



United Nations

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

**Report of the Executive Board on its work
during 2019***

**Economic and Social Council
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* Reproduced as received; approved by the 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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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures.

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Part one
First regular session 2019

**Held at United Nations Headquarters in New York
from 21 to 25 January 2019**

I. Organizational matters

1. The first regular session 2019 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 21 to 25 January 2019. The newly elected President of the Board welcomed all delegations and thanked the outgoing President and Vice-Presidents for their leadership and commitment to the work of the Board in 2018. He congratulated the new members of the Bureau on their election.

2. In accordance with rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the Executive Board, the Board elected the following members of the Bureau for 2019:

President:	H.E. Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea)
Vice-President	H.E. Mr. Walton Webson (Antigua and Barbuda)
Vice-President:	H.E. Ms. Besiana Kadare (Albania)
Vice-President:	H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland)
Vice-President:	H.E. Mr. Collen V. Kelapile (Botswana)

3. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its first regular session 2019 (DP/2019/L.1), and approved the report of the second regular session 2018 (DP/2019/1). The Board adopted the annual workplan for 2019 (DP/2019/CRP.1) and approved the tentative workplan for the annual session 2019.

4. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2018 appeared in document DP/2019/2, which was available on the Executive Board website.

5. The Executive Board agreed in decision 2019/5 to the following schedule for future sessions of the Executive Board in 2019:

Annual session 2019:	3 to 4 and 6 to 7 June 2019 (New York)
Second regular session 2019:	3 to 6 September 2019

Statement by the President of the Board

6. In his opening address, the President of the Board highlighted that, with United Nations policy support, effective institution-building and public-private partnerships had significantly contributed to eradicating poverty and preventing the waste of development resources in his country at a critical time of its development. The Presidency of the Board gave his country the opportunity to share its experiences and support countries on their path to socioeconomic development. He underscored that 2018 had been a critical year in laying the foundations for United Nations development system reform, and the Executive Board would have to play a key role in guiding UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals

7. The President set four priorities for the Board in 2019. One, the Board would become a forum for strategic, forward-looking discussions, focused on the bigger picture and future of each organization, and be more flexible to adapt to changing contextual needs. In that regard, current and future interactive dialogues would accommodate the Board's more strategic discussions. Two, it would be more action-oriented and produce tangible results, whether on reform implementation or improving Board working methods. Three, as partnerships were key, it would enhance its engagement with the private sector, civil society and outside stakeholders, crucial for successful delivery of the three organizations' strategic plans. In that regard, the Board would act as facilitator to provide entry points with stakeholders. Four, it would strengthen its engagement with other organizations' Boards to foster coordination and collaboration, including through stronger, regular interaction among the Presidents of the Boards and better use of existing coordination platforms such as the joint meeting of the Boards.

UNDP segment

Statement by the Administrator and interactive dialogue

Statement by the Administrator

8. In his address (available on the [Executive Board website](#)), the Administrator said 2018 was a year of reform, reflection and transformation that marked the “next generation” UNDP. Through financial and efficiency measures, UNDP had balanced its institutional budget for the second year in a row, setting foundations for investment and growth. UNDP was on track to exceed the 2018 delivery target, reduce the level of institutional budget expenditure, hit 99 per cent of its regular (core) resources target, mobilize \$4.5 billion in other (non-core) resources, and increase the financing international financial institutions invested in partnership with UNDP. Thanks to contributions from traditional and programme country donors, core had increased after years of decline and UNDP was working to broaden its donor base.

9. On reform, UNDP had been instrumental in ensuring the transition of the resident coordinator system to the United Nations Secretariat by 1 January 2019. That included seconding 63 senior staff as resident coordinators, facilitating transition of Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) staff, committing to serve as principal operational service provider to the resident coordinator system, and being among the first to double its cost-sharing contribution to the resident coordinator system. Simultaneously, UNDP re-staffed its leadership cadre at country level, selecting a new cohort of resident representatives, while reaching its promised 50/50 gender balance and equal geographic diversity, as it continued to drive forward implementation of its Strategic Plan, 2017–2021.

10. The next generation UNDP was pushing the boundaries: (a) reaffirming its position as global development thought leader through the *Human Development Report*, global policy centres and collaboration with partners; (b) responding to Member States call for an integrated approach to sustainable development through its country platforms, backed by its new Global Policy Network and Accelerator Labs Network; (c) investing and encouraging investment, through partnerships with private sector and promoting impact investment through SDG Impact and the Country Investment Facility; and (d) making its business model more innovative, effective and efficient.

11. The Administrator highlighted the significant pressures on multilateralism, which demanded reinvigorated political momentum around a shared vision for humanity. The coming year offered critical moments to demonstrate the capacity of multilateralism to prevent conflicts, mitigate risks and advance development progress through, for example, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Climate Change Summit. UNDP would contribute to those and other key events, promoting a common vision of humanity and accelerating action. Implementing its Strategic Plan, 2017–2021, UNDP would drive three main priorities in 2019: inequality, climate change and migration, and their drivers and root causes – focused on poverty eradication through a multidimensional approach.

Regional and national statements

12. Board members emphasized that development remained the focus of the UNDP mandate, through a programmatic approach to the 2030 Agenda, in line with the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. They stressed the importance of national capacity-building in achieving the Goals, in line with national priorities and to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. They expressed continued concern with the

core/non-core imbalance and underscored the importance of predictable, multi-year core funding. They expected that the funding compact would help to realize that goal. They reiterated their support for the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and looked forward to an expanded UNDP role in South-South efforts, noting that South-South cooperation was not a substitute for, but a complement to, North-South cooperation.

13. Delegations welcomed the innovative approach of the interactive dialogue. On reform, they welcomed the UNDP integrator role to ensure smooth repositioning of the United Nations development system and the effectiveness of UNDP and the system at large. They looked forward to the next generation UNDP and expressed full support for the transformation process. One group highlighted the need for the new resident coordinator system to review multi-country offices in subregions, with equal consideration to efficiency and effectiveness, including through adequate funding for long-term results and sustainability. The group underscored the unique, fragile development circumstances of small island developing States (SIDS) and middle-income countries (MICs), which suffered high rates of poverty, inequality and the risk of certain population groups falling back into poverty.

Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator

14. The Board held an interactive dialogue that gave members an opportunity for a strategic, high-level exchange on the organization's development offer. The dialogue was organized into two discussions: a morning session on UNDP work on poverty and an afternoon session on the humanitarian-development nexus. Each session began with a short video that highlighted examples of UNDP work at the country level followed by a facilitated discussion.

UNDP work on poverty

15. The President of the Board, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea and UNDP senior managers joined the Administrator for the morning session. The Administrator noted that poverty was multidimensional and socially manifested. Poverty was not inevitable and was intrinsically linked to governance. UNDP was helping governments to determine where poverty was occurring and who was being left behind. The President of the Board highlighted two approaches from his country's experience to reduce poverty – effective institution-building and public-private partnerships.

16. The Board discussion highlighted the following points. The multidimensional character of poverty demanded multidimensional solutions. Poverty eradication was a social and political process that demanded political will to address root causes – inequalities and social injustice. UNDP was well positioned to address poverty's multidimensional nature. It used a holistic approach to poverty eradication that combined inclusive and sustainable development – including environmental protection and resilience to natural disasters – along with democratic governance and national capacity-building. Eradicating poverty could not be boiled down to a social welfare approach alone. It had to go hand-in-hand with sustained economic growth built on effective inclusive growth policies and public-private partnerships that fostered innovation.

17. Delegations noted key challenges to poverty eradication, including illicit financial flows, rising inequality, and the impact of brain drain in perpetuating poverty. They highlighted the roles South-south cooperation, social protection measures, human rights and governance-based approaches, women and youth empowerment, digitalization and information and communication technology played in enabling poverty eradication. The Administrator emphasized the centrality of

poverty eradication in UNDP work, especially in least developed countries (LDCs) and poverty's complex nature; poverty was a phenomenon affecting most countries independent of their gross domestic product per capita level. Solutions should be framed within each country context. As knowledge leader and integrator, UNDP was a conduit able to marshal expertise from across and outside the larger United Nations development system.

Joint session on the humanitarian-development nexus

18. The Emergency Relief Coordinator and Director, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Vice President of the Board, the Permanent Representative of Ireland, the Director, Crisis Bureau, UNDP, and the Director of the Center for International Cooperation joined the Administrator for the afternoon session.

19. The Administrator said the new way of working was a common-sense approach. Working together in crises had to begin with a sustainable development perspective that converged the United Nations system toward a preventive mode. The Emergency Relief Coordinator stated that although the humanitarian system was more effective and efficient than ever, it did not tackle underlying problems. Collaborating with the development system was essential, especially given limited flows of international assistance. The Permanent Representative of Ireland stressed the need for mutual accountability among Member States through increased collaboration and adequate funding to the United Nations development system. The Director, Center for International Cooperation said the purpose of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus was to reinforce national capacities, whose challenges UNDP was well placed to address.

20. Board members expressed support for UNDP focus on crisis-affected States. They recognized that a humanitarian approach to protracted crises was not enough and welcomed UNDP integrating peacebuilding in the prevention agenda. Focus should shift to country level and start with better information sharing and joint analysis for joint planning. UNDP and OCHA had strong political support and leverage, which they should use in coordinating and operationalizing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. They welcomed the UNDP offer to pursue sustainable development by building national/local capacity to address root causes. The funding challenge was critical, however, and included humanitarian-development funding silos and conflicting budget cycles between donors and annual appeals.

21. The Administrator said the nexus enabled pragmatic humanitarian-development coordination. The UNDP integrator role, through a whole-of-government approach and revamped resident coordinator system, was well suited to help governments incorporate disaster risk reduction in national strategies, building on the Sendai Framework and International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. UNDP was also well placed to tackle nexus challenges through its knowledge and experience in capacity-building and institution-building, long-term relationships with governments, ability to convene peacebuilding, security and peace actors, and strong partnerships with international financial institutions and donors.

II. Evaluation

22. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), UNDP, presented the evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (LDCs) (DP/2019/4) and the report of the IEO on its support to evaluation capacity development (DP/2019/6), and the Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, provided the interim management note.

Evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries

23. Board members welcomed the evaluation, and expressed interest in the evaluation on poverty in MICs, to be presented at the first regular session 2020. Delegations drew attention to the number of LDCs graduating out of the LDC category, a testament to development progress and role of development actors and partnerships in tackling multidimensional poverty. They cautioned that LDC graduation was not a panacea and graduating required continued support to prevent their falling back into poverty. Clarification was sought on next generation UNDP assistance to countries and how UNDP adjusted its assistance on the basis of country categories. On evaluation practice, they sought clarity on the difference between decentralized and independent. On recommendations for conflict-affected States, there was a request for details on UNDP efforts to pay attention to intersecting vulnerabilities through its work on governance and its relation to data and capacity strengthening.

24. Delegations commended UNDP for its implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution [2018/26](#), which called on the United Nations development system to prioritize allocation to LDCs through clear operational guidelines and budget targets. While the programmatic approach was a good first step, UNDP had to ensure LDCs and others benefitted from system-wide assistance. They commended UNDP for its work on climate change in LDCs through its Global Policy Network and sought details on progress UNDP had made in prioritizing climate change in LDCs. They stressed the importance of and encouraged UNDP to continue to facilitate horizontal and vertical coordination when providing assistance to LDCs. There were requests for information on whether IEO and UNDP could collaborate with other United Nations organizations to achieve scale and greater impact, and how UNDP was working with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to leverage private sector approaches.

25. A group of delegations said they would have preferred for the evaluation to have been discussed along with the management response, while others supported the consultative process and offered to engage further. They supported the recommendation that UNDP focus on LDCs in recurrent, protracted crises, especially in Africa, and sought details on UNDP work to develop pro-poor solutions in Africa. They commended UNDP for its capacity-building work in vulnerable countries to break negative patterns, and called on UNDP to invest further in its thought leadership on multidimensional poverty, using the Human Development Report Office to help countries develop their own data, analysis and policies. UNDP governance work was key in addressing multidimensional poverty. They supported the recommendation to allocate resources for gender equality, women's empowerment and youth in LDCs. They counted on the UNDP integrator and expert role on poverty to support country teams in joint programming and monitoring. Attention was drawn to the evaluation's indication that in LDCs UNDP needed to step up efforts to translate policy and assessments into action and ensure local-level engagement was backed by long-term strategic thinking, including through South-South cooperation.

26. In response, the Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, said UNDP had not submitted a management response because, in the spirit of "co-creation" between IEO, UNDP and the Board, it sought first to distil different perspectives before finalizing the response. UNDP recognized that, without continued assistance, graduated LDCs risked falling back into poverty, which it helped counter through structural transformation assistance, governance programmes and helping to open political space. UNDP aimed to double the number of LDCs where it undertook climate-related activities. On the humanitarian-development nexus, UNDP focused on root causes and resilience-building to head off crises before they took root. As part

of its multidimensional approach to poverty, UNDP experts in different specializations no longer worked in silos but collaborated with colleagues to address the Goals. As integrator, UNDP assisted country teams with analytics, financing and planning through country platforms and accelerator labs. The UNDP private sector offer focused on guiding countries through de-risking for investment while providing “SDG intelligence” to private sector partners. On disabilities, in 2018 UNDP had issued guidance to country offices on the mandatory integration of disabilities into country programmes.

27. The Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP, highlighted that ending poverty was a political commitment. UNDP urged assisted stakeholders to adhere to that commitment. Because extreme poverty in Africa was located predominantly in borderlands and urban centres, UNDP would launch a programme on borderlands. Since traditional development models were not suitable to borderlands, UNDP would invest in developing new models grounded in sound diagnostics. As for unplanned urban areas, UNDP would invest in “smart cities” labs at regional levels. On thought leadership, UNDP helped countries create and own the policy space needed to allow Africa to emerge from poverty.

28. The Team Leader for the 2030 Agenda, UNDP, highlighted how UNDP used vertical funds to address multidimensional poverty and other development challenges, such as climate change and women’s empowerment. UNDP collaborated with UNCDF on local development finance and financial inclusion that allowed deployment of expertise and innovative financing models in over 30 LDCs to examine local-level poverty challenges. Inclusive, equitable local development approaches examined structural impediments that women faced, and used local and public investments to unlock domestic capital for their empowerment. UNDP played a central role in integrating such inter-agency partnerships at low cost and high impact.

29. The Deputy Executive Director, UNCDF, said the Fund worked with UNDP through its country platforms on investment cycles, pipeline sourcing, de-risking, assessment of investment opportunities, and issuance of loans and guarantees, driven by the Goals and inclusive growth. UNCDF was a leader in innovation, be it development-focused investments on the stock exchange or connecting investment capital. As integrator, UNDP was a driver of system-wide private sector partnerships at country level aimed at expanding use of financial instruments. UNCDF combined its expertise with UNDP on digital finance, municipal finance and fiscal decentralization.

30. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, explained that independent and decentralized evaluations informed each other. Independent evaluations drew on country-level work (decentralized and other work) while independent evaluations were independent and reported to the Board. A key consideration of decentralized evaluations was learning; most UNDP evaluations were decentralized. The IEO quality assessments of decentralized evaluations, one of its main roles, would be presented to the Board at its annual session 2019. In June 2020, IEO would submit its evaluations of disaster and risk management and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, 2018–2020 for Syrian refugees. The Board had approved a portfolio of evaluations in its four-year plan that included environment and climate change.

31. The Executive Board took note of the evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (DP/2019/4) and the accompanying management note.

Report of the IEO on its support to evaluation capacity development

32. There were no interventions by Board members on the report.
33. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Independent Evaluation Office on its support to evaluation capacity development ([DP/2019/6](#)).

III. Country programmes and related matters

34. The Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP, on behalf of the Associate Administrator, UNDP, introduced the item and provided overviews of the country programmes and country programme extensions up for approval. The regional directors for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean presented and elaborated on the following country programmes from their respective regions: Burundi, Niger and Togo (Africa), Cambodia (Asia and the Pacific), and Chile and Ecuador (Latin America and the Caribbean).

35. The Executive Board reviewed and approved, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/7, the country programme documents for: Burundi ([DP/DCP/BDI/4](#) and [DP/DCP/BDI/4/Corr.1](#)), Cambodia ([DP/DCP/KHM/4](#)), Chile ([DP/DCP/CHL/4](#)), Ecuador ([DP/DCP/ECU/3](#)), Niger ([DP/DCP/NER/3](#)) and Togo ([DP/DCP/TGO/3](#)).

36. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina and approved the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa, as contained in document [DP/2019/3](#).

UNFPA segment

Statement by the Executive Director

37. In her statement (available on the [UNFPA Executive Board website](#)), the Executive Director underscored that 2019, which marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the fiftieth anniversary of UNFPA, was a time for stocktaking, reflection, and renewed resolve and partnerships. The Fund was committed to reenergizing and expanding the global movement for rights and choices for all – essential for achieving the three transformational results and fulfilling the promise of the ICPD and 2030 Agenda. She drew attention to ICPD regional reviews that would feed into the full review of the programme of action by the Commission on Population and Development, as well as the launch of the *State of the World Population 2019*. She highlighted the November 2019 Nairobi Summit on ICPD+25: Accelerating the Promise, and the march of young activities carrying a torch from Cairo to Nairobi to raise awareness.

38. On United Nations reform, UNFPA was moving forward with internal change to build organizational culture, systems and skills to deliver with the United Nations development system on the 2030 Agenda. That included a new vision for intergovernmental and inter-agency affairs, a new Humanitarian Affairs Office, and realignment of global, regional and subregional functions. Programmatically, the Fund's three transformative results were accelerators to achieve the 2030 Agenda, and UNFPA was intensifying investments in partnerships to scale up programmes and results with the rest of the system. The Fund was engaged with partners in strengthening health systems, integrating universal health coverage in a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services, ensuring sexual and reproductive health services were integral to primary health care, and ending all

forms of violence against women through the Spotlight Initiative. UNFPA was co-coordinating two important reform processes: the Strategic Financing Results Group, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Redesign Group and the Sustainable Development Results Group.

39. A top priority for UNFPA was its coordinated work with United Nations partners to end sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment through the Office of the Special Coordinator, the Victims' Rights Advocate and the Inter-Agency Steering Committee. Internally, it had strengthened its structure to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse at country and regional levels, and introduced stronger management accountability. At the session, UNFPA would submit the first ever evaluation of its support on gender-based violence. The Fund continued to prioritize innovation to create and scale up data-driven, sustainable, open solutions to bring about transformative change through, for example, the Population Data Platform. In 2018, it signed some 60 new partnerships, including with the private sector, bringing its total to 184. Those partnerships were linked to funding, including individual contributions; in 2018 UNFPA received funding significantly above its targets for core and non-core resources. The number of government donors had nevertheless decreased and the Executive Director made an appeal for an upturn in 2019.

40. The Fund's humanitarian work was central to its mandate and in 2018 together with partners it reached an estimated 18 million people in over 55 countries. UNFPA expected similar needs in 2019 when it aimed to reach millions of women, girls and youth in crisis situations with life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, supplies and information, and interventions to prevent gender-based violence and respond to the needs of survivors, grounded in a human-rights based approach. UNFPA continued to strengthen its ability to respond quickly in emergencies, and had scaled up its roving team and augmented its surge mechanism, while strengthening support for staff serving in high-risk duty stations.

41. Board members expressed continued strong support for the Fund's mandate and welcomed its active engagement in United Nations reform and its related aligning of resources and priorities. They welcomed UNFPA leadership and participation in the Strategic Financing Results Group, UNDAF Redesign Group and Sustainable Development Results Group. They stressed the importance of the Fund's mandate in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Goals and requested regular updates on how UNFPA would deliver against its three transformative results, how it would support the new resident coordinator system, and how it was working to improve system-wide coherence. They sought details on reported ongoing competition among United Nations development organizations noted in the revised evaluation policy. They called on the Fund to work closely with programme countries to advance the repositioning of the United Nations development system, including efforts to redesign the UNDAF, enhance common country assessments, and strengthen resident coordinator system capacity.

42. Delegations welcomed the Fund's good financial standing, despite ongoing funding challenges, and encouraged it to continue to broaden its donor base and pursue innovative funding approaches and partnerships, including with non-traditional donors and the private sector. They were pleased with the emergence of and increase in funding from programme countries. They welcomed the clean audit findings and management approach, including audit-based management, building on recommendations of the Board of Auditors. Delegations encouraged countries to abide by their funding commitments and ensure predictable, multi-year contributions to core resources. They called on countries, in a position to do so, to step up contributions to core. They requested details on how the Fund would stay focused on practical delivery of its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and what Member States could do to improve the funding situation. They sought information on how the Fund was

planning for the Nairobi Summit on ICPD+25: Accelerating the Promise, and how Member States could be involved.

43. A group of delegations stressed the importance of national ownership and nationally defined priorities. They underscored the important UNFPA role through the three transformative goals in the LDCs and Africa, and welcomed the Fund's investments in education, demographic dividend and youth-focused programmes. They encouraged UNFPA to continue to support the Maputo Plan of Action to deliver sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights services in LDCs and Africa. Another group from the SIDS welcomed the Fund's work in the Caribbean subregion in addressing gender equity, young girls and youth and gender-based violence. They stressed the need for UNFPA to allocate adequate, predictable funding resources to the subregion and to continue to strengthen its regional platform, including through a review of multi-country offices, connecting them to technical expertise and best practices, as per Samoa Pathway principles. They welcomed UNFPA efforts to streamline its work and structure its portfolios to avoid duplication. Delegations stressed the importance of and UNFPA successes in using South-South cooperation as a means to addressing the ICPD programme of action and achieving the Goals.

44. Board members underscored the Fund's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights work and adherence to a rights-based approach and "choices for all" in all areas and levels, to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the Goals and ICPD programme of action. They expressed strong support for the Fund's continued work in humanitarian and crisis settings, providing sexual and reproductive health services, and preventing and combatting gender-based violence, abuse and harassment. They welcomed efforts to eradicate social norms that perpetuated gender-based violence and divisions that impeded women's and girls' human rights. They reaffirmed the right to development as universal, inalienable and central to the human-rights approach. They stressed the importance of an "inclusive" approach to addressing gender equality, women's empowerment and gender-based violence to include the most vulnerable and engage all stakeholders and partners, including men and boys. They expressed strong support for universal health coverage and the key role UNFPA needed to play.

45. Board members welcomed the Fund's work on data collection and analysis in population dynamics, the demographic dividend and advocacy for youth. They encouraged continued investment and engagement in information, data gathering and innovation as part of advocacy efforts and to inform programme and policy design. They called on UNFPA to take into account country-specific demographic trends, including ageing, declining fertility rates and family reproductive behaviour, when supporting countries in designing programmes and, in general, as a depository and thought leader in those areas.

46. In response, the Executive Director said delegations' feedback helped UNFPA refine its programmes and address development challenges. UNFPA actively supported United Nations reform and system-wide coherence, and engaged only in competition that drove innovation, such as in the Spotlight Initiative. Thanks to the increase in adequate, predictable resources in 2018, UNFPA had been able to plan better and be more proactive and reactive. UNFPA focus on demographics, building on census and applied health survey data, had allowed it to address youth issues in Africa, among others. It would continue to build on successes to define future assistance and inform its preventative approach to development. The Maputo Plan of Action was a UNFPA priority as it focused on woman through a family-wide perspective. UNFPA sought to create a "peace" environment within crisis situations and households to protect women and girls from violence, working with local communities and youth. The pressure on the ICPD agenda only spurred the Fund to drive practical implementation of its strategic plan and build resilience at country

level through capacity strengthening. UNFPA was also stepping up cooperation in the area of disabilities. In closing, she highlighted that the “full review” covered both the ICPD programme of action and the Goals.

47. The Director, UNFPA Programme Division, said the transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda demanded urgent action. UNFPA was working to pinpoint ICPD accelerators that drove action, and explore financing of those accelerators at global, regional and country levels. The change needed to propel the 2030 Agenda began by addressing women’s and girls’ reproductive health. UNFPA worked through academic partnerships and national governments to identify priority areas, and would ensure that women’s and girls’ reproductive health and rights featured prominently in redesigned UNDAFs. It would do so in collaboration with partners and through South-South initiatives in driving the ICPD programme of action, built on innovative knowledge sharing and cross-fertilization. It was crucial to change the narrative of women’s and girls’ reproductive health and place it at the centre, along with the three transformative goals, to guarantee success. All funding to UNFPA served that sole purpose.

48. The Deputy Executive Director (Management) highlighted that UNFPA was committed to becoming more effective and efficient corporately, programmatically and operationally. The Fund had worked with the Board since 2016 shaping internal change toward that end. The internal information and communications technology transformation changed how UNFPA functioned, and UNFPA continued to outsource service provisions to United Nations organizations. UNFPA shared some 70 per cent of its country offices with United Nations organizations, and continued to seek shared services. The Fund was an active participant in the United Nations Development Group Business Innovations Group focused, among other topics, on common back office services.

49. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) highlighted that the five regional reviews of ICPD had been successful in the Fund’s engagement with Member States and strengthening national capacity to conduct country reviews. UNFPA was engaged with civil society organizations and youth groups in the review process. The reviews explored successes, gaps and emerging issues, which informed the regional reports and the final report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the fifty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development.

IV. Evaluation

50. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office, presented the main results of the revised evaluation policy (DP/FPA/2019/1) as well as the evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices, 2012–2017 (DP/FPA/2019/CRP.1). In turn, the Deputy Executive Director (Management) provided the management response (DP/FPA/2019/CRP.2).

UNFPA revised evaluation policy

51. Board members welcomed the revised evaluation policy, and transparent consultative process and preparatory work by the Evaluation Office, which was aligned with the evaluation policies of United Nations organizations. Delegations encouraged the Fund to use the revised policy to support national capacity-building for evaluation and inform future country programmes. They recognized the norms laid out in the revised evaluation policy, including the universal indicators of credibility, impartiality, ethics, transparency and professionalism. South-South cooperation best practices in evaluation could benefit the Fund’s work in that area. They sought clarification on the extent to which the drop in core funding might

jeopardize the evaluation practice. They noted that the revised evaluation policy should more fully address gender and human rights aspects. And they sought clarity on the difference between joint and system-wide evaluations, and whether UNFPA was collaborating with the World Health Organization on system-wide evaluations.

52. A group of delegations stressed the importance of allocating adequate resources to the evaluation function, and welcomed the proposal to enhance funding to maintain a strong evaluation function. They expected UNFPA to periodically report on resource allocation and budgeting measures to improve capacity to conduct and disseminate evaluations. They requested that future evaluation reports include analysis of how decreased core funding impacted its ability to conduct high quality evaluations. They welcomed increased focus on joint evaluations and coordination with United Nations development organizations, and that evaluation of the common chapter formed part of the revised evaluation policy. They welcomed the focus on national capacity-building for evaluations to support public policy in programme countries.

53. In response, the Director, Independent Evaluation Office, affirmed UNFPA had the resources to conduct high quality evaluations, and welcomed establishment of a resource range to identify where evaluation could be strengthened. In that regard, the revised evaluation policy aimed to protect funding for decentralized evaluations. The Evaluation Office would continue to report annually on UNFPA allocations to evaluation, as part of reporting against the key evaluation indicators. As a testament to the Fund's commitment to reform, almost 50 per cent of centralized evaluations were conducted jointly or system-wide, in addition to joint evaluation work on the common chapter. UNFPA was committed to working with United Nations organizations and others to strengthen national evaluation capacity, on request by national governments and through South-South initiatives. Joint evaluations differed from system-wide evaluations in that they focused on how a few United Nations organizations were performing in a certain programme, while system-wide evaluations assessed how the system as a whole was performing in a much larger area, such as humanitarian delivery.

54. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) said UNFPA worked jointly on evaluation of the common chapter with United Nations organizations concerned, and had put in place a structure at global and regional levels to identify programme accelerators. UNFPA sought first to make use of its finance and expertise to develop indicators, while exploring innovative ideas for implementation. The Fund aimed to build results-based management, monitoring and evaluation capacity into country programmes throughout the programming period, focused on national capacity strengthening. On the issue of establishing a higher range for annual evaluation funding, UNFPA sought first to use cost recovery to fund evaluation, though it was open to the idea of an evaluation funding levy.

55. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/1 on the revised UNFPA evaluation policy.

Evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices

56. Board members strongly welcomed the evaluation focus on gender-based violence as a means of improving UNFPA programming and assistance in development and humanitarian settings. They welcomed the Fund's work in combatting gender-based violence from a health and prevention perspective, including addressing practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting. They welcomed the Fund's work on data and trend analysis of gender equality, women's empowerment, gender-based violence and harmful practices, and recognized its role in addressing social and behavioural change through culturally sensitive approaches

in consultation with all stakeholders, including government. That included its role in raising the awareness of political leadership at country level. They valued efforts aimed at addressing cultural norms as part of a strengthened inclusive and holistic approach that included marginalized groups and men and boys. They recognized resource inadequacies and welcomed UNFPA efforts to ensure adequate allocation of resources to its gender-based violence activities.

57. Delegations sought clarity on reported challenges to inter-agency coordination at country level and government efforts to address inter-agency competition, and welcomed the idea of governance agreements at global level to mitigate competition. They encouraged the cross-fertilization of experiences at country level and in leveraging South-South cooperation in combatting gender-based violence. They noted that gender-based violence needed to be addressed in all areas throughout the organization, including in humanitarian settings in the provision of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights services through a human-rights based approach. They stressed the importance of maintaining gender specialists and using a crosscutting approach to gender-based violence. They highlighted the need for a common definition of gender-based violence understood by all partners. They suggested using the resident coordinator's office and redesigned UNDAF to spearhead system-wide gender-based violence and gender equality programming, and connecting fraud prevention efforts to gender-based violence in the workplace through the resident coordinator system.

58. In response, the Director, Evaluation Office, said the office collaborated with United Nations organizations' evaluation offices within the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) to advocate for UNDAF evaluations' compliance with normative evaluation frameworks, both within the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and UNEG norms and standards.

59. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) highlighted UNFPA work in the Spotlight Initiative with United Nations organizations in addressing gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation/cutting, as part of its three transformative goals. UNFPA took a preventive approach to combatting gender-based violence, addressing social and cultural norms at community level and conducting data analysis. The Fund welcomed the proposal to coordinate inter-agency work on gender-based violence through the resident coordinator system and in the workplace. On control and prevention of fraud, UNFPA efforts to create a corporate environment free of fear by improving leadership and culture, including through regular audits, helped address gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace.

60. The Director, UNFPA Programme Division, explained that redesigned UNDAFs had yet to be completed because the working group sought to ensure they contained enough detail to be used for programming and accountability. Likewise, it was still not clear whether the system-wide strategic document would be operational in focus and linked to the UNDAFs through results statements and indicators. Furthermore, because the development-humanitarian divide on gender-based violence activities had yet to be determined, monitoring and reporting on UNFPA gender-based violence programming would focus solely on development activities, including through the resident coordinator system. In that context, the Fund was focused on coordinated inter-agency, cross-partnership activities grounded in the common chapter and Spotlight Initiative; both had reporting and accountability frameworks. All the Fund's work focused on gender, but the profile of gender experts had to evolve to address the changing dynamics of gender-related challenges. UNFPA had to continue to assess evolving gender challenges and determine how to address them. The redesigned UNDAF could serve to establish clear lines of responsibility and funding, a topic for financing for development discussions.

61. The Executive Board took note of the evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices, 2012–2017 (DP/FPA/2019/CRP.1)

V. Country programmes and related matters

62. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) provided an overview of the two country programmes for Cambodia and Niger, as well as the second country programme extension for South Africa. In turn, regional directors for Asia and the Pacific, West and Central Africa, and East and Southern Africa provided details from the regional perspective.

63. The Executive Board, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, reviewed and approved the country programmes documents for Cambodia (DP/FPA/CPD/KHM/6) and Niger (DP/FPA/CPD/NER/9). The Board also approved the second one-year extension of the country programme for South Africa (DP/FPA/2019/3).

UNOPS segment

VI. Statement by the Executive Director

64. In her statement, the Executive Director, UNOPS, provided an update on the implementation of the organization's Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and highlighted the key focus areas for 2019. She underscored UNOPS support for United Nations reform and readiness to share its experiences in driving it forward. The funds needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals however far surpassed what the United Nations could contribute. The United Nations had to find ways to catalyse official development assistance, in cooperation with others, to unleash larger sources of sustainable financing, both public and private. Through its Social Impact Investing Initiative, UNOPS mobilized the large-scale investments in sustainable infrastructure developing economies needed. Social impact investing gave opportunities to socially conscious investors to generate financial returns while ensuring their contributions made positive social, environmental and economic impact. UNOPS role was based on its decades of operational experience in difficult settings, willingness to invest, and commitment to de-risk projects so the private sector more easily stepped in. Those efforts helped to accelerate the Goals and promote learning from the private sector through access to technologies and know-how. UNOPS fostered gender-sensitive infrastructure to promote gender equality and ending discriminatory practices related to infrastructure.

65. On the humanitarian-development front, UNOPS had earned a solid reputation for its rapid, flexible response to crises through, for example, quick restoration of electricity for health, water and sanitation facilities in Gaza or help in delivering food, fuel and supplies in Yemen through the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism. Its rapid deployment of new technologies and efficiencies into projects helped to introduce artificial intelligence to humanitarian responses in Afghanistan and set up call centres in Iraq to more efficiently assist displaced populations. Its revitalized information technology systems saved hours of work and its process automation reduced time spent on procurement. UNOPS played a key role helping governments fight corruption, bureaucracy and inefficiency through public procurement and, for several years, had been awarded the gold standard in sustainable procurement. In 2018, UNOPS launched two major initiatives to prioritize gender equality corporately and in projects, on which it would report to the Board at its annual session 2019.

66. Board members expressed strong support for UNOPS work in developing countries and in supporting the work of United Nations organizations. They underscored UNOPS central role in United Nations reform and resident coordinator system repositioning, focused on greater efficiency and effectiveness for results delivery and providing common services. They expected UNOPS to play an increased role in country teams and in UNDAF design and implementation. Innovation and innovative financing were key, and areas where UNOPS should continue to play a central role, including through innovative partnerships. They welcomed UNOPS unique self-sustaining business model, a model for other United Nations organizations. UNOPS should make reinvestment a key priority without seeking maximum profits. They called for UNOPS to continue collaboration with the United Nations system, while avoiding competition and duplication.

67. Delegations encouraged UNOPS to design tailored, demand-driven, cost-effective approaches to meet programme countries' needs, with sustainability as the driver of operational priorities, focused on sustainable project management, infrastructure and procurement. That approach was pertinent to UNOPS work in LDCs and SIDS, in line with the principles of the Samoa Pathways, as well as in MICs. Other delegations highlighted UNOPS support to the public sector to strengthen national capacities, improve public administration, and create production capacity and swift response to operational challenges. UNOPS role in infrastructure management helped to promote economic efficiency, safety, local job creation, transfer of expertise, environmental and social consolidation, and fiscal soundness. They welcomed its work in social impact investment in Africa and requested information on whether it planned to expand such work to other regions. They encouraged UNOPS to respond in a timely manner to Board of Auditors' recommendations.

68. Delegations welcomed UNOPS work in the humanitarian-development nexus and in providing peace and security solutions in conflict settings. They sought details on UNOPS role in conflict prevention, including its engagement with the private sector, and how UNOPS approached sustainable development in long-term refugee camps. They welcomed UNOPS work on gender equality, including gender mainstreaming, in programmes and projects, and looked forward to UNOPS fulfilling its objective of gender parity by end 2019 and further collaboration with United Nations organizations in that area. They welcomed its work on gender-sensitive architecture and sought details on how it promoted it in development planning.

69. In response, the Executive Director highlighted UNOPS work to address the needs of SIDS through a model that capitalized on its innovation centres to connect technology to local entrepreneurs working with national governments. UNOPS had been able to bring social impact investing to the level where private sector demonstrated the will to invest. UNOPS fully supported reform and establishment of an independent resident coordinator working on behalf of United Nations organizations. UNOPS had made its required contributions to the resident coordinator system, and actively helped implement the 2030 Agenda through and beyond official development assistance to include cooperation with the private sector. It was committed to working with country teams and developing UNDAFs, and ready to collaborate with UNDP and OCHA to determine more efficient, effective engagement in the humanitarian-development nexus. UNOPS aimed to ensure development aid worked efficiently in helping governments spend public resources better and access private funding. UNOPS was ready to work with organizations to explore shared services, procurement practices, access to new funding and innovation. Social impact investing, innovation centres and public procurement support were examples of UNOPS support to MICs. On conflict prevention, UNOPS played multiple roles

through rapid response and mitigation measures and by being a neutral implementation partner focused on developing new solutions.

Joint segment

VII. Recommendations of the Board of Auditors

70. The Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, introduced the UNDP and United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, 2017 (DP/2019/7). The Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, introduced the report of UNFPA: follow-up to the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2017: status of implementation of the recommendations (DP/FPA/2019/2). The General Counsel, UNOPS, introduced the report of UNOPS on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for 2017 (DP/OPS/2019/1).

UNDP

71. Board members welcomed UNDP unqualified audit opinions for 2017. They sought clarity on whether the fact that most Board of Auditors' recommendations for 2017 were country-focused meant UNDP needed to undertake a more systemic response. First, on management risks related to implementing partners, they noted that despite improvements risk assessments remained a concern, including under the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT), and they welcomed the inclusion of fraud clauses on fiduciary risk management and control in programme agreements. Second, noting the continuing low recovery rate of funds lost owing to fraud, they encouraged UNDP to address recurring findings and recommendations on its compliance with existing operational rules and procedures, and urged it to review procedures to determine if concerned offices could liaise earlier to speed up processes and recover funds. Third, on reported ongoing procurement weakness, while recognizing improvements, they encouraged UNDP to continue to digitize and integrate procurement, focused on centralization and greater levels of transparency, integrity and accountability. Delegations urged UNDP to take steps to improve staff completion rates for mandatory training; sought clarification at the annual session 2019 as to why in 2018 UNDP had budgeted 50 per cent more than its actual expenditures; encouraged UNDP to address recurrent findings about information technology weaknesses at country level; and sought details on how UNDP would address areas on which audit opinions were partially satisfactory.

UNFPA

72. Board members welcomed the Fund's unqualified audit opinion for 2017 and overall healthy financial standing, despite funding challenges, and encouraged it to continue to broaden its donor base and pursue innovative funding approaches and partnerships, including with non-traditional donors and the private sector. They were pleased with the increase in funding from programme countries. They welcomed the clean audit findings and management approaches, including audit-based management, building on the Board of Auditors' recommendations. Delegations encouraged countries to abide by their funding commitments and ensure predictable, multi-year contributions to core resources. They called on countries in a position to do so to step up contributions to core. They requested details on how the Fund would stay focused on practical delivery of its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and what Member States could do to improve the funding situation. Delegations recognized initiatives to handle implementing partners and strengthen operational controls, but suggested strengthening risk management at country levels, including under HACT. They

welcomed implementation of a formalized enterprise risk management policy and the results of the qualitative review undertaken by the Risk Treatment Working Group, and recognized efforts to improve the maturity of risk management. They welcomed the checklist for microassessments and strengthened staff capacity to conduct spot checks, but stressed the need for follow-up, enhancing methodology and ensuring findings informed learning and decision-making. They commended the start of inventory audits in 16 countries in 2019 and the accompanying training, and requested that management monitor resourcing and follow up. They urged UNFPA to adhere to procurement plans to ensure efficiency in operations and transparency, and to strengthen monitoring of distributed inventories to provide assurance they were used as intended. They expected UNFPA to address issues related to non-recovery and non-authorization of cash advances, as they were related to fraud and corrupt practices. They commended UNFPA for efforts to close outstanding audit recommendations and encouraged it to continue to implement recommendations. While welcoming the shift from a deficit to a surplus in 2017, they requested an action plan with clear subgoals for increasing the share of unearmarked contributions and broadening the donor base, including as part of the structured funding dialogue. They stressed the importance of continuous follow up and recurring sensitivity analysis of employee benefit liabilities.

UNOPS

73. Board members welcomed UNOPS robust financial health while urging it to develop a strategy for effective use of increasing surpluses. They welcomed the sustainable procurement criteria checklist but, noting their variability of application, encouraged UNOPS to ensure it incorporated sustainability concerns in all procurement processes. Recognizing its actions to focus on gender mainstreaming, they encouraged UNOPS to allocate enough time and resources to facilitate timely implementation of and follow up to its gender mainstreaming activities. They encouraged timely implementation of the enterprise portfolio and project management system and the enterprise resource management system to set the foundations for its integrated risk management system. Recognizing the reduced number of new audit recommendations, delegations called on UNOPS to focus more on ensuring it addressed outstanding recommendations.

Response

74. In response, the Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, reiterated UNDP commitment to fulfilling audit recommendations and achieving greater development effectiveness. UNDP had redesigned its programme and policy manuals and streamlined its operational procedures to facilitate delivery at country level. It had revised its enterprise risk management approach to improve risk management and link it to programme planning. On compliance with rules and procedures, especially recovery, UNDP would present its report, with breakdowns by year and amount recovered, at the annual session 2019. UNDP was making improvements in procurement, including appointment of regional procurement specialists. On mandatory training, especially on sexual harassment and abuse, the Administrator had introduced a system by which managers declared in writing completion of mandatory courses by staff and group training and disclosed any case at country level. On information technology, the UNDP digital security team was pursuing ISO 27001 certification. On budgeting, between 2014 and 2017 UNDP had seen significant reductions in core resources compared to aspirational core, which it had offset through reduced institutional spending. Building on lessons of aspirational budgeting, UNDP had moved to base its budgeting process, under the Strategic Plan, 2017–2021, on an income derived model. On income, it applied a risk management approach to corporate budgeting for core resources, using different possible scenarios to counter

risk. On spending, it maintained its promise not to run a deficit organization, and retained its surplus of core in reserve. On project weaknesses at country level, UNDP tracked each country office on its compliance with audit recommendations, held country office leadership accountable, conducted national-level audits between independent audits, and used guidance from independent evaluations. On pooled funding, UNDP was subject to two separate audit protocols, one as system-wide fiduciary for the Multi-Partner Trust Fund and two for its programme delivery at country level in joint programmes.

75. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, affirmed the Fund's capacity to monitor implementation of audit recommendations through a dedicated staff member within the Executive Office. UNFPA continued to improve its preventive measures, including maintaining a running item on Board fiduciary matters in senior management meetings, where discussions on performance were informed by country and regional data to ensure timely action. In 2018, for example, the Fund had undertaken a full evaluation of its supplies programme that offered recommendations for improvement.

76. The Director, Division of Management Services, UNFPA, said the Fund embraced preventive measures in risk management. UNFPA was revising its information technology infrastructure, including the new enterprise resource planning, and sought to improve its risk management. HACT constituted the Fund's primary risk management tool in audits and spot checks of implementing partners. On information technology audit coverage, audits by independent audit firms, along with spot checks, ensured over 90 per cent of spending by implementing partners was covered. Its efforts to boost risk management included review of assurance methods and revision of workplan policies for implementing partners. The enterprise resources management system tracked risk management performance and mitigation plans for each business unit. That said, UNFPA sought to differentiate risk management processes to address greatest areas of risk, including "last mile" audits and local cash transactions and advances. In 2018 the Fund had released its new inventory policy that contained risk and responsibility measures, had put in place measures to control cash advances in response to recovery concerns, and would undertake a complete review of its supply chain. On fund balance, UNFPA had carried over funds received for non-core activities, which represented additional cash for it to spend; the move from deficit to surplus was not a significant development and did not affect its strong financial position.

77. The General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York Office, said the points raised correlated to those on which UNOPS was focused to become more efficient and effective in results delivery. On gender, UNOPS maintained a running item on gender in its senior management agenda, which changed regularly based on whether measures were working or not. UNOPS fully supported the proposal to develop a strategy on managing its increasing surplus. The first part of the reserve was meant to cover the minimum necessary for UNOPS personnel in the event of UNOPS closure, especially in light of potential significant exposure of UNOPS projects. The larger part of the reserve was meant for innovation and investment, and became crucial when it moved to a new enterprise resource planning system.

78. The Board adopted decision 2019/2 on the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

VIII. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on repositioning of the United Nations development system

79. The Director, Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP, the Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, and the General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York Office, presented updates on their organizations' progress and plans in response to General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning exercise.

80. Board members reaffirmed their support for resolution 72/279 and the role of reform in making the United Nations development system fit for purpose to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the Goals. A group of delegations welcomed the timely financial contribution of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS under the expanded cost-sharing arrangement for swift operationalization, and commended them for signing a memorandum of understanding on mutual recognition to improve cooperation. They sought clarity on when changes to each organization's financial rules and regulations, to reflect the memorandum, would be presented to the Board, and requested a UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS assessment of the need to update internal guidelines and regulations to align with provisions in resolution 72/279. They encouraged UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to support non-resident agencies' efforts to strengthen their impact at country level and engagement in repositioning. They welcomed UNFPA co-chairing of the UNDAF Redesign Group and called on United Nations development organizations to ensure the UNDAF became the most important instrument for planning and implementation of United Nations development activities in partnership with host countries.

81. The same group encouraged UNDP and UNFPA to integrate perspectives related to implementation of resolution 72/279 in midterm reviews of strategic plans and adjust results to reflect reforms, including on mutual accountability. Delegations looked forward to the common chapter evaluation on impact of joint work in the six outcome areas, and requested that the organizations include results in their midterm reviews. They called on UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to work together to implement the funding compact in line with ongoing structured funding dialogue to ensure better reporting, transparency, efficiency and accountability for results. They called for system-wide harmonized cost classifications, definitions and methodologies, and asked that the United Nations development system make changes to ensure greater administrative and organizational efficiency. Delegations reiterated their call for the United Nations development system to meet the Secretary-General's target of achieving 50 per cent common premises by 2021 and fully shared services by 2022. They welcomed the establishment of a steering committee that fostered synergies in humanitarian and development action, and mobilized global action for crises, and called for strengthened alignment and integration with the peace and security pillar, especially in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and rule of law.

82. Other delegations requested details on when the organizations would consult the Board on UNDAF redesign and resident coordinators' reporting on UNDAF implementation. They suggested that UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, in accordance with the management and accountability framework, present updates of progress on the repositioning to allow the Boards to fulfil their oversight role, including through the Economic and Social Council and General Assembly. They called on UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to reorient freed up funds, resulting from shared contributions to the resident coordinator system, toward development activities, and requested information on progress, including guidelines on resident coordinator system fund collection. They expected the redesigned UNDAF to be

analytical, useful in financing implementation of the Goals, and aligned with national priorities. They highlighted that a United Nations development system-wide strategic document, requested in the 2016 quadrennial review, should be submitted to the Economic and Social Council operational segment in May 2019. They urged the organizations to avoid delay in implementing the 1 per cent levy to fund the resident coordinator system and stressed the importance of including private sector contributions into the scope of the levy.

83. In response, the Director, Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP, highlighted that the UNDP integrator role was focused at country level to localize solutions for the Goals and strengthen local capacity in line with national needs. Through its integrator role, UNDP supported the resident coordinator system and partners in analysing data and identifying gaps as part of efforts to interlink organizational mandates and areas of development assistance, which helped UNDP realign its assistance and planning to national needs and challenges. Given its universal presence and trusted relationship with government, UNDP was ideal for that system-wide, partner-wide integrator role.

84. The Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, speaking on doubled cost-sharing contributions, said the UNDP share of \$10.3 million meant it was an important shareholder in the success of the new resident coordinator system. Efficiency gains were key to that success, and UNDP was on track to meet its commitment to reduce core resources allocated to administrative functions, shifting them to programme. UNDP viewed the UNDAF as the principal document, at all levels, governing the United Nations development system's relationship with government and country presence. UNDP fully espoused an empirical approach to operational services; as the only organization with universal operational presence and legal operational host country agreements, UNDP was the ideal agency to lead on common services. UNDP had signed a legal agreement with the United Nations Secretariat guaranteeing its provision of operational services and capacity to the resident coordinator.

85. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, stressed that the new UNDAF was premised on national ownership and national sustainable development to which the United Nations system offered support and assistance. The UNDAF redesign was ongoing with the purpose of marshalling different mandates together to support the ambitious targets of the Goals and 2030 Agenda. It provided new ways of working together to fulfil national development aspirations, including through non-resident agencies, and in response to evolving challenges, all embodied in the mutual recognition agreements. The organizations were ironing out the details of operationalizing the 1 per cent levy and establishing benchmarks to measure efficiency gains.

86. The General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York Office, stated that UNOPS was determining with the United Nations Legal Office whether the mutual recognition agreement could require changes in UNOPS rules and regulations. UNOPS would update internal guidelines to reflect interactions on reporting, accountability framework and resident coordinator mechanisms. As an entity that worked in peace/security, humanitarian and development, UNOPS welcomed the inclusion of all three in the repositioning exercise and inter-agency coordination. Empirical data was key and UNOPS was prepared to provide its services where and when needed within its mandated areas.

87. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/4 on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on repositioning of the United Nations development system.

IX. Working methods of the Executive Board

88. In his statement, the Coordinator of the Core Group, citing the coherence principles of the 2016 quadrennial review and related decisions of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, presented the core group's activities to improve the methods of the Board.

89. Board members welcomed efforts made to improve working methods as part of 2016 quadrennial review follow-up to enhance the Board's oversight role. Delegations expected the core group to keep an eye on the rules of procedure for each Executive Board. They underscored that joint meetings of the Boards were a coordination forum; not a decision-making body. They expected the Boards to work consultatively to ensure coordinated decision-making and avoid overlaps. They underscored the need to follow up on decisions with concrete actions and ensure an ongoing consultative process. They asked for a timetable of meetings on working methods that included themes and topics. They stressed that improving working methods was an ongoing process that addressed issues as they arose.

90. In response, the Coordinator of the Core Group said the group would continue to discuss ways to improve working methods. Thematic core group discussions took up issues raised in the 2017 Board non-paper and other related documents. Each core group regional member was expected to share with and cull feedback from its respective regional group for consideration by the core group. The group was scheduled to share its outcomes at the annual session 2019.

91. The Secretary of the Executive Board affirmed the Secretariat's commitment to support the core group and implement decisions to improve working methods. Since the Board adopted decision 2018/22, the Secretariat had circulated to Board members the common items table and the text, table and template of decisions two weeks in advance of sessions; posted a joint online calendar on the websites of the different Executive Boards; and compiled a calendar of negotiations to ensure coordination. The Secretariat continued to work with decision facilitators to determine appropriate working hours for decision consultations.

92. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/3 on the working methods of the Executive Board.

Part two
Annual session 2019

**Held at United Nations Headquarters in New York
on 30 May, 3–4 and 6–7 June 2019**

I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session 2019 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 30 May, 3 to 4 and 6 to 7 June 2019.
2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its annual session 2019 (DP/2019/L.2) and approved the report of the first regular session 2019 (DP/2019/8).
3. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the annual session 2019 appeared in document DP/2019/9, which is available on the Executive Board website.
4. The Executive Board agreed in decision 2019/25 to the following schedule for future sessions of the Executive Board in 2019:

Second regular session 2019: 3 to 6 September 2019

UNDP segment

II. Interactive dialogue with the Administrator and annual report

5. In his statement to the Board, the Administrator highlighted UNDP progress in 2018 in implementing the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, which went hand in hand with its work to accelerate local action and global impact for the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP did so while pushing the boundaries of how it thinks, delivers, invests and manages to drive progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the first year of implementation of the strategic plan, UNDP had experienced the highest programme delivery in five years: \$4.60 billion in programme resources, spending 22 per cent under outcome one, 25 per cent under outcome two and 16 per cent under outcome three. For 22 of its 27 development outputs, UNDP had reached over 90 per cent of its targeted milestones, 19 of which had achieved or exceeded 2018 milestones. These achievements would not have been possible without the organization's important efficiency gains. In 2018, just over 90 cents of every dollar spent went to programmes and services and achieve development results, up from 88 cents in 2017. Business processes were simplified and reflected in programming and operational guidance.

6. The Administrator drew attention to the ten observations laid out in his report on results for 2018 and progress on the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 (DP/2019/10). Those observations had grown out of careful analysis of UNDP results and reporting in 2018 and signalled emerging trends based on existing data as UNDP responded to the directional shift of the strategic plan. The observations highlighted that: (a) the 2030 Agenda and the Goals were the drivers of UNDP work throughout the world; (b) UNDP advanced integrated ways to eradicate multidimensional poverty and advance development; (c) UNDP elucidated its focus on leaving no one behind; (d) the new way of working with humanitarian and other development actors was taking root; (e) UNDP saw a surge of innovation in its governance work; (f) UNDP remained the primary United Nations partner for climate action; (g) while UNDP showed good results on gender in all its areas of work, there is more to do; (h) UNDP remained a trusted, active partner in advancing South-South cooperation, with diversifying financial flows; (i) UNDP achieved results by doing business better and re-establishing financial stability, notably through greater efficiencies and cost savings; and (j) UNDP achieved excellent results while powering the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

7. The organization's implementation of its strategic plan in 2018 also offered lessons. The Administrator pointed to the need to step up efforts, for example, on social protection, an area in which fewer country offices reported in 2018 compared to that in the previous Strategic Plan, 2014–2017. Other areas included UNDP work to advance women's leadership and participation in crisis prevention and recovery efforts, which had shown only initial progress in 2018; its work to consolidate a previously fragmented approach to financing the Goals; the need to further enhance its audit performance; and improving its support to least developed countries (LDCs) in their efforts to eradicate poverty. UNDP would continue to use lessons from evaluations and audits to improve efficiencies, including by expanding global shared services, streamlining corporate business processes and increasing clustering of back-office services. Central to those efforts was the organization's ongoing work to strengthen its partnership with the United Nations development system and accelerate implementation of the common chapter, in line with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development (General Assembly resolution [71/243](#)). Indeed, strong partnerships would continue to be crucial for implementing the strategic plan, including through its growing collaboration with the international financial institutions and the private sector. Despite the positive trajectory, however, resources remained fragile. Only 12 per cent of UNDP resources were regular (core), a situation that impacted its ability to be flexible in delivery of services and results.

8. The Administrator pointed to three global issues in 2019 which, if tackled in an integrated way, would help to scale and accelerate progress toward the Goals: inequality, climate change and migration and displacement. He stressed that climate change was the defining issue of the time, one that underlined the need for an integrated approach to achieve the 2030 Agenda. UNDP had the largest United Nations portfolio on climate action, supporting over 140 countries in their implementation of their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). UNDP was committed, responsible, capable and determined to support all partners in accelerating the ambition and progress toward the Goals, including at the Climate Action Summit taking place in September 2019. Through its local and global investments, UNDP was committed to playing its part to make the summit a success, including by working with countries to design concrete plans that enhance their NDCs by 2020.

