



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

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**First regular session 2025**  
27 to 31 January 2025, New York  
Item 1 of the provisional agenda  
**Organizational matters**

**Report of the second regular session 2024  
(26 to 29 August 2024, New York)**

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## I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session 2024 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held from 26 to 29 August 2024.
2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its second regular session 2024 (DP/2024/L.3) and the report of the annual session 2024 (DP/2024/24). The Board took note of the draft annual workplan for 2025 (DP/2024/CRP.2).
3. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the annual session 2024 appeared in document DP/2024/25, made available on the [Executive Board website](#).
4. The Executive Board agreed in decision 2024/30 to the following schedule for sessions of the Executive Board in 2025:

First regular session:	27 to 31 January 2025
Annual session:	2 to 6 June 2025
Second regular session:	25 to 29 August 2025

### Statement by the Vice-President of the Executive Board

5. The Vice-President of the Executive Board, opening the session on behalf of the President, recognized the ongoing and rigorous efforts of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS in engaging with the Board and Member States. He commended their efforts to deliver on their mandates and noted that the Bureau of the Board is working to enhance the predictability of its activities to better support these organizations. He emphasized that thorough preparations and consultations for Board sessions reflect the value of the work of these organizations at the country level, benefitting billions of people. This focus, especially in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future, will help reaffirm and advance the shared mission and collective purpose.

## Joint segment

## II. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

6. The UNDP Associate Administrator, speaking on behalf of both UNDP and UNFPA, presented the comprehensive review of the joint cost-recovery policy and its implementation (DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2024/1).
7. Delegations called for annual consolidated reports on cost recovery, including detailed tables from each agency listing discounts, waivers and their corresponding financial impacts. They noted that discounted rates for thematic contributions had not significantly increased thematic resources and called for effective implementation at the country level. Delegations encouraged the inclusion of the rationale for direct costs in programme and project proposals, suggested exploring where costs related to oversight and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse could be included as direct costs, and requested further information on recurring challenges related to cost recovery at the country level. The comprehensive review recommended further refinements to cost categories and enhancements to direct costing, with a view to improving transparency and further ensuring full cost recovery. Proposed adjustments aim to enhance the collective impact and advance normative mandates.
8. In response, the UNDP Associate Administrator endorsed the call for more regular harmonized reporting, committing to transparency on cost recovery as guided by the Board and discussions with programme counterparts. He further noted that the UNDP integrated budget presented all cost recovery amounts and allocations. The UNDP Chief Financial Officer confirmed that when the Board adopts the joint cost-recovery policy, it would be integrated into the policy guidance of UNDP, accompanied by training.

9. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) reaffirmed the commitment of UNFPA to advocating for core resources and preventing core funds from subsidizing non-core projects. UNFPA would strictly apply the policy at the country level, ensuring that all direct costs are included in projects. The UNFPA Comptroller added that to minimize cross-subsidization, a new UNFPA requirement mandates additional review for any funding proposal above \$5 million to ensure direct costs are included.

10. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/24 on the comprehensive review of the joint cost-recovery policy and its implementation.

### **III. Update on the assessment of how the Executive Board executes its governance and oversight functions**

11. The President of the Executive Board provided an update on the assessment of how the Executive Board executes its governance and oversight functions, in line with decision 2024/12. Engagements with the Presidents of the Boards of the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women laid the groundwork for close collaboration and alignment among Bureaux in progressing on recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) assessment. A broader governance assessment will rely on the active participation of Member States in upcoming consultations to establish a working group. Furthermore, the President noted that each United Nations entity is requested to provide information notes in November 2024 to inform these consultations.

12. The President announced that the Bureaux would work with the regional groups to nominate members to the working group by early January 2025, ensuring equal representation. Draft terms of reference would be presented for adoption at the first regular session in 2025, with the working group providing regular updates thereafter. Formal sessions and decisions would maintain oversight and accountability for the report's recommendations, with progress updates included as a standing formal agenda item. A joint informal consultation with the JIU would be scheduled for mid-January 2025.

13. A group of delegations emphasized the wide-ranging implications of the JIU report, calling for careful consideration. They stressed the importance of well-informed and deliberate decisions, supporting an inclusive working group to guide the process. The group reaffirmed their commitment to a process paced to accommodate varying capacities.

14. A delegation referenced the 2022 reform of the World Food Programme Board, expressing hope for similar leadership and a meaningful reform of governance and oversight.

