



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

Distr.: General
14 July 2025

Original: English

Second regular session 2025

25 to 28 August 2025, New York

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Organizational matters

Report of the annual session 2025

(2 to 5 June 2025, New York)

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I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session 2025 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held from 2 to 5 June 2025.
2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its annual session 2025 (DP/2025/L.2) as well as the report of the first regular session 2025 (DP/2025/8).
3. The decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 2025 are contained in document DP/2025/9, available on the Executive Board website.
4. The Executive Board approved the tentative workplan for the second regular session 2025 to guide its discussions and decision-making.

Statement by the President of the Board

5. The President of the Executive Board underscored the significance of the current moment for the United Nations development system and highlighted the need for constructive dialogue. Emphasizing the Board's governance and oversight role, the President called for active engagement, empathy, and strategic vision to overcome fragmentation and help restore trust in multilateral cooperation. The President also stressed the importance of coordinated and systemic responses as the United Nations development system reform process progresses. In closing, the President expressed appreciation to the UNDP Administrator and the UNFPA Executive Director for their visionary leadership and dedication to advancing the work of the United Nations, noting that this marked their final session with the Executive Board.

Joint segment

II. Internal audit and investigation

6. The UNDP Director of the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) presented the annual report on internal audit and investigations activities in 2024 (DP/2025/10). The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Management Services provided the corresponding management response. The UNFPA Director of the Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAS) presented the report on internal audit and investigation activities in 2024 (DP/FPA/2025/6) along with the annual report of the Oversight Advisory Committee (DP/FPA/2025/6/Add.1). The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) delivered the management response. The UNOPS Director of the Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG), presented the annual report on internal audit and investigations activities in 2024 (DP/OPS/2025/4), with the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) providing the management response.
7. The Chairs of the UNDP Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC), the UNFPA Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) and the UNOPS Audit Advisory Committee (AAC) presented their respective annual reports for 2024. Management from the respective entities referred to these reports in their statements.
8. An Executive Board Bureau member welcomed the independence and essential role of oversight offices, emphasizing their value as a critical check on the system. They expressed appreciation for the informal briefings and raised three questions: (a) whether increased reporting indicates greater trust in the system; (b) clarification on the evolution of the investigation model of UNDP; and (c) whether the findings at UNFPA, though not affecting delivery, might impact credibility. They also encouraged continued discussion on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) during future deliberations.
9. Another Bureau member acknowledged the satisfactory ratings of UNDP and UNFPA and noted the partially satisfactory rating of UNOPS. They posed a broader question to the Board: should a "satisfactory" rating be considered the ceiling for oversight performance, or should entities strive for higher standards as systems mature?

10. A delegation underscored the critical role of OAI, OAI and IAIG in promoting transparency, accountability, and responsible use of resources. They called for full operational independence, adequate resources, and direct access to the Executive Board- particularly in the context of ongoing reforms and budget constraints. They inquired how oversight bodies plan to contribute to broader efficiency and reform efforts.

11. Another delegation expressed appreciation for the work of the oversight offices and the value of informal dialogue. However, they voiced concern about fragmentation in addressing ethical breaches and disciplinary measures. They asked the UNDP AEAC to elaborate on its recommendation for a system-wide approach and sought clarity on coordination between oversight bodies at UNFPA and UNOPS to prevent siloed processes.

12. The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Management Services reaffirmed the organization's commitment to safeguarding independent oversight, particularly amid fiscal constraints. The Director underscored that these functions have consistently been protected to the fullest extent possible- an approach also acknowledged by the AEAC Chair.

13. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management), likewise reiterated the organization's commitment to a strong, independent, and well-resourced oversight function, noting its long-standing investments in this area despite financial constraints.

14. The UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships), confirmed the importance of ensuring the independence of IAIG, noting that adequate resources are key to effective oversight.

15. The Chair of the UNDP AEAC stressed that even "satisfactory" audit ratings require continued vigilance. He underscored the importance of collaboration among oversight bodies and identified the need to improve investigation timelines and compliance processes. He attributed the increase in reporting to expanded awareness-raising, the designation of ethics champions, and more visible management action on misconduct, particularly in the areas of whistleblower protections and safeguarding.

16. The UNFPA OAC representative confirmed that the committee operates with full independence and adequate resourcing, supported by management collaboration and unrestricted access to information. The representative reiterated the committee's readiness to respond to any further queries from the Board.

17. The Chair of the UNOPS AAC, responding to a question from a Bureau member on whether a "satisfactory" rating should be considered the ceiling for oversight performance, noted that the AAC generally considers it a matter of concern when more than 25 per cent of audit reports indicate a need for improvement. He added that the AAC monitors systemic issues, citing the case of Sustainable Investments in Infrastructure and Innovation (S3i) as both systemic and structural in nature. The Chair further underscored that the adequacy of the budgets and staffing of the IAIG and the Ethics Office remain areas of continued attention and regular dialogue with those offices.

18. The UNDP Director of OAI outlined a flexible approach to supporting UNDP through the United Nations reform initiatives, including enhanced advisory services to manage emerging risks. He noted that any structural changes would also affect OAI and should be carefully sequenced to ensure continuity of support. Increased reporting was partially attributed to outreach efforts on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH), and to expanded training for staff. Updates to the investigations model include a more risk-based approach to case triage and internal reorganization to establish thematic specializations within the team—focused on PSEAH, proactive investigations, artificial intelligence, and donor relations. He clarified that "fully satisfactory" remains the highest possible rating under the current system, although continued improvement is always the goal—even when that rating is achieved.

19. The UNFPA Director of OAI welcomed the role of oversight in supporting United Nations reform efforts, highlighting collaboration through networks such as UN-RIAS. He noted efforts to enhance reporting through multilingual tools, staff outreach via the Staff Council, and broader dissemination of findings. He emphasized that credibility stems from delivery and consistent enforcement of zero-tolerance policies, and commended management for its responsiveness. He

reaffirmed the role of OAI in upholding strong internal controls and compliance in complex environments.

20. The UNOPS Director of IAIG confirmed that while IAIG has no formal role in the United Nations reform initiatives, it stands ready to provide advisory support upon request. He emphasized the importance of maintaining independence and avoiding conflicts of interest. He noted that regional training efforts had increased awareness of reporting mechanisms, reflected in the rise in complaints. He also reported that UNOPS had improved its audit rating to “partially satisfactory with minor improvement.” While operational challenges persist in fragile settings, he stressed that IAIG’s credibility depends on fairness, objectivity, and a rights-based approach.

21. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/9 on the reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on internal audit and investigation activities in 2024, and the corresponding management responses.

III. Ethics

22. The UNDP Director of the Ethics Office presented the report on the activities of the UNDP Ethics Office in 2024 (DP/2025/11). The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Management Services delivered the management response. The UNFPA Ethics Adviser presented the report on the activities of the UNFPA Ethics Office in 2024 (DP/FPA/2025/7), with the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) providing the management response. The UNOPS Director of the Ethics Office presented the report on the activities of the UNOPS Ethics Office in 2024 (DP/OPS/2025/5), followed by the management response from the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships).

23. A delegation commended the ethics offices for their essential role in upholding integrity, accountability, and ethical conduct across the three organizations. They underscored the importance of ensuring that ethics offices remain fully independent, adequately resourced, and actively engaged in supporting reforms and mitigating risks. They also posed a question regarding how the ethics offices would engage with ongoing reforms and what role they foresee for themselves in these processes.

24. The UNDP Director of the Ethics Office thanked the delegation for its comments and affirmed that, similar to the oversight offices, the Ethics Office stands ready to provide advice and guidance on emerging risks, and to support the implementation of decisions taken by the organization and Member States.

25. The UNFPA Ethics Adviser highlighted the critical importance of the Ethics Office during periods of restructuring, noting the potential rise in workplace concerns and risks of retaliation. She emphasized the continued relevance of the Ethics Office in safeguarding integrity and accountability, in line with its mandate under the Secretary-General’s bulletin of 2007.

26. The UNOPS Director of Ethics welcomed the opportunity to participate in discussions related to the United Nations reform, emphasizing the importance of balancing organizational consolidation with the unique mandates and operational contexts of each entity. He acknowledged the relevance of the question posed and expressed the Office’s readiness to continue engaging in the dialogue.

27. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/10 on the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on activities in 2024, and the corresponding management responses.

IV. Addressing racism and racial discrimination

28. The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Management Services, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management), and the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) updated the Executive Board on progress made in addressing racism and racial discrimination. The updates were provided on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) contained in its note entitled *Review of measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and*

racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations: managing for achieving organizational effectiveness (JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1).

29. A Bureau member, speaking on behalf of a group of delegations, unequivocally condemned all forms of racism, affirming that such practices have no place in UNDP, UNFPA or UNOPS. They acknowledged the efforts made by the entities—such as staff training in UNFPA, the promotion of a speak-up culture in UNDP, and data collection initiatives in UNOPS—and encouraged greater transparency regarding persistent challenges. The speaker called for stronger inter-agency collaboration, particularly in the areas of voluntary self-identification and anti-racism efforts at the country level. They reaffirmed the need for sustained and holistic action to uphold human rights and zero tolerance for discrimination.

30. One delegation expressed strong support for the leadership of the Executive Board on this issue and condemned all manifestations of racism within the United Nations. Citing survey data, they welcomed actions undertaken by the three entities, while emphasizing the need to institutionalize anti-racism efforts, establish clear accountability mechanisms, and fully implement the JIU recommendations, including mechanisms for measuring progress. Another delegation commended the leadership and staff of the entities for their dedication to upholding integrity and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. They highlighted the importance of survivor-centred approaches and stressed the principles of transparency, accountability, and a respectful workplace culture.

31. The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Management Services noted that the organization's partnership policy prohibits collaboration with entities that act in contradiction to the principles of the United Nations Charter, including those engaging in racial discrimination. She highlighted the integration of anti-discrimination clauses in partnership agreements, strengthened engagement with marginalized groups, the rollout of anti-racism training, and the tracking of related cases through the Office of Audit and Investigations. Data on respectful behaviours and other elements of the organizational culture is monitored using various tools, including UNDP's personnel surveys, in which participants are also invited to self-identify across a number of demographic categories, including race and ethnic origin. This enables more nuanced analysis of results and supports the identification of emerging issues.

32. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) confirmed that all implementing partners are required to uphold United Nations principles, including a commitment to anti-racism. Since 2020, UNFPA has expanded its anti-racism initiatives, which include fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the launch of a new people strategy, and the facilitation of leadership dialogues. In 2024, a senior consultant was engaged to lead targeted learning initiatives on anti-racism.

33. The UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) reiterated the organization's commitment to inter-agency collaboration on anti-racism. She noted that progress is measured through culture and engagement surveys that include DEI indicators. While the improvements observed to date are modest, they indicate emerging positive behavioural change. An interim accountability plan is in place to guide further action.

34. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/12 on addressing racism and racial discrimination.

V. Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

35. The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Management Services, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management), and the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) provided updates on efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH).

36. A group of delegations commended the three entities for their continued commitment to fostering safe and inclusive organizational cultures. Underscoring that the protection of vulnerable populations is non-negotiable, they called for sustained funding, dedicated staffing, and victim/survivor-centred approaches. Delegations urged entities to focus on enhanced inter-agency

collaboration, harmonized tools, and expanded use of frameworks such as the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS). They also requested clarification on several entity-specific issues, such as the limits of UNDP's investigative authority, UNFPA's challenges in reporting, and UNOPS's efforts to engage with communities.

37. A delegation welcomed the prioritization of PSEAH and the adoption of a zero-tolerance stance by the three entities. Stressing the need to safeguard vulnerable populations, they called for improved coordination, prevention measures, and transparency. They emphasized the importance of an intersectional approach—considering factors such as gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and ethnicity—and advocated for stronger whistleblower protections and more accessible, community-based complaint mechanisms, especially in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

38. The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Management Services reaffirmed the organization's commitment to PSEAH despite resource constraints. She highlighted the imminent appointment of a victim support officer and the establishment of a global network of over 170 focal points. She emphasized the value of inter-agency collaboration for enhancing efficiency and noted that while UNDP relies on its United Nations partners to deliver gender-based violence (GBV) services, this is challenged by funding reductions. The MDS is currently being piloted in five countries, with potential for expansion. It was clarified that, while UNDP does not have the mandate to investigate personnel of implementing partners, it works proactively to promote standards and provide advice on cases where investigation may be warranted.

39. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) confirmed continued funding for PSEAH and announced the creation of a new specialist position. He noted the agency's leadership role on GBV prevention and response, its support for inter-agency coordination efforts, and the piloting of the MDS, with expansion under consideration. Complementarity with the ClearCheck platform is also being reviewed. Monitoring systems are in place, and a recent staff survey identified key deterrents to reporting—such as fear of retaliation and lack of trust—which are now being addressed to strengthen transparency and build confidence.

