanisms would help hold all stakeholders responsible for their roles and contributions.

118. A group of countries appreciated UNFPA investment in improved risk management. It called for continued implementation of United Nations reform, including through joint programmes and evaluations. It commended the organization's pivotal role in providing life-saving support in humanitarian crises. Welcoming the six key priorities identified in the midterm review, it also underlined the importance of prioritizing the organization's normative role.

119. Delegations said that with progress still needed on the 2030 Agenda and the ICPD, more must be done to address the root causes of structural inequalities, including discriminatory social and gender norms, systemic health deficiencies, and shortages in access to education and economic autonomy for women and girls. They supported the call in the midterm review for innovative strategies to alter discriminatory social and gender norms and urged UNFPA to deploy stronger evidence for advocacy and policy dialogues. Bolstering thought leadership and tracking progress with clear metrics were other priorities. A delegation remarked that it was essential to seek the advice of Member States in designing and implementing public policies from an integrated, intersectional perspective.

120. Delegations underlined the importance of developing analytical capacities and new narratives of demographic resilience; looked forward to hearing more about the UNFPA foresight strategy; called for work with other United Nations entities to create spaces where migration could be safe, orderly and regular; and appreciated a growing emphasis on innovation, including to ensure that services and support reach those left furthest behind.

121. Delegations recognized advances in bringing together resilience, prevention, preparedness

and early action in programming. Noting concerns about ongoing crises, they encouraged UNFPA to continue strengthening country office capacities to operate in emergency situations. The intersection between countries most affected by climate change and those where women and girls were at greatest risk of maternal mortality, intimate partner violence and child marriage and pregnancy highlighted the importance of including sexual and reproductive health needs in emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction plans.

122. Delegations committed to supporting UNFPA in combating gender-based violence, including by amplifying local and national capacities through women-led organizations. They encouraged UNFPA to look to young people to drive the ICPD agenda forward. They appreciated the quantification of the impact of the procurement of reproductive health supplies on both preventable maternal deaths and unintended pregnancies and assessed returns on investments in family planning.

123. A delegation noted the success of the Commission on Population and Development as demonstrating renewed momentum behind the ICPD Programme of Action. It urged UNFPA to be vocal and strategic in stepping up to defend universal human rights and welcomed efforts to respond to megatrends such as climate change, demographic transition and technological progress, while maintaining focus on the core mandate and comparative advantages.

124. A delegation welcomed the move to Nairobi as a decentralized global presence ensured proximity to where impact was most needed. Another delegation looked forward to visible improvements in efficiency and effectiveness that would provide savings that could be reallocated to substantive activities. Delegations encouraged UNFPA to integrate the findings of the midterm review into the headquarters optimization process. Enhanced dialogue with all stakeholders could explore more funding channels and balance development and humanitarian resources.

125. One delegation welcomed data on common and complementary indicators on interagency coherence and cooperation, and suggested that narrative reporting on results from joint engagements should feature in future annual reports.

126. In response to delegations, the UNFPA Executive Director said that the idea behind the move to Nairobi was to bring the work closer to the ground, partly because of Africa's needs but also due to the geographic time proximity with other parts of the world. She appreciated the support of Board Members in helping UNFPA optimize its presence and confirmed commitment to the UNFPA normative role.

127. She expressed full commitment to United Nations development system reform and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and stated that the next annual report would include a joined-up narrative on the achievements of common strategic plan indicators.

128. The Executive Director agreed that the data proposition needed strengthening and that work had already accelerated on this, with a strong South-South component. There was renewed emphasis, including through censuses, on helping governments ask questions that gave the answers they needed. UNFPA could shed light on what happened to women and girls, especially in vulnerable circumstances.

129. UNFPA would be speaking more frequently about men's responsibilities and the benefits they received, for instance, in taking parental leave. Work with boys from very early ages could enlist them as allies of girls in rejecting online hate speech. UNFPA would also continue to improve even on the 40 per cent of funds deployed through local women's groups and youth-led groups, always paying attention to accountability.

130. The Executive Director concluded by saying it was heartening to hear support and understanding and that while operating in an imperfect world, UNFPA would keep its ambition and aim high. Fulfilling the promises made at the ICPD should not take another 30 years.

131. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) described how UNFPA programming advanced the three transformative results across the humanitarian, development and peace continuum. It balanced meeting immediate life-saving needs with resilience and capacity-building.

132. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) noted, on United Nations reform, that UNFPA achieved slightly over \$14 million in operational efficiencies in 2023, based on bilateral and system-wide initiatives.

133. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/18 on the annual report of the Executive Director.