15. In response, the UNFPA Executive Director highlighted the information-gathering exercise initiated with decision 2024/12, which requested information notes from the management of the entities. She shared three key reflections: (a) it is crucial to consider the roles and responsibilities outlined by other United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly in resolution 48/162, which established the Executive Boards, and to ensure consistency with the United Nations Charter; (b) UNFPA encourages adopting lessons and best practices from other United Nations Executive Boards; and (c) it is important to assess whether existing mechanisms could achieve desired goals more effectively and to ensure capacities are in place to support new mechanisms sustainably and inclusively.

16. The UNDP Administrator echoed the UNFPA Executive Director's remarks, acknowledging an evolving context that requires both governance and management to align mechanisms, policies and procedures. UNDP remains committed to following the Board's further guidance.

17. The UNOPS Executive Director stressed the importance of aligning governance with international standards and practices and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Engagement with the Board enabled UNOPS to bridge high-level strategic directives and daily operations.

18. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/25 on the assessment of how the Executive Board executes its governance and oversight functions.

## **UNDP segment**

### **Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator**

19. In his [statement](#), the UNDP Administrator described the Summit of the Future as a critical opportunity to tackle current global challenges and chart a path forward. Despite numerous difficulties, the world holds great potential and opportunities, as highlighted in the recent UNDP Signals Report. The session's focus on financing underscored the need for collective action and co-investment in development.

20. The Administrator noted that, although UNDP represents only 1 per cent of financing for each Sustainable Development Goal, it remains a pillar of development cooperation through its ability to evolve continuously.<sup>1</sup> According to AidData's Listening to Leaders Survey, UNDP is the only United Nations organization consistently ranked among the top five development partners by leaders benefitting from its advice and assistance. This is noteworthy given that many top-ranked organizations are international financial institutions with larger budgets. Additionally, in 2023, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries contributed 39 per cent of direct contributions to UNDP, while programme countries contributed 25 per cent, reflecting trust in UNDP and the diversity of its funding sources.

21. Addressing the challenge of articulating the value of UNDP, the Administrator mentioned that while core funding declined to \$566 million in 2023, UNDP delivered \$4.8 billion in programmatic financing. Every dollar in core funding leveraged an additional \$11 in programme financing. The Administrator stressed that sustaining high performance requires continued investment in future-focused capabilities and a global presence. He highlighted that modern operations such as the new enterprise resources platform and the People for 2030 strategy were recognized for advancing corporate infrastructure and culture. The commitment of UNDP to improved efficiency, transparency and accountability, including through working closely with the Executive Board, has facilitated its position as a trusted partner.

22. Other examples of the added value of UNDP in investing in the spectrum of needs of countries were cited, such as its Sustainable Finance Hub, established with a \$10.3 million investment, which helped to catalyse over \$30 billion in development finance and align \$200 billion of investment with the Sustainable Development Goals. Notably, UNDP has supported the integrated national financing frameworks, which have become a major platform for policy reform. The Administrator pointed to similar initiatives such as the "timbuktoo" platform in Africa designed to support entrepreneurship, and UNDP leadership in supporting nationally determined contributions to climate action through the Climate Promise. Similar investments in development unlocked transformative support for digitalization, innovation and the UNDP offer on development in crisis.

23. UNDP remains a committed and key partner to the United Nations development system. All its country programmes are aligned with United Nations sustainable development cooperation frameworks, and it contributes the most in cost-sharing to the resident coordinator system. The Administrator also highlighted that core funding supports UNDP in hosting key system-wide entities – the United Nations Volunteers, United Nations Office on South-South Cooperation, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

24. In conclusion, the Administrator stated that UNDP was on track to deliver planned results, despite disruptions in the development context. However, setbacks in core funding put enormous stress on the organization. The Administrator acknowledged and appreciated that some countries have increased core funding, despite facing difficult times. With the uncertainties facing future development cooperation, UNDP is reflecting on its business model. He indicated that UNDP would conduct an "MRI" of current cost and revenue models to steer the organization towards sustainable financing and prepare for the organization's next strategic plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis of AidData, 2024. Listening to Leaders Global View.

25. An Executive Board Bureau member expressed concern about the decline in core funding while commending the ability of UNDP to continue to deliver on its mandate. Several delegations requested more information on the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, preparations for the next strategic plan, and the role of core resources in national ownership and sustainability; they expressed concern regarding low levels of finance for gender equality. Delegations encouraged contributions to softly earmarked funding modalities such as the funding windows and enquired how UNDP could bridge the digital divide and mobilize climate finance.

