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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Organizational matters

Report of the first regular session 2026
(2 to 5 February 2026, New York)

Contents

I. Organizational matters

1. The first regular session 2026 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held from 2 to 5 February 2026.

2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its first regular session 2026 (DP/2026/L.1), and adopted the report of the second regular session 2025 (DP/2026/1).

3. The decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 2026 are contained in document DP/2026/12, available on the Executive Board website.

4. The Executive Board approved the tentative workplan for the annual session 2026 to guide its discussions and decision-making.

5. The Board adopted the annual workplan for 2026 (DP/2026/CRP.1), which included the following schedule of sessions:

First regular session, 2–5 February 2026

Annual session, 8–11 June 2026

Second regular session, 24–28 August 2026

Statement by the President of the Board

6. The President of the Executive Board opened the session, noting the challenging global environment and a fragile financial context. He emphasized the Board's role in providing strategic guidance, oversight and accountability for the development agenda. Referring to the UN80 initiative launched by the Secretary-General, he noted that Member States' views would inform discussions, and underscored the importance of reflecting on the future development architecture while continuing to support the entities in implementing their mandates. The President welcomed the responsiveness of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to Member State engagement and indicated that the Board would build on those inputs in its deliberations. He also reiterated his commitment to maintaining an open-door approach, including through convening formal and informal settings as needed.

Joint segment

II. Engagement with the UN80 initiative

7. The Deputy Secretary-General introduced the UN80 initiative, describing it as the Secretary-General's blueprint to ensure that the United Nations remains fit for purpose, credible in its use of resources and relevant to the people it serves, in a context of declining trust, rising conflict and stalled development progress. She noted that UN80 aimed to strengthen system-wide coherence, address duplication, modernize business models and improve alignment with national priorities. She emphasized that Member States had a central role in shaping reforms and noted the responsibility of Executive Board members in ensuring that General Assembly reform directions translate into change within the entities. She referred to two potential mergers under assessment: UNDP with UNOPS, and UNFPA with UN-Women.

8. The Deputy Secretary-General stated that the initiative was not about changing or reopening mandates, nor about "fixing what is not broken", but about strengthening impact and delivery at scale, including by unlocking funding opportunities. She emphasized that the process was ongoing and consultative, including engagement with staff, civil society and Member States, and that Member States would ultimately decide on any structural changes.

9. The UNDP Administrator framed UN80 as a delivery-driven agenda aimed at strengthening trust in multilateralism through results. He stated that reform should be assessed against whether it strengthens efficiency, accountability, agility and impact, and stressed that reform was a means to protect and improve delivery across peace, security and development mandates. He noted UNDP's engagement across 14 UN80 work packages and its support for the Secretary-General's reform momentum.

10. Regarding a UNDP–UNOPS merger, the Administrator stated that the assessment should address whether a single end-to-end development entity would add value for Member States by combining UNDP's development mandate and integrator role with UNOPS' implementation capacity. He noted that any merger would involve significant risks, including potential mandate dilution, disruption to delivery, and legal, financial, people and organizational culture risks, and therefore required a rigorous, data-driven cost-benefit and risk analysis, including consideration of different pathways and options, potentially supported by independent analysis. He also noted that, irrespective of the outcome of the merger assessment, UNDP and UNOPS could pursue "quick wins" to enhance collaboration and reduce fragmentation, while ensuring continuity of delivery.

11. The UNFPA Executive Director expressed support for UN80, underlining that for UNFPA, UN80 is not about protecting institutions, but about protecting rights, delivering better for those furthest behind, and accelerating progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. She noted UNFPA's engagement across UN80 workstreams and emphasized the importance of safeguarding UNFPA's technical, programmatic and normative functions in light of demographic shifts, crises and increased demand for services.

12. The Executive Director referred to a draft assessment of a potential merger with UN-Women, highlighting key benefits and risks emerging from the exercise, prepared at the request of the Secretary-General. She emphasized that any reform should safeguard mandates, protect life-saving operations and preserve core principles. The Executive Director also underlined that any decisions will be taken by Member States and UNFPA looks forward to consultations with the Board, civil society and other partners.

13. The UNOPS Executive Director emphasized the need for a new international development architecture able to reduce fragmentation and improve coherence across policy, finance and delivery, stating that the current development model required updating and that UN80 provided an opportunity to build on what works. He expressed support for assessing the potential merger between UNDP and UNOPS and noted that a recent technical overview could inform Member States' consideration, including in relation to operating models, organizational cultures and their compatibility. He indicated that the assessment work had focused on data collection and the current configuration of the two organizations, to clarify complementarities, overlaps and potential synergies. He stressed that, in any potential merger, the mandates and distinct added value of each organization should be preserved and, where possible, maximized.

14. The UNOPS Executive Director highlighted elements of UNOPS's operational model that he considered important to preserve, including its fee-for-service approach with full cost recovery, focus on implementation, delivering infrastructure, procurement and project management services in fragile contexts. He cited UNOPS' delivery scale and partner satisfaction indicators and noted its cost-recovery fee structure. He stated that preserving UNOPS' model was important both in a potential merged configuration and, more broadly, in strengthening delivery across the United Nations development system.

15. A Bureau member expressed support for UN80 and emphasized the importance of clarity, a clear roadmap, coherence across parallel reform processes, transparency, step-by-step implementation and a focus on results, human rights and gender equality.

16. Three groups of countries took the floor. The first group acknowledged the efforts of country-level teams and emphasized the need for an efficient, coordinated, coherent United Nations development system, including by accelerating previously agreed measures, expanding joint administrative platforms, addressing incentive structures and upholding normative mandates, including human rights and gender equality.