XVI. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

134. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) presented the midterm review of the UNFPA integrated budget, 2022-2025 (DP/FPA/2024/3) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the midterm review of the UNFPA integrated budget 2022-2025 (DP/FPA/2024/8).

135. A delegation supported long-term cost-savings efforts, including headquarters optimization, but expressed concern that unintended consequences could impact the net benefit. It encouraged UNFPA to be fully transparent about the process.

136. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) said that UNFPA remained committed to full transparency. It would continue to brief Member States and provide information on its webpage.

137. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/19 on the midterm review of the UNFPA integrated budget, 2022-2025.

XVII. Evaluation

138. The UNFPA Director, Independent Evaluation Office, introduced the annual report on the UNFPA evaluation function, 2023: report of the Director, Evaluation Office (DP/FPA/2024/5) and the formative evaluation of the organizational resilience of UNFPA in light of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic (DP/FPA/2024/CRP.1). The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) presented the management commentaries on the annual report on the UNFPA evaluation function (DP/FPA/2024/CRP.5) and the management response to the evaluation on the organizational resilience of UNFPA in light of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic (DP/FPA/2024/CRP.1).

139. On the annual report and management responses, a group of countries indicated the excellent performance of the Independent Evaluation Office in 2023 but underlined further improvements needed in the decentralized evaluation system, including for humanitarian evaluations. It appreciated the enhanced evaluation quality assurance system, and the creation of a support team for technical assistance and capacity development for monitoring and evaluation staff. It asked if measures were sufficient given the understaffing of specialists in some regions, and if further measures were foreseen to mitigate capacity limitations. It encouraged UNFPA to adhere to the recalculated evaluation function funding target of 1 per cent to 1.6 per cent of overall programme expenditure.

140. In response to delegations, the UNFPA Director, Independent Evaluation Office noted a strategy to strengthen decentralized evaluation that involved leveraging existing resources, such as through closer links between decentralized and humanitarian evaluation teams, and regular knowledge exchanges. It also entailed mobilizing new resources, including through a new position dedicated to humanitarian evaluation. He explained that the 2024 Evaluation Policy requested new agreements above \$5 million to include, on a voluntary basis, a budget line for evaluation. When contributions from all donor agreements reached an economy of scale, UNFPA would consider establishing an evaluation pooled fund. Given an expected increase in evaluations, UNFPA was taking a phased approach to ensure technical assistance and quality control, focused on evaluations of projects above \$5 million from 2024 to 2025 and covering all evaluations from 2026. A tracking

system would strengthen the evaluation function.

141. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) noted that evaluation expenditure was at 2.5 per cent of regular resource expenditure. She stressed that humanitarian and decentralized evaluations were important as UNFPA sought to get as close to the field as possible.

142. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/20 on UNFPA evaluation.

XVIII. UNFPA country programmes and related matters

143. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the extension of the country programme for Rwanda and the country programme extension for the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/2024/9). In accordance with its decision 2014/7, the Executive Board approved the extension of the country programme for Rwanda and took note of the country programme extension for the Syrian Arab Republic.

UNOPS segment

XIX. Statement by the UNOPS Executive Director and thematic interactive dialogue

144. The segment considered the report on the implementation of the restated UNOPS Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/OPS/2024/6); the comprehensive response plan in response to the recommendations of the two independent third-party reviews of UNOPS (DP/OPS/2024/7) and the terms of reference for the external third-party review of the comprehensive response plan (DP/OPS/2024/8).

145. In his opening address ([available on the UNOPS website](#)), the UNOPS Executive Director highlighted the organization's focus on practical solutions, such as integrated water supply networks with solar-powered systems in the Maldives and fuel delivery to support humanitarian efforts in Gaza. He updated the Board on reforms and the comprehensive response plan, emphasizing rebuilding trust. Of 43 recommendations, UNOPS had completed 36. Of four outstanding recommendations, three would be completed in 2024; one would continue until 2027.

146. UNOPS had increased resources for oversight functions, internal controls, risk management and organizational culture. It had integrated risk management into decision-making; created a dedicated risk and compliance group; ensured the independence and capacity of control functions; and completed a review of whistleblowing processes. Efforts continued to reshape organizational culture, enhance outcome reporting and revise financial regulations and rules. UNOPS remained committed to net zero revenue and was continuing with the settlement of excess reserves. Integration of environmental sustainability across its work included ambitious internal targets and an extended perspective across the supply chain.

147. The Executive Director reported that UNOPS had declined over 30 engagement opportunities in 2023, reaffirming commitment to its mandate. He concluded that constraints on development, including under the Sustainable Development Goals, were not only related to policy and finance but also to implementation capacity. UNOPS played a unique role in addressing the implementation gap.