Regional and national statements

9. Board members commended UNDP for its significant achievements in 2018 against the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 – especially given the challenges UNDP faced delinking from the resident coordinator system and the internal changes it demanded. They welcomed the organization's achieving gender parity among senior staff and balancing its budget for the second consecutive year. They commended the notable increase in UNDP's work on persons with disabilities, as reflected in its swift integration in programming and results at country level. Board members were pleased with the continued innovative approach of the interactive dialogue and its focus on climate change. They supported the organization's role in assisting countries with their NDCs and welcomed the annual report's three interrelated priorities for 2019: climate change, inequality and migration and displacement. On reform, they welcomed the UNDP integrator role to ensure the effectiveness of UNDP and the system at large in addressing complex issues such as climate change and in guiding the repositioning of the United Nations development system. They welcomed the "next generation" UNDP and expressed full support for the transformation process. One group highlighted the need for the new resident coordinator system to review multi-country offices in subregions, with equal consideration to efficiency and effectiveness, including through adequate funding for long-term results and sustainability. The group underscored the unique, fragile development circumstances of small island developing States (SIDs) and middle-income countries (MICs), which

suffered high rates of poverty, inequality and the risk of certain population groups falling back into poverty.

10. Board members emphasized that the overarching common goal of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals was to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Poverty eradication had to be an integral objective of all policies and addressed in a multidimensional manner. They stressed the importance of national capacity-building in achieving the Goals, in line with national priorities. They expressed strong support for the organization's role in bridging the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, based on the idea that development was preventive and had to be integrated in humanitarian and peace work. In that area, UNDP should take into account the interlinkages between sustainable development, humanitarian action and peacebuilding activities in accordance with the quadrennial review and as reaffirmed in resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. Securing sufficient and predictable core resources for development activities was key to achieving the 2030 Agenda and gave UNDP and others the ability to respond to rapidly changing and new country priorities. They expressed continued concern with the core/non-core imbalance and underscored the importance of predictable, multi-year core funding. They expected that the funding compact would help to realize that goal. One group stressed that the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation was the articulator of South-South cooperation in the United Nations system. South-South cooperation continued to strengthen international cooperation for the achievement of the Goals and remained a complement to and not a substitute for North-South cooperation.

Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator

Climate change

11. The Board held an interactive dialogue that allowed Board members to engage in discussion with the Administrator and senior management on the UNDP development offer in 2018 against its strategic plan objectives. Climate change was a particular focus, including what each country would contribute through its NDCs. Discussions on UNDP's results in 2018 revolved around two questions central to the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021: What do we want to achieve? and What do we want UNDP to be?

12. The President of the Board, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, joined the UNDP Administrator and the directors of the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy for the interactive discussion, and UNDP colleagues video-linked live from the Ecuador country office for the discussions on climate change.

13. Board Members noted that in 2018 UNDP had made significant progress against the goals in its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. The progress was notable given the inherent challenges UNDP faced as it delinked from the resident coordinator system and undertook the internal changes it demanded. In the midst of those challenges, UNDP had achieved gender parity among senior staff and balanced its budget for the second consecutive year. They called on UNDP to continue to act as an integrator of the United Nations development system and all stakeholders in assisting countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Goals.

14. Delegations noted that central to the UNDP integrator role was its unique capacity to view the big picture and connect the dots that revealed the interconnectedness of development challenges and their solutions. In doing that, UNDP had to build on its expertise in poverty eradication, governance, political participation and the human rights-based approach, all part and parcel of its mandate and all central to addressing the three global challenges of climate change, inequality

and migration and displacement. That included its work to bolster cooperation, joint analysis, resilience-building and pursuit of collective outcomes in humanitarian-development-peace efforts. Because none of that was possible without funding, UNDP had to continue to play its crucial role as an implementer of vertical trust funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility trust fund (GEF), and in assisting governments with national funding reviews. Despite those notable achievements, delegations encouraged UNDP to do more to communicate its work and its results to stakeholders. The complex, multidimensional challenges of the 2030 Agenda demanded that the United Nations development system, with UNDP as its integrator, step up its integration and pursuit of innovative partnerships, most notably with the private sector.

15. On climate change, the President highlighted that many developing countries, including SIDs and LDCs, were struggling with NDC implementation and with gaining access to GCF resources. Because UNDP had a critical role to play in supporting those more vulnerable countries, the President asked how UNDP was helping SIDs and LDCs to implement their NDCs and access GCF resources. The Administrator highlighted that in 2019 UNDP was focused on rallying the world and raising the level of ambition for the Climate Action Summit. Throughout the year and moving into 2020, UNDP would maximize efforts to work closely with programme countries at their call to review their national climate strategies and their NDCs, and to assist in identifying areas to raise ambition and pursue new tracks of work, as part of a multi-partnership ecosystem.

16. Board members viewed climate change as one of the most important challenges of the time, one that demanded a multidimensional approach that united all stakeholders. The UNDP integrator role was crucial to addressing climate change, and its vast country presence, technical expertise and operational capacity made it the ideal driver of collective climate action. UNDP support to countries formulating their NDCs was key and would help to raise the ambition of the Climate Action Summit in September 2019.

17. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/6 on the annual report of the UNDP Administrator.

III. Gender equality in UNDP

18. The Administrator, UNDP, opened the item and the Director, ad interim, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, presented the annual report of the Administrator on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy in 2018 (DP/2019/11).

19. Board members welcomed UNDP work to foster gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender equality and the economic and political empowerment of women were central to achieving the Goals, and women's and girls' rights were relevant to all UNDP outcomes. They welcomed the UNDP approach to women as agents of change and encouraged UNDP to strengthen its collaboration with UN-Women, including in fighting violence against women through the Spotlight Initiative and in addressing implementation challenges. Fighting violence against women in all its forms was a priority for system-wide gender activities. In pursuing those activities, UNDP should engage in private sector and South-South cooperation partnerships.

20. Delegations welcomed the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into poverty eradication and reaching the furthest behind. The annual report's analysis of the intersectionality of gender with climate change, disaster,

displacement, conflict and migration reflected the issue's complexity and root causes. There was a call for UNDP to (a) advance women's political leadership, representation and participation, including on the women and peace and security agenda; (b) address discriminatory gender and social norms through legal and policy transformations; (c) strengthen government capacity to generate data to understand the root causes of gender injustice and gender-based violence; (d) harness comparative advantages of United Nations organizations for a system-wide approach; and (e) champion an organizational culture supporting a positive working environment with gender parity at all levels.

21. A group of delegations commended UNDP management's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. They were pleased UNDP had met the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women requirements and had reached parity in senior management. They appreciated UNDP results empowering women as decision makers in natural resource management, energy and climate action. They welcomed the establishment of the Crisis Bureau as an opportunity to support women as agents of change and better mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in crisis management. They encouraged UNDP to continue to invest in its gender team, decentralized gender capacities, community of practice, and audit and evaluation learning. They requested that UNDP incentivize managers and hold them accountable. They asked if the \$1 million UNDP had invested in gender mainstreaming was sufficient and encouraged UNDP to reach the 15 per cent target for country programme budgets to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

22. In response, the Director, ad interim, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, said closing the gender gap was a development imperative. UNDP focus on achieving gender parity at senior levels and throughout the organization showed its commitment to gender equality and transforming organizational culture. UNDP was investing in women and peace and security, in which it aimed to reach 50 per cent parity in 2019. Similarly, UNDP collaborated on gender equality and women's empowerment with United Nations organizations system-wide and through the common chapter.

23. The Executive Board took note of the annual report on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2018–2021 ([DP/2019/11](#)).

IV. Human Development Report

24. The Director, Human Development Report Office (HDRO), provided an update on *Human Development Report* consultations held in various forums in 2019, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [57/264](#).

25. Board members welcomed the report's thematic focus on inequality and the breadth of HDRO partnerships and consultations during the report's development. They encouraged HDRO to continue to work with partners and strive for complementarity. They sought details on how the report connected to system-wide efforts to unite around data, the use of the report by UNDP and the United Nations system, particularly at country level (through national human development reports) and what types of innovations HDRO was pursuing in the renewed approach to the reports. They sought clarity on the level of detail and depth used when examining inequality.

26. In response, the Director, HDRO, restated that the office had collaborated with partners such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and sought to complement existing research and analytics on the report's thematic focus of inequality, bringing new innovations and value added. Substantively, the 2019

report brought a unique perspective beyond income. The Director highlighted how the human development index (HDI) remained a prominent indicator for a wide range of stakeholders, including academia, the finance community and Member States, and how such broad interest had created greater demand for more and better statistics. HDRO worked closely with the statistical community, had an advisory board on statistics and was active in the Statistical Commission to keep them abreast of Member States' concerns. The Director stressed that regional and national human development reports would continue to be critical.

27. The Executive Board took note of the update by the secretariat on consultations on the *Human Development Report 2019*.

V. UNDP country programmes and related matters

28. The Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP, provided an overview of the country programme document (CPD) for the Congo, the first one-year country programme extensions for Timor-Leste and Tunisia and the two-year extension for the Comoros for Board approval.

29. There were no comments by delegations on this item.

30. The Executive Board approved, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, the country programme document for the Republic of the Congo ([DP/DCP/COG/3](#)).

31. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Timor-Leste and Tunisia from 1 January to 31 December 2020 (see [DP/2019/12](#)), as approved by the UNDP Administrator.

32. The Executive Board approved the second two-year extension of the country programme for the Comoros from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 (see [DP/2019/12](#)).

VI. Evaluation

33. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), UNDP, presented the annual report on evaluation for 2018 ([DP/2019/16](#)), the independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy ([DP/2019/13](#)) and the IEO response to the review of the UNDP evaluation policy ([DP/2019/15](#)). The Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, provided the management response to the independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy ([DP/2019/14](#)) as well as the evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (LDCs), which had been submitted to the Board at the first regular session 2019 ([DP/2019/4](#)).

Annual report on evaluation and review of the UNDP evaluation policy

34. A group of delegations recognized UNDP achievements in establishing an independent, impactful evaluation function and strengthening national evaluation capacity. They pointed to the need to improve the quality and planning of decentralized evaluations and their use for learning, accountability and communication. Such improvements should focus on strengthening IEO capacity, increasing investments in evaluation and revising the evaluation policy. Delegations would have welcomed information on how the evaluation function was equipped to assess the impact of new elements of UNDP work under the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 – in particular IEO involvement in formulating outcomes and indicators to assess the UNDP integrator function, and plans to evaluate UNDP results implementing the plan of engagement with the Board. The policy revision was an

opportunity to include guidance on how UNDP could better mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in evaluation. IEO should continue to evaluate UNDP performance on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, and UNDP should conduct the planned evaluation on conflict prevention within its 2018–2021 cycle. In view of the IEO move to reduce support to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the group encouraged UNDP, in collaboration with United Nations organizations, to support independent system-wide evaluations, as members of UNEG and under the Secretary-General's leadership.

35. In response, the Director, IEO, highlighted that IEO was engaged with management to improve the UNDP evaluation function through the new evaluation architecture and roll-out of IEO regional personnel working with UNDP and United Nations organizations. IEO was engaged in learning at the outset and end of country-level evaluations, together with partners at the national level. As a result, the average time and costs of country programme evaluations had been significantly reduced. IEO focused on efficiency and effectiveness but also on ensuring the human element through partnerships and constructive dialogue. IEO would engage with members of the Evaluation Advisory Panel and the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee to measure partnerships' qualitative elements. As the largest evaluation office within the United Nations system, IEO policies and independent status were being replicated by other United Nations organizations.

36. The Director, ad interim, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, said UNDP was committed to addressing the 28 per cent "unsatisfactory" evaluation rating. UNDP had already established the evaluation's primacy for the development and updating of country programmes and was working to ensure the rate would improve in 2019.

Evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the LDCs

37. In the sole intervention, one delegation encouraged UNDP to clearly define its added value at country level when building national ownership for integrated solutions. UNDP should build strong partnerships at national level with broad participation of all actors, including the private sector. UNDP should prioritize developing, implementing and reporting on different phases of long-term programmes, addressing poverty's multidimensional nature. The organization should be precise in how it intended to strengthen its work for and integrate women, youth and persons with disabilities in its programmes.

38. The Director, ad interim, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, said the interactive process for evaluations was a model that should be replicated. He concurred that a broad definition of national ownership that included national public and private institutions, civil society and academia was central to UNDP work. UNDP worked with national-level partners to ensure Goals-focused budgeting that left no one behind, working with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. While it was working with UNCDF and GCF to speed up funding disbursements to LDCs, UNDP addressed, with the World Bank, the related challenge of national absorptive capacities.

39. The Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP, underscored that for Africa, national ownership and long-term programmes were paramount, and UNDP partnerships in Africa focused on African institutions. Because country bottlenecks to development often went beyond the development sphere and required a cross-pillar, cross-border approach, especially in fragile contexts, UNDP had set up integrator labs in cross-border regions afflicted by poverty and exclusion. Key to such efforts was integrating disaster risk reduction strategies in development programmes. A major challenge was maximizing African money for the benefit of Africa and addressing

illicit financial flows and offshore funds. The African Continental Free Trade Area offered an opportunity to create the right environment for women to engage.

40. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/7 on UNDP evaluation.

VII. United Nations Capital Development Fund

41. The Acting Associate Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States, UNDP, introduced the item, and the Executive Secretary, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), presented the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2018 (DP/2019/18). Two colleagues from the field presented their work on financial inclusion and local development finance, respectively, and the Head, LDC Investment Platform, outlined how UNCDF had been expanding its financing toolkit.

42. Board members welcomed UNCDF achievements in 2018 against its Strategic Framework, 2018–2021, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Plan of Action. The Fund played a critical role in LDCs and spearheading innovative finance mechanisms. UNCDF should continue to work in places where financing sources were scarce and innovative ideas needed, and pursue new partnerships to channel finances towards the Goals. They welcomed its work launching the first-ever United Nations-affiliated exchange trade fund on the New York Stock Exchange. Such initiatives encouraged investors to align investments with the Goals and invest in places they might otherwise avoid owing to risks. The Fund's commitment to exploring new financial instruments and fiscal decentralization mechanisms was crucial; they opened the space where local authorities could act, helping to empower local communities. Delegations encouraged UNCDF to design, implement and scale up mechanisms that allowed fund transfers to local levels supporting climate-resilient development, disaster risk management, sustainable cities, gender equality and women's empowerment. It was important that the Fund measure not only access to financial services but usage and behavioural change. They welcomed the Fund's efforts to collaborate with United Nations organizations on deployment of financing tools and expertise, and commitment to share best practices system-wide. They urged Member States to consider fully funding UNCDF core resources so it could fulfil its mandate. They called on UNDP to draw on UNCDF expertise as it developed its innovative financing approaches.

43. Board members from the LDCs commended UNCDF for making finance work for the poor. The Fund showed how a small, focused organization could play a big role in getting finance flowing where most needed, demonstrating what was possible to public and private investors. UNCDF demonstrated how small amounts of well-targeted risk capital could make them more inclusive, for example, through digital financing. They commended UNCDF for its thought leadership, including on blended finance. The Fund played an important role in keeping LDCs at the centre of development discussions. They expressed concern over the continued shortfall in UNCDF core resources and appealed to Member States to contribute to UNCDF to ensure it met its funding goals. They called on UNDP and UNCDF to continue discussions with the World Bank to explore how to unlock resources for LDCs.

44. In response, the Executive Secretary, UNCDF, said the Fund would organize informal sessions in 2019 to share evaluation lessons and real-time learning from innovations and to address and openly discuss the topic of exchange trade funds.

45. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/8 on the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2018.

VIII. United Nations Volunteers

46. The Acting Associate Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States, UNDP, introduced the item, and the Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), presented the report of the Administrator on United Nations Volunteers (DP/2019/19).

47. Board members commended UNV for progress against its Strategic Framework, 2018–2021, supporting Member States and the United Nations system through volunteerism and UN-Volunteers engagement, and institutional effectiveness. They welcomed that UNV had ‘met or exceeded expectations’ for most of its results and were pleased with the UNV shift from stand-alone project implementation to helping Member States integrate volunteerism into their national development plans. They recognized the UNV as convener of global debates on volunteerism, especially in the context of the plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the *2018 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report*. They welcomed the significant rise in the number of UN-Volunteers.

48. Delegations acknowledged the strong relationship between UNV and United Nations organizations and its achievement of most of its objectives to mobilize volunteerism – notably at country level. They welcomed UNV collaboration with regional organizations fostering volunteerism, such as the Economic Community of West African States, the rising trend in recruiting national UN-Volunteers, and UNV contributions to building national capacity for the 2030 Agenda and South-South cooperation. That 80 per cent of international UN-Volunteers originated from countries in the South provided the basis for national ownership of the Goals. There was strong support for UNV advocating for gender equality and women’s empowerment by promoting women and youth volunteers, fighting against sexual exploitation and abuse and promoting UN-Volunteers’ role at the country level in raising awareness of the Goals. They welcomed the role of UNV in crisis settings, promoting peace, security, climate action, human rights and social cohesion, and acknowledged its Talent Programme for Young Professionals with Disabilities as an inclusive tool of the United Nations system.

49. Delegations commended UNV for its organizational and digital transformations and strategic repositioning, in line with United Nations reform, and impact they had on cost savings. They highlighted that the UNV Special Voluntary Fund and the Full Funding Programme, in addition to UNDP core resources, were important sources enabling UNV to implement its strategic framework. They encouraged Member States to contribute to such funds and requested that the UNDP Administrator lead efforts to explore innovative financing for UNV.

50. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, highlighted the key role UN-Volunteers played across the United Nations system in diverse positions. UN-Volunteers represented a strong force for diversity and promoted issues around youth and persons with disabilities. They were central to the United Nations reform agenda, peace and security reforms, the Spotlight Initiative and the Peacebuilding Fund. In 2018, DMSPC signed a memorandum of understanding with UNV that allowed UN-Volunteers to serve in United Nations offices and departments and to continue to work for the United Nations once their UN-Volunteer assignments ended.

51. In response, the Executive Coordinator, UNV, confirmed UNV would continue to work with regional and global organizations promoting volunteerism and pursue and foster diversity and gender equality in volunteerism. He appealed to Member States to support UNV through the Special Voluntary Fund, allowing UNV to continue expanding the number of volunteers and promote volunteerism.

52. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/9 on the report of the Administrator on UNV.

UNFPA segment

IX. Statement by the Executive Director and annual report

53. In her address (available on PaperSmart), the Executive Director, UNFPA, presented the Fund's progress and challenges as part of her report on the implementation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 (DP/FPA/2019/4 (Part I)), her report on the statistical and financial review, 2018 (DP/FPA/2019/4 (Part I/Add.1)) and her report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in 2018 (DP/FPA/2019/4 (Part II)). The fiftieth anniversary of UNFPA and twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 2019 marked a time to celebrate achievements and reflect on challenges. In its political declaration, the fifty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development had reaffirmed the ICPD programme of action, and all Member States had agreed that ICPD principles were crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. UNFPA was working to include an essential package of sexual and reproductive health services in universal health coverage policies so that national programmes responded to people's needs, whether in development or humanitarian settings.

54. The Executive Director highlighted the role of the Spotlight Initiative in ending violence against women and reaching the furthest behind, including persons with disabilities. Universality was a guiding principle of the ICPD Programme of Action. The Fund's data work was key to "seeing" those left behind and understanding their needs so they could benefit from the Fund's three transformative results: zero unmet need for contraception; zero preventable maternal deaths; and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices.

55. In 2018, UNFPA had made strong, steady progress against its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. UNFPA had mobilized more resources than ever before while continuing to exercise fiscal prudence; improve efficiencies, cohesiveness and synergies; and make strides in its change management process. The 2017–2018 assessment of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) had recognized UNFPA as a "well performing organization on a positive trajectory". She appealed to donors to step up their contributions to UNFPA core resources. Looking ahead, UNFPA was prioritizing country-level capacity-building in programming, policy and advocacy. It was strengthening its capacities in data analysis and dissemination to help governments formulate policies to close gaps in services. UNFPA continued to strengthen its capacities to respond quickly in emergencies and had established a Humanitarian Response Unit. UNFPA shared its results publicly through its online Results Portal, a testament to its commitment to innovation, transparency, accountability and results, making it a pioneer among United Nations organizations.

56. The contextual challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda and reaching the 'three zeros' required innovative approaches, better mapping and needs estimation, new partnerships and funding and the interdisciplinary 'One United Nations'. The Fund was working with partners to pioneer new solutions, including a costing and financing initiative for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and building stronger population data systems. That effort included the Fund's life cycle work to help countries achieve the demographic dividend and address low fertility and population ageing. The midterm review would allow UNFPA to readjust the Strategic Plan, 2018–

2021 to better address complex challenges. The Fund's leadership and embrace of innovative approaches extended to United Nations development system repositioning, including as co-convenor in redesigning the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), renamed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The Fund would strengthen its partnership with resident coordinators to rally country teams around UNFPA transformative results.

57. Board members underlined the Fund's role in championing the ICPD principles and programme of action. They welcomed its steady progress with regard to its strategic plan 2018–2021 and commended the Executive Director on her leadership through the repositioning and change management processes to ensure the Fund was fit for purpose to support countries as they implemented the 2030 Agenda. Delegations stressed the need to address population and demographics as a development issue, including through innovative technologies. They encouraged UNFPA to continue to play its role in data analysis and dissemination to feed into country programmes and as part of preparations for the Nairobi Summit on ICPD 25: Accelerating the Promise in November 2019. Delegations expressed strong support for the Fund's rights-based approach, including access to sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights, women's human rights and empowerment, mainstreaming gender equality and addressing climate change, all of which were cornerstones of UNSDCF. They looked forward to the Fund's central role in the Nairobi Summit on ICPD 25, including through regional ICPD reviews, by mobilizing youth participation and guiding the summit's outcome vision. They welcomed the progress of the joint programme on female genital mutilation and evaluation of the global programme to end child marriage.

58. Delegations expressed support for the notion of voluntary family planning and empowering individuals and families by helping countries to become self-sufficient through capacity- and partnership-building around the health sector to ensure sustainability. They stressed the importance of universal health coverage and encouraged UNFPA to continue to support countries addressing the challenges of ageing and low fertility. They welcomed the Fund's technical support to programme countries and efforts to build national capacities and requested details on what UNFPA was doing to address unmet needs. They welcomed the Fund's role in small island developing States (SIDs) and middle-income countries (MICs) and urged it to continue to ensure a strong regional presence. They encouraged UNFPA to continue to support South-South and triangular cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

59. Board members encouraged UNFPA to continue to support United Nations repositioning and maximize its potential for greater efficiency and effectiveness, especially at country level, through the common chapter and system-wide strategic document. The Fund should continue to become fit for purpose to deliver on its three transformative results, focusing on its value added while ensuring a multisectoral approach with other organizations. It should work for ever-greater integration through the new resident coordinator system, built on national ownership and activities tailored to local needs. They urged UNFPA to continue to provide leadership and guidance in crisis settings and in providing assistance to refugees. While recognizing progress, they underscored the need to address ongoing challenges of gender-based violence, violence against women, girls and children, sexual exploitation and abuse in development and crisis settings.

60. Delegations welcomed UNFPA commitment to strengthening programmes and pursuing partnerships, including with finance ministries, in order to secure multi-year commitments for its sexual and reproductive health activities and the ICPD. They encouraged UNFPA to use the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, to reflect evolving challenges and the structured funding dialogues to address funding. They requested a joint briefing on the funding compact in the run-up to the second

regular session 2019. Delegations welcomed the upturn in resource mobilization in 2018, but expressed concern over the continued core/non-core imbalance and its potential to jeopardize the Fund's ability to deliver. They welcomed steps to manage resources, as confirmed in the JIU and MOPAN reports, and encouraged UNFPA to continue to implement and track progress of JIU recommendations.

61. A group of SIDs delegations encouraged UNFPA to continue to contribute to the advancement of women within SIDs subregions by increasing efforts to address growing socioeconomic instability, high unemployment, substance abuse and effects of climate change and natural disasters on women. They encouraged UNFPA to secure predictable, multi-year funding and explore innovative partnerships with the private sector to sustain the work of the Caribbean subregional office. They requested an update on plans within the United Nations reform multi-country offices review to ensure sustainability of the subregional office. They encouraged greater collaboration with regional and subregional mechanisms where regional and subregional policies and declarations were made. Recognizing its achievements in 12 of the 18 outputs of its strategic plan, they expressed concern with the remaining six outputs and requested information on specific plans to address the lack of success. They encouraged UNFPA to stay focused on its strategic plan and country programmes while implementing the common chapter. They looked forward to an update at the second regular session 2019 on implementation of results and recommendations for improving the working methods of the executive boards.

62. Another group of delegations strongly supported the Fund's commitment to protecting and advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular of women, adolescent girls and young people, and its long-term support to maternal health as part of universal health care. They welcomed results in organizational effectiveness and efficiency, including in change management and humanitarian architecture. They welcomed the Fund's exploration of innovative partnerships to drive and fund the Goals and work on climate change, and urged UNFPA to use the midterm review to prioritize investments in partnerships.

63. In response, the Executive Director said the Fund was maximizing resources, reallocating savings to programmes and scaling up resource mobilization. Individual giving had proven effective in mobilizing resources and advocating for the Fund's mission. Thematic funds, likewise, helped to put aside funds for specific areas and offset effects of the core/non-core imbalance. The Nairobi Summit on ICPD 25 would discuss financing for unmet needs and family planning-focused budgeting. Change management was working to increase the Fund's organizational effectiveness, as shown in the MOPAN assessment, and publicize its organizational results – which were tied to greater system-wide coherence for results at country level and through the common chapter.

64. UNFPA was focused on strengthening its programme and operational capacity to reach the furthest behind. That included allocating greater funding to family planning, which promised greater return on investment. She underscored that UNFPA spent nearly 6.5 per cent of its regular programme resources for SIDs country programmes. For the Caribbean region, Board approval of resource distribution of \$1.6 million across the United Nations system was allocated as a fixed amount each year. Though it represented a 65 per cent increase from the previous cycle (2014–2017), increased funding was needed to meet SIDs challenges, including boosting capacity within regional offices. The Fund had designed a system for vulnerable MICS and SIDs that allocated resources from emergency funds.

65. The Fund was rolling out its strategy on persons with disabilities and stepping up the fight to end all forms of violence against women, including in humanitarian settings. In 2018, 65 per cent of country programmes had integrated disabilities, while

internal policies and procedures promoted greater inclusivity among staff, and the new country office in Seoul addressed issues of ageing societies and low fertility. As part of efforts to leave no one behind, UNFPA supported national data collection on marginalized groups. The Bridge Funding Mechanism and Women Deliver were innovative tools to meet family planning need gaps at country level. Partnerships were key to such initiatives and had a major impact, including in crisis settings, in creating safe spaces and tackling the vulnerabilities of women due to climate change. On unmet need, UNFPA continued to engage with faith-based, youth and indigenous organizations to tackle social and legal barriers to access, a challenge UNFPA addressed through its universal health coverage initiative.

66. The Deputy Executive Director (Management) highlighted that in 2018 UNFPA had developed a new strategy to engage with resident coordinators, promoting new ways of working for staff to use more collaborative and joined-up inter-agency approaches.

67. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) stressed the importance of partnerships in giving UNFPA work greater impact and visibility and allowed it to design programmes with wider scope and reach the furthest behind. The Fund's strategic partnerships included those with the World Bank, private sector companies and NGOs to advance the 2030 Agenda and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights across the globe. In 2018, UNFPA had signed some 75 new partnerships and would continue to do so in subsequent years.

68. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/10 on the annual report of the UNFPA Executive Director.

X. Evaluation

69. In his presentation, the Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office, introduced his report on the evaluation function, 2018 (DP/FPA/2019/5) and the evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis (DP/FPA/2019/CRP.3). The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) provided the management response to both reports, which was followed by a statement from the Regional Director, Arab States.

Annual report on the evaluation function

70. On performance, resource allocation and learning, a group of delegations welcomed the Evaluation Office's overall positive picture of UNFPA evaluation performance, especially the significant improvement in coverage and implementation rates of decentralized programme-level evaluations. They appreciated that the Evaluation Office and the Policy and Strategy Division were cooperating to address past financial constraints, notably through financial ring-fencing that benefited small country offices. They welcomed the increase in financial investment in the evaluation function in 2018, especially for decentralized evaluations. They encouraged the Office to safeguard the quality of evaluations, including by monitoring the potential continuing decline in the percentage of programme-level evaluations rated 'good' or 'very good'. They welcomed the rising trend in management's implementation of recommendations and introduction of the new key performance indicator on the use of evaluation in programme development. They encouraged the Office to finalize its strategy to strengthen evaluation use in 2019.

71. On system-wide and joint work, the group valued the Office's commitment and active support to the reform agenda and joint and system-wide evaluations. They encouraged UNFPA, in collaboration with United Nations organizations, to support independent system-wide evaluation mechanisms, as members of the United Nations

Evaluation Group (UNEG) and under the Secretary-General's leadership. They sought clarification on the status of the system-wide evaluation unit, including options for responsibilities, mechanisms and funding. They noted with appreciation that the joint evaluation of the common chapter was included in the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan, scheduled for 2019 to 2020/2021.

UNFPA response to the Syria crisis

72. Delegations welcomed the evaluation's transparency and expressed support for the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis and the wider region, especially in support of female refugees. They supported the evaluation's recommendations and encouraged UNFPA to continue to focus on strengthening programmes for youth, in particular adolescent girls in humanitarian responses. They supported the evaluation's recommendation to ensure the Fund's humanitarian programme was grounded in a comprehensive gender and inclusion analysis, including comprehensive risk analysis and risk mitigation strategies, to address the needs of marginalized groups, particularly persons with disabilities. They appreciated the Fund's planned response to address recommendations highlighted in the management response. Overall, they welcomed the Fund's strengthened engagement and leadership in humanitarian settings and coordination of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services.

73. In response, the Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office, highlighted that the Evaluation Office would continue to monitor the quality of evaluation reports, especially for decentralized evaluations, in cooperation with the Policy and Strategy Division and regional monitoring advisers. The Evaluation Office had finalized its communications strategy and launched it in June 2019. It would report to the Board on implementation of the communications strategy at the second regular session 2019.

74. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) noted that UNFPA had rolled out its knowledge management system to capture evaluation lessons and findings during implementation, which were incorporated into policies and programmes, with 80 evaluation findings incorporated into new country programmes. He said the fourth pillar of the Fund's humanitarian work focused on youth, and UNFPA would continue to focus on persons with disabilities as part of its overarching strategy, including in humanitarian settings.

75. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/11 on UNFPA evaluation.

UNOPS segment

XI. Statement by the Executive Director and annual report

76. In her address, the Executive Director of UNOPS stated that 2018 had been a record year. UNOPS delivery had continued to increase, while its greenhouse gas emissions, average fees and management costs had dropped. A growing number of governments continued to request UNOPS services and delivery, underscoring its popularity among non-United Nations entities. UNOPS continued to focus on providing essential services at local level, often in emergency and humanitarian settings. The Executive Director presented her annual report ([DP/OPS/2019/2](#)) and the proposal to establish a UNOPS client board to replace the Policy Advisory Committee ([DP/OPS/2019/CRP.1](#)). In 2018, UNOPS had announced two major initiatives on gender: workforce parity and gender balancing in projects. Gender was a top priority moving forward. On innovation, UNOPS focused on finding ways to catalyse official development assistance, facilitate partnerships and unleash public and private sources of financing for the Goals through social impact financing,

notably in clean energy and renewables. She drew attention to the UNOPS affordable housing project in Kenya, Ghana and India and its partnership for quality, sustainable infrastructure with the University of Oxford. UNOPS continued to help governments improve public procurement, transparency, cost reductions and anti-corruption. On United Nations reform, the Secretary-General had abolished the UNOPS Policy and Advisory Committee to remove potential conflicts with the Board in favour of the UNOPS Client Board. UNOPS innovative financing was an important contribution to United Nations reform.

77. Board members commended UNOPS for its progress in 2018 against its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and its social impact financing activities. They welcomed the UNOPS unique financing model, distinct competencies and strong partner satisfaction. Overall, they welcomed its work in sustainable procurement and urged UNOPS to continue to improve its working methods to help countries achieve the Goals. UNOPS work on gender mainstreaming and gender parity was key and needed clear targets. The UNOPS role was especially key in United Nations reform in light of its unique operational and funding model. They sought details on future sectors with the highest demand for UNOPS services and where UNOPS foresaw its greatest potential to work with the private sector in sustainable infrastructure.

78. A group of delegations acknowledged UNOPS efforts to implement cross-cutting elements, such as human rights, gender equality, environment and anti-corruption. They recognized UNOPS work and challenges in crisis settings through its community engagement toolkit and work with indigenous groups. They stressed the need for strengthened cooperation between UNOPS and United Nations organizations and welcomed the decision to establish the UNOPS Client Board, though they sought further consultations with the Board on that matter. They welcomed UNOPS work on increased efficiency and quality and sought details on the revision of UNOPS country managers' job description. They looked forward to UNOPS articulation of its commitments to the funding compact and its progress against common back office targets.

79. Two groups of delegations highlighted the UNOPS key role in helping SIDs to implement the 2030 Agenda, the Goals and the SAMOA Pathway. They were encouraged by UNOPS readiness to support SIDs in achieving the Goals. They urged UNOPS to pursue cooperation agreements with SIDs and to consider a tailored approach in addressing SIDs unique vulnerabilities. They welcomed UNOPS work with UN-Women on safe markets and encouraged the two organizations to reproduce such projects in SIDs. UNOPS should continue to work with SIDs on climate infrastructure and efficient, sustainable procurement in the health sector and post-disaster. United Nations reform required UNOPS to continue to collaborate and improve its services to the United Nations development system at all levels. Given its unique funding model, UNOPS had to prioritize reinvestments, taking into account countries' development priorities. They looked forward to tailored reinvestments favourable to SIDs to increase production capacity and raise service levels for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

80. In response, the Executive Director said UNOPS was committed to expanding its work and presence in SIDs, including through South-South cooperation, and introducing its social impact initiative. UNOPS sought to work through the SAMOA Pathway to fight climate change and explore ways to better serve the United Nations system by driving quality and cost efficiency. UNOPS supported the repositioning exercise and was ready to play a greater role in country teams. She appealed to resident coordinators to engage with UNOPS country managers, who often dealt with multiple countries. With a small country presence, UNOPS was better at engaging in shared services based on quality standards. UNOPS sought to showcase system-wide cost efficiency initiatives, such as the Technology Bank in Turkey and call centres for

refugees in Iraq and Afghanistan. UNOPS was focused on quality and transparency, but without touching its governance structure, and on innovation to implement the Goals through social impact investing. UNOPS was a catalyst for partnership-building with the private sector for such work. UNOPS actively addressed audit recommendations and would continue to use technology to monitor real-time progress, including in the area of sexual exploitation and abuse.

81. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/12 on the annual report of the UNOPS Executive Director.

Joint segment

XII. Reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

Reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

82. The Director, Ethics Office, UNDP, presented the report on the activities of the UNDP Ethics Office in 2018 ([DP/2019/20](#)), and the Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, provided the management response. The Director, Ethics Office, UNFPA, presented the UNFPA report of the Ethics Office 2018 ([DP/FPA/2019/7](#)), and the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) provided the management response. The General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York office, presented the report on the activities of the UNOPS Ethics Office in 2018 ([DP/OPS/2019/3](#)) and the management response.

83. A group of delegations welcomed the ethics offices' contribution to promoting a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability. They commended management for their commitment to strengthening ethical culture within their organizations and constructive engagement with the ethics offices. They commended the ethics offices for contributing to better organizational policies, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and noted the ongoing work on training, outreach and awareness-raising. They sought details on organizational efforts to strengthen collaboration between ethics and audit functions. Noting the growth in requests for services of the UNDP Ethics Office, the group sought details on where those requests had originated. They were pleased to learn of efforts to boost the capacity of the UNDP Ethics Office in 2019 to handle the expanding workload. Noting the decrease in requests for services of the UNFPA Ethics Office in 2018, they sought details on what UNFPA was doing to address it through outreach. They encouraged UNFPA management to consider the request of the Ethics Adviser to increase staffing by one junior-level professional staff member.

84. One delegation welcomed the participation of the Director, UNDP Ethics Office, in the UNDP Administrator's senior-level task force on prevention of sexual harassment and its role in revising UNDP policy on harassment to make it more victim-centred. It welcomed revisions by the UNDP Ethics Office to the policy on protection against retaliation. It asked UNDP management to provide a detailed response in 2020 to the JIU review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations organizations. The delegation supported the UNOPS revised practice on retaliation, consistent with the Secretary-General's bulletin on protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations ([ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1](#)).

85. In response, the Director, Ethics Office, UNFPA, highlighted that the Office had gone from 237 advisory requests in 2016 to 280 in 2017 and 237 in 2018, indicating fluctuations rather than a trend of decreasing requests. In addition, the slight increase in coherence-related activities from 61 to 64 was the main reason for the 10 per cent

decline in requests. UNFPA would report to the Board on any major changes as they arose.

86. The Director, Ethics Office, UNDP, said it was possible to specify the origin of requests for services, which generally came from country offices. The office considered the number of employees in each office and ethics scores from biannual staff surveys, together with audit and investigation results, to target trainings to country offices with the highest risks. Those trainings led to more inquiries from trained populations. The Ethics Office had a cordial working relationship with the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations and the Independent Evaluation Office, though they avoided discussing confidential information that might jeopardize ongoing investigations. The office would work with management to develop a detailed response to JIU recommendations.

Independent review of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

87. A representative from the audit firm Deloitte gave a presentation of the firm's independent, external review of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment ([DP/FPA/OPS/2019/1](#)). The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) delivered the joint UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS management response to the review ([DP/FPA/OPS/2019/2](#)); the Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, and the General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York office, provided details specific to their organizations.

88. A group of delegations welcomed the inter-agency initiative to ensure a victim-centred approach to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. They supported key recommendations for action and the management response. They encouraged UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to implement comprehensive, whole-of-organization strategies to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and bring together actions at all levels, aligned with system-wide efforts, with clear monitoring and evaluation. They welcomed the call for better communications to facilitate awareness, compliance, transparency and culture change. They appreciated efforts to strengthen reporting on allegations, follow-up and accountability, and encouraged stronger reporting on sexual harassment, including alignment with reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse. They were pleased with efforts to share and implement good practices ensuring implementing partner accountability. They supported closer monitoring and evaluation of investigation units' capacity to meet increasing expectations while managing operational risks.

89. One delegation stressed that ensuring victims' rights was essential to preventive action and handling of cases. It stressed the importance of skilled investigators in addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. It regretted the report did not more prominently reflect victims' perspectives. It encouraged transparency on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and requested the disclosure of the number of reports and investigations initiated and the timeliness of investigations.

90. In response, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) said the organizations would address delegations' concerns. Prevention was at the core of UNFPA efforts and key to achieving zero tolerance. On investigations, UNFPA was considering options to improve efficiency and effectiveness, including by pooling resources. On resources, in 2018 UNFPA had hired one full-time coordinator, to work with the Executive Office at headquarters, who was supported by designated country focal points.

91. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/13 on the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS.

XIII. Internal audit and oversight

92. The Director, Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI), UNDP, presented the annual report on internal audit and investigation activities in 2018 (DP/2019/23), and the Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, provided the management response. The Director, Office of Audit and Investigations Services (OAIS), UNFPA, presented the report on UNFPA internal audit and investigation activities in 2018 (DP/FPA/2019/6) and the opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the UNFPA framework of governance, risk management and control (DP/FPA/2019/6/Add.1) and mentioned the annual report of the UNFPA Oversight Advisory Committee (DP/FPA/2019/6/Add.2); the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) provided the management response (DP/FPA/2018/6/CRP.5). The Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG), UNOPS, presented the report on internal audit and investigations activities in 2018 (DP/OPS/2019/4), and the General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York office, provided the management response.

93. A group of delegations recognized that the increased number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse for UNDP and UNFPA, and received allegations of fraud, corruption or other forms of abuse and misconduct, were likely due to better procedures for reporting alleged misconduct and a readiness to speak up. They commended UNDP and UNFPA for improvements in applying the harmonized approach to cash transfers and encouraged UNDP and UNFPA to continue to enhance oversight and management of implementing partners and take a risk-based approach.

UNDP

94. The group expressed concern with the OAI change in its overall rating from “satisfactory” to “partially satisfactory/some improvement required” and the result of the audit reports of non-governmental organizations/nationally implemented project where UNDP had received four reports with a qualified opinion. They sought clarification on whether UNDP had special arrangements for risk management in challenging operating environments. They appreciated UNDP efforts to invest time and resources to address audit issues, and urged it to prioritize the most recurrent audit issues in country offices. They commended UNDP for its high implementation rate of OAI recommendations and significant improvement in implementing long-outstanding recommendations. They welcomed the UNDP move in 2018 to present better comparative year-by-year information showing where and when losses incurred and were recovered. They encouraged UNDP to continue to increase the probability of recovering funds at an earlier stage and supported the recommendation to appoint a chief risk officer in the Executive Office.

UNFPA

95. The group noted the OAIS opinion of “some improvement needed”. They welcomed UNFPA supply management and commodity requirement tools. Concerned with reported cases of non-compliance with procurement procedures, they stressed the need to strengthen UNFPA procurement practices and procedures at country level and welcomed workshops and the online platform planned for 2019. They urged UNFPA to address recurring recommendations on insufficient supervisory controls and inadequate compliance by country offices. They welcomed the Fund’s plan to address the negative trend in long-outstanding audit recommendations.

UNOPS

96. Another group of delegations noted that the overall IAIG rating for UNOPS governance, risk and management control was “partially satisfactory” and in need of

improvement. They welcomed the large reduction in audit recommendations and commended UNOPS for efforts to close audit recommendations. They noted the increasing complaints to IAIG and reiterated the need for sufficient capacity for audit and investigations. They sought clarity on which audit areas demanded management's closest attention.

97. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/14 on the reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on internal audit and investigations and the management responses.

XIV. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system

98. The Director, UNDP Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy; the Director, ad interim, Bureau for Management Services; the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management); and the General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York office provided respective agency updates. In turn, representatives of the UNOPS country office in Nairobi, the UNFPA country offices in the Republic of Moldova and Albania and the UNDP country office in Panama gave detailed presentations via video link on how the United Nations repositioning exercise was being implemented and how it was impacting programmes at country level.

99. Board members reiterated their support for resolution [72/279](#) and underlined the role of reform in making the United Nations development system fit for purpose to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the Goals. They welcomed country-level interventions and requested that the organizations continue to engage the Board in interactive dialogue with field colleagues in future.

100. Delegations reiterated that the overarching purpose of United Nations reform was poverty eradication and building national capacities to implement the Goals. They requested details on how the organizations were using new technologies to drive implementation of the repositioning, and called for a more structured system-wide communication strategy to support it. They sought information on the UNDP integrator role and resident representative job descriptions, and how the UNSDCF would be tailored to country contexts. They asked what role the management and accountability framework (MAF) would play in the repositioned United Nations system. They stressed the need to help resident coordinators engage with governments and requested details on how the repositioning would benefit middle-income countries. They sought information on how the funding compact impacted activities at country level, how the organizations were partnering with the World Bank and IFIs, and how they intended to address collective reporting challenges. They requested details of progress implementing the 1 per cent levy to fund the resident coordinator system.

101. A group of delegations stressed that UNSDCF was the most important instrument for planning and implementation of United Nations development activities at country level. They emphasized the importance of strengthened common country assessments, and consultation with all stakeholders. They looked forward to receiving proposals on the reprofiling and restructuring of regional assets, with attention to the role of United Nations system regional offices and their relationship with the regional offices of the Development Cooperation Office (DCO) and resident coordinator offices. They expected the organizations to contribute to a more effective, efficient multi-country office architecture. They called for the system-wide strategic document to articulate United Nations development system gaps, overlaps and comparative advantages.

102. The group encouraged UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to review their accountability and reporting frameworks to ensure alignment with MAF. They looked forward to the first set of reports by UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on follow-up to commitments under the funding compact. They encouraged UNDP and UNFPA to advance reforms in the midterm reviews of their strategic plans, and stressed the need for deeper integration between the peace, security and development pillar. They called on the organizations to brief the Board on the preliminary results of the work of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration and plans for improvements. They expected UNDP to drive integration at regional and country levels, using peace and security reforms to integrate prevention across the pillars.

103. In response, the Director, UNDP Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, said UNDP would continue to engage the Board on the repositioning and provide regular updates. That included inter-agency coherence and coordination work through the resident coordinator system. UNDP would give its resident representatives and country directors full support in a coordinated manner with DCO. UNDP continued to develop its integrator role and would keep the Board informed of progress.

104. The Director, ad interim, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, said the UNDP inter-agency online portal provided countries immediate responses to requests, and UN-Info allowed United Nations organizations to link results reporting to United Nations results reporting. She affirmed that poverty eradication remained at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and required close cooperation with national authorities in line with national ownership. UNDP worked with national institutions to build national capacity to deliver services and implement the Goals. And it was the role of host governments to decide on United Nations organizations' country-level presence. UNDP was reviewing two elements of its new resident representative job description: performance goals related to the wider system and responsibilities vis-à-vis the resident coordinator. UNDP was considering its country programme guidance against the UNSDCF and had in place 60 accelerator labs and country platforms.

105. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) said the Fund was working to leverage technology for reporting, through preparations for the launch of its enterprise resources planning system, which integrated programme planning, real-time monitoring and evaluation, and reporting that enabled real-time visibility of programme execution and clarity on programme performance and results. The platform supported analysis of funding gaps and reporting. The new UNFPA population data platform would be available to country teams during the common country analysis and UNSDCF development.

106. The General Counsel and Director, UNOPS New York office, said UNOPS embraced the role of technology and had auditing processes that strengthened its ability to deliver more quality and efficiency. It had evolved its procurement to drive the United Nations system through the global marketplace portal. The UNOPS new sourcing tool had become a platform for United Nations organizations on procurement; it had developed innovation labs at country level to identify development solutions. National and local-level cooperation was a challenge for UNOPS, given its limited country presence. The biggest challenge was persuading potential partners why UNOPS would be a quality choice at country level.

107. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/15 on the update on implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

XV. Working methods of the Executive Board

108. Presiding over the item, the Vice-President and Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda stated that as no Board member had broken the silence procedure for the draft decision on item 14 on working methods or motioned to make additional comments from the floor, the item was closed without presentation on further discussion.

109. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/16 on working methods of the Executive Board.

Part three

Second regular session 2019

**Held at United Nations Headquarters in New York
from 3 to 6 September 2019**

I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session 2019 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York in from 3 to 6 September 2019.
2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its second regular session 2019 (DP/2019/L.3), and approved the report of the annual session 2019 (DP/2019/24). The Board approved the draft annual workplan for 2020 and approved the tentative workplan for the first regular session 2020.
3. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the second regular session 2019 appeared in document DP/2020/2, which was available on the Executive Board website.
4. The Executive Board agreed in decision 2019/23 to the following schedule for future sessions of the Executive Board in 2020:

First regular session:	3 to 6 February 2020
Annual session:	1 to 5 June 2020
Second regular session:	31 August to 4 September 2020

UNDP segment

Statement by the Administrator

5. In his address to the Board (available on the Executive Board website), the Administrator of UNDP focused on four broad areas: (a) how UNDP was driving transformational change through integration; (b) the growing UNDP role assisting countries to align public and private capital to finance the Sustainable Development Goals; (c) how UNDP continued to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of its institutional backbone – finances, human resources, business model; and (d) the UNDP focus on assisting countries in harnessing the digital revolution.
6. UNDP was working in a more integrated way to implement the Goals and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This consisted of a “systems” approach that connected issues across sectors and thematic areas and leveraged the creativity and know-how of all of society to build solutions. Those integration efforts included four work streams: (a) “next generation UNDP” programming; (b) data and analytics; (c) financing; and (d) innovation and learning. They represented the missing pieces that made a whole-of-2030-Agenda approach possible, drawing together tools and approaches, such as mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS), the Multidimensional Poverty Index, the human development index, the new finance sector hub, and the collective strength of UNDP flagship initiatives and accelerator labs.
7. The UNDP finance sector hub assisted governments in scaling up financing and private capital for the Goals. UNDP initiatives included helping countries conduct development finance assessments, increase tax collection, and raise money for wildlife conservation and habitat protection through, for example, the Lion’s Share initiative. UNDP fostered “practice standards” as part of its SDG Impact initiative on how investors and enterprises managed and measured impact against the Goals, and made available investor maps that pinpointed Goals-enabling investment opportunities and conditions in target markets and sectors. SDG Impact was an example of how UNDP was stepping up its engagement with the private sector to align their priorities with governments’ plans for the Goals.

8. Strengthening the UNDP institutional backbone remained a priority. UNDP had re-established financial stability, balancing the institutional budget for the second year in row, and had become more efficient, channelling 87 per cent of total expenses to programme activities. In 2018, for the fourteenth consecutive year, the United Nations Board of Auditors had awarded UNDP an unqualified audit opinion. UNDP was taking steps to improve its audit and oversight performance in relation to recurrent audit findings and pursuing transparency and accountability through a strengthened evaluation function. In the meantime, the “People for 2030” strategy was making UNDP a more family-friendly workplace, where gender parity was a high priority. People for 2030 aimed to make the UNDP workplace inclusive, respectful, and free from bias or harassment. UNDP had made important progress in tackling sexual harassment and, together with the Ombudsman’s Office, had set up a new pilot programme to place “respectful workplace facilitators” in 25 country offices.

9. In 2018, contributions to UNDP grew across all funding categories. The imbalance between regular (core) and other (non-core) resources, however, persisted. The Administrator appealed to Board members and observers to increase predictable, multi-year contributions to core as the most viable means of ensuring the organization’s ability to deliver. UNDP continued to expand its network of partners and diversify its funding base, including through the international financial institutions (IFIs) in both financial and nonfinancial ways. Similarly, pooled funding was increasingly relevant. UNDP remained committed to efficient, effective use of resources, including by expanding the scope and scale of operational services at country level and pursuing better business practices, including through the United Nations Business Innovations Group.

10. UNDP had begun implementing its digital strategy and appointed a new chief digital officer. It was transforming its management systems and programmes to better respond to present challenges and future opportunities. The Board and UNDP would have the opportunity to review progress, shortcomings, and the way forward in the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, at the annual session 2020.

Regional and national statements

11. Board members welcomed the UNDP role in supporting national efforts toward sustainable development and achieving the Goals in line with countries’ priorities. They urged UNDP and the United Nations development system to continue to pursue transparency and accountability in implementing General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#) and to continue strengthening dialogue between Member States and the United Nations development system, including through the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).

12. A group of delegations stressed that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions remained the top priority, indispensable for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. They underscored that securing core funding was critical to achieving the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. In that regard, they called on Member States to honour official development assistance (ODA) commitments to drive progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The group highlighted that in 2018 contributions from developing countries to UNDP amounted to over \$1 billion; they urged UNDP to give greater visibility to funding from developing countries.

13. Another group of delegations emphasized that UNDP had to remain at the forefront of the drive to achieve the Goals. Despite progress, many countries lagged behind, especially the most vulnerable, including the small island developing States (SIDS). In that regard, some delegations highlighted the importance of the multi-country office review. The group appealed to the international community to double its efforts to respond to natural disasters and assist the SIDS in preparing for

disasters before they strike. Noting that financing the Goals was pivotal to the success of the 2030 Agenda, the group called on UNDP and United Nations organizations to actively participate in the SAMOA Pathway High-level Midterm Review 2019. They commended UNDP on progress against its strategic plan and encouraged it to use the midterm review of the strategic plan to take stock of gaps, challenges and opportunities.

14. Other Board members encouraged UNDP to continue efforts to expand its donor base in pursuit of sustainable, long-term funding, while cautioning against overdependence on non-core and private sector funding and competition among United Nations organizations to attract resources. The private sector nevertheless had an important role to play in financing the Goals, including through the SDG Impact initiative, through which UNDP should continue to work to create the enabling environment for private sector financing. They welcomed that 87 per cent of UNDP expenditures had been allocated to programming in 2018 and encouraged UNDP to continue optimizing and streamlining institutional expenditures. Overall, the core/non-core resources imbalance continued to be a matter of serious concern among Board members and they stressed the importance of predictable, multi-year core resource allocations to allow UNDP to fulfil its mandate.

Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator

Financing the Sustainable Development Goals

15. The Board held its third interactive dialogue of 2019 that allowed Board members to engage in discussions with the Administrator, senior management and guests from the private sector on the UNDP development offer against its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, objectives. Financing the Goals was the main topic. Discussions were guided by two questions central to the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021: What do we want to achieve? What do we want UNDP to be? – in relation to the role of UNDP in financing the Goals.

16. The President of the Board, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, joined the UNDP Administrator and the directors of the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy for the interactive discussion with guests from the private sector, which included the CEO, EcoCash (Zimbabwe), the CEO, iKure (India), the Chair of the Board, Summa Equity (Sweden).

17. Board members stated that the United Nations development system and UNDP had a central role to play in mobilizing financing for the Goals. Partnerships were key, with governments, IFIs, development finance institutions and the private sector. The Goals could not be achieved without the contribution of the private sector. UNDP had a strong track record in working with the private sector and in helping governments create the enabling environment for businesses to perceive the value in pursuing profitable “SDG”-investment opportunities. “SDG Impact” and the UNDP accelerator labs represented the kinds of tools needed to accelerate implementation of the Goals and mobilize private sector financing. Strong, transparent institutions and an infrastructure that supported sustainable transformation, private investments and innovation were needed. Innovation was paramount and UNDP had to continue to explore avenues to capitalize on the power of technology and the digital revolution to raise awareness of the Goals and mobilize resources, both in crisis and non-crisis settings and at global, regional and national levels. The Secretary-General’s Task Force on Digital Financing of the Goals had to continue exploring tech-driven solutions for sustainable development.

18. The role of women in achieving the Goals was critical. There was a clear connection between gender equality and diversity, profitability and sustainability.