17. A second group expressed support for UN80 and emphasized the importance of evidence-based, transparent and inclusive consultations to preserve mandates and strengthen coherence, accountability and effectiveness, and ensure tangible results at the country level.

18. A third group of countries stressed that Member States should remain central to decision-making. They emphasized the need to safeguard development mandates, ensure transparency and meaningful consultation, and prioritize outcomes aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and national development strategies.

19. Individual delegations expressed support for strengthening coherence and efficiency, while emphasizing the need for comprehensive, evidence-based assessments and risk analysis, and full protection of mandates. Delegations requested further information on timelines, legal frameworks and financial implications, including transition costs and potential efficiency gains. Several delegations underscored the Executive Boards' governance role in reviewing and recommending proposed structural changes within their remit.

20. In response, the UNDP Administrator highlighted the importance of a risk-based, scenario-driven approach to potential mergers, supported by independently audited data and noted the need to maximize the coordination value of the resident coordinator system while adapting to local contexts.

21. The UNOPS Executive Director emphasized that any potential merger should be assessed holistically within the broader UN80 reform agenda, with a focus on delivering impact at scale. He underscored the need for an inclusive, evidence-based process that preserves mandates and safeguards UNOPS' fee-for-service model, while assuring the Board that delivery would continue uninterrupted throughout the reform process.

22. The Deputy Secretary-General acknowledged the feedback from delegations and reaffirmed that mandates would be protected and that the reform process was not intended to reopen them. She emphasized that the Secretariat would need to present how risks would be mitigated, alongside continued consultations and evidence-based analysis, and reiterated the importance of ongoing engagement with Member States, including through Executive Board processes.

23. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/2.

III. Recommendations of the Board of Auditors

24. The Chair of the Audit Operations Committee of the United Nations Board of Auditors presented the audit findings for 2024 covering UNDP, UNCDF, UNOPS and UNFPA. He reported that the Board had issued unqualified audit opinions on the financial statements of all four entities. He highlighted key findings, including observations related to UNDP's medical insurance framework, cooperation with other United Nations entities and crisis procedures; UNCDF's accounting controls and institutional visibility; UNOPS' infrastructure project governance, contingent liabilities, and direct contracting practices; and UNFPA's supply chain governance, ICT project management and documentation of cash transfers.

25. Representatives of the entities introduced their respective reports on the status of implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2024 (DP/2026/3; DP/FPA/2026/2; DP/OPS/2026/1; DP/2026/4). They provided updates on implementation rates, oversight enhancements, structural reforms and internal control measures undertaken in response to audit findings.

26. One delegation commended the entities for receiving unqualified opinions and encouraged full and timely implementation of all outstanding recommendations. Another delegation expressed concern regarding weaknesses identified in financial management, infrastructure governance, procurement practices and reserve methodologies. It stressed the need for immediate corrective action, strict oversight, clear timelines, measurable outcomes and full disclosure, and indicated that systemic failures must be addressed without delay.

27. Management from the entities provided their responses to these queries. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Management Services outlined actions taken to strengthen internal controls, crisis response procedures, integrator functions and financial oversight, including progress in implementing audit recommendations. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Management described restructuring of the supply chain management unit, system upgrades and strengthened oversight and compliance frameworks. The UNOPS Chief Financial Officer provided clarifications regarding the infrastructure project cited in the audit, the establishment of the Portfolio Oversight Committee, treasury structural reforms and procurement controls. The UNCDF Executive Secretary confirmed the status of implementation of prior recommendations and provided timelines for closure of outstanding recommendations.

28. Representatives of the Board of Auditors provided additional clarifications, including observations on shared services governance, infrastructure project oversight, reserve calculation methodology and recurring procurement exceptions. They indicated that follow-up reviews would continue during subsequent audit cycles.

29. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/1.

IV. Risk management

30. Representatives of the entities presented updates on enterprise risk management (ERM) systems and principal risks of strategic importance, pursuant to prior Executive Board decisions.

31. The UNDP Associate Administrator and Chief Risk Officer emphasized that risk management is embedded

across all lines of defense and supports decision-making in complex operational environments. He identified six principal risks: financial sustainability; reputational risks related to fraud, misconduct and safeguard violations; escalating crises and climate events; technological threats, including cybersecurity and misinformation; potential operational risks associated with United Nations reform processes; and declining confidence in multilateralism. He outlined mitigation measures including strengthened oversight, updated information security frameworks, structured escalation mechanisms and engagement in reform workstreams.

32. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Management reported that UNFPA had advanced its ERM system from compliance-based monitoring towards a more strategic and data-driven approach integrated with its enterprise system. He identified key risks including sustained underfunding, geopolitical instability, political pressures affecting mandate implementation and uncertainties linked to reform processes. He emphasized that risk management supports delivery and includes adaptive approaches, including humanitarian “no-regrets” mechanisms and strengthened oversight of implementing partners.

33. The UNOPS Chief Financial Officer described improvements in corporate and portfolio risk oversight, including the establishment of the Portfolio Oversight Committee, enhancement of the UNOPS Accountability Framework, refinement of corporate risk metrics and further institutionalization of risk appetite. He identified critical risks related to workplace culture and morale, challenges facing the multilateral - system, reform -related uncertainty and financial constraints affecting operational readiness.

34. A group of delegations, speaking on behalf of African members of the Board, emphasized that risk management should enable delivery rather than constrain operational space, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. They underscored the need to safeguard mandates, institutional capacity and national ownership, and stressed that risk management should not become an end in itself.