26. A group of delegations encouraged UNDP to focus on people-centred economic recovery, environmental protection and rebuilding social contracts. The delegations noted the crucial link between sufficient and predictable funding, strengthened partnerships and the ability of UNDP to deliver on its ambitious mandate. They praised progress on economic inclusion for women and youth as well as digitalization, and called for more funding for climate-resilient infrastructure and strengthened partnerships with regional organizations and economic communities. The delegations emphasized prioritizing poverty reduction, institution-building, social protection and sustainable livelihoods, with a focus on addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality.

27. Another group of delegations highlighted the shortfall in commitments from developed countries and expressed concern about the sustainability of the significant achievements of UNDP amid current funding trends. The criticality of Member States fulfilling their funding compact commitments so that UNDP and other entities could respond to rapidly changing development conditions was underlined. They emphasized the need for significant changes in the international financial architecture and equitable access to funding in crises. They requested UNDP to strengthen its support through integrated national financing frameworks, mobilize innovative financing and capitalize on digital innovations.

28. Delegations requested that the next strategic plan focus on high-impact development returns and enquired about the impact of a coordinated United Nations system at the country level. One delegation emphasized the need for a broader donor base, while others praised the cost recovery and efficiency improvements made by UNDP.

29. A delegation raised concerns about the impact of defunding the United Nations development system on the Sustainable Development Goals. Another stressed the need for more cost-effective development outcomes and urged the global community to maximize resources for sustained development investments.

30. A delegation called for active engagement with Member States in the timely business model review of UNDP and recommended complementing the Partners at Core campaign with efforts to engage key stakeholders, such as parliaments and the media.

31. A delegation praised the UNDP integrated approach to programming, its field presence and portfolio approach, indicating these as generating high development returns while enquiring about methods to evaluate effectiveness. Another delegation lauded the work of UNDP in social protection, public reforms, strengthened rule of law, efforts to consolidate peace and strengthen resilience, and stressed the importance of the multidimensional vulnerability index in supporting small island developing States.

32. Responding to delegations, the Administrator confirmed inclusive consultations on the strategic choices to be considered in the next UNDP strategic plan. He indicated significant efforts to make more explicit commitments to gender-focused activities in programme design and budgeting. The use of digital tools to enhance transparency and citizen engagement has led UNDP to look at its governance work through the lens of the technology frontier. He further noted that partnerships with international financial institutions were growing and expressed his expectations for advanced support from UNDP to countries, complementing funding from these institutions. He also reaffirmed the commitment of UNDP to supporting small island developing States and localization efforts.

33. On the nexus of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, the Administrator credited the Executive Board's measures for the high performance of UNDP. He suggested that these criteria

be used in evaluating value creation and investment choices.

34. The Administrator emphasized the need for integrated solutions amid a complex development landscape, calling for stronger outreach to taxpayers to link development efforts with their future. He viewed the upcoming international conference on financing for development as an opportunity to demonstrate that development cooperation is an investment in multilateralism.

35. The Administrator concluded by stating that the key to advancing development goals lies in collective action, where countries, regardless of wealth, become co-investors in the vision outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

**Thematic interactive dialogue: Working together to accelerate sustainable energy for development**

36. The President of the Executive Board introduced the thematic interactive dialogue, highlighting a just energy transition as a major global opportunity. He highlighted priorities, such as financial innovation, investment platforms and green industrialization, particularly through sectors such as artificial intelligence-managed energy solutions and data-driven energy policies. He commended the UNDP strategic plan for its focus on sustainable energy for development.

37. The UNDP Administrator underscored progress in energy access over the last 10 to 15 years and emphasized the importance of shifting to a sustainable development trajectory. UNDP efforts included a focus on affordable energy access and a just energy transition through renewable energy.

38. The Minister of Power of Nigeria outlined the energy challenges of the country, including the lack of access to reliable electricity for over 90 million Nigerians. He detailed the country's multipronged approach to tackling energy issues, noting the pivotal role of UNDP in providing technical assistance and capacity-building. The Government of Nigeria was leveraging both public and private sector funds, embracing technology and innovation, fast-tracking infrastructure development, and fostering strategic partnerships with investment and development partners.

39. The Minister of Industry, Energy and Mining of Uruguay detailed Uruguay's success in achieving 99.9 per cent electrification and a 90 per cent share of renewables in the energy mix. The Minister emphasized the need for continued international cooperation to support ongoing decarbonization efforts. The Government of Uruguay recognized the critical role of UNDP in helping to shift fossil fuel subsidies towards renewable energy and e-mobility. Continued support was critical to developing a robust global ecosystem, including international standards, for new markets, and to advance innovation and technologies, build strong capacity, promote investments, expand infrastructure and increase citizen dialogues.