40. The UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) reiterated that PSEAH remains a core organizational priority, integrated throughout operations and strongly supported by senior leadership. UNOPS is intensifying collaboration with UNDP and UNFPA, including joint efforts on prevention. The MDS is being piloted in three regions ahead of planned global implementation, and a context-specific PSEA community engagement guidance note is under development to support operations in remote areas. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/11 on the joint update on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

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

41. The UNDP Associate Administrator, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management), and the UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) provided updates on implementation efforts related to the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

42. A group of delegations stressed the urgency of fully implementing the United Nations development system reforms, particularly in light of growing demands and constrained resources. They welcomed the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative and identified four priority areas: (1) accelerating progress on shared services and common premises; (2) addressing delays in advancing the Management Accountability Framework (MAF); (3) strengthening the dual reporting model, including increased United Nations Resident Coordinator input into performance appraisals; and (4) ensuring full alignment of agency programmes with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF), including by sharing Resident coordinator alignment letters with the Executive Board.

43. Delegations reiterated their support for the UN80 initiative and for continued reforms of the Resident Coordinator system, highlighting the central role of the Resident Coordinator and

UNDP's function as a provider of common services and integrated policy advice. They emphasized the need to move from reform to full implementation of the 2024 quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), and to ensure agency activities are fully aligned with cooperation frameworks to reduce duplication and enhance coherence.

44. Delegations called for improved efficiency through shared services and common premises, stronger accountability, and better resource optimization, particularly in complex and fragile settings. Delegations also encouraged the mobilization of innovative, transparent, and domestic sources of financing, including from private and local actors, and called for inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnerships. They requested performance updates and clearer communication on the measurable impact of reform implementation.

45. The UNDP Associate Administrator reaffirmed the organization's support for joint business operations, implementation of the MAF, and coordination based on delivery capacity. He highlighted UNDP's leadership role in providing shared services—including enterprise resource planning, payroll, and procurement—which benefit over 70 United Nations entities, alongside the continued expansion of common back-office services. He confirmed that all UNDP country programme documents are aligned with the UNSDCF, and that dual reporting has been institutionalized, although consistent input from Resident Coordinators remains a challenge. He underscored that, since 2018, UNDP has contributed over \$120 million to the Resident Coordinator system—comprising \$80 million from its core resources under the UNSDG cost-sharing arrangement and an additional \$42 million through the 1 per cent levy—while cautioning that sustaining this level of contribution poses increasing risks in light of declining core resources. Cost-saving measures have included post reductions and relocations from high-cost duty stations. Further updates will be presented in the forthcoming strategic plan and integrated results and resources framework.

46. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) emphasized that UN-to-UN transfers represent the largest source of UNFPA's non-core funding. He underlined UNFPA's leadership in joint business operations and participation in all six current common back-office locations, which have generated measurable cost savings. As co-chair of the Business Innovation Group, he called for broader engagement across agencies and trust-based collaboration. He reported that UNFPA had issued MAF guidance, conducted surveys to identify implementation challenges, and incorporated dual reporting into performance appraisal processes. Country programme documents are fully aligned with UNSDCF, and Resident Coordinator confirmation letters are routinely submitted. UNFPA reiterated its strong commitment to the Resident Coordinator system, to timely cost-sharing contributions, and to performance transparency through the use of established reform indicators.

47. The UNOPS Deputy Executive Director (Delivery and Partnerships) outlined the organization's contributions to the efficiency agenda. She highlighted United Nations Web Buy Plus and human resources services as key global shared services provided by UNOPS to other United Nations entities. UNOPS also actively participates in the common back-office initiative, citing its partnership with UNICEF in Pakistan with a view to becoming a lead service provider. On the MAF, she welcomed efforts to streamline guidance and reaffirmed UNOPS support for the Resident Coordinator system and dual reporting, emphasizing the value of mutual feedback between Resident Coordinators and entity representatives. In 2024, UNOPS participated in 94 UNSDCF and supported 13 common country analyses. In addition to the current indicators in the reform checklist, UNOPS is developing a set of results and performance indicators to inform its next Strategic Plan. She emphasized the importance of sharpening system-wide metrics to incentivize performance and enhancing collective communication to demonstrate the impact of reform.

48. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/8 on the update on implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

VII. Update on the assessment of how the Executive Board executes its governance and oversight functions

49. The Executive Board received an update from the Co-Chair of the Joint Working Group of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, and UN-Women on the governance and oversight functions of the Executive Boards and to examine the recommendations of the JIU report entitled *Review of the governance and oversight functions of the Executive Boards of the UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women* (JIU/REP/2023/7).

50. The Co-Chair of the Joint Working Group provided an update on the progress of the group's work to assess and advance the recommendations of the JIU report. He recalled the group's establishment following the 2024 annual session and expressed appreciation to the 15 Member State representatives for their active engagement and collaborative spirit. The Co-Chair emphasized that the swift adoption of the group's term of reference and working methods- based on inclusivity, structure, and consensus- demonstrated strong commitment to strengthening governance and oversight across the four Boards.

51. The Co-Chair outlined the roadmap guiding the group's work, organized into four phases: (i) mapping and categorizing the JIU recommendations; (ii) identifying areas for early action; (iii) conducting in-depth review of more complex or structural issues; and (iv) preparing thematic clusters with supporting sub-groups to enable focused discussion. He noted that the group had already consulted with the JIU to revisit the recommendations in light of evolving financial and institutional contexts and underscored the importance of building early momentum while recognizing that it was premature to present "quick wins" at this stage. Nonetheless, the group saw value in identifying non-contentious, actionable items to build trust and demonstrate early progress.

52. Looking ahead, the Co-Chair confirmed that the next meeting of the Joint Working Group was scheduled for mid-July, where substantive discussions would begin. While the Terms of Reference anticipated decision points at each Board session, the group agreed that a case-by-case approach to decision-making would ensure relevance and alignment with the group's pace of work. Regular updates will be provided to maintain transparency. The Co-Chair concluded by reaffirming the time-bound nature of the mandate, the group's commitment to an agile and Member State-driven process, and its openness to supporting broader reform efforts through governance insights that may emerge over the course of its work.

53. A group of delegations welcomed the update, commended the collaborative spirit and early achievements of the Joint Working Group, and reiterated their support. They emphasized the importance of streamlining Board operations, strengthening accountability, and maintaining a transparent and results-oriented approach. The group expressed support for the early implementation of feasible recommendations and encouraged continued collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards to support technical assessments- particularly with respect to Recommendation 6 of the JIU report, which related to the role of the Board secretariats. They welcomed the roadmap as a living document, aligned with broader reform efforts across the United Nations development system.