35. Another group of delegations welcomed progress in strengthening ERM systems and highlighted three cross-cutting priorities: clarification and operationalization of risk appetite; strengthening risk culture and accountability; and robust data controls and assurance systems. They requested information on how risks related to ongoing UN80 reform initiatives would be systematically integrated into risk assessments and reported to the Executive Board.

36. In response, the UNDP Associate Administrator reaffirmed that risk management is intended to support results delivery and described mechanisms for escalation, accountability and whistleblower protection. He indicated that risks related to UN80 reform processes were under review and would be assessed within existing governance frameworks. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Management reiterated that risk management enables informed engagement rather than risk avoidance. He described structured risk committees, oversight arrangements and adaptive operational tools used to balance delivery and accountability. The UNOPS Chief Financial Officer emphasized that risk governance reforms, including strengthened oversight committees and clearer decision principles, were intended to enhance accountability while supporting operational effectiveness.

37. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/4.

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

38. A representative of the Joint Working Group of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women presented an update on follow-up to recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit concerning governance and oversight functions. He reported that discussions included the potential establishment of standing subcommittees and that further interviews and questionnaire reviews were underway. Preliminary observations were expected at the annual session 2026, with a final report expected at the second regular session 2026.

39. A group of delegations welcomed progress and encouraged accelerated implementation of selected measures, including the possible establishment of budget and oversight committees, strengthened self-assessment mechanisms and enhanced onboarding processes. Another group called for further analysis of more complex recommendations before decisions were taken.

40. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/3.

VI. Organizational culture

41. Representatives of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS presented updates on organizational culture initiatives. The Chair of the Staff Council for UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN-Women also addressed the Board.

42. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Management Services described the implementation of the People for 2030 strategy as a phased organizational culture transformation focused on strengthening a safe, inclusive and high-performing workplace grounded in United Nations values. She outlined measures including leadership development, strengthened accountability frameworks, enhanced listening mechanisms, confidential reporting channels and culture measurement tools. She referred to engagement and inclusion indicators exceeding external benchmarks and to the development of a People Index designed to link staff experience with programme delivery outcomes. She also highlighted efforts to reinforce gender parity, leadership accountability and institutional learning.

43. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Management described organizational culture as a strategic enabler of mandate delivery. He referred to progress reflected in global staff survey follow-up actions, high performance appraisal completion rates, strengthened accountability mechanisms and EDGE certification on gender equality. He emphasized investments in leadership development, innovation, diversity and inclusion and a reinforced oversight system aimed at sustaining a resilient and high-performing organizational environment.

44. The UNOPS Director of the People and Culture Group described the implementation of a comprehensive culture work plan, comprising over 50 completed initiatives. She highlighted strengthened leadership accountability including diversity, equity and inclusion objectives and culture engagement indicators, supported by targeted learning and regular 360-degree feedback processes and behavioral performance assessments. She also highlighted the launch of UNOPS’ first Code of Ethics, a new Integrity Portal and whistleblower mechanism, and participation in ClearCheck 2.0. She stated that the approach had moved from diagnosis to systemic reform fully aligned with United Nations values, including gender parity objectives and improved geographic representation at all levels.

45. The Chair of the Staff Council described a workforce experiencing significant strain due to financial reductions, mandate pressures and reform processes. She raised concerns regarding workforce reductions, increased reliance on non-staff contracts, relocations and restructuring processes, which she indicated were affecting morale, institutional memory and delivery capacity. She called for transparent communication, evidence-based decision-making and meaningful staff consultation in reform processes. She expressed concern regarding merger discussions and broader reform dynamics and emphasized the importance of safeguarding staff well-being while pursuing operational effectiveness.

46. A group of countries commended progress made in organizational culture transformation and encouraged continued strengthening of leadership competencies, sustained progress on gender parity and equal opportunity, and systematic monitoring of cultural indicators through regular reviews and data-driven tools.

47. Another group of countries welcomed the inclusion of organizational culture as a dedicated agenda item and called for more robust results frameworks with clear baselines and targets. They emphasized the importance of qualitative staff surveys during reform processes and closer monitoring of gender parity and geographic representation indicators.

48. In response, the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Management Services acknowledged the impact of budgetary pressures and reform processes on personnel and noted that staff survey results indicated sustained engagement despite challenges. She reaffirmed the importance of continuous dialogue and accountability.

49. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Management indicated that in the context of significant donor funding reductions, the organization had sought to avoid abrupt layoffs where possible, reposition affected staff and implement phased workforce adjustments. He highlighted mitigation measures taken during headquarters optimization to maintain programme continuity and retain expertise.

50. The UNOPS Director of People and Culture Group described measures to address reform-related uncertainty and staff anxiety, including enhanced leadership accountability, strengthened managerial support and access to confidential psychosocial support services.

51. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/5.

VII. Addressing racism and racial discrimination

52. Representatives of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS presented their respective reports on addressing racism and racial discrimination (DP/2026/5; DP/FPA/2026/3; DP/OPS/2026/2). They outlined measures to strengthen prevention, accountability and institutional culture, including policy updates, reporting mechanisms, monitoring frameworks and training initiatives.

53. A Bureau member acknowledged ongoing efforts and emphasized that progress must translate into tangible, measurable and systematic institutional change. She stressed the importance of embedding anti-racism principles across operational processes, strengthening accountability and reporting systems, promoting equitable geographical representation in recruitment and retention, and ensuring that staff feel safe when reporting incidents.