40. The Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Moldova stressed the importance of justice in the energy transition, recounting how support from UNDP helped to reduce energy poverty and foster social acceptance of energy reforms. To support the most vulnerable, the Government of Moldova collaborated with UNDP to develop an energy vulnerability reduction fund, based on a partnership involving the Government, private sector, energy suppliers and citizens. Surveys found that the majority of the population viewed it as a just system, which was important given social polarization. The experience led to re-engineering other programmes based on similar approaches, such as a voucher for eco-appliances targeting poor households.

41. Following the presentations, delegations expressed concerns over the high initial investment cost of renewable energy projects and limited financing options, urging support for national energy development plans and better access to climate finance. Some delegations called for assistance from UNDP in building resilient energy infrastructure, promoting private sector engagement, and establishing mechanisms to de-risk renewable energy projects and provide investment guarantees.

42. Delegations emphasized that just transitions involve the creation of new opportunities, clean energy investments, ambitious nationally determined contributions and shared societal benefits. They also suggested increasing access to finance via multilateral development banks and a systems approach to understanding and overcoming barriers to clean energy adoption.

43. Responding to delegations, the Minister of Power of Nigeria emphasized the need for tailored

approaches for developing countries still reliant on fossil fuels. The financial burden of adopting green technologies and upgrading infrastructure was prohibitive for some countries, potentially diverting funds from critical sectors such as health care, education, agriculture and poverty alleviation. He called for support to leverage fossil fuel reserves for economic development while transitioning to cleaner alternatives. He noted that UNDP could support countries in developing robust policy frameworks that attract private investment in sustainable energy and remain aligned with national development.

44. The UNDP Administrator highlighted how core funding for the Sustainable Energy Hub was leveraged for national engagement and de-risking renewable energy markets. He reiterated that every country should participate in the energy revolution to prevent deepening inequalities and ensure a just energy transition.

45. The President of the Executive Board concluded by stating that while challenges remain, the opportunities from a just energy transition were significant and within reach, through shared commitment and collective impact.

#### **IV. UNDP structured funding dialogue**

46. The UNDP Associate Administrator presented the structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2024/26 and its annexes), while the Executive Secretary of UNCDF presented the annual review of the financial situation of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, 2023 (DP/2024/27).

47. A group of delegations emphasized the importance of flexible, sustainable and predictable funding for United Nations entities to achieve their mandates and the Sustainable Development Goals. They voiced concerns over decreasing core contributions and requested continued emphasis on ongoing efforts to increase accountability and transparency as a foundation of trust. It was further emphasized that there is a collective need to ensure effective risk management, improved evidence-based communication, and increased visibility and incentives for core funding. The group stressed that core functions at UNDP should be funded by core funding, rather than fragmented funding through funding windows and other streams. They also called for broader donor bases, increased thematic and flexible funding, and collaboration with resident coordinators to ensure inclusive country-level dialogues, including with partner governments and contributors. They appreciated efforts towards continuous improvements and the yearly dialogues on funding, and requested updates on results achieved through innovative financing efforts.

48. A delegation highlighted the business case for core funding, noting its critical role in enabling UNDP to be agile, innovative and responsive to emerging crises while maintaining transparency and accountability. The delegation requested sufficient time to consider the business model review, and further asked for details on how UNDP planned to apply the multidimensional vulnerability index. Another delegation queried how the approach to reversing the decline in core contributions differed from previous efforts.

49. In response, the UNDP Associate Administrator pointed to the robust risk management framework at UNDP, citing the role of core funds in accountability and crisis response, such as recent investments in anti-money laundering. He acknowledged that resource competition among United Nations entities is a structural complexity and raised the potential need for consolidation. Core resources below a certain level would affect programmes, including crisis response. Other concerns related to sustaining high levels of effectiveness and transparency, increased workloads on staff and the ability to sufficiently deliver on expectations.

50. The Director of the UNDP Bureau for Programme and Policy Support stated that the multidimensional vulnerability index would be integrated into the next programmatic offer, potentially influencing concessional finance decisions, and that UNDP would advocate for its adoption by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and others.

51. A delegation expressed concern about the overall financial situation of UNCDF and declining

core contributions, despite non-core resource growth. It urged increased involvement from UNCDF in financing for development, particularly in mobilizing private finance and de-risking investments in high-risk environments.

52. The Executive Secretary of UNCDF noted that while non-core resources had tripled, the dominance of non-core funding remained a key challenge. He emphasized that core resources remained essential for leveraging non-core investments, particularly in supporting the least developed countries and in challenging markets.

53. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/26 on the structured funding dialogue on financing the results of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025.