Similarly, achieving the Goals was inconceivable without addressing the looming issue of climate change. Any strategy to achieve the Goals, including the creation and pursuit of financing, had first to be viewed through gender and climate change lenses, both of which were intimately linked. UNDP should work with private companies to devise gender-smart investment strategies, and continue to collaborate with private insurance companies to address risk, especially that faced by women, vulnerable populations and SIDS, including as a result of climate change. UNDP should work with the private sector to help companies align their portfolios to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and with the public sector, to create laws and policies that enabled women to engage and act. In mobilizing financing for the Goals, UNDP should identify its niche and take into account lessons learned from existing mechanisms to ensure complementarity, including those of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the Global Compact, and be able to demonstrate a clear link between resources and results going forward.

II. UNDP structured funding dialogue

19. The Director, Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP, and the Director, ad interim, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, introduced the annual review of the financial situation, 2018 ([DP/2019/26](#)), detailed information relating to the annual review of the financial situation, 2018 ([DP/2019/26/Add.1](#)) and the structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 ([DP/2019/27](#)).

20. Board members expressed appreciation for continued improvements made to the presentation and structure of the structured funding dialogue reports and encouraged UNDP to include more qualitative analysis in future. They welcomed the increased transparency and opportunity to review the breakdown of funding in the integrated results and resources framework at output level. They welcomed the opportunity to discuss the funding challenges UNDP faced in its conflict prevention work. They requested details on which regions and programmes UNDP was focusing to address that funding challenge, and how the overarching strategy for conflict prevention financing was tied to mutual commitments in the Funding Compact to direct quality funding to underfunded areas of the corporation frameworks. They recognized the importance of private sector and IFI funding and the need to pursue innovative partnerships for sustainable development and funding. They appreciated the clear, substantive steps UNDP had taken to improve discussions with the Board on strategic plan results and financing challenges, and requested details on further changes they could expect, including a more strategic, granular view of the private sector financing strategy beyond core, which should reflect pooled funding examples and partnerships with IFIs, including the World Bank. Future reports should include analysis of the reasons behind and consequences of overall programme expenditures, and implementation of entity-specific and collective Funding Compact commitments. There was a request that UNDP report to the Board on the 1 per cent coordination levy in its annual reporting and indicate how it would affect overall funding. It was noted that the cost of UNDP cooperation in 2018 had reached \$97 million, of which 60 per cent was financed by national governments; it was important to channel resources from other sources and step up efforts to strengthen local institutional capacity.

21. The Director, Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, reaffirmed UNDP commitment to implementation of the Funding Compact. UNDP was implementing the 1 per cent coordination levy and would report on its consequences on the overall funding portfolio. On Funding Compact reporting, UNDP would work with other United Nations organizations on a more harmonized approach and methodology for

reporting progress to the Board. UNDP would continue to expand its work on financing the Goals, including by attracting private investment for the sectors of the Goals. UNDP sought to be a strong platform for financing the Goals, including with partners such as UNCDF. With regard to conflict prevention, the new set up of the Crisis Bureau would allow UNDP to play a more visible role within collective efforts by the entire United Nations system and beyond in pursuit of sustaining peace.

22. The Director, Crisis Bureau, UNDP, stated that the newly recruited heads of teams in the Crisis Bureau/Global Policy Network had begun to lead their respective portfolios and that UNDP was ready to provide an update to the Board on its conflict prevention work, including underfunded areas in the subsequent months.

23. The Board adopted decision 2019/18 on the UNDP structured funding dialogue.

III. UNDP country programmes and related matters

24. The Associate Administrator, ad interim, UNDP, introduced the three country programmes for Board approval, as well as the extensions of two country programmes. The Director, Regional Bureau for Africa and Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States, presented and elaborated on the country programmes for Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as the first one-year extension of the country programme for Madagascar, and the fourth extension of the country programme for Yemen for one year.

25. The Executive Board reviewed and approved, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/7, the country programme documents for: Angola ([DP/DCP/AGO/4](#)), Liberia ([DP/DCP/LBR/3](#)) and Sierra Leone ([DP/DCP/SLE/4](#)).

26. The Board took note of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Madagascar from 1 January to 31 December 2020, and approved the fourth extension of the country programme for Yemen for one year from 1 January to 31 December 2020, as contained in document [DP/2019/28/Rev.1](#).

IV. Evaluation

27. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), UNDP, introduced the revised UNDP evaluation policy ([DP/2019/29](#)) and the Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, provided the management response to the revised UNDP evaluation policy.

28. Board members recognized the essential work of IEO and welcomed the revision of the UNDP evaluation policy. They stressed that UNDP and IEO should take strong measures to live up to the ambitious evaluation policy. They expressed strong support for IEO work at the global, regional and national levels, especially with regard to system-wide evaluations, in line with United Nations reform, and they valued the role IEO played in the UNDP thought-leadership agenda. They also welcomed the detailed information IEO provided on decentralized evaluations. They called on IEO to continue to improve its dialogue and communication with Board Members and UNDP, and encouraged it to continuously improve its evaluation work, taking into account Board members' suggestions to create a virtuous cycle of discussions to build institutional strength and accountability. While expressing appreciation for a strong, well-crafted evaluation policy, delegations remained concerned about the policy's implementation. As noted previously, investment in evaluation had reached half of what had been stipulated in the policy, completion rates for planned evaluations reached only 56 per cent, and only 55 per cent of decentralized evaluations had been deemed "fully satisfactory".

29. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, assured delegations that IEO would provide updates on the implementation plan to improve the quality of decentralized evaluations. IEO had already taken several steps and begun comprehensive reporting on decentralized evaluations. The posting of evaluation personnel across the globe, together with the increased budget and the new revised evaluation policy and guidelines, would ensure higher satisfaction scores moving forward. As vice-chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), IEO was actively engaged in discussions to support system-wide evaluations. IEO actively sought to improve the virtuous cycle of discussions with Board members; the evaluation charter and processes had indicated increased IEO engagement with all partners involved in evaluations, including through systematic debriefings, to ensure an ongoing communications loop. IEO was pursuing efforts, through the National Evaluation Capacities Conference, to conduct evaluations that supported countries' achievement of the Goals.

30. The Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, pointed out that while evaluations were progressively improving, there were still room for improvement, especially to ensure a shift from "partially satisfactory" to "fully satisfactory" ratings. UNDP was thus working with country offices to design realistic evaluation plans. While revisions to the policy were modest, the evaluation policy did include essential changes: (a) establishment of regional evaluation capacity to ensure the quality of decentralized evaluations; (b) greater country-level management involvement to support quality assurance and ensure greater management responsibility; and (c) establishment of a deputy-director-level annual review of the evaluation policy.

31. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/19 on the revised evaluation policy.

UNFPA segment

Statement by the Executive Director

32. In her statement to the Executive Board (available on [PaperSmart](#)), the Executive Director thanked Board members for their support and guidance throughout the Fund's fifty-year history and restated the commitment of UNFPA to the principles of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the partnerships underpinning them. The Fund looked forward to reaffirming the ICPD principles at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25.

33. UNFPA was reshaping itself to become more effective, results driven and better equipped to deliver the transformative change demanded in the 2030 Agenda, the Goals and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (General Assembly resolution [71/243](#)). Efforts included alignment of more than 60 country offices to ensure adequate financial and human resources, a streamlined headquarters presence, and stronger nexus between intergovernmental support and programme implementation at national level. She highlighted UNFPA efforts to cost achievement of the three transformative results, engage strategic partners, improve field-focused technical services, and realign humanitarian operations to respond quickly in emergencies, all integral to building institutional capacity and leadership. UNFPA commitment to leaving no one behind included building climate resilience and promoting universal health coverage. Internally, the Fund had launched a dedicated initiative to understand its current organizational culture and was working to build an inclusive, civil work environment free of abuse, including sexual harassment and exploitation, and supportive of the well-being and mental health of staff.

34. In turn, the Executive Director spoke on a number of topics. The Fund would use the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, to capitalize on the repositioning of the United Nations system to deliver better and become more effective and efficient. In addition to United Nations reforms, the midterm review would focus on implementation and cumulative progress towards strategic plan results, including for the common chapter and global and regional initiative results. UNFPA would present the results of the midterm review to the Board at the annual session 2020, with informal briefings to be scheduled ahead of the final report. On innovation, selected country offices were leveraging big data to mine new insights and break misconceptions about pregnancy prevention. They were harnessing low and high-tech solutions to track family planning commodities and reduce waste and shortages, and exploring ways for youth to access comprehensive sexuality education and services, joining forces with the World Food Programme (WFP) Innovation Accelerator to analyse field-level challenges and solutions.

35. The Executive Director reported that UNFPA exceeded, for the second consecutive year, the \$1 billion mark in 2018 for total contribution revenue (\$1.3 billion). As of 1 August 2019, \$706 million in commitments had been recorded (\$252 million for core resources and \$454 for co-financing resources), which was lower than the previous year at that time. Core resources remained the best investment one could make to UNFPA, she stressed. Unfortunately, only 67 Governments have so far contributed to core for 2019. To fulfil its mandate, UNFPA requires adequate, consistent, predictable financial resources. In line with United Nations reform, the Fund was collaborating with other United Nations organizations in joint programme design and resource mobilization.

36. The Nairobi Summit would focus on five themes: achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health as a part of universal health coverage; mobilizing financing to finish the ICPD programme of action; drawing on demographic diversity to drive economic growth and sustainable development; ending gender-based violence and harmful practices; and upholding the right to sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian and fragile contexts. The ICPD agenda belonged to everyone, and many more partners were urged to join the diverse coalition and help make the Summit a success. More than 3,000 people from across the globe had registered for the summit so far; they would join the many heads of State and Government who had already confirmed their participation. The new UNFPA gender equality strategy aimed to strengthen institutional accountability and foster an integrated, rights-based approach, while the new adolescents and youth strategy – My Body, My Life, My World! – sought to reflect the needs, aspirations and ideals of young people at the centre of the ICPD agenda and the Goals, in line with the Youth 2030 strategy. Preliminary results of a UNFPA costing exercise showed that meeting the need for family planning in priority countries by 2030 was going to cost in the range of \$40 billion.

37. Board members commended UNFPA for its championing of ICPD principles and looked forward to the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25. They expressed appreciation for the Fund's ongoing work under the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, to help countries achieve the Goals. They stressed the importance of having an ambitious outcome for the Nairobi Summit, focused on realizing unfinished ICPD business – encouraging countries and stakeholders to make concrete commitments to fulfilling the rights of women, girls and young people. They called for caution in formulating the Nairobi outcome document to ensure it did not undermine the ICPD programme of action and included key actions for its further implementation. The outcome document should reaffirm all elements without exception, including the Goals in full. Delegations underscored that, while important, the Summit should not aim to revisit the ICPD programme of action, which had achieved full consensus in Cairo in 1994, and should

not create new obligations. They encouraged UNFPA to show leadership in realizing the Summit's ambitious vision and looked forward to regular updates, including guidance on how Member States could contribute to its success.

38. Delegations welcomed the new UNFPA strategy on adolescents and youth and sought clarity on the strategy's added value for the Youth 2030 strategy; Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) on youth, peace and security; education on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in schools and beyond; and the Fund's work with civil society. They urged UNFPA to pursue its transformative approach to the ICPD and the 2030 Agenda, underpinned by gender equality and the human rights-based approach. They encouraged United Nations organizations to coordinate their work on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and in developing population and development strategies, so joint efforts fully aligned with the principle of national ownership in all population-related Goals. Delegations welcomed the creation of a population and data thematic fund, to be launched in 2019, but noted that more information was needed for Member States to mobilize support for it. They sought clarity on UNFPA efforts to engage religious leaders on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights issues, offset the environmental impact of the Nairobi Summit, and counter political efforts to roll back sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights legislation in countries.

39. Board members commended UNFPA for its efforts, through the costing initiative, to improve evidence-based planning. In light of the continued core/non-core resources imbalance, they stressed the importance of stable, predictable, multi-year core resources, and called on Member States to step up contributions to core resources to ensure the Fund was able to fulfil its mandate. They encouraged UNFPA to strengthen collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women by sharing best practices and fostering strategic partnerships with the private sector. They called on UNFPA to continue to promote South-South and triangular cooperation as central to its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and strengthen its partnerships, especially with parliaments, local government, civil society, academia and through public-private partnerships, to mobilize financial resources to build capacity to achieve the 2030 Agenda and ensure sustainable financing of United Nations development system reform, including through its co-leadership of the Strategic Financing Results Group.

40. Delegations stressed the central importance of United Nations development system coordination, including in humanitarian and conflict settings, as laid out in General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial review, resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning exercise, and through the revamped resident coordinator system. They commended UNFPA for its crucial assistance to refugees in conflict settings, especially regarding the Syrian crisis, and welcomed its increased focus on organizational efficiency as well as management's initiative to review the humanitarian response architecture, laying the foundations for the new Humanitarian Response Office. They requested details on whether UNFPA aimed to achieve 100 per cent common premises by 2021 and whether the review of the strategic plan to "leave no one behind" would include integration of the system-wide strategy on persons with disabilities.

41. A group of delegations recognized the conclusion of the ICPD review of the Caribbean – that UNFPA had made a tremendous contribution to the region in all its mandated areas. They encouraged UNFPA to incorporate climate change and responses to natural disasters in its portfolio and to quickly respond when such events occurred. They urged the Humanitarian Response Office to continue to enhance the Fund's humanitarian response capacity. They stressed the importance of the upcoming review of the SAMOA Pathway and encouraged the Fund to be active during the review, which would guide its work in SIDS. They commended UNFPA implementation of United Nations reform but urged it and other United Nations

organizations to address the outstanding issue of multi-country offices and delivery in smallest countries.

42. In response, the Executive Director said the Fund's ability to activate, respond and pre-position resources in response to natural disasters had been facilitated by governments and civil society. UNFPA would participate in the SAMOA Pathway conference 2019 to plan towards achieving results in accordance with its strategic plan. Regarding climate and women's vulnerability, UNFPA worked with other organizations, in line with United Nations reform, and in jointly formulating the new corporation frameworks. UNFPA would relentlessly work to put women and girls at the centre of the response. UNFPA addressed vulnerability among women, elderly and disabled, including issues related to low fertility and aging societies, and had active associations on youth with disabilities participating at the Nairobi Summit. The Fund would approach the Nairobi Summit with a high level of ambition, focused on finishing unfinished ICPD business. UNFPA worked closely with national institutions in promoting sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights services and information, especially for youth, without discrimination, discouragement or judgment. In tackling the remaining challenges in ending maternal mortality, the Nairobi Summit was a step forward towards fully achieving that Goal. UNFPA was committed to monitoring Nairobi Summit commitments and making all information public on its website. While fully supporting the Summit's ambition, UNFPA sought to be an honest broker, ensuring the ICPD constituency was as inclusive as possible. On the issue of discrimination, UNFPA actively worked to leave no one behind through its adolescent and youth strategy and throughout the lifecycle into old age, using new technologies to make progress and reach those in need, including through data advances and South-South and triangular corporation. In late 2019, UNFPA would launch its new population and data thematic fund, designed to modernize censuses to create holistic analyses aimed at leaving no one behind and helping countries gauge their populations' trajectory. She highlighted a strong core resources base allowed UNFPA to deliver on the broader issues for women and girls and provided the Fund the flexibility to respond when and where needed.

43. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), in addressing the multi-country offices review, highlighted that UNFPA continued to participate in UNSDG to ensure coherent, effective, efficient coverage and cooperation in multi-country settings. Following the Secretary-General's recommendations, an inter-agency working group was convened under the co-leadership of UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to move that issue forward, including a Member States track, led by the United Nations Secretariat. The Fund's business model was already differentiated, allowing it to tailor its support to countries. On United Nations reform, 68 per cent of UNFPA country offices were located in common premises; the Fund was working to raise that percentage and was an active member of the Business Innovations Group looking into harmonizing and consolidating back-office functions.

V. UNFPA structured funding dialogue

44. The Director, Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships, UNFPA, presented the report on the UNFPA structured funding dialogue, 2018–2019 ([DP/FPA/2019/8](#)).

45. Board members welcomed the Fund's lead in arranging structured funding dialogues throughout the year, ensuring process-oriented interactive dialogue with and among Member States on financing the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. They appreciated the Fund's resource mobilization successes in 2018, which had helped to address funding gaps, and its success in remaining within Funding Compact targets,

despite the increasing core/non-core resources imbalance. Delegations stressed that the private sector had to play a greater role and commended UNFPA efforts to diversify partnerships and modalities. They welcomed the plan to mobilize \$100 million per year in donations by 2030 through the new individual giving strategy, and requested an update on the launch of the start-up and market-entry phases of the private giving strategy and creation of the supporting donor recruitment and stewardship infrastructure.

46. Delegations welcomed the development and integration of demand forecasting systems that increased cost savings and the responsiveness of UNFPA supplies to cover annual needs. They expressed concern with the uneven increase in core and non-core resources and noted the decline in core resources, which threatened the Fund's ability to deliver its mandate and normative role – especially regarding the institutional set-up handling a 40 per cent increase in mobilized funding. They called on Member States to provide more flexible financing and increase the number of contributors to core resources, especially as the Fund was becoming increasingly dependent on the political will of a very small number of countries. They called on Member States to honour the harmonized cost recovery rate to ensure core resources were not used to subsidize implementation of non-core programmes at the expense of core funding.

47. Board members underscored the ongoing need to improve financial reporting as a basis for the structured funding dialogue, as it remained difficult to understand the Fund's financial needs and gaps in implementing its strategic plan – future reports should include annual outcome and output-level reporting results. They requested clarity on whether financial gaps existed for full implementation of the strategic plan. They expected stronger evidence-based reporting on joint resource efforts, such as pooled funding and the common chapter, at the annual session 2020. They sought clarity on whether the reporting of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women provided a full picture of delivery against Funding Compact targets. They welcomed the imminent launch of a thematic fund on population and data, and encouraged the Fund to make it operational to support country censuses by 2020–2021.

48. In response, the Director, Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships, UNFPA, said the Fund had piloted the individual giving initiative in 2018 and 2019, and had already raised three times more than the original target. Senior management was looking to scale up individual giving. The Fund hoped to launch the population and data thematic fund and attract a large number of donors to support countries in their 2020 rounds of censuses. UNFPA remained concerned with the ongoing core/non-core imbalance and continued to seek new avenues to increase core funding. On financial gaps, UNFPA, as a voluntarily funded organization, could not determine during the year how much it would raise by the year's end. Furthermore, 40 per cent of its income arrived in the second half of the year. In future, the Fund planned to establish a system to better determine financial gaps, but the voluntary nature of UNFPA funding made that an ongoing challenge. On the Funding Compact, indicators provided a good indication of how the four organizations were performing individually, though it was difficult to obtain a full picture of how they fared as a system because its voluntary nature made it hard to predict year-end funding envelopes.

49. The Chief, Strategic Information and Knowledge Management Branch, UNFPA, highlighted that UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women had organized a series of meetings to discuss ways in which to improve reporting against the common chapter. Discussions on the common chapter would continue to be a central topic of their agenda.

50. Since no consensus could be reached among all members of the Board on the draft decision, the Bureau moved to give more time to Board members to continue the discussion on the draft decision on the UNFPA structured funding dialogue.

VI. UNFPA country programmes and related matters

51. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) introduced the item and provided an overview of five country programmes presented for Board approval, as well as seven country programme extensions. In turn, the respective UNFPA regional directors presented the country programmes for East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

52. The Executive Board reviewed and approved, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, the country programmes documents for: Angola ([DP/FPA/CPD/AGO/8](#)); the Congo ([DP/FPA/CPD/COG/6](#)); Liberia ([DP/FPA/CPD/LBR/5](#)); Mexico ([DP/FPA/CPD/MEX/7](#)); and Sierra Leone ([DP/FPA/CPD/SLE/7](#)).

53. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Madagascar, Timor-Leste and Tunisia; and approved the first two-year extension for the country programme for Afghanistan, the second two-year extension for the country programme for Comoros, and the fourth one-year extension of the country programme for Yemen, as contained in document ([DP/FPA/2019/9](#)).

UNOPS segment

VII. United Nations Office for Project Services

Statement by the Executive Director

54. In her statement, the Executive Director, UNOPS, highlighted the organization's role in protecting and rebuilding livelihoods through social impact investing, quality infrastructure, gender-focused development and procurement while driving forward United Nations reform. The funding needed to address people's needs, however, far surpassed what the public sector could provide; UNOPS therefore promoted and pursued innovative financing initiatives. From 2017 to 2019, through its Social Impact Investing Initiative, UNOPS had forged a pipeline of projects with private sector partners to build affordable housing projects across the globe. UNOPS fostered public-private partnerships that unleashed larger sources of sustainable financing, and created a space where investors generated social environmental and economic impact while making a financial return, built on United Nations principles and achievement of the Goals. The addition of UNOPS own resources helped to de-risk projects to attract investment. With a specific mandate on infrastructure, in 2019 UNOPS helped to shape G20 principles for quality infrastructure investment.

55. Gender was a top UNOPS priority, including gender parity within the organization. As of September 2019, women constituted 41 per cent of UNOPS workforce while 60 per cent of new hires were women. UNOPS was determined to go beyond United Nations staff targets to include all personnel in gender goals, and encouraged all United Nations organizations to expand gender principles throughout the workforce. UNOPS was committed to United Nations reform. As the new chair of the High-level Committee on Management, the Executive Director was working to refine the system-wide management approach to ensure less bureaucracy and greater innovation. She highlighted that UNOPS budget estimates for the biennium 2020–2021 ([DP/OPS/2019/5](#)) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative

and Budgetary Questions on the budget estimates for the biennium 2020–2021 (DP/OPS/2019/6) demonstrated that UNOPS was in good financial shape. Projections for 2020–2021 showed that management expenses would increase by the expected inflation rate only. At the same time, revenue was projected to increase faster than management expenses. UNOPS was diligent in controlling its expenses and would continue to improve efficiencies as demand for services increased.

56. In presenting the annual statistical report on United Nations procurement, 2018 (DP/OPS/2019/7), the Executive Director highlighted that United Nations organizations had demonstrated continued progress in embedding sustainability in their procurement activities. In 2019, for the first time, all 39 participating organizations had reported on their sustainable procurement practices. A record 95 per cent included environmental sustainability as a main consideration in their procurement processes while social and economic considerations continued to play an important role. The report provided the United Nations system the opportunity to reflect on what it could do differently to make efficiency gains and enhance the value of United Nations procurement. UNOPS had made great strides in advising governments on public procurement that benefited all of society, and in offering solutions to address fraud and corruption.

57. Board members underscored UNOPS unique, unmatched services to developing countries and the United Nations system, and in the service of United Nations reform, including in sustainable infrastructure, project management, procurement and financial management. They welcomed UNOPS increasing role in supporting governments, as demonstrated by governments' growing demand for its services. They noted the central role infrastructure played in achieving the Goals. They strongly welcomed UNOPS Social Impact Investing Initiative and its focus on renewable energy and building affordable housing in developing countries. They expressed strong appreciation for UNOPS continued focus and increased investment in knowledge and innovation, and comparative advantage in ensuring transparent use of public resources, procurement and project management, including efficient delivery of medical services and supplies. They called on UNOPS to step up its partnership with UNDP to optimize the impact of results.

58. Delegations, recognizing the need for private sector investments to complement ODA, commended the UNOPS Social Impact Investing Initiative for breaking down barriers that prevented private investors from funding long-term development in developing countries. Given its technical expertise and strong track record, including in crisis situations, UNOPS was uniquely placed to attract private capital for social impact investing. They sought details on how UNOPS was using technology to attract private sector investment. Delegations recognized UNOPS special role in United Nations reform, especially its efficient, effective financial and management structure, critical for the achievement of the Goals. They sought clarity on how UNOPS used a gender lens when planning and implementing its projects.

59. A group of delegations drew attention to UNOPS unique services through its innovation hub, sustainable housing platform, renewable energy projects, sustainable procurement practices, and medical services. The group stressed, however, the importance for UNOPS to continue to tailor services to the special needs of countries, such as SIDS, where cost savings and cost effectiveness remained challenges. They sought clarity on UNOPS plans to assist SIDS with the effects of climate change, both pre- and post-disaster. They requested UNOPS assistance in the area of sustainable infrastructure construction, sustainable project management and sustainable procurement through a cost-effective, cost neutral, non-profit-based partnership, integral to achieving the 2030 Agenda, the Goals and SAMOA Pathway.

60. In response, the Executive Director stated that UNOPS had long worked to determine how best to engage in SIDS individually and collectively through the United Nations system, working with public and private sectors. UNOPS was working in the SIDS to build affordable housing through its Social Impact Investing Initiative, attracting funding from public and private sectors. She stressed, with regard to UNOPS high fees, that quality had a price while the fees themselves were competitive; this resulted from pursuing best practice world standards and was crucial for building back better. In working with governments, UNOPS offered rebates that boosted the value of funding for greater impact; the rebates were earned through transparent, public procurement procedures that allowed fair competition and in which local providers played a strong role. UNOPS worked to become a catalyst, facilitator and partner to deliver on the Goals and the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary-General had included UNOPS Social Impact Investing Initiative in the United Nations financing for development strategy, while UNSDG encouraged all members to work with UNOPS on the initiative. The initiative and the affordable housing scheme applied proven, certified sustainable technologies tested for earthquakes and other natural disasters.

61. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/20 on the United Nations Office for Project Services.

Joint segment

VIII. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs

62. The Director, ad interim, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, and the Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, gave a joint presentation on the joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs ([DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2019/1](#)).

63. Board members welcomed joint efforts to harmonize cost recovery and issue a joint report. They also welcomed the review/analysis and inclusion of the specialized agencies' perspectives and encouraged the organizations to continue to engage with the specialized agencies to ensure a harmonized message on cost recovery throughout the United Nations system. Delegations sought further details on: (a) the rationale for creating separate cost classification line items in the integrated resources plan to report on and obtain separate appropriation for independent oversight and assurance activities and resident coordinator cost-sharing contributions; (b) the effects and results of full implementation of recommendations and why full cost harmonization was considered unrealistic; (c) with regard to the separate budget line for the resident coordinator system cost-sharing contribution, how the appropriation process worked in practice and whether such funding would be provided in addition to general funding for the organizations; (d) efforts to devise a system-wide cost recovery framework; (e) the impact of cost recovery harmonization on the profitability of different programmes; and (f) how unifying cost categories would impact the criteria of expenditures policy.

64. In response, the Chief Finance Officer, UNDP, said that creating separate budget lines for coordination and oversight ensured separate appropriations from the institutional budget. The two budgets followed different legislation: coordination under the General Assembly, oversight under the Executive Board. Harmonization allowed for a better attribution of costs and a higher degree of comparability among organizations, including better costing of similar results. System-wide efforts toward

harmonization were growing but further harmonization would require legislation at the General Assembly level and other governing bodies. The difficulty of full harmonization lay in organizations' differing funding, business models and mandates. The quadrennial review sought to avoid cross-subsidization and protect core resources, with the majority of core going to programme. Full harmonization risked leading to cross-subsidization. On the issue of core/non-core resources proportions per organization, the harmonization of cost classification was one phase of the process; the most important phase was determining the purpose of core resources and where it should be spent. Going forward, the organizations would reclassify costs to better reflect where funds were being allocated.

65. The Director, Division of Management Services, UNFPA, said the four organizations were constrained to follow General Assembly and Board legislation when submitting budget lines for coordination and oversight. In the event that future legislation requested increased spending on oversight and coordination, funding would not come from any other budget line within UNFPA than those dedicated to oversight and coordination. UNFPA and the other organizations were taking every step possible to ensure harmonization and explain its benefits to other United Nations organizations. The additional cost classification for oversight assurance of the resident coordinator system represented another appropriation within the integrated budget proposal, which would be included in the integrated budget along with similar appropriation lines.