54. A group of countries encouraged accelerated implementation of existing initiatives and Joint Inspection Unit recommendations and called for strengthened representation of the Global South in senior leadership positions.

55. One delegation emphasized that while discrimination must be addressed, merit should remain the primary basis for recruitment, promotion and performance management. It expressed concern regarding the use of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in ways that could alter merit-based human resources policies.

56. Another delegation underlined that a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace is integral to human rights obligations and organizational effectiveness. The delegation requested clarification on how organizations monitor diversity data, including in the context of workforce restructuring and abolished posts.

57. In response, the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Management Services described formal misconduct reporting mechanisms addressing racism and harassment, including anti-retaliation safeguards, investigative processes and oversight systems such as ClearCheck 2.0. She referred to the "Speak Up" initiative aimed at awareness-raising and early intervention. She reaffirmed that merit remains central in recruitment decisions and indicated that UNDP monitors the impact of workforce optimization measures across different staff categories, noting operational complexities, particularly in decentralized country office contexts.

58. The UNOPS Director of People and Culture Group stated that UNOPS continues to align with Joint Inspection Unit recommendations and Executive Board guidance. She noted that anti-racism is a core institutional priority within the UNOPS' culture transformation agenda, accountability systems and people processes, reinforced through a confidential reporting system and governance safeguards and implemented alongside commitments to both merit-based recruitment and improved geographical representation.

59. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/6.

VIII. Field visits

60. A member of the Executive Board presented the report on the field visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (DP/FPA/OPS/2026/CRP.1). The presentation highlighted Jordan's continued resilience in the face of regional instability and protracted refugee pressures, and underscored the role of coordinated support from UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS in partnership with national authorities.

61. Delegations welcomed the report and noted that the visit demonstrated how sustained, nationally owned and locally anchored programmes can contribute to institutional strengthening and longer-term resilience. They referred in particular to initiatives supporting maternal health, prevention of gender-based violence, youth empowerment, employment generation and nature-based climate solutions. Delegations emphasized the importance of strong partnerships with government institutions, predictable and flexible funding, and integrated programming across agencies to ensure coherence and impact. Several underscored that field visits serve as an important oversight and learning tool for the Executive Board, informing policy guidance and strengthening understanding of operational realities on the ground.

62. The Executive Board took note of the report on the field visit to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (DP/FPA/OPS/2026/CRP.1) and the report of the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP to the Arab Republic of Egypt (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2026/CRP.1).

UNDP segment

IX. Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator

63. The UNDP Administrator opened the interactive dialogue by stating that the credibility and relevance of the multilateral system were being tested in a context of expanding conflicts, intensifying climate shocks and stalled poverty reduction. He highlighted the recent reversal in progress on child mortality following reductions in development assistance, noting this as an indicator of the direct human impact of declining resources. He observed that expectations of multilateral cooperation were increasing even as available resources were shrinking and underscored that restoring trust in development and in multilateralism institutions was a central challenge, emphasizing that such trust ultimately depends on visible, accountable results that improve people's lives.

64. Framing his intervention through a "delivery lens", the Administrator described UN80 as a delivery-driven agenda rather than reform for its own sake. He emphasized that reform efforts should protect and improve delivery, making the United Nations more efficient, agile, accountable and responsive to people's needs. He highlighted UNDP's contributions across governance, poverty reduction, climate action, gender equality, sustainable finance, resilience, digital transformation and crisis recovery, referring to recent results including support to reforms in countries representing more than 5 billion people, protection of millions of hectares of ecosystems and large-scale mobilization of financing for the Sustainable Development Goals. He stressed that such results demonstrated the importance of scaling effective development solutions as a means of reinforcing confidence in multilateral cooperation.

65. The Administrator noted that shrinking core funding posed a significant risk to quality, accountability and operational reach. He stated that core resources were projected to decline by approximately $188 million in 2026 compared with 2024 levels. While outlining cost-saving reforms, workforce optimization measures and relocations aimed at strengthening sustainability and partnerships, he cautioned that continued erosion of core funding would undermine UNDP's universal presence and its ability to respond to rising demands, particularly in fragile and crisis-affected settings where needs were increasing. He referred to the transition toward a distributed global hub model, including expanded presence in Bonn and Madrid, intended to improve efficiency and resilience and proximity to partners.

66. Looking ahead, the Administrator identified three strategic priorities: positioning development as a preventive investment; unlocking inclusive private sector investment through governance reforms and risk reduction; and harnessing digital innovation responsibly. He emphasized that prevention, resilience and institutional strengthening are more cost-effective than crisis response and called for adaptive reform that improves effectiveness while safeguarding delivery. He reiterated a "listen, partner, deliver" approach, and appealed for diversified, predictable and multi-year funding, including strengthened core contributions, alongside broader engagement with public and private actors.

67. In the ensuing dialogue, a Bureau member supported the emphasis on visible and inclusive delivery as a means to restore trust in multilateralism and welcomed UNDP's focus on prevention, resilience, mobilizing private investment alongside public finance and rights-based digital innovation. The member also underscored the importance of sustained voluntary contributions and careful, evidence-based assessment of any potential structural changes under UN80.

68. Four groups of countries took the floor. One group characterized reform as an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism but stressed that it must protect mandates, preserve expertise and remain country-focused. The group highlighted concerns regarding declining core funding and rising crises, urging UNDP to prioritize resilience, financing mobilization and tangible results for the most vulnerable.