## **V. UNDP country programmes and related matters**

54. The UNDP Associate Administrator presented an overview of the new UNDP country programme documents for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Ukraine, and the extensions for the country programmes for Myanmar and Yemen.

55. The regional directors for Africa, the Arab States, and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States provided details from their regional perspectives.

56. The Executive Board approved, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, the country programme documents for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DP/DCP/COD/4), Djibouti (DP/DCP/DJI/4), Namibia (DP/DCP/NAM/4), Sierra Leone (DP/DCP/SLE/5) and Ukraine (DP/DCP/UKR/4).

57. It took note of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Yemen and approved the third one-year extension of the country programme for Myanmar (DP/2024/21).

## **UNFPA segment**

### **Statement by the UNFPA Executive Director**

58. In her [statement](#), the Executive Director highlighted the focus of UNFPA on building a future for women and girls in all their diversities ahead of the Summit of the Future. She referenced key events marking the thirtieth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), including dialogues on demographic resilience, technology and youth leadership. The future approach of UNFPA will involve forging new partnerships, driving innovation, exploring financing options and leveraging technology to advance rights and choices for all.

59. UNFPA is adapting to a changing world, notably by implementing a headquarters optimization process, including the creation of a new integrated programme division and an external relations division. The new programme division will aim to break silos, enhance knowledge management, and strengthen foresight and analytics, with a phased move to Nairobi planned for 2025. The external relations division, based in New York, will improve engagement with intergovernmental and interagency processes. UNFPA has strengthened supply chain functions, including by repositioning supply chain specialists in regional offices and expanding third-party procurement services.

60. Emphasizing accountability, transparency and integrity, the Executive Director noted investments in oversight, ethical awareness and risk management, and underlined the commitment of UNFPA to zero tolerance for any form of wrongdoing by any staff member, no matter their grade. UNFPA launched a strategy on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, backed by a dedicated professional team, to embed safety, respect and accountability across all business units and partnerships.

61. UNFPA continues to champion technology as a force for good while actively combating digital violence. The Executive Director stressed the importance of ending all forms of violence,



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highlighting the recent upholding of a ban on female genital mutilation in the Gambia. She condemned the pushback against women's rights, reproductive rights, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) rights, calling for bold advocacy in addressing growing inequalities, crises and economic challenges.

62. Partnerships are key to the achievements of UNFPA, with 2023 marking the seventh consecutive year of UNFPA surpassing \$1 billion in funding, including over \$1.4 billion in total funding. However, core funding continues to decline, falling to 27 per cent of total resources. Humanitarian needs rose, accounting for 43 per cent of non-core funding, yet the 2024 global humanitarian appeal for \$1.2 billion was only 18 per cent funded. UNFPA remains concerned about the future of core funding as it prepares for the next strategic plan cycle. UNFPA welcomed the funding compact 2.0 and stands ready to engage with United Nations partners and Member States to take this forward.

63. UNFPA continues to address challenges from conflicts, the climate crisis and attacks on women's rights. It provides life-saving sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services in complex emergencies while raising awareness of the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on women and girls. The Executive Director reaffirmed the commitment of UNFPA to reproductive freedom and the right of individuals to make decisions about their own bodies, as envisioned in the United Nations Charter.

64. The UNFPA Regional Director for West and Central Africa highlighted significant advances in education, health and sexual and reproductive health benefitting millions of women, girls and young people. However, security challenges in the Sahel and the effects of climate change continue to exacerbate vulnerabilities and inequalities, requiring a collective response and adequate core funding.

65. An Executive Board Bureau member emphasized the importance of Member States upholding funding commitments. Acknowledging progress since the ICPD, a delegate commended the efforts of UNFPA to leverage additional resources through innovative funding mechanisms while managing associated risks. Another delegate requested updates on the work of UNFPA on youth, peace, and security, and on improving outreach to remote, disaster-affected communities.

66. A group of delegations praised the efforts of UNFPA to combat maternal mortality and morbidity, harmful practices and unequal access to family planning. They called for coordinated action on inequalities, especially at the Summit of the Future and the Fourth Conference on Financing for Development. The group welcomed the optimization of the UNFPA headquarters process and urged continued investment in health infrastructure, human resources and emergency preparedness, especially for vulnerable populations. They appreciated support for women-led organizations in humanitarian contexts and the emphasis on localization.

67. Delegations stressed that optimization efforts must also address the needs of ageing societies, emphasizing demographic resilience and diversity. They commended the work of UNFPA on climate, emergency preparedness and data optimization, and urged continued advocacy for women's rights amid global pushbacks. Delegations requested more information on how UNFPA would incorporate ICPD commemorative events takeaways and implement the United Nations LGBTIQ+ strategy. They supported a policy emphasizing South-South cooperation and appreciated the results of the joint programme to combat female genital mutilation.