54. The Executive Board took note of the update on the assessment of how the Executive Board executes its governance and oversight functions.

VIII. Field visits

55. The President of the Executive Board referred to the Executive Board field visit to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, which took place in December 2024. He noted that the visit provided Board Members with valuable, first-hand insight into the work of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, and the broader United Nations system presence in both countries.

56. The President recalled that the findings of the field visit were formally presented at the first regular session 2025 and the final report had been made available on the Executive Board website as part of the official session documentation. Accordingly, no further presentation was deemed necessary.

57. The Executive Board took note of the report on the joint field visit to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

UNDP segment

Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator

58. The UNDP Administrator delivered his final address to the Executive Board, reflecting on the organization's transformation over two strategic plan cycles and its 60-year history. He expressed his appreciation to the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, the General Assembly, and the Executive Board for their trust, and acknowledged the leadership of his predecessors and the dedication of UNDP staff and partners.

59. Marking UNDP's 60th anniversary, the Administrator recalled its 1965 founding through the merger of two technical cooperation funds and emphasized that innovation and service remain central to UNDP's identity. He described UNDP as a dynamic, adaptive, integrated development platform—digitally enabled and responsive to emerging challenges.

60. The Administrator highlighted a range of institutional achievements, including the creation of the Accelerator Labs—now the world's largest network for development innovation—supported by Germany and Qatar as core partners; leadership in digital public infrastructure and artificial intelligence; and support to over 60 countries in areas such as energy access, biodiversity protection, and climate resilience. He cited assistance to 96 electoral processes involving 840 million voters and efforts to help mobilize over \$800 billion in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-aligned investments.

61. UNDP contributions to global public goods were also emphasized, including the development and support to the Climate Promise, nature-based solutions, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Administrator underscored UNDP's role in developing sustainable finance norms, including a new ISO standard, and noted the organization's support to 80+ countries on integrated national financing frameworks and SDG-aligned bonds.

62. On development system reform, the Administrator reaffirmed UNDP's longstanding and strong commitment since the outset of the reform process. He noted that, since 2018, UNDP has contributed over \$120 million in cumulative cost-sharing contributions to the Resident Coordinator system—both from core resources and the 1 per cent coordination levy. He also highlighted UNDP's provision of common services in over 100 countries, its stewardship of corporate digital platforms such as Quantum, and its administration of payroll for more than 50,000 United Nations personnel. Additionally, the Administrator emphasized UNDP's continued role in hosting and providing core funding to system-wide entities, including the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).

63. The Administrator pointed to institutional performance gains, such as 19 consecutive unqualified audit opinions and consistent top rankings in the Aid Transparency Index. He reported increased programme efficiency, with 92 cents of every dollar now going directly to programming—up from 88 cents—and cited improved implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) as indicators of disciplined, accountable institutional management.

64. Expressing concern over declining core resources, the Administrator cautioned that core funding could fall to below \$450 million by 2026—less than half the level recorded in the early 2010s. He described this trajectory as unsustainable, warning that it could undermine programme delivery, staffing, institutional resilience, and the integrity of UNDP systems. He urged Member States to consider the long-term implications of continued declines in core funding.

65. Looking forward, the Administrator introduced the draft Strategic Plan, 2026–2029, as a focused and integrated document shaped by consultations with over 11,000 stakeholders. He

reaffirmed the centrality of human development, emphasized systemic transformation, and highlighted strengthened risk management. The Plan draws on lessons from the past eight years to deliver results and impact in increasingly complex environments.

66. During the interactive dialogue, delegations expressed appreciation for the leadership of the Administrator and welcomed the cumulative review of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, and the Administrator's annual report for 2024. Delegations commended UNDP's performance and its role in the multilateral system during a challenging period.

67. Several delegations and regional groups expressed strong appreciation for the Administrator's leadership, acknowledging his efforts to reposition UNDP as an agile, forward-looking organization. They highlighted UNDP's contributions to development finance, innovation, climate action, support to elections and crises, and United Nations development system coherence. The Administrator was commended for efforts to improve organizational transparency, efficiency, and gender equality.

68. A number of delegations stressed the importance of predictable, flexible core resources. They noted the urgent need to reverse declining core funding trends, which could undermine programmatic delivery and continuity. Other delegations and regional groups emphasized the disproportionate impact of these trends on least developed countries, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and countries in crisis or transition. Delegations reiterated their support for multilateralism and pledged continued collaboration with UNDP in implementing the Pact for the Future and strengthening coherence across the United Nations system.

69. On strategic planning, delegations welcomed the cumulative review and commended UNDP for maintaining focus on results. They urged the organization to maintain its emphasis on national ownership, country-level delivery, and alignment with national priorities. Delegations stressed the need for greater attention to countries in special situations, including middle-income countries, SIDS, and those affected by conflict. There was also strong support for South-South and triangular cooperation.

70. Member States broadly welcomed the draft Strategic Plan, 2026–2029, recognizing its ambition and responsiveness to current and emerging challenges. They emphasized the importance of maintaining a strategic focus on poverty eradication, gender equality, and leaving no one behind, while also underscoring the need for clear prioritization, adaptability in the face of funding constraints, and a well-defined articulation of UNDP's comparative advantage.

71. Member States emphasized the importance of innovation and digitalization, urging UNDP to deepen investments in digital public infrastructure, data systems, and technological innovations to accelerate the SDGs. Delegations requested more information on how UNDP integrates lessons learned into its programming and welcomed efforts to track performance through robust monitoring frameworks.

72. Delegations acknowledged UNDP's financial and programmatic contributions to the Resident Coordinator system, including through core resources and the 1 per cent levy. Many reaffirmed the importance of mutual accountability between UNDP and Resident Coordinators and encouraged greater harmonization and joint programming among United Nations entities.

73. Finally, many delegations thanked the Administrator for his service and expressed strong support for a smooth leadership transition. The importance of sustained commitment to UNDP's mandate and multilateral values was underscored.

74. The UNDP Administrator responded with gratitude for Member States' trust and engagement throughout his tenure, particularly during two cycles of the UNDP Strategic Plan. On the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, the Administrator confirmed that UNDP remains on track, with substantial progress made across the three directions of change. He noted that the cumulative review was grounded in over 100 performance indicators and reflected broad consultations, including with more than 11,000 stakeholders. He emphasized that the Plan remains relevant and impactful, particularly in fragile and complex settings, and assured delegations that lessons learned are being integrated into the final year of implementation.