69. A second group emphasized that reforms should respect intergovernmental processes, remain transparent and data-driven, and avoid disruption of country-level delivery. The group underscored the importance of national ownership, alignment with United Nations resolutions, adequate core funding and continued support for South-South cooperation.

70. A third group called for UN80 reforms to strengthen responsiveness, field presence and predictable financing and emphasized improved access to climate and development finance, including application of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index. A fourth group reaffirmed its strong partnership with UNDP and

encouraged it to leverage its comparative advantage as a system integrator, including support to the resident coordinator system.

71. Individual delegations broadly reaffirmed support for UNDP's mandate and field presence, particularly in governance, poverty reduction, climate resilience, crisis response and institutional capacity-building. Several delegations expressed concerns regarding proposed merger discussions under UN80 reform, calling for comprehensive, transparent and evidence-based assessments of structural, operational and financial implications and requesting early, detailed and structured information before any decision-making by the Executive Board. Others characterized UN80 as an opportunity to strengthen coherence and effectiveness, provided that mandates are preserved and reforms remain anchored in core United Nations principles.

72. Delegations consistently raised concerns regarding funding challenges and called for predictable, flexible and multi-year core funding to sustain UNDP's universal presence, including its ability to operate in high-risk and fragile contexts. While acknowledging workforce optimization measures, they emphasized the importance of safeguarding normative mandates and institutional capacity.

73. One delegation exercised the right of reply, reiterating that its UNDP country programme document had been developed jointly between UNDP and the national authorities.

74. In response, the UNDP Administrator reaffirmed the importance of achieving rapid efficiency gains while pursuing longer-term reforms. He underscored UNDP's strong support for the resident coordinator system and its role as a principal financial contributor. He highlighted continued engagement in rule of law and justice programming, including in fragile contexts, and reiterated support to small island developing States through integrated approaches to climate, energy and risk reduction.

75. The Administrator reaffirmed UNDP's commitment to national ownership, South-South cooperation and delivery in vulnerable contexts. He reiterated the importance of protecting core funding, strengthening early development engagement in disaster settings, advancing gender equality and scaling digital and artificial intelligence-enabled development solutions. While acknowledging the role of private sector engagement, he emphasized that public investment remains indispensable in several domains.

X. United Nations Volunteers

76. The UNDP Associate Administrator opened the session on the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme strategic framework, 2026-2029 (DP/2026/9), noting that UNV had mobilized over 6,000 volunteers across 137 countries in 2025. He indicated that the framework builds on previous results and aligns with Member State guidance and the UNDP results and resources framework, positioning volunteerism as a strategic enabler of national capacity development and community resilience.

77. The UNV Executive Coordinator presented the strategic framework, outlining priorities including quality volunteer assignments, duty of care, gender parity, disability inclusion, engagement of youth and older persons, digital volunteering and strengthened support in crisis and emergency contexts.

78. A member of the Bureau underscored the importance of the framework in reinforcing support to countries, particularly in contexts where volunteer engagement plays a critical role in service delivery at the national and community levels.

79. A group of delegations recognized UNV as a system-wide service that strengthens national capacities, supports social inclusion and advances governance and youth empowerment. They stressed that progress should be assessed in terms of quality, impact and reach to those left behind, and emphasized the importance of investing in national volunteer ecosystems. Delegations noted that 2026, designated as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development, presents an opportunity to further institutionalize volunteerism within national development strategies.

80. Delegations emphasized people-centered approaches and called for continued focus on gender balance, disability inclusion, youth engagement and local ownership. They encouraged adequate support to the full funding programme and the Special Voluntary Fund to ensure equitable, predictable and timely deployment of volunteers.

81. In response, the Executive Coordinator stated that UNV would continue strengthening human capital in the Global South, promote South-South cooperation, and advance volunteerism as a form of international solidarity.

He highlighted priorities including operational agility, safeguarding standards, digital and online volunteering modalities and support in emergency responses. He noted that the results framework will be finalized as an annex to the UNV annual report for 2025.

82. The Executive Board took note of the UNV programme strategic framework, 2026-2029 (DP/2026/9).

XI. United Nations Capital Development Fund

83. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the session on the United Nations Capital Development Fund strategic framework, 2026-2029 (DP/2026/10), emphasizing that development financing gaps exceed available public resources. He described UNCDF as a risk-tolerant and catalytic financier focusing on underserved and “last-mile” markets, linking concessional capital, demonstrating investability in higher-risk environments and complementing policy de-risking efforts delivered by UNDP and other partners.

84. The UNCDF Executive Secretary presented the strategic framework.

85. A member of the Bureau emphasized the importance of leveraging limited public resources to crowd in private capital, particularly in digital finance, renewable energy and fintech sectors. The member stressed alignment with national priorities, partnerships with domestic financial institutions and a focus on catalytic and scalable interventions capable of mobilizing domestic capital.

86. A group of countries commended UNCDF’s support to micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, subnational finance, and initiatives benefitting women and youth. They highlighted digital finance as key to expanding financial inclusion, supporting cross-border trade and addressing gender and rural–urban disparities. Delegations encouraged strengthened partnerships with governments, banks and the private sector to ensure resilience, scale and sustainability.

87. Another group indicated that the framework should enhance the ability of the United Nations system to mobilize private finance toward high-impact development initiatives. A third group encouraged stronger alignment with the broader development finance ecosystem, including blended finance instruments and partnerships with development finance institutions.

88. Individual delegations emphasized that UNCDF interventions are essential for reaching communities underserved by conventional finance, including rural areas, remote islands and markets perceived as high risk. They stressed the need for rigorous evaluation and impact measurement to ensure that catalytic finance translates into measurable development outcomes. Several delegations expressed concern that funding constraints could limit UNCDF’s ability to meet its strategic ambitions and called for increased core contributions.