68. Concerns were raised regarding the continued dependency on a few major donors, but delegations welcomed ongoing efforts to diversify funding, including through domestic resource mobilization and partnerships with international financial institutions and the private sector. Delegations called for strengthened governance and oversight functions to restore confidence and reverse the decline in core funding. They also sought information on how UNFPA would address gaps in family planning and preventable maternal death.

69. In response to delegations, the Executive Director reiterated that core resources are critical for agility in crises, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. She highlighted the importance of risk management and dialogue with the Executive Board in shaping high-yield strategies,

particularly those prioritizing adolescents and youth as powerful change agents. Recent youth dialogues revealed enthusiasm for human rights, gender equality and climate resilience, offering opportunities for intergenerational engagement.

70. Support from UNFPA to countries on demographic resilience includes the needs of ageing and low fertility populations. Future work will focus on demographic resilience, expanded research and targeted data analysis to identify those left behind. The climate efforts of UNFPA integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and population issues into adaptation and resilience strategies. Advancing women's rights, health and education contributes to cohesive societies, stronger economies and resilient families.

71. The Executive Director concluded by stressing that a stronger multilateral system and greater partnerships are key to ensuring the ICPD Programme of Action remains central to sustainable development and the rights of women and girls.

### **Thematic interactive dialogue: Addressing inequalities to achieve the ICPD programme of action**

72. The President of the Executive Board opened the thematic interactive dialogue reflecting on the thirtieth anniversary of the ICPD, which established sexual and reproductive health and rights as essential to global development. He praised the progress made, including a 20 per cent drop in unintended pregnancies and increased contraceptive use, but noted stagnation in areas such as gender-based violence, maternal health and family planning. To advance the ICPD agenda, he emphasized targeting the most marginalized women and youth.

73. The UNFPA Executive Director highlighted that despite advancements, inequalities persist. She stressed the importance of prioritizing those furthest left behind, including through the collection and use of disaggregated data.

74. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health discussed the ongoing impact of racism and discrimination in health care. Despite progress in equality and anti-discrimination laws, racist, exploitative practices continue to affect global health financing, foreign policy and the aid sector, hindering the ICPD agenda. She called for accountability, justice and reparations for health rights violations, urging all stakeholders to uphold human rights and ensure the highest attainable standard of health for all.

75. The President of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics addressed demographic inequalities and the need for updated public policies. He cited studies in Brazil, especially on indigenous and marginalized communities, which promoted public debates and strengthened policies across sectors. Technology has helped expose demographic realities more effectively.

76. A youth delegate emphasized that young people seek meaningful participation to challenge norms and create solutions on their own terms, such as through peer-to-peer partnerships. The recent youth dialogue highlighted challenges to health-care access, including high out-of-pocket health costs, and the need for third-party consent and other legal restrictions. The delegate recommended support for community-building to empower youth and provide opportunities, among other recommendations.

77. The UNFPA Director of the Programme Division described the focus of UNFPA on leaving no one behind as a core priority in its current strategic plan, with a marker tracking programme expenditure. UNFPA promoted disaggregated data to enhance the visibility of marginalized groups and supported governments in identifying gaps based on ethnicity and race. Addressing entrenched social and gender norms that disproportionately disadvantage women and girls remains critical.

78. In response to the panellists, a delegation enquired about addressing exclusion due to harmful social norms and stigma to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services. It also asked about mobile applications to gather disaggregated data, including from remote communities. The delegation emphasized the role of midwives in reaching more people, called for investment in data platforms and highlighted the potential of digital health technologies to connect rural patients with specialized health-care providers. It also sought examples of programmes linking health services

with livelihoods, education and social protection to address multiple inequalities.

79. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Health reiterated that health-care workers are human rights defenders, emphasizing that data analysis should influence policy.

80. The President of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics raised concerns about the global reduction in funding for statistics, noting the rise in misinformation and the concentration of data in the private sector.

81. The youth delegate described working with marginalized groups through the global youth dialogue to address stigma and promote a human rights-based approach to technology to counter hate speech and online discrimination.

82. The UNFPA Director of the Programme Division reaffirmed the value of midwives and underscored the need to invest in civil registration and vital statistics as crucial for informed decision-making on what works, for whom and where.

## **VI. UNFPA structured funding dialogue**

83. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) and the UNFPA Director of the Division of External Relations presented the report on the structured funding dialogue, 2023-2024 (DP/FPA/2024/11).