75. Regarding core resources, the Administrator reiterated his deep concern over their ongoing declining. He explained that while non-core resources have grown, especially in response to major crises, this has created an imbalance that jeopardizes UNDP's ability to plan strategically, invest in staffing, and take programmatic risks. He called for urgent attention from Member States to reverse this trend.

76. The Administrator highlighted UNDP's longstanding support to the Resident Coordinator system since the inception of the delinking process. He noted that while financial contributions have continued, they represent only a fraction of overall resource trends. He reaffirmed UNDP's institutional commitment to the Resident Coordinators, emphasizing that all UNDP country programme documents are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. He also underscored UNDP's leadership in results groups, joint programming, and the delivery of common services in over 100 countries.

77. In response to questions on the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) and dual reporting, the Administrator reiterated UNDP's institutional commitment to mutual accountability. He acknowledged the need to strengthen reciprocal feedback mechanisms and emphasized the importance of fostering coherence through shared accountability among United Nations country teams, Resident Representatives and Resident Coordinators.

78. With respect to innovation and digital transformation, the Administrator underscored UNDP's leadership in digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and the use of data systems to advance SDG delivery. He welcomed Member States' recognition of these efforts and pledged to deepen innovation work in the upcoming Strategic Plan.

79. Lastly, the Administrator acknowledged Member States' calls for enhanced communication of UNDP's results and impacts. He proposed more citizen-oriented outreach strategies, such as involving parliamentarians in field visits, and underlined the importance of better articulating the value of UNDP's work to domestic audiences in donor countries.

80. In closing, the Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its trust and partnership during his tenure and reaffirmed his enduring belief in the value of multilateralism, particularly in a world marked by uncertainty and fragmentation.

81. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/13 of the cumulative review of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, and annual report of the Administrator for 2024.

IX. UNDP evaluation

82. The Director of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) introduced the annual report on evaluation for 2024 (DP/2025/14) and the evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2025/15). The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) delivered the management commentaries on the annual report on evaluation for 2024 and the management response to the evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2025/16).

83. A group of delegations welcomed both reports, commending their contribution to enhancing UNDP's relevance, learning and systemic impact. They highlighted positive developments in decentralized evaluations, regional support, and the shift toward thematic and portfolio-level assessments. Delegations appreciated UNDP's work in areas such as digital public infrastructure in fragile settings, governance, transparency, anti-corruption, and crisis preparedness. However, they voiced concern over a continued gap in gender-transformative results, noting that the cross-cutting nature of gender integration in the Strategic Plan lacked dedicated outputs or recommendations in the evaluation or management response. They called for stronger accountability mechanisms, clearer tools, and institutional support to advance gender equality, alongside more predictable and flexible core resources to ensure long-term, transformative outcomes—especially for least developed and middle-income countries.

84. A delegation aligned with the group statement and expressed strong support for IEO's independent oversight role, particularly its contributions to innovation, risk identification and institutional learning. They emphasized the need to preserve the office's independence, secure

adequate resourcing and maintain its direct access to the Executive Board. They welcomed the development of tools such as the Artificial Intelligence for Development Analytics (AIDA) platform and posed three specific questions: (1) how collaboration between IEO and UNDP enhances learning and systems change; (2) how results under the new Strategic Plan will be measured and communicated; and (3) whether AIDA is intended for broader use across the United Nations Evaluation Group.

85. Another delegation viewed the reform of the United Nations development system as a critical opportunity to build a more effective, accountable, and coherent multilateral architecture. They underlined the importance of harmonizing mandates, strengthening the Resident Coordinator system, reducing administrative duplication through shared services, and reinforcing the Executive Boards' dual role in both agency-specific governance and system-wide coherence. They also emphasized timely data-sharing, coordinated reform efforts, and a continued commitment to multilateralism grounded in the United Nations Charter, international law, and gender equality.

86. In response, the IEO Director noted that UNDP maintains a high uptake rate of evaluation recommendations, reinforcing the organization's culture of responsiveness and transparency. She highlighted the evolving advisory role of IEO, supported by digital innovations such as AIDA platform. She also informed the Executive Board of new methodological guidance under development to measure systems change and strategic impact, in collaboration with the UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support.

87. The UNDP Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support reaffirmed the strong working relationship between IEO and UNDP, emphasizing that the advisory support provided does not compromise the independence of the evaluation function. On gender, he acknowledged the limitations of the current Strategic Plan and noted that the forthcoming Plan includes strengthened approaches to gender equality, with specific outputs and indicators. He also underscored the importance of increased donor support to sustain progress on gender equality.

88. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/14 on UNDP evaluation, encompassing the annual report on evaluation for 2024 and management commentaries, as well as the evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 and the related management response.

X. United Nations Capital Development Fund

89. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the item, and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) presented the cumulative review of the UNCDF Strategic Framework, 2022-2025, and the 2024 annual report on results (DP/2025/18).

90. A group of delegations reaffirmed UNCDF's unique and essential role in supporting least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS). They welcomed the Fund's efforts to catalyse finance and de-risk investment, particularly through joint programming and innovative financing models. Delegations encouraged the development of a clearer strategy in the next Strategic Framework to position UNCDF as a financing enabler- linking grant funding to impact investment, strengthening partnerships, and engaging proactively in the Financing for Development (FfD4) process. They also called for enhanced visibility, transparent reporting, and improved communications, alongside a realistic resource mobilization plan to address financial sustainability concerns. Requests were made for clarification on UNCDF's positioning within the UN80 initiative, as well as continued decentralization to serve LDCs and SIDS more effectively.

91. Several delegations praised UNCDF's alignment with the Doha Programme of Action, its success in catalysing \$780 million through domestic private sector engagement and blended finance, and its contributions to climate adaptation, local infrastructure, public finance, and private sector development. Support was expressed for graduating LDCs, and for scaling efforts to reduce aid dependence via strategic partnerships and capital investments. Delegations highlighted UNCDF's ability to leverage catalytic capital, employ de-risking instruments, and bridge the divide between development and commercial finance.

92. UNCDF was commended for delivering results in key areas such as digital finance, climate resilience, micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) development, renewable energy, and local governance, often in close partnership with governments and United Nations country teams. Delegations noted its inclusive, context-sensitive approach, especially in reaching women, youth, rural populations, and persons with disabilities. Particular appreciation was expressed for the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility (LoCAL) as a replicable model for climate adaptation and capacity-building at the local level.