89. In response, the Executive Secretary underscored that UNCDF’s effectiveness depends on collective support from across the United Nations system, development banks, foundations and new donors. He highlighted strengthened fiduciary standards and the establishment of an independent impact measurement unit to enhance transparency and accountability. He reaffirmed UNCDF’s role as a complementary financing platform within the broader United Nations development architecture.

XII. United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

90. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) strategic framework, 2026–2029 (DP/CF/SSC/8), describing the office as the United Nations focal point for South-South and triangular cooperation. He emphasized the growing role of countries in the Global South in advancing development solutions through peer learning and nationally owned approaches.

91. The Director of UNOSSC presented the strategic framework.

92. A member of the Bureau highlighted UNOSSC’s system-wide coordination role, including management of trust funds and facilitation of demand-driven Southern solutions. The member expressed concern regarding a 25 per cent reduction in corporate resources, indicating that this could affect the office’s ability to fulfil its mandated functions. Another Bureau member reiterated the importance of adequate voluntary contributions to safeguard operational continuity.

93. A group of delegations supported efforts to enhance coherence, efficiency and accountability but expressed serious concern regarding proposed resource reductions. They requested clarification on the scale and rationale

of budget adjustments and mitigation measures to ensure that mandated functions would not be weakened. A second group stressed that austerity measures should not undermine functions critical to developing countries and emphasized maintaining the integrity of policy, programmatic and trust fund operations, alongside equitable geographic representation.

94. Individual delegations welcomed the framework as forward-looking and aligned with broader United Nations reform efforts. They underscored the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation as complementary to traditional development assistance and essential for resilience and self-reliance. Delegations emphasized multistakeholder partnerships, innovative financing mechanisms and regional collaboration, and broadly supported UNOSSC's continued role as a knowledge hub and catalytic convener.

95. In response, the Director of UNOSSC reaffirmed that the framework upholds the Office's mandate as the United Nations system-wide focal point for South-South and triangular cooperation. It provides a balanced approach among its four pillars and builds on lessons from independent evaluations. She added that the forthcoming global alliance for South-South and triangular cooperation seeks to match supply and demand effectively while preserving the core functions.

96. The Associate Administrator reaffirmed UNDP's commitment to supporting and financing UNOSSC. He acknowledged that a decline in core resources had required difficult budgetary decisions but reiterated UNDP's commitment to ensuring that UNOSSC fulfils its mandate and to continued dialogue with Member States on sustainable funding solutions.

97. The Executive Board took note of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation strategic framework, 2026–2029 (DP/CF/SSC/8).

XIII. UNDP evaluation

98. The Director of the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office presented the Independent Evaluation Office multi-year programme of work, 2026-2029 (DP/2026/7) and the formative evaluation of the UNDP funding windows (DP/2026/8). She outlined the strategic focus of the programme of work and highlighted key findings of the funding windows evaluation. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support presented the management response to the formative evaluation.

99. A group of countries commended UNDP for strengthening its evaluation function, including through the use of innovative methodologies and digital tools, to support results-based, inclusive and evidence-driven development. They emphasized that systematic implementation of evaluation recommendations is essential to maintaining credibility, trust and accountability.

100. Another group described the funding windows as an important mechanism for bridging core and non-core resources, enhancing flexibility and enabling integrated responses aligned with the strategic plan. They stressed the importance of strategic clarity, robust governance arrangements and transparency, and underlined that sustained donor confidence depends on demonstrating value for money and measurable results.

101. The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support described steps being taken to align the funding windows with the new Strategic Plan and to integrate them more closely with flagship initiatives and corporate results frameworks. He indicated that UNDP would strengthen governance, oversight and standard operating procedures, including improvements in pipeline management, fund allocation processes and performance reporting.

102. The Director of the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office noted that the evaluation included a comparative analysis of other pooled and thematic funding mechanisms, which provided context for assessing the positioning and added value of the funding windows. She underscored the importance of maintaining a diversified funding architecture, with different instruments serving distinct objectives.

103. The Executive Board took note of the formative evaluation of the UNDP funding windows and management response.

104. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/7.

XIV. UNDP country programmes and related matters

105. The UNDP Regional Directors for Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the CIS, and Latin America and the Caribbean presented country programme documents, by their respective regions, for Cuba, Georgia, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Uruguay, as well as extensions for Argentina, Kuwait, Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic.

106. In accordance with decision 2014/7, the Executive Board approved the UNDP country programme documents for Georgia (DP/DCP/GEO/5), Malaysia (DP/DCP/MYS/5), Mexico (DP/DCP/MEX/4), Panama (DP/DCP/PAN/5), Somalia (DP/DCP/SOM/5), South Africa (DP/DCP/ZAF/4), Sudan (DP/DCP/SDN/4) and Uruguay (DP/DCP/URY/5).

107. During consideration of the country programme document for Cuba (DP/DCP/CUB/4), a Board member requested a recorded vote and delivered an explanation of vote before the vote, expressing concerns regarding references contained in the document and indicating that it would vote against its approval. The representative of Cuba exercised their right of reply and responded prior to the vote. The Executive Board proceeded to a recorded vote and approved the country programme document for Cuba (DP/DCP/CUB/4) by 33 votes in favour, 1 against and 0 abstentions. The Chair subsequently invited explanations of vote after the vote; no additional statements were made.