148. The UNOPS Director, People and Culture Group provided an update on the organizational culture workplan, noting five areas for development highlighted by the independent review. A Programme Board for Reshaping Organizational Culture had been established to support and advise on culture initiatives and review progress. Other features included engaging with a third party to conduct stakeholder engagement for further defining desired culture and behaviours, and the creation of a network of culture ambassadors.

149. A Vice-President of the Bureau commended UNOPS for progress but raised concerns on the lack of perceived accountability for key actors in the crisis two years ago. He stressed a clear division of labour between UNOPS as a non-programmatic organization and entities with clearly defined programmatic mandates, including on health. A Bureau member welcomed progress and asked how UNOPS was implementing its capacity development mandate.

150. A group of delegations underlined the sustainability of achievements and continued progress to rebuild, reform and renew UNOPS, which required longer-term dedication and commitment. It expected frequent updates on cultural reform and stood ready to support efforts.

151. A group of delegations said that the full, final and transparent accountability of former senior officials was essential, yet a perception remained that they had evaded accountability by resigning.

152. A group of delegations recognized the crucial role of UNOPS in capacity-building, project implementation and creative resource mobilization. Corrective measures should not discourage it from its mandate. The group called for UNOPS to support countries' development priorities and commended the risk and compliance group and organizational culture transformation plan.

153. Delegations supported a second interim review in early 2025 to sustain improvements and stressed implementing the updated whistleblower policy and determining the response to the missing \$61 million from the Sustainable Investments in Infrastructure and Innovation project (S3i). A delegation expressed concern about a large-scale medical supplies programme; called for more details on plans to expand UNOPS offices; and urged correcting geographical imbalances in staffing. A delegation appreciated UNOPS support for the fair participation of developing countries in United Nations procurement.

154. In response to delegations, the UNOPS Executive Director stressed that every effort was being made to increase collaboration with other United Nations organizations on project implementation. As an example of capacity support, he referred to how UNOPS might provide both supplies and technical assistance to strengthen national procurement systems. He stressed diversity in the UNOPS management team and said the whistleblowing process was on track. Noting a closed session on accountability issues, he called for discretion until the process was completed. He welcomed delegations' statements as the most positive in two years.

Interactive thematic dialogue on sustainable infrastructure

155. The UNOPS Executive Director opened the interactive dialogue, highlighting climate resilience in infrastructure and addressing the infrastructure implementation gap. A major challenge was better planning and implementation, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries. UNOPS was assisting countries in defining sustainable, resilient infrastructure, including through assessment tools.

156. The UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) shared experiences, such as in Zimbabwe, where UNOPS had helped communities to recover from shocks and develop resilient infrastructure. The aim should be to develop not only resilient infrastructure but also infrastructure for resilience.

157. The Permanent Representative of Cabo Verde underscored the role of infrastructure in economic growth and saving lives but noted significant capacity constraints due to limited fiscal space. A systems approach to physical and social infrastructure should optimize investments and improve livelihoods and could draw on UNOPS for master planning. Small island developing States would continue to call for financing for multidimensionally vulnerable countries.

158. The United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs said that infrastructure designed solely to deliver services was not sufficient; it had to be resilient to climate change. A critical element was infrastructure asset management. Public finance from multilateral development banks and national development banks could provide guarantees and attract public and private finance on the massive scale required.

159. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction described both a significant need for infrastructure

investment and private capital looking for investment opportunities. Four conditions for investment were: risk analysis, adherence to standards and regulations, predictable mechanisms to recover and reconstruct infrastructure stock built to earlier standards, and financial backing.

160. Delegations asked about accessing private capital amid debt concerns in developing countries with the greatest needs; how UNOPS could partner with other United Nations organizations to bridge the infrastructure gap; and what tools UNOPS had for knowledge transfer. A delegation urged investing in pooled funding mechanisms to foster inter-agency, multidimensional cross-cutting approaches.

161. The UNOPS Executive Director emphasized that assessing infrastructure needs should precede project design, with UNOPS ready to support this process. It would explore testing the multidimensional vulnerability index in infrastructure projects. Since closing the infrastructure gap depended on partnerships, he encouraged more demand from programmatic agencies in water, sanitation and energy.

162. The United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs described structural shifts and functional solutions until substantial change occurred. Numerous emerging solutions included advancements through the fourth international conference on financing for development.

163. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction noted that early warning systems had focused on life-saving activities and now needed to include infrastructure resilience.

164. The UNOPS Executive Director concluded by commending participants for avoiding silos that defined infrastructure discussions. While UNOPS had no convening role within the United Nations, it aimed to actively contribute to an integrated approach to closing the infrastructure gap.