93. Concerns were raised over the UNCDF's limited and unpredictable funding base, with delegations urging diversification of financial instruments- including concessional finance, catalytic capital, and greater donor outreach. They emphasized the importance of stronger results communication, continued governance reforms, and the development of a streamlined, well-prioritized Strategic Framework aligned with the evolving development finance landscape and institutional capacity.

94. Looking forward, delegations highlighted the Fund's potential contribution to FfD4 and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS and reiterated their support for its standalone status as a responsive and catalytic financing mechanism within the United Nations development system.

95. In response, the UNCDF Executive Secretary thanked delegations and reaffirmed the Fund's focus areas for consolidation under the next Strategic Framework- MSME finance, digital finance, and local infrastructure. He underscored UNCDF's role as a lean, capital-focused institution with strong fiduciary standards, and reiterated the need for core resources to sustain its catalytic mandate.

96. The Associate Administrator reaffirmed UNDP's commitment to hosting UNCDF and confirmed that there are no plans to merge the Fund with any other entity. He also noted that discussions regarding UNCDF's relocation remain ongoing, guided by consultation with Member States and clear criteria, with the Executive Board to be kept fully informed on such matters.

97. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/15 on the cumulative review of the UNCDF Strategic Framework, 2022–2025, and the annual report on results for 2024.

XI. United Nations Volunteers

98. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the item, followed by the Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, who presented the 2024 annual report of the Administrator on the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme (DP/2025/19).

99. A group of delegations commended the UNV's contributions to peace, humanitarian assistance and sustainable development, noting the record mobilization of 14,631 volunteers across 169 countries in 2024. They welcomed UNV's support to 59 United Nations entities, including in conflict-affected and post-crisis contexts, and acknowledged its organizational adaptability and ongoing efforts to enhance decentralization, optimization, and efficiency. The importance of duty of care was underscored, particularly given the increasing presence of volunteers in fragile and high-risk settings. Delegations welcomed the designation of 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development as an opportunity to elevate the visibility of volunteerism across the United Nations system. Member States were encouraged to contribute to the Special Voluntary Fund (SVF).

100. Delegations affirmed the strategic relevance of UNV, noting its agility, field presence, and alignment with national priorities and UNSDCF's. The increasing share of national volunteers was welcomed, with several delegations underscoring the value of local knowledge, language, and community trust in delivering nationally owned results. In this context, the contributions of nationals serving abroad were also acknowledged as reinforcing South–South cooperation and solidarity.

101. Delegations recognized the programme's commitment to diversity and inclusion, highlighting the engagement of 273 United Nations Volunteers with disabilities in 2024- a 41 per cent increase compared to 2023- serving across 26 United Nations entities. They welcomed the expanded opportunities for women, youth, and older persons. While commending progress, delegations encouraged more rapid deployment, improved matching processes, and greater equity through national and digital modalities. The Online Volunteering platform was acknowledged as an accessible and flexible tool to

engage professionals and broaden geographic reach. Delegations proposed enhancements to the platform's technical quality, responsiveness, and user support.

102. The focus on youth engagement was widely praised, with several delegations referencing the alignment of national youth priorities—including in SIDS—with UNV initiatives. They encouraged stronger youth participation and the inclusion of intergenerational equity in the upcoming Strategic Framework. Delegations also emphasized the role of volunteerism in fostering South-South cooperation, regional solidarity, capacity-building and shared learning, encouraging its deeper integration into cooperation frameworks and partnerships.

103. Looking ahead, delegations called for broad and inclusive consultations with Member States in the development of the Strategic Framework, 2026-2029, grounded in lessons learned and responsive to diverse country contexts. They reiterated the importance of strong and sustained support for the Special Voluntary Fund as essential to enabling flexible, demand-driven deployments, particularly in emergency settings and for innovative initiatives.

104. In response, the UNV Executive Coordinator welcomed Member State engagement and affirmed UNV's commitment to adapt and deliver on its mandate. He encouraged national-level actions to commemorate the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development and reiterated the calls for continued support to the Special Voluntary Fund, noting that volunteers represent the human face of the United Nations and embody its founding principles.

105. The UNDP Associate Administrator expressed appreciation for Member State contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund and reaffirmed UNDP's longstanding support to UNV, noting that it has provided approximately \$9 million annually in core contributions over the past decade. He underscored the importance of predictable core funding to sustain operations and ensure continuity.

106. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/15 on the United Nations Volunteers programme: annual report of the Administrator.

XII. Gender Equality at UNDP

107. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the item, followed by the UNDP Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, who presented the 2024 annual report on the implementation of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2022–2025 (DP/2025/13).

108. A group of delegations expressed strong support for the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy, welcoming the integration of gender across all six signature solutions and the organization's partnerships with civil society and United Nations entities. They praised progress on joint programming, gender-responsive climate action, certification through the Gender Equality Seal, and the application of data tools such as the Care Georeferencing Tool. Delegations noted that 66 country offices had been certified under the Gender Equality Seal and 89 per cent of stakeholders perceived UNDP's gender work as effective. Delegations posed questions about the scalability of transformative programming and sustainability of climate gains for Indigenous and rural women. Full gender parity within UNDP was welcomed, with calls for continued ambition under the next Strategic Plan.

109. A group of delegations reiterated their strong support for advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment. They acknowledged progress but noted that Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) remained off track, calling for sustained resources and strengthened institutional accountability. Concern was expressed over the potential repositioning of gender equality from a strategic priority to an accelerator in the forthcoming Strategic Plan. These delegations urged full implementation of the current strategy, deeper engagement with women's rights organizations, continued use of institutional tools such as the Gender Equality Seal, and support for gender-responsive policies and care systems. They also emphasized the importance of maintaining clarity and commitment amid global pushback on gender and human rights.

110. One delegation emphasized the importance of using language that reflects biological sex distinctions.

111. Another delegation welcomed UNDP's ongoing commitment to women's rights and supported the inclusion of gender equality as an accelerator in the draft Strategic Plan, 2026–2029. They underscored the development value of integrating women's perspectives and called for clarity on how gender equality and a human rights-based approach would be embedded across the new Plan's strategic objectives. The delegation also emphasized the importance of continued collaboration with UN-Women and UNFPA and asked how system-wide commitments would be reflected in the new results framework and budget. Visible gender equality leadership across all levels of the organization was underscored.

112. In response, the Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support acknowledged concerns regarding constrained resources and noted that the decline in core funding remains a particular concern for UNDP, especially given that commitments to gender equality rely primarily on core resources. He highlighted innovative financing approaches, including the gender funding window as well as the integration of gender expertise into thematic initiatives such as biodiversity finance. He also referenced continued training for Resident Representatives and senior leaders on gender-responsive leadership.