108. The Executive Board took note of the first six-month extension of the country programme for Argentina and approved the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for Kuwait, Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/2026/6).

UNFPA segment

XV. Statement by the UNFPA Executive Director

109. The UNFPA Executive Director opened her statement by underscoring the organization’s continued commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights in a complex global environment She framed her remarks in the context of ‘results, resilience, and returns.’

110. She highlighted UNFPA’s delivery, including in humanitarian settings, where it provides sexual and reproductive health services, contraceptives and support for survivors of gender-based violence, reaching millions of women, girls and young people. She emphasized that UNFPA’s technical, programmatic and normative partner-supported results demonstrate that multilateralism is both essential and effective.

111. The Executive Director described how UNFPA had adapted to evolving challenges by strengthening crisis response capacities and supporting national systems to build resilience. She noted efforts to diversify funding, including through domestic resources, international financial institutions and private philanthropy. Internally, UNFPA was pursuing organizational reforms aimed at strengthening accountability, transparency, operational efficiency and workforce agility. She referred to the headquarters optimization process, under which approximately 25 per cent of New York-based personnel had been relocated to Nairobi.

112. The Executive Director emphasized the development returns associated with investments in sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the social and economic benefits of family planning. She stressed the importance of partnerships with governments and local actors to ensure nationally owned and sustainable programmes, particularly for adolescents, women, girls and marginalized communities.

113. In conclusion, the Executive Director reaffirmed UNFPA’s commitment to delivering results even despite financial and geopolitical uncertainties, and reiterated that the organization’s vision of ensuring that every pregnancy is intended, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

114. A member of the Bureau reaffirmed support for the UNFPA mandate and stressed that United Nations reforms should strengthen, not diminish, the capacity of the system to serve women, girls and youth. Another bureau member underlined that UNFPA remains a critical partner and requested clarification on the potential implications of a proposed UNFPA–UN Women merger for country programmes.

115. A group of countries highlighted persistent challenges in reducing maternal mortality and addressing gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse and advocated for intensified efforts, particularly in contexts

affected by conflict and constrained resources. They drew attention to the impact of debt burdens and declining international funding on implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Therefore, they encouraged UNFPA to continue mobilizing resources in key strategic areas.

116. Individual delegations reiterated support for UNFPA's mandate and commended its work in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality and protection from harmful practices. They referenced demographic trends, including ageing, migration and climate change, and underscored the importance of local partnerships, engagement with women- and youth-led organizations, and South-South cooperation, particularly in humanitarian contexts.

117. Delegations also expressed support for ongoing organizational reforms aimed at enhancing efficiency, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining operational capacity, support to normative work, and country-level presence. They called for transparency and meaningful consultations regarding the potential UNFPA–UN Women merger. Concerns were raised regarding funding constraints and their impact on service delivery, and some delegations encouraged exploring additional partnerships, including with the private sector. One delegation requested clarification on the integration of audit findings into risk management processes.

118. In response, the Executive Director expressed appreciation for Member State support and reiterated UNFPA's focus on life-saving humanitarian assistance, maternal health, midwifery, youth empowerment, and the prevention of harmful practices. She emphasized continued coordination, including on demographic analysis and resilience, and highlighted the importance of evidence-based policymaking.

119. The Executive Director affirmed that, as a voluntarily funded organization, UNFPA would continue delivering on its mandate in the context of broader United Nations reform processes. She emphasized accountability to Member States, transparency and stakeholder engagement, and reiterated the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation.

120. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Programmes outlined the approach to monitoring optimization efforts, combining internal performance tracking with independent oversight mechanisms. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Management confirmed that audit findings were integrated into the enterprise risk management framework. The Director of the UNFPA Programme Division confirmed that following its relocation to Nairobi, the Division retained its global role and mandate.

XVI. UNFPA evaluation

121. The Director of the UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office ad interim presented the multi-year costed evaluation plan, 2026-2029 (DP/FPA/2026/1), as well as two independent evaluations: the evaluation of UNFPA support to the integration of the principles of "leaving no one behind" and "reaching the furthest behind first", and the evaluation of UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action, 2019-2025. He outlined key findings and recommendations from both evaluations. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Programmes presented the management responses.

122. A group of countries emphasized that evaluation should inform adaptive programming, organizational learning and policy refinement, in addition to strengthening accountability. Two individual delegations urged full implementation of recommendations relating to protection, localization, youth inclusion and comprehensive services in humanitarian settings, while cautioning that funding reductions were placing essential services at risk.

123. The Director of the UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office stated that UNFPA systematically tracks implementation of evaluation recommendations and reports regularly to the Executive Board. He noted ongoing monitoring of the evaluation plan and efforts to ensure alignment between planned activities and available resources.

124. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director of Programmes stressed the urgency of maintaining and strengthening protection and humanitarian services, noting that funding reductions were having severe and, in some contexts, life-threatening consequences. He outlined mitigation measures, including deployment of global emergency response teams, strengthened partnerships with women-led and local organizations, expanded use of cash and voucher assistance, and reinforced youth engagement. He emphasized the organization's commitment to continuous learning and adaptation based on evaluation findings.

125. The Executive Board took note of the independent evaluation of UNFPA support to the integration of the principles of "leaving no one behind" and "reaching the furthest behind first" and the independent evaluation of UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action.

126. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/8.

XVII. UNFPA country programmes and related matters

127. The UNFPA Regional Directors for the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean presented country programme documents, by their respective regions, for Argentina, Cuba, Georgia, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda and Uruguay, and extensions for Guatemala, Mali, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic.