66. The Director, ad interim, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, underscored the difficulties the organizations had faced in harmonizing cost recovery at country level. They hoped to use cost recovery harmonization to attract other United Nations organizations to follow suit. Harmonization gave the organizations a more business-like approach in costing the actual cost of products, services and results, which led to harmonization of cost classification for greater transparency. The costing of services and products highlighted the need to pursue harmonized cost recovery. Whether the organizations' institutional budgets remained the same, or whether there was a request for additional resources, should not disprove the need for a separate appropriations line. Considerable differences in the organizations' business models limited the possibilities for full harmonization, which would not be optimal since diversity was one of the United Nations greatest strengths.

67. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/21 on the joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs.

Report of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on joint procurement activities

68. The General Counsel and Director, New York Office, UNOPS, the Chief, Procurement Services Branch, UNFPA, and the Officer-in-Charge, Procurement, UNDP, presented the report of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on joint procurement activities ([DP/FPA/OPS/2019/3](#)).

69. In the only intervention, one delegation welcomed efforts to date and encouraged the organizations to continue their pursuit of joint procurement.

70. The Executive Board took note of the report of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on joint procurement activities ([DP-FPA-OPS/2019/3](#)).

IX. Follow-up to the Programme Coordinating Board Meeting of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

71. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, and the Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, jointly presented the report on

implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (DP/2019/30-DP/FPA/2019/10).

72. A group of Board members noted that the global AIDS response was at a precarious point. Inequalities and other social factors continued to undermine efforts to achieve HIV-related Goals targets. The joint programme was key in supporting countries to scale up multi-sectoral HIV responses. They welcomed the appointment of the new UNAIDS Executive Director and looked forward to working with her and her team. They underscored that the management action plan, if fully implemented, with strong leadership from the Executive Director, would provide solid basis for addressing reported issues of harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and abuse of power within the UNAIDS secretariat. They welcomed feedback given through the UNDP-UNFPA report on implementation of the joint programme action plan and the transformative results across their respective strategic results areas. They welcomed contributions made by both organizations and expressed appreciation for UNDP and UNFPA work in addressing stigma, violence and discrimination towards people living with HIV and other structural drivers of HIV. The delegations stressed the UNDP and UNFPA role in reducing gender inequality, combatting harmful masculinity norms and bringing about positive behavioural/cultural change. They welcomed the report's focus on HIV and health services integration, and UNFPA work in creating awareness and commitment to increasing utilization of integrated sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights services. They welcomed the discussion at the June 2019 Programme Coordinating Board meeting on strengthening and integrating comprehensive HIV responses in sustainable health systems for universal health coverage.

73. One delegation stressed the need for UNDP and UNFPA to engage the private sector and civil society more in addressing HIV. The delegation welcomed the new strategy for youth and adolescents using a holistic approach to sexual and reproductive health and in guaranteeing access to services.

74. In response, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, underscored that the collaborative efforts between UNAIDS, UNDP and UNFPA ensured greater impact in preventing the spread of HIV and in expanding access to HIV treatment. The new UNFPA adolescents and youth strategy provided a roadmap for engaging adolescents and young people, focused on the three elements of My Body, My Life, My World! The strategy reflected an approach that integrated HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and empowered adolescents and youth through information and education so they could make informed decisions. In that integrated approach, sustainability and scale were key, as was bringing sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights into topics such as universal healthcare coverage, equity in access, quality of care and accountability.

75. The Executive Board took note of the report on implementation of decisions and recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (DP/2019/30-DP/FPA/2019/10).

X. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system

76. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, the Director, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP and the General Counsel and Director, New York Office, UNOPS, each updated the Board on their organizations

implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system – and Funding Compact commitments.

77. Board members welcomed the important steps the three organizations had taken since the annual session 2019 to further implement United Nations development system reforms – including completion of the new guidance for United Nations country team’s development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the common country assessment.

78. A group of delegations sought details on how UNDP and UNFPA plans to ensure country-level documents (including for reporting cycles) were modified and streamlined to comply with UNSDCF guidance and informed by the common country assessment, expected of all United Nations development system organizations, including specialized agencies. They welcomed steps UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS – and other United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) members – were taking to follow up on Funding Compact commitments, and encouraged all organizations to pursue efforts to reach Funding Compact targets. They commended UNDP and UNFPA for reporting on Funding Compact commitments as part of the structured funding dialogue, a good basis for annual Board reporting, but expressed concern about differing interpretations among UNSDG organizations of “entity-specific commitments” and how to report on them. They suggested that the organizations schedule, as part of structured funding dialogues, an annual review of follow-up to the Funding Compact at each second regular session, a reflection on collective commitments, and narrative on how each entity was contributing.

79. Other delegations expressed concern that progress in developing UNSDCF guidance remained limited and that the organizations had yet to demonstrate a “full first principles review” of reporting requirements and Board approval processes for country-level documents. The UNSDCF, it was noted, should trigger a genuine review of United Nations country team configuration, including fuller understanding of the United Nations role, compared to other development actors. There was a request for details on how UNDP and UNFPA intended to demonstrate progress against key reforms outlined in UNSDCF guidance.

80. Delegations recognized progress made in implementing the management and accountability framework (MAF) and sought details on the range of challenges the organizations faced in their efforts to comply with MAF and steps to address them. They stressed the need to bring the three reform pillars (humanitarian, development, security) together – only possible through improved UNDP delivery in conflict prevention. There was a request for details on how UNDP was working with the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDCO) and peacekeeping and humanitarian actors to ensure coherence, delivery of joint analysis, planning and coordination in fragile and conflict-affected States.

81. Board members said success of United Nations reform hinged on smooth transfer of functions to the new resident coordinator system (which should not affect programme activities), and through continued UNDP provision of advisory services to the resident coordinators. They sought details on UNDP income from providing services to the resident coordinator system, including to strengthen common back offices, and “how significant” cost increases had been. Delegations expected UNDP to update the Board in 2020. They encouraged UNDP and UNFPA to build on regional models, such as regional economic commissions, to strengthen regional cooperation. They welcomed the UNFPA proposal to raise the status of UNFPA representatives to the level of heads of country offices in places where the Fund did not have a country presence, and requested its budget implications. They welcomed UNOPS system-wide cost savings efforts and the UNSDG Business Innovations Group work to gather procurement best practices for the benefit of the United Nations system.

82. Delegations welcomed the harmonized system-wide format for reporting and encouraged the four organizations to follow the format developed by UNDCO. There was a request for details on the extent to which the organizations were on track to fulfil Funding Compact targets. They sought clarity on whether the former UNDP resident coordinator system survey would continue to be used as a tool for reporting. They recognized the collective nature of the Funding Compact and sought clarity on how United Nations development organizations planned to report on their assistance to each other in light of collective results.

83. In response, the Director, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP, said the organizations collaborated in planning, monitoring and evaluating the cooperation frameworks at country level. UNDP was involved in developing UNSDCF guidelines, together with UNDCO, to which its own plans, strategies and policies were aligned. That was also the case for the harmonization of reporting and the Funding Compact. UNDP had still not recovered all income earned from servicing the resident coordinator system, and was still determining those costs. She underlined the importance of a strong core resources base for UNDP to fulfil its mandate. UNDP was engaged with the Business Innovations Group, exploring avenues for greater efficiency, and had turned a deficit into a surplus, investing more in country programmes while supporting United Nations reform. On the resident coordinator system survey, UNDP reaffirmed its commitment to continue exploring ways to receive feedback from partners on how the United Nations system was performing a country level.

84. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, said UNSDCF outcomes would become the outcomes of country programme documents, which served to unpack UNSDCFs as implementation plans. On reporting, UNFPA systems were aligned with UN-Info, and its new enterprise resource planning would further integrate seamless reporting between the two systems. The country team would continue to include resident and non-resident agencies, giving the United Nations system the opportunity to consider new business models. The companion piece to UNSDCF guidance offered options for country team configuration, for both resident and non-resident agencies. Country-level implementation of MAF was gradual as country offices adapted to the new way of working, which included implementation of the new resident coordinator assessment tool. UNFPA was building the capacity of its assistant representatives (not present in country) to assume a more substantive role as part of country teams and heads of offices. The cost implications of that effort were minimal. As part of the Business Innovations Group, the Fund's focus on the "client" perspective showed that greater investments were needed in systems, premises and services to bring about greater efficiencies and cost savings. The UNFPA pilot in South Africa served as a model for efforts to consolidate services for smaller offices and bring about greater cost savings and efficiencies.

85. The General Counsel and Director, New York Office, UNOPS, referenced that the MAF was a work in progress and moving in the right direction. He mentioned that there remained some issues to workout at the country, regional and subregional levels related to contract modalities. An important aspect was inclusivity, key for UNOPS as a non-resident agency. With regard to system-wide operations and the Business Innovations Group, there was much UNOPS could offer through procurement and e-procurement, and on quality infrastructure. On progress made in fulfilling the Funding Compact commitments, UNOPS explained that the disaggregation of expenditures by the Goals was an indicator on which the organization was still working.

86. The Executive Board took note of the update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

XI. Working methods of the Executive Board

87. The Vice-President of the Executive Board stated that, in accordance with decision 2019/6, the secretariats of the Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women had drafted a joint proposal to improve the working methods of the joint meetings of the Boards. The Bureau of the Board had agreed that, in lieu of plenary discussions on the item at the session, the Board would use the allocated time to negotiate a decision in informal meetings.

88. Delegations made no comments on this item.

89. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/22 on the working methods of the Executive Board.

XII. Field visits

90. The rapporteur presented the report on the joint field visit to Colombia by the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2019/CRP.1), which took place from 11 to 18 May 2019, followed by a short film of the joint field visit. The visit included various meetings with Colombian authorities, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-Colombia), the National Planning Department, the Legal Commission for the Equity of Women of the Congress of the Republic, some of the Presidential High Counsellors and other national authorities that worked with United Nations organizations.

91. The Government of Colombia manifested its special interest in strengthening its cooperation with the United Nations development system, keeping in mind its action should be planned according to the demands and needs of the recipient country in critical areas where the United Nations had an added value. It was important to consider the need to focus the work of the elements of the United Nations development system towards the comparative advantages of each of its organizations, taking into account that it was important to promote inter-agency work as an essential asset. It was also relevant to consider that the work of the United Nations development system in the field should focus on implementation of actions that could strengthen national and local capacities in a sustainable manner. And finally, it was necessary to boost the appropriation and replication of good practices and the results obtained by the institutions and communities.

92. One delegation underscored the key role the United Nations country team in Colombia played in driving forward United Nations development system reform and the revamped resident coordinator, as part of efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. Those efforts had generated better alignment with national development plans and more fluid communication, helping to identify where the United Nations development system could best help the Government in an integrated, cohesive manner.

93. The Executive Board took note of the report on the joint field visit to Colombia by the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP (DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2019/CRP.1).

XIII. Other matters

Address by the Chairperson of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN-Women Staff Council

94. In her statement, the newly appointed Chairperson, UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN-Women Staff Council, highlighted the Council's revitalized engagement

with senior management and personnel. She drew attention to workplace culture, contractual modalities, leadership skills, and the role of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. She welcomed the UNFPA plan to establish a respectful workplace and the UNDP People for 2030 strategy. Despite these, however, staff remained reluctant to speak out, and there was a general negative perception that recruitment practices did not provide equal opportunity, while underreporting of misconduct, abuse of authority and sexual harassment remained a challenge. Attracting and retaining staff were key; she encouraged UNDP and UNFPA to follow the good practices of UNICEF and UNOPS. The organizations should prioritize recruitment and retention of high-quality leaders, key for attracting and retaining high-quality staff. The Council supported the UNDP Office for Human Resources review of performance policies and was working with United Nations organizations to coordinate methods governing conditions of service and review of local salaries; it was also engaged with the United Nations Joint Pension Fund to address the backlog of cases.

95. A group of delegations commended UNICEF for making public the independent task force report on workplace gender discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority, and acknowledged efforts of the Chief Executives Board task force on sexual harassment. They encouraged the other funds and programmes to follow UNICEF and commission similar reviews. Participation of all stakeholders was key to fostering a culture of change. Staff had to feel safe to speak up and report misconduct and have access to confidential, impartial mechanisms for reporting, investigation and mediation. The group pointed to three elements for culture change: (a) proper organizational policies and procedures on harassment, conflict of interest and abuse of authority; (b) functioning and sufficiently staffed institutions; and (c) a continuously nourished ethical workplace culture. A strong justice system within the United Nations system was important, including a strong conflict resolution function and more cost-effective mediation, followed through with timely investigations and implementation of findings.

96. In response, the Director, ad interim, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, underscored that the UNDP “People for 2030” strategy addressed the key issues raised. The organizations had to align contract modalities, regardless of type, with jobs needed, and focus on supervisors’ capacity to engage fairly throughout performance cycles. UNDP had taken measures, including introducing a people management certificate, as part of its prevention for culture change. Sexual harassment was likewise linked to workplace challenges, including gender parity, exclusion, bullying and people management. UNDP had taken action to pilot, with the Office of the Ombudsman, a network of “respectful workplace facilitators” to support staff, and would utilize the additional mediation capacity UNICEF supported. UNDP had expanded its independent help lines to address all types of harassment, discrimination and abuse. UNDP would continue to conduct its annual global staff survey, which captured those issues. On recruitment, UNDP would ensure new policies on career planning and an updated mobility policy, effective in 2020, and follow UNICEF and UNOPS practices to end unpaid internships.

97. The Director, Division for Human Resources, UNFPA, said the Fund had a 50/50 staff gender split, although senior management did not reflect that parity – an issue UNFPA continued to address. The UNFPA disability policy would tackle issues of workplace inclusivity, while the culture initiative focused on workplace civility. On sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, UNFPA had put in place policies to ensure staff felt comfortable reporting. The global staff survey 2018 indicated staff felt confident to report cases of misconduct, including sexual harassment. UNFPA was committed to conducting a similar survey to that of UNICEF. On mental health and well-being, UNFPA took a preventive, proactive stance, including training mental health first aiders. UNFPA would introduce “respectful workplace advisers” at

country level, in addition to its employee assistance programme, to support other forms of workplace harassment or violence. On recruitment, UNFPA would address concerns about transparency. UNFPA worked with managers so they understood their role in ensuring a healthy, safe and engaging working environment.

98. The General Counsel and Director, New York Office, UNOPS, said UNOPS conducted an annual staff survey and a separate survey on workplace conduct, the two of which it combined in 2019. The survey outcomes had determined UNOPS policies and shown that career development, diversity and recruitment were important staff issues. The UNOPS annual merit rewards programme recognized performance by personnel of all contracts. UNOPS was engaged with the Staff Council to spearhead new contractual modalities, specifically for field-based organizations. On conflict resolution, UNOPS had developed a network of peers through which it trained individuals to create a cadre of personnel able to respond at short notice to field-level conflicts. On leadership, UNOPS was exploring ways to manage and improve workplace culture, using staff survey outcomes as objectives in managers' performance plans.

99. The Executive Board took note of the statement by the Chairperson of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN-Women Staff Council.

Adoption of decisions

UNFPA structured funding dialogue

100. A group of delegations, while accepting the decision by the Bureau of the Board to continue negotiations on the UNFPA structured funding dialogue decision, noted with regret that the discussion had been unnecessarily politicized. The group was unequivocal in its position on maintaining the UNFPA mandate of protecting and progressing sexual and reproductive health and rights. Any effort to retreat to 1994 was a direct encroachment on the advancement of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and human rights and progress on the agenda to date – especially unacceptable during the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Cairo Conference and the adoption of the ICPD programme of action, and the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNFPA. They stated that the issues raised went well beyond the scope of the structured funding dialogue, which aimed to allocate donor funding where most needed to achieve the three transformative goals of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The group noted that the decision text had been placed under the silence procedure and that Member States supporting this statement had not received notification that the silence procedure had been broken. It appreciated that the Bureau members had decided to recommend a deferral with due consideration; however, the group was unable to support that approach. The decision text presented by the facilitator contained one minor adjustment to previously agreed language, namely the structured funding dialogue decisions from 2016, 2017 and 2018. The group stood fully behind the Fund's mandate and sought clarification on how decisions were arrived at, both in the Bureau and the Board.

Annex I

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2019

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2019/1

Revised UNFPA evaluation policy

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the revised evaluation policy ([DP/FPA/2019/1](#));
2. *Endorses* the 2019 evaluation policy;
3. *Reaffirms* the role played by the evaluation function at UNFPA and underscores the importance of high-quality independent evaluation evidence in supporting the UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021 in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
4. *Requests* that UNFPA and the Evaluation Office always seek out opportunities with other United Nations agencies for joint evaluations of joint programming as well as the common chapter of the strategic plan;
5. *Encourages* UNFPA management to work with the Evaluation Office to continue its efforts to increase the implementation rate of decentralized evaluations and to ensure that management at all levels use evaluation findings as a key source of evidence to make decisions about enhancing programmes, as well as to duly communicate and disseminate such evaluation findings and implementations;
6. *Requests* UNFPA to report to the Executive Board, as part of the annual report on the evaluation function, starting in 2019, on all actions taken at all levels to increase spending on evaluations to a minimum 1.4 per cent and to a maximum 3 per cent, including detail of how funds for evaluation have been ringfenced as foreseen by the policy;
7. *Encourages* UNFPA to report to the Executive Board, as part of the annual report on the evaluation function, in 2020 on how evaluations are generating the specific knowledge and evidence UNFPA needs to deliver on the 2030 Agenda as well as on how such knowledge and evidence are duly communicated and disseminated;
8. *Requests* UNFPA to report, as part of the annual report on the evaluation function, on progress made on implementing management responses of evaluations and resulting changes on policies, programmes and practices.

25 January 2019

2019/2

Reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, 2017

The Executive Board

With regard to UNDP and UNCDF:

1. *Takes note* of the report ([DP/2019/7](#)) on the actions taken by UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the further actions planned to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the financial period that ended on 31 December 2017;
2. *Notes* the unqualified audit opinions issued by the Board of Auditors for 2017;
3. *Notes* progress made by UNDP and UNCDF in addressing the top seven audit-related priorities in 2016-2017;
4. *Endorses* the suggested, refined top seven audit-related management priorities of UNDP for the biennium 2018-2019;

5. *Recalls* decisions 2018/3 and 2018/13, and underscores the need for UNDP to address issues relating to procurement oversight and fraud mitigation strategies, financial management and sustainability of country offices, programme/project management and evaluation, and partnerships and resource mobilization;
6. *Acknowledges* the findings of the Board of Auditors on the monitoring of risk in country offices, requests UNDP to ensure the capacity is in place to do this effectively, and requests UNDP to report to the Board on the implementation of the updated enterprise risk management policy at its annual session of 2019, as appropriate, and as part of its report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors;
7. *Notes* that many of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors are at country level, and requests UNDP to consider more systemic action within their ongoing reviews of businesses process and structure;
8. *Acknowledges* the efforts made by UNDP, and encourages UNDP to continue to improve actions for recovery of funds lost, including those due to fraud;
9. *Supports* the ongoing efforts of UNDP management to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the year ended 31 December 2017 as well as the remaining recommendations from prior years;

With regard to UNFPA:

10. *Takes note* of the report ([DP/FPA/2019/2](#)) on the actions taken by UNFPA and the further measures planned by the organization to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the financial period that ended on 31 December 2017;
11. *Notes* the audit opinion by the Board of Auditors that UNFPA financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of UNFPA as at 31 December 2017 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended, in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS);
12. *Also notes* the progress made by UNFPA in addressing prior-year recommendations and support ongoing management efforts in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the year ended 31 December 2017;
13. *Encourages* UNFPA efforts to continue to improve the maturity of risk management at all levels of the organization (including strengthened approaches to fraud risk, inventory audit and supply chain management), encourages UNFPA to continue to adopt a risk-based approach to audit coverage of implementing partners to mitigate the risk of overcontrol, and requests UNFPA to report to the Board on the implementation, enforcement and resourcing of the updated enterprise risk management policy and the policy and procedures on management of programme supplies at its annual session of 2019, as appropriate, and as part of its report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors;
14. *Also encourages* UNFPA to ensure that its investment in a new enterprise resource planning system produces actionable information for managers to drive improvements in the identification, prioritization and management of strategic delivery risks, including relating to commodity inventory losses and the performance of its implementing partners, and to work with other funds and programmes to ensure compatibility of enterprise resource planning systems;

With regard to UNOPS:

15. *Takes note* of the report ([DP/OPS/2019/1](#)) on the progress in the implementation of the various recommendations made for the year ended 31 December 2017 and the

efforts currently in progress to ensure that the remaining recommendations are successfully implemented;

16. *Acknowledges* that due to the fact that recommendations were issued to UNOPS towards the end of July 2018 and that many of them require long-term attention, UNOPS will need to work beyond the financial year 2018 to implement them successfully.

25 January 2019

2019/3

Working methods of the Executive Board

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the rules of procedure of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP;
2. *Recalls* decision 2018/22 on working methods of the Executive Board in which the Bureau of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, in collaboration with the Bureaux of UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, was asked to launch a joint consultative process with the Member States starting at the first regular session 2019;
3. *Takes note with appreciation* of the formation of the core group of Member States to lead the joint consultative process with Member States, in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, with a view to examining the efficiency and quality of its current sessions, as well as the functions of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards, building on the joint response prepared by the secretariats and in close consultation with all Member States, seeking their inputs to the written account of the core group;
4. *Requests* the Executive Board secretariats to support the core group, upon request, in analysing the effects of its findings and suggestions;
5. *Looks forward* to the written account of the core group, to be presented at the joint meeting of the Executive Boards in May 2019, for subsequent consideration of its findings and recommendations by the members and observers of the respective Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP.

25 January 2019

2019/4

Implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

1. *Welcomes* the updates provided by UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 on repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;
2. *Recognizes* the continuing contributions of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS in operationalizing resolution [72/279](#) and requests them, in line with General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, resolution [72/279](#) and the Secretary General's implementation plan, to continue to support and contribute to the full implementation of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system including a matrixed, dual reporting model, with United Nations

country team members accountable and reporting to their respective entities on individual mandates, and periodically reporting to the resident coordinator on their individual activities;

3. *Calls on* UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to provide written, harmonized agency-specific information to the Executive Board at its annual session 2019 on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#), based on the information previously provided during informal consultations;

4. *Recognizes* the importance of improving efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services through inter alia enhancing inter-agency cooperation, and encourages the executive heads of UNOPS, UNFPA and UNDP to continue to take action as appropriate in these areas;

5. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to operationalize their respective Strategic Plans while implementing General Assembly resolution [72/279](#);

6. *Requests* UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to continue to support the Secretary-General to collaboratively implement a new generation of United Nations country teams, with needs-based tailored country presence, to be built on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and finalized through open and inclusive dialogue between the host Government and the United Nations development system, facilitated by the resident coordinator, to ensure the best configuration of support on the ground, as well as enhanced coordination, transparency, efficiency and impact of United Nations development activities, in accordance with national development policies, plans, priorities and needs;

7. *Welcomes* the strong commitment of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, to redeploy their efficiency gains from United Nations development system reform for development activities, including coordination, and requests the three agencies to contribute to the Secretary-General's report on the cost-savings and efficiency gains and their redeployments and to update the Executive Board through existing reporting mechanisms;

8. *Welcomes* the steps already taken by UNDP to support the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including the transfer of its 2019 cost-sharing contribution to the United Nations Development Coordination Office and the 2019 service-level agreement with the United Nations Secretariat.

25 January 2019

2019/5

Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its first regular session 2019

The Executive Board

Recalls that during its first regular session 2019, it:

Item 1

Organizational matters

Elected the following members of the Bureau for 2019:

President:	H.E. Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea)
Vice-President:	H.E. Mr. Walton Webson (Antigua and Barbuda)
Vice-President:	H.E. Ms. Besiana Kadare (Albania)
Vice-President:	H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland)
Vice-President:	H.E. Mr. Collen V. Kelapile (Botswana)

Adopted the agenda and approved the workplan for its first regular session 2019 (DP/2019/L.1);

Approved the report of the second regular session 2018 (DP/2019/1);

Adopted the annual workplan of the Executive Board for 2019 (DP/2019/CRP.1);

Approved the tentative workplan for the annual session 2019;

Agreed to the following schedule for the remaining sessions of the Executive Board in 2019:

Annual session: 3 to 4 and 6 to 7 June 2019

Second regular session: 3 to 6 September 2019.

UNDP segment

Item 2

Evaluation

Took note of the evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (DP/2019/4) and the accompanying management note, and the report of the Independent Evaluation Office on its support to evaluation capacity development (DP/2019/6);

Item 3

UNDP country programmes and related matters

Approved the following UNDP country programmes in accordance with decision 2014/7:

Africa: Burundi (DP/DCP/BDI/4 and Corr.1); Niger (DP/DCP/NER/3); Togo (DP/DCP/TGO/3);

Asia and the Pacific: Cambodia (DP/DCP/KHM/4);

Latin America and the Caribbean: Chile (DP/DCP/CHL/4); Ecuador (DP/DCP/ECU/3);

Took note of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1 January to 31 December 2019 (DP/2019/3);

Approved the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1 January to 31 December 2019 and for South Africa from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 (DP/2019/3).

UNFPA segment

Item 4

Evaluation

Adopted decision 2019/1 on the revised UNFPA evaluation policy;

Item 5

Country programmes and related matters

Approved the following UNFPA country programmes in accordance with decision 2014/7:

Cambodia (DP/FPA/CPD/KHM/6); Niger (DP/FPA/CPD/NER/9)

Approved the second, one-year extension of the country programme for South Africa from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 (DP/FPA/2018/11);

UNOPS segment**Item 6****United Nations Office for Project Services**

Heard the UNOPS Executive Director give a statement;

Joint segment**Item 7****Recommendations of the Board of Auditors**

Adopted decision 2019/2 on the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, related to the following reports: UNDP and UNCDF: Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, 2017 ([DP/2019/7](#)); UNFPA: Follow-up to the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2017: Status of implementation of recommendations ([DP/FPA/2019/2](#)); and UNOPS: Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for 2017 ([DP/OPS/2019/1](#));

Item 8**Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on repositioning of the United Nations development system**

Adopted decision 2019/3 on implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Item 9**Working methods of the Executive Board**

Adopted decision 2019/4 on the working methods of the Executive Board.

25 January 2019

2019/6**Annual report of the UNDP Administrator***The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Administrator on results for 2018 and progress on the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 ([DP/2019/10](#)) and its annexes; the report of UNDP on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2018 ([DP/2019/10/Add.1](#)) and its annexes; and the statistical annex ([DP/2019/10/Add.2](#));
2. *Takes note* of the 10 observations presented in the report, welcomes the progress made towards achieving Strategic Plan results in 2018 and urges UNDP to incorporate lessons learned in the Plan's implementation going forward;
3. *Recalls* decision 2017/31 on the UNDP integrated resources plan and integrated budget, 2018–2021, and recognizes the importance of regular resources provided by UNDP for ensuring the continued delivery of the strategic frameworks of the United Nations Volunteers and United Nations Capital Development Fund;
4. *Takes note* of the annual report on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy in 2018 ([DP/2019/11](#)) and UNDP achievements both in terms of development results under each outcome of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and in institutional performance;

5. *Takes note* of the achievements on the six signature solutions of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and requests that information in this regard be included but not be limited to the annual reports of the Administrator;
6. *Recognizes* the inter-agency efforts to make progress against the common chapter of the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women and urges UNDP to continue working in close partnership with these organizations to further enhance effectiveness and delivery of results in line with their commitment to United Nations reform;
7. *Welcomes with appreciation* the engagement with the Executive Board on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and requests UNDP to continue the dialogue with the Executive Board.