84. A group of delegations emphasized that flexible, sustainable and predictable funding is essential for United Nations entities to deliver on their mandates and the Sustainable Development Goals, and to maintain strong internal oversight. They expressed concern about decreasing core contributions and called for increased accountability and transparency to build trust. Key priorities included effective risk management, evidence-based communication, and enhanced visibility and incentives for core funding. The group sought insights into challenges posed by declining core funding, how UNFPA shares lessons and strategies to reduce funding competition. They stressed the importance of funding core functions with core resources, expanding the donor base and diversifying funding streams. They also enquired about incentives for thematic and flexible funding and progress on private-sector and philanthropic resources, and urged UNFPA to fully implement the funding compact and collaborate with resident coordinators. They appreciated the ongoing funding dialogues and efforts.

85. A delegation highlighted that the case for core funding is strong as it allows UNFPA to remain agile, innovative, transparent and accountable while adhering to internationally agreed principles. The delegation asked how UNFPA: (a) ensures a balanced distribution of resources across its three transformative results areas and whether the current balance is optimal; (b) is advancing its domestic financing agenda; and (c) approaches the multidimensional vulnerability index.

86. Another delegation called for a reaffirmation of the goals behind the multidimensional vulnerability index and a commitment to strengthening structured funding. It recommended further investment in non-discriminatory artificial intelligence-facilitated data collection to ensure equitable achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. A delegation also enquired about the status of the adolescent sexual and reproductive health development impact bond launched by UNFPA.

87. In response to delegations, the UNFPA Director of the Division of External Relations noted that risk management and transparency remained priorities and had been enhanced. Communications had improved, effectively demonstrating results and the value proposition of UNFPA. Funding from other United Nations entities remains the largest funding source for UNFPA, highlighting the importance of collaboration. UNFPA is on track with expenditures for its three transformative results. Investment cases have been critical for securing domestic resources, and contributions to core resources from programme countries have increased. The metrics on the development impact bond are promising, with interest from three additional countries. UNFPA will continue to update the Board on innovative financing modalities.

88. The UNFPA Director of the Programme Division emphasized that core funding is vital for maintaining normative work. A decline in core funding could hinder this capacity, which is particularly concerning as the UNFPA mandate is becoming increasingly sensitive in more countries. She anticipated the multidimensional vulnerability index would be included in the new strategic plan. UNFPA will continue ensuring alignment with the best data and focus on the areas of greatest need.

89. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) noted the impact of declining core funds on humanitarian work. While there has been a significant increase in humanitarian funding, it has mostly come through tightly earmarked resources, concentrated in a few countries. Many humanitarian contexts remain underfunded and depend on core resources to help address humanitarian needs.

90. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/27 on the report on the UNFPA structured funding dialogue, 2023-2024.

## **VII. UNFPA country programmes and related matters**

91. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) presented an overview of the new UNFPA country programme documents for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Ukraine, and the extensions for the country programmes for Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Liberia, Mexico, Myanmar, the Republic of Congo and Yemen.

92. The regional directors for the Arab States, East and Southern Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and West and Central Africa provided details from their regional perspectives.

93. The Executive Board approved, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, the UNFPA country programme documents for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DP/FPA/CPD/COD/6), Djibouti (DP/FPA/CPD/DJI/6), Namibia (DP/FPA/CPD/NAM/7), Sierra Leone (DP/FPA/CPD/SLE/8) and Ukraine (DP/FPA/CPD/UKR/4).

94. It also took note of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Cuba, Liberia, Mexico and Yemen. It approved the first two-year extension of the country programme for the Republic of Congo, the third one-year extension of the country programme for Myanmar and the fourth one-year extension of the country programme for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DP/FPA/2024/12).

### **UNOPS segment**

## **VIII. Statement by the UNOPS Executive Director**

95. The UNOPS Executive Director presented an update on the comprehensive response plan in response to the recommendations of the two independent third-party reviews of UNOPS, including the terms of reference for the external third-party review at the end of the implementation period of the comprehensive response plan (DP/OPS/2024/10); the implementation strategy for the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme; and an update on the approximate amount of remaining undisbursed funds. He also presented the annual statistical report on the procurement activities of United Nations system organizations, 2023 (DP/OPS/2024/9).

96. In his [statement](#), the Executive Director highlighted the continued focus of UNOPS on project implementation aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, climate action and peace and security, emphasizing their impact on the ground, particularly in crisis settings.

97. The reform agenda of UNOPS, under the guidance of the Executive Board, is nearing completion. Of 43 recommendations in the comprehensive response plan, only three remain to be addressed with finalization expected in 2024. One key initiative, the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme, is planned to extend to 2027. He reaffirmed the commitment of UNOPS

to delivering on the remaining recommendations.