128. In accordance with decision 2014/7, the Executive Board approved the UNFPA country programme documents for Argentina (DP/FPA/CPD/ARG/2), Cuba (DP/FPA/CPD/CUB/10), Georgia (DP/FPA/CPD/GEO/5), Malaysia (DP/FPA/CPD/MYS/2), Mexico (DP/FPA/CPD/MEX/8), Panama (DP/FPA/CPD/PAN/5), Somalia (DP/FPA/CPD/SOM/5), South Africa (DP/FPA/CPD/ZAF/6), Sudan (DP/FPA/CPD/SDN/8), Uganda (DP/FPA/CPD/UGA/10) and Uruguay (DP/FPA/CPD/URY/5).

129. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Guatemala and approved the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the first two-year extension for the country programme for the State of Palestine (DP/2026/8).

UNOPS segment

XVIII. Statement by the UNOPS Executive Director

130. The Executive Director opened his statement by noting that overlapping global crises were placing international commitments to peace, sustainable development and prosperity under strain. He stated that persistent gaps between policy, financing and implementation required more practical, coordinated and impact-focused approaches. In the context of broader United Nations reforms, he underscored the need rethink and develop models that would enable the United Nations to deliver more effectively and more coherently.

131. The Executive Director described UNOPS as an operational partner supporting implementation across development, humanitarian and peace contexts. He highlighted its expertise in infrastructure, procurement and project management, and its self-financed "fee-for-service" model, which enables scaling based on demand. He referred to ongoing internal reforms aimed at strengthening governance, transparency, accountability and organizational culture, as well as continued investment in systems, digital innovation and workforce capacity.

132. The Executive Director detailed examples of UNOPS' work on the ground, such as support to basic services and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine and operational support to humanitarian partners in the Gaza Strip through the UN2720 Mechanism for aid delivery. He also referred to UNOPS' support to livelihoods, health and food security in Myanmar, sustainable energy access in Sierra Leone, and efforts to create livelihood opportunities for vulnerable communities in Afghanistan.

133. A member of the Bureau expressed appreciation for the work of UNOPS staff, particularly in challenging environments, and welcomed progress in strengthening transparency, accountability, innovation and contributions to United Nations reform processes.

134. A group of countries highlighted UNOPS strengths in infrastructure delivery, procurement and project management, and noted that its cost-recovery model, combined with safeguards, contributed to results in complex and high-risk settings. They stressed that future governance arrangements should preserve operational agility while reinforcing transparency, oversight and risk management.

135. Individual delegations expressed support for UNOPS' operational role and referenced progress under the comprehensive response plan and digital innovation efforts. They emphasized continued attention to governance, risk management, digital monitoring, sustainable procurement, inclusive staffing, and support to countries transitioning from least developed country status. Several delegations called for careful, evidence-based assessment of the proposed UNDP-UNOPS merger and stressed the importance of safeguarding UNOPS'

mandate and operational model.

136. In response, the Executive Director emphasized the role of UNOPS personnel, particularly in conflict-affected and high-risk contexts, noting the difficult conditions under which staff operated. He underscored the continuity of services during reform processes, the importance of maintaining integrity and risk management standards, and the use of digitalization and artificial intelligence to improve efficiency while preserving accountability.

137. The UNOPS Director of the Process, Innovation and Digitalization Programme provided an overview of digital solutions and artificial intelligence applications, indicating that such tools were implemented in accordance with United Nations ethical frameworks and used to support, rather than replace, human decision-making.

XIX. UNOPS Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme Implementation

138. The UNOPS Chief Financial Officer presented the UNOPS annual report on the implementation of the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme and associated risks (DP/OPS/2026/3).

139. A group of delegations welcomed progress in modernizing core systems and deploying digital tools, while noting that the programme was at a critical stage in light of uncertainties related to the proposed UNDP-UNOPS merger. They emphasized the importance of addressing outstanding recommendations, ensuring solutions were adapted to country contexts, and securing predictable financing to safeguard delivery and strengthen accountability and efficiency.

140. In response, the UNOPS Director of the Process, Innovation and Digitalization Programme stated that UNOPS had invested approximately $18million in the programme in line with the roadmap presented to the Board in 2024 and 2025. He noted that the review of process and implementation of specialized solutions was continuing, while work on the enterprise resource planning system remains paused, pending more clarity related to organizational changes, including the potential UNDP-UNOPS merger under the UN80 initiative.

141. The Executive Board adopted decision 2026/9.

XX. Transformation Initiatives Linked to the Comprehensive Response Plan

142. The UNOPS Chief of Staff provided an update on transformative initiatives under the comprehensive response plan, focused on strengthening risk management, accountability, ethics and organizational culture. She referred to enhancements to the enterprise risk management system framework and the establishment of the Portfolio Oversight Committee to support governance and informed decision-making. She also highlighted measures to reinforce ethical standards, including a whistleblowing mechanism supported by the Integrity Portal, awareness campaigns and mandatory training.

143. She noted that the Process Innovation and Digitalization Programme supported these reforms through modernization of systems, improving data management and strengthened performance monitoring. UNOPS was also updating policies related to talent management, mobility and anti-discrimination, with initiatives overseen by the Transformation Board and supported by structured change management processes.

144. The Executive Board took note of the transformation initiatives linked to the comprehensive response plan.

Joint segment

XXI. Other matters

145. A delegation informed the Executive Board that it had ceased its participation in UNFPA and would dissociate itself from any decisions, or elements thereof, pertaining to UNFPA, while continuing to participate in matters relating to UNDP and UNOPS.