113. The Executive Board took note of the 2024 annual report on the implementation of the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2022–2025.

XIII. UNDP country programmes and related matters

114. The UNDP Associate Administrator presented the item, providing an overview of the new UNDP country programme document for Ethiopia and the proposed extensions of the country programmes for Burkina Faso, South Africa, and South Sudan. The UNDP Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa presented the strategic orientation and key priorities of the Ethiopia country programme document, highlighting its alignment with national development plans and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

115. Speaking in his national capacity, the Vice-President of the Executive Board for the African Group and Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations reaffirmed the Government's strong ownership of the new country programme and its full commitment to implementation in partnership with UNDP and other stakeholders.

116. The Executive Board, in accordance with decision 2014/7, approved the UNDP country programme document for Ethiopia (DP/DCP/ETH/5).

117. The Executive Board also took note of the following country programme extensions: the first six-month extension of the country programme for South Africa; the first one-year extension of the country programme for South Sudan; and approved the fourth one-year extension of the country programme for Burkina Faso (DP/2025/17).

UNFPA segment

Statement by the UNFPA Executive Director

118. The Executive Director presented the report on progress in implementing the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 - Report of the Executive Director for 2024 (DP/FPA/2025/4 (Part I)), highlighting achievements in 2024 and the evolving operational context. She underscored UNFPA's continued focus on delivering transformative results amid global conflict, inequality, demographic shifts, and climate change. She emphasized gains in family planning, maternal health, and safe delivery, especially in fragile settings, and reaffirmed commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda and the achievement of three transformative results.

119. The Executive Director emphasized the organization's role as a public health and population agency, and a key partner in delivering essential services to women and girls in both development and humanitarian settings. She noted that UNFPA is the only United Nations entity entirely focused – through combined operational and human-rights based approaches - on reproductive health and rights across the life course. She highlighted joint programming and use of common services as essential to the achievement of UNFPA's mandate.

120. The Executive Director highlighted UNFPA's leadership in efforts to end gender-based violence and called on Member States to support the prioritization of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health in all crisis contexts, particularly as the humanitarian system undergoes reform.

121. The Executive Director noted that UNFPA had more than doubled its revenue over the past decade. She nevertheless cautioned that persistent shortfalls in core resources continued to pose challenges and appealed for increased and predictable funding. She reaffirmed the organization's continued commitment to accountability, oversight, and programmatic adjustments, as informed by the midterm review of the Strategic Plan.

122. In closing, the Executive Director thanked the Executive Board for its support and acknowledged the dedication of staff delivering under difficult conditions.

123. Delegations expressed appreciation for the leadership of the Executive Director and reaffirmed strong support for UNFPA's work. They commended the organization's role in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), particularly in fragile contexts. Delegations also welcomed the integration of gender-based violence prevention across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, efforts to reach marginalized populations, and innovation in digital solutions and data systems. They further welcomed strengthened accountability and called for continued results-based management and enhanced collaboration with national institutions.

124. Delegations welcomed the draft Strategic Plan 2026-2029, including the addition of a new outcome on population dynamics and the consultative process through which it was developed. They emphasized the importance of ensuring that SRHR remains central to UNFPA's work and called for continued alignment with United Nations country-level results frameworks under the leadership of Resident Coordinators.

125. While acknowledging the organization's achievements, delegations expressed concern over declining core resources. They urged the protection of flexible funding to sustain long-term planning and support in underserved contexts and encouraged UNFPA to further strengthen its efforts to diversify funding sources.

126. One delegation expressed opposition to UNFPA's engagement with another Member State, citing concerns about coercive population practices and invoking national legislation as the basis for funding restrictions. The delegation also questioned the allocation of resources to countries with substantial domestic capacity and called for greater transparency and accountability in programming. In exercising its right of reply, the cited Member State firmly rejected the allegations as unfounded, defended its population and development policies, and reaffirmed that its cooperation with UNFPA aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The delegation further criticized unilateral funding withdrawals as politically motivated, asserting that such actions undermine multilateralism and negatively impact global humanitarian efforts. Both delegations reiterated the importance of respectful dialogue and cooperation in advancing UNFPA's mandate.

127. In response, the Executive Director thanked delegations for their support to UNFPA and the Strategic Plan, 2026-2029. She reaffirmed UNFPA's commitment to achieving transformative results through partnerships, innovation, and accountability. On funding, she underscored the importance of core contributions and the need to safeguard services for those most in need.

128. The Executive Director rejected as unfounded the allegations raised by one Member State regarding UNFPA's work, noting that such claims had been repeatedly disproven, including by the Member State itself. She emphasized that UNFPA unequivocally opposes all forms of coercive practices, including forced sterilization and coerced abortion, and consistently advocates against such human rights violations. She reaffirmed that supporting UNFPA- the only United Nations agency dedicated to reproductive health and rights- helps reduce the risk of such practices. The Executive Director reiterated UNFPA's willingness to maintain an open dialogue with the Member State.

129. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/17 on the progress report on the implementation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025.

XIV. UNFPA evaluation

130. The UNFPA Director of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) presented the 2024 annual report on the evaluation function (DP/FPA/2025/5), followed by the presentation of the management response by the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) (DP/FPA/2025/CRP.5).

131. A group of delegations welcomed the report and commended both the IEO and UNFPA management for strong performance, innovative approaches, and effective collaboration. They noted high achievement across key indicators, including full implementation of decentralized evaluations and the highest rate of management action on recommendations in a decade. Delegations encouraged continued investment to meet the 1-1.6 per cent evaluation budget target, stronger support for decentralized and humanitarian evaluations, and innovation- particularly in the use of responsible artificial intelligence. Emphasizing youth engagement, evidence-based decision-making, and institutional learning, they reaffirmed the importance of a well-resourced, independent evaluation function as central to UNFPA's effectiveness and reform efforts.

132. A delegation acknowledged the performance of the IEO and UNFPA's commitment to implementing evaluation recommendations. They stressed the value of evaluations in shaping the draft Strategic Plan, 2026–2029, while expressing concern over evaluation spending falling below the 1 per cent target. The delegation inquired about the implications of this funding gap and the availability of preliminary findings from the evaluation on leaving no one behind, and extended appreciation to the outgoing Director of the IEO.