7 June 2019

2019/7

UNDP evaluation

The Executive Board

With regard to the review of the UNDP evaluation policy (DP/2019/13) and the management responses thereto (DP/2019/14):

1. *Takes note* of the independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy and the management response thereto;
2. *Takes note* of the review team's conclusion that the 2016 revisions to the UNDP evaluation policy were well crafted, clear and useful, and that the policy provides UNDP with a solid evaluation framework;
3. *Further takes note* of the joint UNDP and Independent Evaluation Office management response to the report, and the planned actions to be taken in response to the issues raised through the review;
4. *Requests* the Independent Evaluation Office, in close consultation with UNDP management, to draft a revised evaluation policy for consideration and approval by the Executive Board at the second regular session 2019;

With regard to the annual report on evaluation, 2018 (DP/2019/16) and the management commentaries thereto:

5. *Takes note* of the annual report on evaluation;
6. *Requests* UNDP to address the issues raised;

With regard to the evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (DP/2019/4) and the management response thereto (DP/2019/17):

7. *Takes note* of the evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (LDCs), presented at the first regular session 2019, and the management response thereto; and requests UNDP, in line with the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations, to consider a more consistent programmatic engagement for poverty reduction in areas highly relevant for LDCs, and outline LDC-specific approaches and solutions that benefit people living in poverty, particularly in Africa;
8. *Further notes* the evaluation's recommendation regarding resource investment towards gender equality and women's empowerment, including the finding that opportunities for mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment in programme design and implementation have been underutilized in LDCs; urges

UNDP to enhance systematic development support including through specifically targeting gender equality and women's empowerment within poverty reduction interventions to promote stronger impact in LDCs through informed programming with the aim of lifting women out of poverty; and requests UNDP to update the Executive Board on steps taken in this regard through its existing reporting;

9. *Also notes* the evaluation's findings regarding youth employment and empowerment and requests UNDP to develop a strategic approach to mainstreaming youth employment issues in its programmatic work on poverty reduction, including through integrated interventions combining policy aspects and downstream demand-supply interventions;

10. *Notes* that UNDP needs well-thought-through programme priorities for inclusive growth and sustainable livelihood engagement, and that multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities must inform UNDP poverty reduction and post-conflict programming;

11. *Welcomes* the reinvigorated global leadership of UNDP in the development and use of multidimensional poverty indices;

12. *Also notes* the evaluation's recommendation regarding the need to enable linkages between UNDP community-level sustainable livelihood programmes and rural poverty alleviation policies in LDCs, and requests UNDP to update the Executive Board on improving measures taken in this regard through its existing reporting;

13. *Further notes* that there is scope to strengthen the UNDP strategic poverty and environment impact, and synergies between country programmes and vertical fund engagements in this regard;

14. *Recognizes* the efforts of UNDP management in holding extensive consultations with the Board, the Independent Evaluation Office and other stakeholders in developing its management response;

15. *Encourages* UNDP to act on its intentions to develop a more ambitious support frame to countries on poverty reduction in response to the concerns raised in the evaluation, and to ensure that poverty reduction remains a central pillar of the UNDP Strategic Plan.

7 June 2019

2019/8

Report on results achieved by the United Nations Capital Development Fund in 2018

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) on results achieved in 2018 (DP/2019/18) and its annex;

2. *Commends* the efforts of UNCDF to implement its Strategic Framework, 2018–2021;

3. *Welcomes* its commitment to innovate financing solutions and approaches to make finance work for poor people;

4. *Welcomes* the work of UNCDF to demonstrate value of investing in the last mile of least developed countries (LDCs) through its management and deployment of loans and guarantees through its LDC investment platform; welcomes the lessons learned on achieving sustainability and crowding in other actors to make markets more

inclusive; and commends UNCDF for making its investment platform instruments and expertise available to other United Nations agencies wishing to access them;

5. *Welcomes* the work of UNCDF in making finance work for the poor, where few others operate, and notes the limits on the number of countries and inter-agency initiatives that can be supported due to the shortfall in resources against the Strategic Framework targets;

6. *Commends* its efforts to track and evaluate its contributions to financial market and local systems change and unlocking finance for the poor, and to share lessons with the wider development community;

7. *Recognizes* the increase in the diversification of the UNCDF funding base, including from least developed and middle-income countries, and recommitments to supporting UNCDF, including through fully funding regular resource requirements of \$25 million per year.

7 June 2019

2019/9

United Nations Volunteers: report of the Administrator

The Executive Board

1. *Acknowledges* General Assembly resolution [73/140](#) of 17 December 2018 on volunteering for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which the Assembly welcomed the integration of volunteerism into all relevant issues considered at the United Nations, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requested actions by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) to further this agenda;

2. *Takes note* of the results-oriented annual report of the Administrator ([DP/2019/19](#)) and its annexes;

3. *Expresses appreciation* to all UN Volunteers for their outstanding contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during 2018;

4. *Commends* UNV for the results achieved during the first year of its Strategic Framework, 2018–2021 ([DP/2018/6](#));

5. *Welcomes* the publication by UNV of the report entitled *2018 State of the World's Volunteerism Report: The Thread that Binds – Volunteerism and Community Resilience*, which presents new evidence on the roles of volunteerism in strengthening community resilience, voice and inclusion in the 2030 Agenda;

6. *Notes* the importance of regular resources provided by UNDP for ensuring the continued delivery of the UNV Strategic Framework;

7. *Reaffirms* the crucial role of the Special Voluntary Fund to the delivery of the UNV Strategic Framework 2018–2021, and calls upon all development partners in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund;

8. *Requests* that UNV build on the progress made in pursuing innovative volunteer solutions to improve its response to the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7 June 2019

2019/10

Annual report of the UNFPA Executive Director

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the documents that make up the annual report of the Executive Director for 2018: DP/FPA/2019/4 ([Part I](#), [Part I/Add.1](#) and [Part II](#));
2. *Welcomes* the promising progress made by UNFPA in implementing the [UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021](#);
3. *Commends* UNFPA for its success in mobilizing resources, including the increase in regular resources;
4. *Recognizes* the inter-agency efforts to make progress against the common chapter of the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, and urges UNFPA to continue working in close partnership with these organizations to further enhance effectiveness and delivery of results in line with their commitment to United Nations reform.

7 June 2019

2019/11

UNFPA evaluation

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the present report on the evaluation function of UNFPA, 2018, and of the programme of work and budget of the Evaluation Office in 2019 ([DP/FPA/2019/5](#));
2. *Welcomes* the efforts made by UNFPA and the significant progress achieved in strengthening the evaluation function, in actively contributing to United Nations system-wide evaluation efforts, and in fostering national evaluation capacity development;
3. *Notes* the current promising trend of evaluation investment but encourages faster progress to reach 1.4 per cent as a minimum of total programme expenditures by 2021, as committed to in the evaluation policy;
4. *Welcomes* the Evaluation Office's commencement of the development of a strategy to strengthen evaluation use through communications and knowledge management, and encourages the Evaluation Office to finalize the evaluation use strategy in 2019, and report against it in the 2019 annual report on evaluation to the Executive Board;
5. *Reaffirms* the role played by the evaluation function at UNFPA and underscores the importance of high-quality independent evaluation evidence in the context of the [UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021](#), and its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7 June 2019

2019/12

Annual report of the UNOPS Executive Director

The Executive Board

1. *Recognizes* the contributions of UNOPS to the operational results of Governments, the United Nations and other partners in 2018 through efficient management support services and effective specialized technical expertise, expanding the implementation capacity for sustainable development;

2. *Welcomes* the progress made in implementing the UNOPS Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 ([DP/OPS/2017/5](#));
3. *Takes note* of the annual report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and the progress made in implementing recommendations relevant to UNOPS;
4. *Takes note* of the progress achieved in initiating social impact investment activities in UNOPS mandated areas;
5. *Takes note* of the decision of the Secretary-General to establish a Client Board to replace the Policy Advisory Committee, pursuant to internal consultation and a review by the Joint Inspection Unit, and notes that Client Board functions are advisory and do not supplant or duplicate any governance functions of the Executive Board.

7 June 2019

2019/13

Reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

The Executive Board

With regard to the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS:

1. *Welcomes* the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS ([DP/2019/20](#), [DP/FPA/2019/7](#) and [DP/OPS/2019/3](#)), and encourages their management to continue to instil and improve a culture of ethics in the three organizations, including robust whistle-blower protection policies;
2. *Encourages* the management of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS in its reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment to further enhance transparency on how implemented actions ensure a victim-centred approach and are aligned with United Nations system-wide efforts;
3. *Notes* the progress made by the UNDP Ethics Office in strengthening the ethical culture of UNDP;
4. *Welcomes* the continued progress in the work of the UNFPA Ethics Office and encourages management to consider its request to increase the staff capacity of the Ethics Office;
5. *Welcomes* the continued progress in the work of the UNOPS Ethics Office;

With regard to the independent review of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and the joint management response thereto:

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the independent review of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS policies and procedures to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment ([DP/FPA/OPS/2019/1](#)) and welcomes the joint UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS management response ([DP/FPA/OPS/2019/2](#)); requests UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS to provide an update on implementation of actions set out in the independent review and management response at the annual session in 2020, within existing reporting;
7. *Supports* the ongoing strong commitment to “zero tolerance” for sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse by the heads of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS;
8. *Welcomes* the progress made so far, and urges the management of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to ensure a continued focus on all matters related to prevention and response, including investigation, to sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse going forward.

7 June 2019

2019/14

Reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on internal audit and investigations and management responses

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the progress of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS in addressing audit-related management issues in 2018;
2. *Notes with appreciation* efforts to implement outstanding audit recommendations from previous reports;
3. *Encourages* the management of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS in its reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment to further enhance transparency on how implemented actions ensure a victim-centred approach and are aligned with United Nations system-wide efforts;

With regard to UNDP:

4. *Takes note* of the annual report of the Office of Audit and Investigations on internal audit and investigation activities in 2018 (DP/2019/23) and its annexes, and the management response thereto; and takes note of the annual report of the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee;
5. *Notes with concern* that the overall audit opinion has changed from “satisfactory” to “partially satisfactory/some improvement required” and appreciates that this matter is taken under serious consideration by UNDP management in its response; urges UNDP senior management to exercise greater oversight of offices that have received “unsatisfactory” audit ratings in the recent past, as well as those with high risk exposure, as identified by the Office of Audit and Investigation, and to take corrective and preventative measures to address weaknesses and vulnerabilities;
6. *Notes with concern* that the most recurring audit issues in country offices are inadequate project monitoring and evaluations, delays in closing completed projects in the Atlas system, inadequate controls in procurement management such as not undertaking competitive procurement processes or the absence of contract reviews, inadequate oversight in the recruitment of personnel to ensure proper shortlisting and longlisting of applicants, weaknesses in financial management and weaknesses in asset management; and encourages UNDP management to address these recurring issues;
7. *Notes with appreciation* the high overall implementation rate of Office of Audit and Investigation recommendations, which has improved since 2018 with only four recommendations not fully implemented over 18 months or more;
8. *Further notes* improvements in applying the harmonized approach to cash transfers and encourages UNDP to continue its efforts to enhance the oversight and management functions of implementing partners;
9. *Appreciates* that UNDP has provided information on financial losses due to fraud and improved the recovery rate between 2013 and 2018, as requested by the Board, and encourages UNDP management to continue to improve its recovery efforts and rates, and continue to report to the Board on an annual basis;
10. *Requests* UNDP to continue to work preventively and correctively to address recommendations of, and issues raised by, the Office of Audit and Investigations;
11. *Notes with concern* that, with regard to investigations, the most common complaints refer to financial irregularities including procurement fraud, misrepresentation, entitlement fraud, theft and embezzlement, and the high number

of complaints from high-risk environments, and encourages UNDP management to address these issues as a matter of high priority;

12. *Expresses* continuing support for strengthening the internal audit and investigation functions of UNDP;

With regard to UNFPA:

13. *Takes note* of the report of the Office of Audit and Investigation Services on UNFPA internal audit and investigation activities in 2018 (DP/FPA/2019/6), the opinion, based on the scope of work undertaken, on the adequacy and effectiveness of the UNFPA framework of governance, risk management and control (DP/FPA/2019/6/Add.1), the annual report of the UNFPA Oversight Advisory Committee (DP/FPA/2019/6/Add.2), and the management response (DP/FPA/2019/CRP.6) thereto and to the present report;

14. *Takes note* of the recurring recommendations regarding insufficient supervisory controls and inadequate guidance for country offices, as well as procurement processes, and welcomes UNFPA actions to address this;

15. *Expresses* its continuing support for the strengthening of the audit and investigation functions at UNFPA, and urges management to provide sufficient resources to the Office of Audit and Investigative Services to fully discharge its mandate while recognizing the importance of audit and investigation functions to the organization's activities;

16. *Acknowledges and supports* the engagement of the Office of Audit and Investigation Services in joint audit and investigation activities;

With regard to UNOPS:

17. *Takes note* of the annual report of the Internal Audit and Investigations Group on internal audit and investigation activities in 2018 (DP/OPS/2019/4) and its annexes, and the management response thereto; and takes note of the annual report of the Audit Advisory Committee for 2018 (in line with Executive Board decision 2008/37);

18. *Welcomes* the large reduction in new audit recommendations, as well as the progress made in implementation of audit recommendations;

19. *Welcomes* the improvement as expressed in the general audit opinion of, and based on the scope of work undertaken on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's framework of governance, risk management and control (in line with Executive Board decision 2015/13);

20. *Takes note* of the commitment the Internal Audit and Investigations Group has shown in striving for best practice with regards to efficiency, effectiveness and use of technology and other innovative approaches;

21. *Takes note* of the Internal Audit and Investigations Charter.

7 June 2019

2019/15

Update on implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the updates provided by UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 of 31 May 2018 on repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;
2. *Requests* UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to work towards adequately sequencing entity-specific country programme documents so that the individual programmes derive directly from the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now renamed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework), which is to be prepared and finalized in full consultation and agreement with national Governments and is the most important planning document of the United Nations development system at the country level; and requests UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to provide an update at the next session of the Executive Board on adjustments required;
3. *Requests* UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to provide, for information at the next session of the Executive Board, a detailed mapping of their regional assets and capacities, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/279 and mindful of ongoing discussions on the revamping of the regional approach of the United Nations development system;
4. *Welcomes* the preliminary updates provided by UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on efficiencies, including through shared business operations and premises; calls upon the executive heads of UNOPS, UNFPA and UNDP to continue to take action to ensure full achievement of efficiency gains and their redeployment in line with relevant existing mandates, including from General Assembly resolutions 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and 72/279 on repositioning of the United Nations development system, as well as to take into account the applicable recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in the report on opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation (JIU/REP/2018/5);
5. *Requests* regular updates to the Executive Board on efficiency gains and their redeployments, through existing reporting mechanisms;
6. *Requests* UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General to develop a tracking system to monitor efficiency gains;
7. *Notes* the cost-saving measures UNDP has had to undertake to maintain a balanced budget while providing financial support to the reforms, and requests UNDP to ensure that these measures do not negatively affect its capacities to provide adequate development support to programme countries;
8. *Welcomes* that UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS contributed their doubled contributions to the resident coordinator cost-sharing, and calls on UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to implement the 1 per cent levy, as applicable, as per the operational guidance for implementing the coordination levy (12 March 2019) issued by the United Nations Development Coordination Office;

9. *Recalls* [decisions](#) 2018/16, 2018/18 and 2018/20 and notes that the agency-administered option for collecting the coordination levy adds administrative tasks to UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS and requires adjustments to agency administrative processes, and requests UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to provide information on the adjustments and to promptly report to the Executive Board on any additional transaction and administrative costs associated with the administration of the levy, within existing reporting;
10. *Recalls* the importance of funding predictability and urges Member States in a position to do so to prioritize regular resources and multi-year pledges, given that further reductions in regular resources risk jeopardizing the ability of UNDP and UNFPA to achieve planned strategic results;
11. *Encourages* UNDP and UNFPA, in collaboration with UN-Women and UNICEF, to place special emphasis on the implementation of their respective Strategic Plans, including the common chapter on joint programming, in accordance with their respective mandates and comparative and collaborative advantages, and to report at the annual session in 2020, including through the midterm reviews of their respective Strategic Plans, where and how the inter-agency process among the United Nations funds and programmes has led to greater efficiencies and effectiveness.

7 June 2019

2019/16

Working methods of the Executive Board

The Executive Board

1. *Reaffirms* the [rules of procedure](#) of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS;
2. *Welcomes* the [written account of the core group](#) of Member States that led the joint consultative process with Member States, in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, with a view to examining the efficiency and quality of its current sessions, as well as the functions of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards in line with decisions 2019/3 and 2018/22;
3. *Recognizes* the technical support provided by the secretariats of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP Executive Boards to the core group and notes the annex to the written account as prepared by the secretariats;
4. *Stresses* that the overarching principles of the discussion on working methods of the Executive Boards are the preservation of executive guidance and oversight of agencies; avoidance of duplication with the function of the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment and the respective Executive Boards; and respect for the different mandates and characteristics of each agency, fund, programme and entity;
5. *Requests* UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, in collaboration with the UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, to organize joint informal briefings/consultations and strongly encourages that they be scheduled within socially acceptable hours to allow the WFP Executive Board to participate from Rome;
6. *Requests* the secretariat of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, to present initial proposals to improve the working methods of the joint meeting of the Boards, including an optimal timing for convening the joint meeting of the Boards, for consideration by Member States at the second regular session 2019, mindful that the joint meeting of the Boards does not have decision-making authority

and of the need to avoid duplication and overlap with the functions of the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment;

7. *Requests* that the secretariat propose different alternatives of adjusting the date of the second regular session, mindful that it does not overlap with the other schedules, for consideration by the Executive Board at the second regular session 2019;

8. *Requests* that an informal, at no cost to the organizations, meeting of the Presidents of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP be held on a regular basis for enhanced harmonization of common issues, and for increased coordination among agencies, funds, programmes and entities and the respective Executive Boards, while bearing in mind that according to the rules of procedure of Executive Boards the Presidents remain under the authority of the respective Executive Boards and do not have the authority to make decisions on any substantive matters, and that the outcome of the meetings be shared with the wider membership;

9. *Affirms* the need to elect the Bureau members early on to minimize leadership gaps and enhance the efficient functioning of the Presidency and Executive Board at large;

10. *Recommends* that for continuity and smooth transition between outgoing and incoming Bureaux, whenever appropriate and consistent with the relevant rules of procedure, regional groups could consider taking appropriate measures so that one of the Vice-Chairs/Vice-Presidents of the bureau can take on the Chair/Presidency and could be effective in that capacity in the following year;

11. *Notes* the need for flexibility on chairing the informal meetings of the Executive Board from the President of the Bureau or one of the Vice-Presidents or designated members of their delegations;

12. *Requests* that the secretariat, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UN-Women, continue convening consecutive formal sessions of the Executive Boards in order to avoid gaps between the formal sessions of the various Executive Boards;

13. *Requests* that the secretariat present practical proposals for improving the efficiency of the sessions of the Executive Board, including by reviewing the agenda items and the Board's efficient consideration of these, for deliberation and consideration by the Executive Board at the second regular session 2019;

14. *Requests* that the Executive Board, with the support of the secretariat, make its sessions interactive, while securing the time slot for group and national statements as appropriate and necessary;

15. *Requests* that while encouraging interactive discussions, any format for enhanced interaction with the heads of the agencies should contain follow-up actions within existing mechanisms;

16. *Encourages* that the heads of agencies, funds, programmes and entities participating in Board sessions provide the full texts of their statements or opening remarks (presentation) online in advance and deliver shorter statements at the Executive Board sessions. The statements and presentations should be concise in highlighting the main issues, evidenced-based and action-oriented in addressing the challenges;

17. *Strongly encourages* the President to enforce implementation of time limits for statements;

18. *Affirms* the participation of diverse stakeholders in Executive Board sessions with full respect of the relevant clauses in the rules of procedure and based on the agreement of the Executive Board, recalls decision 2018/22, paragraph 11, and reaffirms the importance of giving due consideration to gender parity in the composition of panellists participating in the Executive Boards;
19. *Requests* the Bureau to decide the destination of field visits two years in advance, while allowing the flexibility to change host countries if circumstances dictated, in order to give host countries as well as agencies as much time as possible to prepare for the visits;
20. *Requests* the Bureau, assisted by the secretariat, to consult with the Bureaux of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, to coordinate for the selection of field visits and to propose harmonized criteria for individual field visits, for evaluation by the Board at the first regular session 2020;
21. *Requests* the secretariats of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to circulate proposed draft decisions to the wider membership at least four weeks prior to each session, at the discretion of the Bureau, and reiterates its strong encouragement to Member States to provide their comments on draft decisions, to the extent possible, prior to the start of the session, with a view to starting substantive consultations on the draft decisions on the first day of negotiations, without pre-empting bringing in additional proposals during negotiations;
22. *Requests* the secretariat, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, to track the implementation of Executive Board decisions using the matrix of common use as attached to the written account of the core group;
23. *Requests* the secretariat to distribute the minutes of Bureau meetings to members and observers of the Executive Board once these minutes have been approved by the Bureau;
24. *Reiterates* the request that the secretariat of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS regularly update the joint online calendar of all Board meetings in real time so as to avoid overlap of schedules with other funds and programmes as well as major official meetings including the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment.

7 June 2019

2019/17

Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 2019

The Executive Board

Recalls that during its annual session 2019, it:

Item 1

Organizational matters

Adopted the agenda and approved the workplan for its first regular session 2019 ([DP/2019/L.2](#));

Approved the report of the first regular session 2019 ([DP/2019/8](#));

Approved the tentative workplan for the second regular session 2019;

Agreed to the following schedule for the remaining session of the Executive Board in 2019:

Second regular session: 3 to 6 September 2019.

UNDP segment

Item 2

Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator and annual report

Adopted decision 2019/6 on the annual report of the UNDP Administrator;

Item 3

Gender equality at UNDP

Took note of the annual report on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2018–2021 ([DP/2019/11](#));

Item 4

Human Development Report

Took note of an update by the secretariat on consultations on the Human Development Report 2019;

Item 5

UNDP country programmes and related matters

Approved the following UNDP country programme in accordance with decision 2014/7:

Republic of the Congo ([DP/DCP/COG/3](#));

Took note of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Timor-Leste and Tunisia from 1 January to 31 December 2020, as approved by the Administrator ([DP/2019/12](#));

Approved the two-year extension of the country programme for Comoros from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 ([DP/2019/12](#));

Item 6

UNDP evaluation

Adopted decision 2019/7 on UNDP evaluation;

Item 7

United Nations Capital Development Fund

Adopted decision 2019/8 on the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2018;

Item 8

United Nations Volunteers

Adopted decision 2019/9 on the report of the Administrator on UNV;

UNFPA segment

Item 9

Annual report of the UNFPA Executive Director

Adopted decision 2019/10 on the annual report of the UNFPA Executive Director;

Item 10

UNFPA evaluation

Adopted decision 2019/11 on UNFPA evaluation;

UNOPS segment**Item 11****United Nations Office for Project Services**

Adopted decision 2019/12 on the annual report of the UNOPS Executive Director;

Joint segment**Item 12****Reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS Ethics Offices**

Adopted decision 2019/13 on the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS;

Item 13**Internal audit and oversight**

Adopted decision 2019/14 on the reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on internal audit and investigations and the management responses;

Item 14**Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on repositioning of the United Nations development system**

Adopted decision 2019/15 on the update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

Item 15**Working methods of the Executive Board**

Adopted decision 2019/16 on the working methods of the Executive Board.

7 June 2019

2019/18**UNDP structured funding dialogue***The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of documents [DP/2019/26](#) (Annual review of the financial situation, 2018), [DP/2019/26/Add.1](#) (Detailed information relating to the annual review of the financial situation, 2018), and [DP/2019/27](#) (Structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021);
2. *Notes* the importance of sufficient and predictable regular resources, which is critical for UNDP to offer the cross-cutting and integrated development solutions that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires;
3. *Recalls* the importance of funding predictability and urges Member States to prioritize regular resources and multi-year pledges for 2019 and future years, given that reductions in regular resources risk jeopardizing the ability of UNDP to achieve the results of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021;
4. *Recognizes* the importance of the private sector as a source of expertise and an essential contributor to economic growth and development, as well as a partner in Sustainable Development Goals financing, and encourages UNDP to deepen its partnership with the private sector, in accordance with its private sector strategy, and

requests information in this regard to be presented at the first regular session of the Executive Board in 2020;

5. *Urges* Member States to continue their dialogue with UNDP, through the structured funding dialogues, on shifting from highly earmarked to regular resources, or flexible other resources, in line with the Funding Compact, and with the national priorities and plans of programme countries;

6. *Requests* UNDP, utilising existing reports and assessments, to include in future structured funding dialogue reports the status of funding by UNDP to United Nations Volunteers, United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, and the results of their work;

7. *Requests* UNDP, drawing on country and regional information in the Statistical Annex to the Annual Report of the Administrator and other relevant existing reports, to integrate in future structured funding dialogue reports updates on the utilisation of resources, and in addition, requests UNDP to provide qualitative examples of how such utilisation works to concretely support the delivery of Strategic Plan outcome areas and results;

8. *Welcomes* steps taken by UNDP, in collaboration with United Nations Development System (UNDS) entities and Member States, to follow up on commitments of the Funding Compact; and encourages UNDP to continue dialogue with all UNDS entities and Member States to jointly make progress towards compliance with their mutual and interdependent Funding Compact commitments;

9. *Requests* UNDP, as part of its reports on structured funding dialogues, to present harmonized annual reporting on implementation of its entity-specific commitments and contribution to the collective commitments of the Funding Compact, including adding annual milestones, examples of country-level impact, and a forward-looking narrative outlining intended progress for those milestones not yet realized, ahead of the second regular 2020 session of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board;

10. Recalling decision 2018/5, *requests* UNDP to further review the format and content of the report on the structured funding dialogue with a view to aligning resources, including programmatic, with expected results as set out in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021, taking into account annual information on regular and other resources, financial gaps and projections as they relate to specific organizational or programmatic objectives and results, as well as proposed solutions, and to present, by the first regular session of 2020, options on improving the quality of the structured funding dialogues.

6 September 2019

2019/19

Revised UNDP evaluation policy

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the revisions made to the evaluation policy (DP/2019/29), in response to the independent review of the UNDP evaluation policy (DP/2019/13) and the management response thereto (DP/2019/14), presented at the annual session 2019;

2. *Adopts*, in its role as custodian of the evaluation function, the revised evaluation policy and requests, in line with the policy, that an independent review of the evaluation policy be commissioned for consideration by the Executive Board in four years, in January 2024;

3. *Requests* that, under the revised evaluation policy, UNDP continue improving the quality and the credibility of its decentralized evaluations at the country level, and that planned expansion of the Independent Evaluation Office presence at the regional level enable greater independent oversight of this work, including additional measures to safeguard the independence of evaluators carrying out decentralized evaluations;
4. *Reaffirms* the importance of the evaluation function at UNDP and underscores the value of high-quality, independent evaluation evidence in the context of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and its contributions to organizational learning and to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
5. *Recognizes* UNDP's continuing engagement in the ongoing development of the system-wide evaluation measures and encourages UNDP to adopt best practices in both the system-wide evaluation measures and its evaluation policy;
6. *Urges* UNDP to further strengthen its efforts to take measures ensuring that policy commitments are met, particularly with regard to evaluation quality and investments in evaluation.