98. A second external third-party review on the implementation of the comprehensive response plan is planned for early 2025. The Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme aims to streamline and digitalize processes, enhance decision-making and improve resource management. The ongoing review of processes and systems is expected to enhance enterprise resource planning systems and specialized systems in human resources, procurement, finance and project management. UNOPS has also made significant progress on resolving the matter of excess reserves, settling over 93 per cent of the total, which is more than \$115 million.

99. The Executive Director noted that ongoing reforms had improved staff morale and commitment. Last year, UNOPS signed 300 new engagements, reflecting increased interest from partners. A forthcoming third-party review will assess partner satisfaction and help shape the next strategic plan.

100. Procurement was emphasized as crucial to addressing development challenges, including job creation, inequality and climate action. Public procurement, in particular, offers opportunities for sustainable development and reducing carbon emissions.

101. In response to the Executive Director, an Executive Board Bureau member stressed the importance of receiving adequate and consistent information on the status of implementation of all recommendations and welcomed the second external review as integral to full accountability and transparency. Some delegates highlighted the role of UNOPS in improving humanitarian operations, regional climate resilience and capacity-building for national institutions. Others stressed that while progress had been made on the reform journey, it was not yet complete; they highlighted the need for a cautious approach to the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme. Delegations requested insights on remaining areas of focus under the current Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, and key challenges for the next strategic plan.

102. A group of delegations urged UNOPS to prioritize capacity-building, knowledge transfer and job creation for youth, and emphasized inclusive digital solutions to bridge the digital divide and promote economic empowerment. They expressed concern about the slow pace of digitalization as hindering the ability of UNOPS to respond to emerging development challenges. They acknowledged the enhanced commitment to transparency and accountability, as well as efforts to strengthen the UNOPS governance structure; however, they expressed reservations about capacity gaps that limit effective project delivery and knowledge-sharing with partners. They urged UNOPS to address these challenges and to prioritize sustainable procurement and project management for maximum impact. They also referred to effective strategies to address pressing needs amid debt concerns and encouraged innovative ways to mobilize private capital for infrastructure development in the most vulnerable countries.

103. A group of delegations praised the reforms of UNOPS and called for continued efforts towards full accountability, which would ensure a more inclusive and trustworthy UNOPS embedded firmly in the United Nations development system. They highlighted their expectations for the forthcoming review to be in-depth and independent, and to outline clearly where reforms had been successfully implemented and where continued action was still required. They stressed that full accountability and recovery of lost funds remained a priority. Although the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme is projected to run until 2027, it should be included in the review to assess progress and provide insights for implementation.

104. A delegation stressed the importance of increasing developing country participation in procurement. Another delegation requested updates on the revised whistleblower policy, underscoring that the policy is to be presented to the Board no later than the first regular session of 2025. Delegations noted the lack of clarity in the staff rebalancing exercise, with indications that some contract staff were performing core functions. UNOPS was urged to adopt the new United Nations LGBTIQ+ strategy, with a request for further information on implementation plans.

105. In response to delegations, the Executive Director highlighted the strengthened accountability of UNOPS through ethics, investigation, risk management and the oversight of the Executive

Board. He mentioned ongoing efforts beyond the comprehensive response plan, including initiatives in organizational culture; project, programme and portfolio management; and digitalization. He also noted the priority of addressing climate and environmental issues and leveraging cross-country collaboration.

106. The Executive Director acknowledged the risks in the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme, including funding, value for money, oversimplification and insufficient stakeholder engagement, and emphasized regular engagement with Member States. UNOPS would deliver draft financial rules and regulations by late 2024, as outlined in the comprehensive response plan. He welcomed the focus on technical assistance and capacity-building, especially in addressing implementation gaps.

107. Enhanced data collection and reporting would support the next strategic plan, with efforts to improve indicators and insights. Progress was being made on the LGBTQI+ strategy, with a revised diversity, equity and inclusion strategy underway. The updated whistleblower protection system, including a central portal and a workplace conduct team, would be launched before the next Board session in January 2025. He also noted that 200 consultants had been converted to staff through a gradual process to balance financial sustainability and project management continuity.

108. The UNOPS Director of Procurement described efforts to work with Governments on public procurement capacity-building and to increase local supplier participation, promoting more sustainable products and services.

109. The Executive Board adopted decision 2024/28 on the comprehensive response plan in response to the recommendations of the two independent third-party reviews of UNOPS and decision 2024/29 on the annual statistical report on the procurement activities of United Nations system organizations, 2023.

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