133. In response, the IEO Director reiterated the importance of maintaining evaluation funding, especially during financial constraints, emphasizing that “investing 1 per cent ensures the other 99 per cent is well-spent”. He cautioned that underfunding limits the IEO's ability to incorporate project-level evaluations into its quality assurance system. He confirmed that preliminary findings from the leaving no one behind evaluation had already been shared with senior management. He thanked delegations for their recognition of IEO achievements in innovation and youth engagement, citing the co-led Future of Evaluation Summit as a notable example, and emphasized that progress had been enabled by adaptability, close collaboration with management and strong Executive Board support.

134. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) thanked delegations for their engagement, especially on the leaving no one behind evaluation, assuring that findings would be rigorously integrated into the next Strategic Plan. She noted that evaluation spending had reached 0.79 per cent—the highest level to date—doubling since 2015. She reaffirmed continued efforts to strengthen collaboration between the IEO, UNFPA management and Member States in an increasingly complex global and humanitarian landscape.

135. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/18 on UNFPA evaluation, which included the annual report of the Evaluation Office for 2024 and management commentaries, and reiterated support for the Office's independence, innovation, and strengthened capacity.

XV. UNFPA country programmes and related matters

136. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) presented the new country programme documents for Ethiopia (DP/FPA/CPD/ETH/10) and the extension of the country programme for South Africa (DP/FPA/2025/8). The UNFPA Regional Director for East and Southern Africa provided an overview of the Ethiopia country programme, highlighting its alignment with national priorities and the UNSDCF.

137. Speaking in his national capacity, the Vice-President of the Executive Board for the African Group, the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, expressed strong support for the new country programme and reaffirmed the Government's ownership and commitment to its successful implementation.

138. The Executive Board approved the UNFPA country programme document for Ethiopia (DP/FPA/CPD/ETH/10) and took note of the first six-month extension of the country programme for South Africa (DP/FPA/2025/8).

UNOPS segment

Statement by the UNOPS Executive Director

139. The UNOPS Executive Director presented the progress report on the implementation of the UNOPS restated Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, and outlined key milestones achieved under the Comprehensive Response Plan.

140. He reaffirmed the continued commitment of UNOPS to delivering practical solutions in response to global crises, including conflict, climate change, and humanitarian emergencies. The Executive Director noted that, in 2024, UNOPS implemented more than 1,100 projects across 130 countries, spanning infrastructure, procurement, emergency response and climate resilience. He drew attention to the situation in Gaza, where UNOPS, in collaboration with other entities, has been deploying critical humanitarian assistance. He also highlighted UNOPS contributions in Ukraine, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Myanmar, including efforts to strengthen health systems, support reconstruction and promote sustainable livelihoods.

141. The Executive Director further expressed UNOPS' commitment to transparency, accountability, and performance, noting that reform efforts aim not only to address past shortcomings but also to reposition UNOPS as a fit-for-purpose service provider within the United Nations development system.

142. The Executive Director highlighted progress made in leadership stabilization, internal oversight, and management systems, and emphasized the implementation of strengthened integrity and accountability measures. He noted that the Process Innovation and Digitalization (PID) Programme is intended to modernize enterprise systems and enhance data-driven decision-making. He called for sustainable, multi-year funding to support this transformation.

143. Reaffirming alignment with the UNSDCFs and support to United Nations country teams, the Executive Director reiterated UNOPS' commitment to system-wide coherence and emphasized the organization's comparative advantage in infrastructure and procurement. He expressed appreciation for Executive Board oversight, and continued Member State engagement.

144. A delegation welcomed the work of UNOPS in fragile contexts, including Gaza and Ukraine, and paid tribute to the dedication of personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty. The delegation commended the organization's efforts to fulfil its mandate and advance internal reforms, and encouraged the organization to maintain strong ethical standards, transparency, and alignment with the UN80 reform agenda.

145. A group of delegations welcomed the geographic reach of UNOPS, the scale of implementation in 2024—with a portfolio of over 1,100 projects across 130 countries—and the progress achieved on internal reforms. They called for continued efforts to strengthen results and impact measurement, increase local procurement, diversify financing sources, and deepen engagement across the African continent. Several delegations underscored the importance of internal justice mechanisms, whistleblower protection, and safeguarding the independence of oversight functions. Reference was made to issues identified by the IAIG that require continued attention.

146. Delegations expressed broad support for UNOPS maintaining its focus on its core mandate—project management, procurement, and infrastructure—and cautioned against any perceived expansion into policy or normative functions. They welcomed the third-party review findings and

emphasized that the forthcoming Strategic Plan should be informed by lessons learned, align with the General Assembly mandate and the guidance of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, and reflect a clear focus on complementarity and comparative advantage.

147. Delegations requested further clarity on how the next Strategic Plan would address key priorities, including digital transformation, gender equality, climate action and risk-informed programming. They encouraged inclusive consultations with the Executive Board and underscored the importance of coherence within the United Nations development system.

148. Delegations expressed support for the inclusion of UNOPS in the development cluster of the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative. They emphasized the importance of joint programming, system-wide efficiency, and coordination through the Resident Coordinator system. UNOPS was encouraged to share relevant lessons learned from its reform efforts to inform broader system-wide reforms.

149. In response, the Executive Director reiterated UNOPS' strong commitment to sustained reform and to translating structural improvements into operational results. He highlighted the issuance of the organization's first code of ethics, the strengthening of internal audit and ethics functions, and ongoing efforts to enhance staff redress mechanisms. He reaffirmed that UNOPS remains focused on implementation, rather than normative development policy or development financing functions.

150. The Executive Director also emphasized the organization's support for the Secretary-General's UN80 vision, citing its comparative advantage in local procurement and infrastructure delivery, particularly in fragile contexts. He reaffirmed UNOPS's readiness to deepen system-wide collaboration in support of Member States and United Nations partners, concluding with reaffirmation of UNOPS's accountability to the Executive Board.

151. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/19 on the progress report on the implementation of the UNOPS restated Strategic Plan, 2022-2025.

XVI. Formative Evaluation of the process innovation and digitalization programme

152. The Director of the UNOPS Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG) presented the formative evaluation of the Process Innovation and Digitalization (PID) Programme, as requested by the Executive Board in decision 2023/22. The evaluation assessed the programme's relevance, design, and early implementation, providing insights to inform its continued development.

153. The UNOPS Chief of Staff delivered the management response, reaffirming UNOPS commitment to implementing the evaluation's recommendations and ensuring the PID Programme remains aligned with reform objectives and organizational priorities.

154. No delegations took the floor in response.

155. The Executive Board adopted decision 2025/20 on the formative evaluation of the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme.