6 September 2019

2019/20

United Nations Office for Project Services

The Executive Board

With regard to the UNOPS budget estimates for the biennium 2020-2021 (DP/OPS/2019/5), having considered the report of the Executive Director (DP/OPS/2019/5) and the comments thereon by the ACABQ in its report (DP/OPS/2019/6):

1. *Approves* the net revenue target;
2. *Endorses* the two-year aspiration of UNOPS with respect to its management results and the targeting of resources to support its contribution goals;
3. *Requests* UNOPS to present its provisions and plans to address contingencies to the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board for review during the annual session in 2020, and to annually update the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board on their plans on how to utilise the surplus in its operational reserve, in line with the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNOPS;
4. *Encourages* UNOPS to consider introduction of separate and individual budget lines for corporate oversight and assurance functions such as the internal audit function and the ethics office;

With regard to the annual statistical report on United Nations procurement, 2018 (DP/OPS/2019/7):

5. *Takes note* of the annual statistical report on United Nations procurement, 2018 (DP/OPS/2019/7), and recalls the decision of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board 2018/20;
6. *Welcomes* the data and analysis contained therein;
7. *Welcomes* steps taken by UNOPS, in collaboration with United Nations Development System (UNDS) entities and Member States to follow up on commitments of the Funding Compact; and encourages UNOPS to continue dialogue with all UNDS entities and Member States to jointly make progress towards compliance with their mutual and interdependent Funding Compact commitments;

8. *Requests* UNOPS to present harmonized annual reporting on implementation of their entity-specific commitments and contribution to the collective commitments of the Funding Compact, including adding annual milestones, examples of country-level impact, and a forward-looking narrative outlining intended progress for those milestones not yet realized, ahead of the second regular 2020 session of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board.

6 September 2019

2019/21

Joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the analysis contained in the joint review of the existing cost definitions, classifications of activities and associated costs ([DP/FPA-ICEF-UNW/2019/1](#));
2. *Reiterates* decision [2018/21](#) and paragraph 35 of resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;
3. *Endorses* recommendations 1 and 2 on further alignment, as contained in the joint review, for application effective in their integrated budgets, beginning in 2022, and requests UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, working with the UN-Women and UNICEF, to implement standardized terminology and formatting of integrated budget proposals and financial information in the annual reports, recognizing that while all cost categories and functional clusters will be shown, not all will apply to each organization;
4. *Takes note* of recommendation 3 in the joint review, which proposes the creation of separate cost-classification line items in the integrated resources plan, to report on and obtain separate appropriations for independent oversight and assurance activities, as well as resident coordinator cost-sharing contributions, and welcomes additional information on this at the first regular session 2020, to enable further analysis prior to potential adoption of this recommendation.

6 September 2019

2019/22

Working methods of the Executive Board

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the joint response prepared by the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women);
2. *Requests* the secretariat of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and UN-Women, to present to the Executive Board for deliberation and consideration at the first regular session 2020 an exemplary annual programme of work, including informal briefings, for each of the three options presented in the joint response, with corresponding explanatory narratives on the envisaged changes and their expected effect on Board oversight, effectiveness and efficiency, as well as further elaboration on the listed issues of joint relevance and interest to all Boards.

6 September 2019

2019/23

Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its second regular session 2019

The Executive Board

Recalls that during its second regular session 2019, it:

Item 1

Organizational matters

Adopted the agenda and approved the workplan for its second regular session 2019 (DP/2019/L.3);

Approved the report of the annual session 2019 (DP/2019/24);

Approved the tentative workplan for the first regular session 2020.

UNDP segment

Item 2

UNDP structured funding dialogue

Adopted decision 2019/18 on the UNDP structured funding dialogue.

Item 3

UNDP country programmes and related matters

Approved the following country programmes in accordance with decision 2014/7:

Africa: Angola (DP/DCP/AGO/4); Liberia (DP/DCP/LBR/3); Sierra Leone (DP/DCP/SLE/4);

Took note of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Madagascar from 1 January to 31 December 2020, already approved by the Administrator (DP/2019/28/Rev.1);

Approved the fourth extension of the country programme for Yemen, from 1 January to 31 December 2020 (DP/2019/28/Rev.1).

Item 4

Evaluation

Adopted decision 2019/19 on the revised UNDP evaluation policy.

UNFPA segment

Item 5

UNFPA structured funding dialogue

The Bureau decided to defer a decision on the UNFPA structured funding dialogue; the draft decision will again be taken up during the first regular session 2020.

Item 6

UNFPA country programme and related matters

Approved the following country programmes, in accordance with decision 2014/7:

Angola (DP/FPA/CPD/AGO/8), Congo (DP/FPA/CPD/COG/6), Liberia (DP/FPA/CPD/LBR/5), Mexico (DP/FPA/CPD/MEX/7) and Sierra Leone (DP/FPA/CPD/SLE/7);

Took note of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Madagascar, Timor-Leste and Tunisia;

Approved the first two-year extension for the country programme for Afghanistan, the second, two-year extension for the country programme for Comoros, and the fourth, one-year extension for Yemen ([DP/FPA/2019/9](#)).

UNOPS segment

Item 7

United Nations Office for Project Services

Adopted decision 2019/20 on the United Nations Office for Project Services;

Joint segment

Item 8

Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Adopted decision 2019/21 on the joint review of the existing cost definitions and classifications of activities and associated costs;

Took note of the report of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on joint procurement activities ([DP-FPA-OPS/2019/3](#)).

Item 9

Follow-up to UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board meeting

Took note of the report on the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS ([DP/2019/30-DP/FPA/2019/10](#)).

Item 10

Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system

Took note of the update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

Item 11

Working methods of the Executive Board

Adopted decision 2019/22 on the working methods of the Executive Board.

Item 12

Field visits

Took note of the report on the joint field visit of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP to Colombia ([DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2019/CRP.1](#)).

Item 13

Other matters

Heard a statement by the Chairperson of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN-Women Staff Council.

6 September 2019

Annex II

Membership of the Executive Board in 2019

(Term expires on the last day of the year indicated)

African States: Botswana (2021), Burkina Faso (2020), Cameroon (2021), Egypt (2020), Gambia (2021), Mauritius (2019), Rwanda (2021), South Africa (2021).

Asia-Pacific States: Cambodia (2020), China (2019), India (2021), Islamic Republic of Iran (2019), Republic of Korea (2021), Saudi Arabia (2020), Vanuatu (2021).

Eastern European States: Albania (2019), Republic of Moldova (2019), Russian Federation (2020), Ukraine (2021).

Latin American and Caribbean States: Antigua and Barbuda (2020), Brazil (2020), Cuba (2019), Mexico (2021), Panama (2019).

Western European and other States:* Australia, Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

* Western European and other States has its own rotation schedule, which varies every year.

Annex III

Report of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP held on 31 May 2019

I. Morning session: opening

1. The President of the Executive Board of WFP opened the joint meeting of the Executive Boards (JMB) on 31 May 2019, welcoming the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, participants from the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, and the principals of the six United Nations agencies. He encouraged all present to reflect on the ultimate goal of the United Nations reform: to improve how the funds and agencies served people on the ground, whether through greater efficiency, increased coherence or innovative thinking. In this respect, the recent joint field visit of the Executive Boards to Colombia had been particularly valuable, giving participants insight into what it meant for the United Nations to work jointly, coherently and in partnership with the government.

2. In her opening address, the Deputy Secretary-General noted that reform efforts were well under way and recognized contributions from each of the heads of agency present. She was encouraged by discussions at the recent high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, which had been the first joint opportunity to reflect on progress made since the adoption of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#), exactly one year previously. Among the highlights from the session, the Deputy Secretary-General described the broad recognition of the implementation of all reform mandates; the documentation drawn up to support reform processes, such as the management accountability framework; the high expectations of Member States, particularly in areas such as the reporting of efficiency gains and oversight; and the commitment to engage in dialogue with Member States on how to strengthen regional assets and country offices.

3. She urged Executive Board members to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the reform as they explored the topics on the agenda for the JMB. She noted that Member State guidance would be crucial on many issues related to the reform, such as the design of reporting systems and country progress systems; entity-specific discussions on the funding compact; support for sustainable cost contributions for the resident coordinator system and the 1 per cent levy; and recruitment of the best candidates for the resident coordinator posts. In closing, on behalf of the Secretary-General, she acknowledged the huge workload faced by the Executive Boards in the run-up to the General Assembly meeting in September. She encouraged all present to continue the momentum towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, working together to meet the aspirations of people around the world.

4. In his remarks, the Executive Director of WFP characterized the JMB as a valuable opportunity for all present to inspire each other towards making the United Nations the best it could be. He underscored the importance of removing silos as part of the reform process, noting that many silos could be traced back to stipulations imposed by the Member States themselves, and he called on everyone to engage in open, honest communication in order to allow the funds and programmes to work together as effectively as possible. He urged participants not to lose sight of the biggest global challenges, such as ending conflict and wars, while they examined opportunities to improve collaboration between the various Executive Boards. In closing, he pointed out the power of employing easily understood, jargon-free language when talking about the multiple positive impacts of the work carried out by

the United Nations, noting that direct, effective communication was the route towards unlocking increased funding for this vital work.

II. Morning session: topic 1

Working methods of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/ UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP

5. The President of the Executive Board of UNICEF presented the first topic, observing that considerable work had been done to improve and streamline the work of the Executive Boards over the past few years. As a recent example of this progress, the Core Group of Member States on working methods of the Executive Boards had been founded in January 2019 in response to the decisions on working methods adopted by the respective Executive Boards at their 2018 second regular sessions. The group was tasked with leading the joint consultative process with Member States to examine the efficiency and quality of the current Executive Board sessions as well as the functions of the JMB. The President thanked the Coordinator of the Core Group, the Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, and all participating Member States and Secretariats for their constructive engagement in the group.

6. The President reminded the joint meeting that the overarching objective of the discussions of the Core Group was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the working methods of the JMB and their respective governing bodies while preserving their executive guidance and oversight without duplicating the functions of the Economic and Social Council operational activities for development segment and the respective Executive Boards. The President highlighted that the Core Group recognized that improvements in the working methods had to be made respecting the different mandates and characteristics of each agency. In the written account of its work, the Core Group recommended several actions that could be taken by each Board immediately, all of which UNICEF had indicated its readiness to support, or was already taking action on: making the Executive Board sessions more interactive; increasing gender parity in the composition of panellists participating in Executive Board sessions; and institutionalizing the meeting of the Presidents of the Boards for enhanced harmonization of common issues and strengthened coordination among the agencies.

7. The President noted that improving the working methods did not mean taking a “one size fits all” approach, and he emphasized that each agency and Executive Board should strive to make individual progress towards improving their working methods wherever they could.

8. The President affirmed that the Executive Board of UNICEF was fully engaged in the process to advance its working methods and enjoyed the full support of the Executive Director of UNICEF in its efforts. Nonetheless, he noted, there was still work to be done. He highlighted the lack of an effective mechanism for taking decisions on matters that concerned all the Executive Boards. Such issues were discussed and decided by each Executive Board individually, which resulted in duplication and fragmentation. He called on Member States to revisit proposals on how the Boards could handle joint matters without delegating decision-making power or affecting the autonomy and independence of the Boards. He noted that joint action could be discussed and agreed collectively, while decisions could continue to be adopted individually by each Board. Issues that would benefit from such treatment included cost recovery, the common chapter of strategic plans, implementation of the repositioning of the United Nations development system and working methods. These

were examples of joint issues that should be addressed in concert with the Executive Boards in order to promote inter-agency efficiency and collaboration.

9. In closing, the President emphasized that the working methods of the Boards were a means to an end, and not an end in themselves. He underlined the need to work together, noting that Board members and the secretariats needed to do their part. The President observed that it was important to avoid the Boards becoming entangled in the minutiae that should be handled by the secretariats, allowing them instead to focus on the strategic issues that could help to advance the common and individual agendas of each Board while recognizing and respecting the unique mandates and characteristics of each agency. Finally, the President noted that the process to improve working methods was now well under way; the work ultimately sought to ensure that working methods fully supported the achievement of the 2030 Agenda; and better working methods would bring efficiencies for the Boards and gains for all, collectively and individually.

10. The Coordinator of the Core Group presented the written account, highlighting the main findings and recommendations related to discussions on the working methods of the JMB; the working methods of the respective governing bodies; and rules, documentation and decision-making. He emphasized that throughout the discussions, the Core Group had recognized that any changes to working methods had to respect the mandates and particular characteristics of each agency.

11. The written account divided the Core Group findings into areas of convergence and areas of non-convergence. The Coordinator highlighted eight areas of convergence, including joint informal briefings on topics for the JMB, the institutionalization of the Presidents' meeting, increased long-term planning of the joint field visits, and the drawing up of an overview table to compare the rules of procedure of the respective Executive Boards. Among the areas of non-convergence, he cited three proposals: elevating the JMB to a decision-making body, introducing one-day special meetings to approve country documents (thereby reducing the workload for Board sessions) and harmonizing the structure of the rules of procedure of the four Boards.

12. The Core Group recommended that each Board consider how to act on the areas of convergence identified in the written account, including by incorporating them into decisions on working methods. As Member States currently held diverse positions regarding the areas of non-convergence, these could be revisited at a later date to explore potential ways forward. The Coordinator also noted that the Core Group had prepared a draft template for decisions reflecting joint informal discussions at the JMB. The template could be used as a basis for negotiation and adoption of decisions at each respective Executive Board session taking place immediately after the JMB.

13. The Member States expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the Core Group, echoing the need to respect the individual mandates and characteristics of the Executive Boards and to ensure that any changes made did not dilute the oversight function of the Member States. Several delegations observed that changes should focus on areas identified as problematic in order to avoid altering working methods that were already efficient. One Member State noted that discussions should include all United Nations Member States, not just those on the Executive Boards, and suggested that the Economic and Social Council might therefore represent a more suitable forum in which to address these issues. The delegation also voiced concern over the proposal to increase the number of Board sessions held annually. Member States agreed with the proposal to focus initially on the areas of convergence and to leave those of non-convergence for future discussions.

14. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS reassured the Member States that the Presidents of the Board would take swift action on the findings

of the Core Group, not least on the proposal to hold the meeting of the Presidents more regularly. The recent joint field trip to Colombia, which had brought together all four Presidents, proved how productive it was for the Presidents to work closely on issues of common concern. He also highlighted issues raised at the recent Economic and Social Council operational activities for development segment, which addressed aligning system-wide and entity-level governance for improved accountability. These issues merited Board attention and included the link between the Council and the Executive Boards and the need to shift from an individual agency approach to an integrated approach that would allow agencies to work smoothly together at the country level. There was also a call for building on best practice related to the common chapter and look at common text for other issues.

15. In response to the comments from Member States, the Coordinator of the Core Group agreed that there should be an emphasis on avoiding duplication and overlap in all changes to working methods. He noted that in general the Core Group was not in favour of increasing the number of Board sessions and had agreed that it would be the prerogative of each Executive Board to fix the number of sessions held each year. While he was not in a position to comment on the proposal to use the Economic and Social Council as a forum to discuss working methods, he did appreciate the agreement among the Member States that the current focus should be on the areas of convergence.

16. The President of the Executive Board of WFP shared the perspective of the WFP membership on efforts to improve working methods. While WFP was unconditionally committed to improving its working methods and supported the joint consultative process, as confirmed by a decision taken by the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2019, the WFP membership felt that they were underrepresented in the discussions, which they perceived as being focused on resolving challenges faced by the New York Boards. Many of the proposals put forward to improve working methods were not clearly relevant to WFP because of its humanitarian mandate, its different operational governance and oversight needs, and its dual parentage with the Economic and Social Council and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The WFP institutional environment differed from that of the New York-based agencies, and its calendar was synchronized with that of the other Rome-based agencies. The agency also faced very particular challenges – such as a multiplication of needs and resources over the past few years due to a rising number of conflicts and food emergencies around the world. In the context of these challenges, the WFP membership was very happy with the way the Executive Board was currently managed and there was little perceived need for deep reform or convergence with other Boards. The President stressed that WFP and its Executive Bureau in no way sought to impede the process to improve working methods and would actively contribute whenever they meaningfully could, but he noted that there was a need to reassess the view that WFP should be treated as if it were a New York-based organization to be treated equally with other New York based funds and programmes.

17. In his closing remarks, the President of the Executive Board of UNICEF noted that just as the broader United Nations reform effort sought to create agencies better placed to serve those in need, the respective Executive Boards also needed to know how to adapt to contribute to this goal. He urged the Boards to act on the areas of convergence, mindful that these were recommendations, not decisions, and that no changes were being imposed. At UNICEF, work was already under way on the areas where UNICEF could improve how it operated, from increasing the attention paid to gender parity to examining how to optimize the use of Board session time.

18. He agreed with Member States that it would take time to address the areas of non-convergence and that respect for mandates should underpin all efforts to improve

working methods. Nonetheless, he described coordination between agencies as paramount and said that it was imperative to break down silos and other barriers to effective collaboration in the field. New working cultures were needed to achieve this, both within the respective agencies and within the Member States themselves, who should encourage reform in their own institutions. Change would take time, but it was necessary to adapt in order to respond to the challenges faced by people in need around the world.

III. Morning session: topic 2

Harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination and sexual exploitation and abuse

19. In her opening remarks, the President of the Executive Board of UN-Women described the discussions at the JMB as a reaffirmation of the commitment of all participating Executive Boards to ending sexual abuse and to engaging in the cultural change needed to create a world free from abusive behaviour.

20. The Executive Director of UNICEF thanked the members of the Executive Boards for their engagement and support and reaffirmed the commitment of UNICEF to ending sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment and all forms of discrimination, abuse of power and harassment in the workplace. She emphasized the trust placed in the agencies – by beneficiaries, staff members and partner organizations alike – that they would provide safe programmes and a respectful environment with no place for harassment or abuse of any kind.

21. UNICEF had taken several steps to strengthen its internal systems to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse. UNICEF was also taking action to improve its workplace culture, introducing simpler reporting mechanisms and strengthening investigations. All allegations of SEA involving UNICEF staff, contractors or personnel of implementing partners were systematically reported to the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The Executive Director had commissioned an independent report on the internal culture, of UNICEF, and a new strategy was being drawn up to address workplace issues. She noted that while similar efforts were under way within agencies, a collective approach was needed across all agencies and partner organizations to ensure cohesive and effective response to these issues at the country level.

22. In her capacity as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Champion on SEA and Sexual Harassment, the Executive Director was heartened to see the level of commitment and engagement across the agencies to work together on these issues, including the dedication of human and financial resources to support accelerated action on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) at the country level. Efforts were under way to share common data on SEA and sexual harassment, and to improve investigation capacities.

23. In terms of PSEA within communities, the agencies were working together to strengthen reporting mechanisms, improve support to survivors and increase accountability across the United Nations system. A new plan adopted by IASC in December sought to accelerate efforts to strengthen PSEA focusing on safe and accessible reporting mechanisms; support for SEA survivors, to help them reintegrate into their communities; and better accountability and investigations. Nonetheless, challenges remained as there was massive underreporting of SEA among communities and of harassment and abuse of power within the agencies themselves. Response

services were still uneven and there were large gaps in ensuring criminal accountability for those who committed these acts.

24. The Executive Director of UN-Women emphasized the vital role of senior leadership in changing organizational culture and instilling zero tolerance for SEA, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination. Organizations had to take a victim-centred approach, protect whistle-blowers and exercise due process in a timely way. She noted that, in many cases, investigations in United Nations bodies were lengthy, particularly in comparison to other organizations where an issue could be concluded within a week of the allegation. In general, it was important for the United Nations to look to trends in the outside world in order to tap into best practice that could improve the effectiveness of its response to these issues.

25. UN-Women sought to place women's experience at the heart of all work to combat sexual harassment, ensuring that system-wide processes were in place and best practice was shared. To this end, the organization had appointed an Executive Coordinator and Spokesperson on Sexual Harassment and Discrimination, who worked with all United Nations agencies. UN-Women was also active in the Spotlight Initiative and in the taskforce set up by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to address sexual harassment. The organization worked with the private sector, academia and civil society on initiatives to prevent and tackle sexual harassment.

26. Last year, the United Nations System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment was endorsed by the High-level Committee on Management and subsequently by CEB. The adoption and implementation of the policy was being monitored. A recent workplace survey across the United Nations had revealed worrying trends in the incidence and nature of sexual harassment within the system and showed a strong correlation between sexual harassment, exclusion and incivility. Workplaces characterized by incivility created a fertile ground for abuse of power, bullying, racism and other forms of harassment and discrimination.

27. The Executive Director thanked the Governments of Israel, Kenya, France and the Netherlands for their proactive approach in setting up a new Group of Friends to Eliminate Sexual Harassment. In addition to efforts to prevent sexual harassment within UN-Women itself, the organization also held regular capacity-building sessions for gender focal points from other United Nations agencies. Other activities included the development of the recently launched enabling environment guidelines, and work to prepare a victims' rights charter on sexual harassment. In conclusion, the Executive Director underlined the importance of fostering a safe environment for junior and subordinate staff and contractors to report any issues related to harassment or abuse. Specifically addressing the Member States, she invited them to consider the issue of diplomatic immunity to evaluate whether it was a privilege they wished to retain while demanding different levels of behaviour from the United Nations agencies.

28. Member States reaffirmed their support for the work carried out by all the agencies to tackle SEA and sexual harassment. Several offered to share best practices distilled from experience within their own institutions. Member States identified investigative capacity as a key issue, acknowledging the difficulty in accessing investigators specialized in cases of SEA and sexual harassment. One delegation proposed introducing a pool of investigators that could be drawn upon by the different agencies, which could also increase the impartiality of investigations.

29. Regarding country-level coordination, one Member State requested more information on the role of the resident coordinators and the country teams. The delegation also asked for more details on how agencies were tracking their progress, how the ClearCheck database was being implemented and how Member States could

best support efforts to prevent and respond to SEA and sexual harassment. Another Member State sought clarity on how the various agencies were sharing their expertise.

30. The Executive Director of UNICEF thanked the Member States for their support. Regarding the issue of investigators, she described the difficulty in accessing those with the right skills, adding that it was particularly hard to find women investigators. UNICEF had recently expanded their number of investigators from 10 to 17, which would make a positive difference. However, she thought the pool idea should be explored, noting it would need to expand and contract according to agency needs. UNICEF had begun considering a fast-track approach to investigations of different types and the Executive Director encouraged the Executive Boards to give agencies the authority to introduce such an approach, even potentially piloting a one-week procedure for certain cases.

31. The Executive Director echoed the words of her counterpart in UN-Women regarding the obstacle presented by diplomatic immunity, which prevented bringing perpetrators to justice. Member State engagement was needed to overcome this issue. In response to questions about monitoring progress, she noted that as part of the IASC proposal for accelerated PSEA action at the country level, a monitoring framework had been developed to benchmark progress against the three priority areas of reporting, access to services and investigations. Member States could certainly contribute with financial support, also to ensure that victims of SEA in the communities where United Nations agencies worked had access to the right support to safeguard their mental health and facilitate their reintegration into society. There were insufficient resources to sustain access to services for SEA survivors based on their individual needs.

32. The Executive Director also noted the value of national campaigns to eradicate the social acceptance of violence within relationships – another potential way in which Member States could contribute to the elimination of SEA and sexual harassment.

33. In her response, the Executive Director of UN-Women thanked the Member States for highlighting the issue of cultural change, and she welcomed all efforts to share best practice. Regarding country-level coordination, she noted that the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women required all agencies to facilitate cultural change as part of their work to embed gender equality in their work at the country level. However, she welcomed the suggestion to explore how the resident coordinators could contribute to coordination on these issues. In terms of support from the Member States, she noted the need for greater investment in investigative capacity and for policy harmonization between the United Nations agencies and Member States. Coupled with a better use of technology, these efforts would contribute to preventing the movement of perpetrators between organizations, as well as strengthening the climate of zero tolerance. In closing, she mentioned a new initiative by the Government of New Zealand to use taxpayers' money to compensate victims of SEA and sexual harassment; it would be interesting to see whether such an approach would give institutions greater incentive to prevent misconduct.

34. The President of the Executive Board of UNICEF strongly condemned any instance of SEA in United Nations operations. He felt that efforts to respond to SEA should be prioritized in terms of securing funding and removing technical barriers such as in the recruitment of investigators. He suggested the Economic and Social Council as the forum for addressing these obstacles and called on the other Presidents of the Board to support these efforts. He supported the idea of common solutions, such as a common database for sharing best practices, a shared pool of investigators and common evaluation and response frameworks. He was personally in favour of

lifting diplomatic immunity and believed many countries would hold the same position in response to reports of SEA. He agreed that the timescale of investigations needed to be reduced, noting that the Government of Morocco had established the best practice of including a police officer with its troops, enabling investigations to commence immediately upon the report of misconduct.

35. The President of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS raised the issue of collaboration over victim support, noting that support should be provided regardless of the agencies involved. He asked whether this flexible approach was in place to allow, for instance, victims to receive support through UNFPA even if that particular agency was not involved in the incident.

36. The Executive Director of UNICEF welcomed the clear commitment to addressing SEA and sexual harassment. She suggested that the goal of starting an investigation immediately upon receiving a report could be something the agencies could work towards in the long term but would require additional resources. Regarding coordination mechanisms, she pointed to the IASC, which included non-governmental organizations and all agencies working in the humanitarian sphere. A protocol on assistance to victims of SEA was being finalized; it would be critical to secure resources for its implementation at the country level.

37. The Executive Director of WFP shared his views on the issues of SEA and sexual harassment. He echoed the call for senior leadership to embed a culture of zero tolerance and foster a sense of trust among staff and contractors. WFP had seen an increase in reports of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of power and discrimination over the past six months, which revealed an increased level of confidence in the organization's ability to handle cases effectively. Anonymous staff surveys had also given insight into potential problem areas, and WFP had recently increased the level of resources dedicated to investigations by \$4 million. A joint WFP management/Executive Board working group had been established to gather best practice from Member States and response times for handling reports of harassment or abuse had been reduced. The organization would continue to work on eradicating misconduct in every way it could.

38. In her remarks, the Executive Director of UNFPA noted that tangible progress had been made in tackling SEA and sexual harassment. At UNFPA, this work included the drawing up of a PSEA accountability policy, improved outreach initiatives and the introduction of a global PSEA focal point system. In 2019, the organization was taking steps to improve communication with at-risk groups, to encourage bystanders to take action and to increase access to and trust in reporting mechanisms, particularly in remote locations. The organization was taking a holistic approach, working together with its partner organizations and striving to achieve a workplace free from any kind of abuse.

39. In its capacity as the lead coordinating agency in the area of gender-based violence, UNFPA was conducting a global mapping to establish how gender-based violence referral mechanisms were being used, when available. In terms of future challenges, she highlighted the need to improve victim support and to strengthen the accountability of implementing partners. There should be a focus on designing practical tools to deliver assurance, particularly in humanitarian settings. In closing, she affirmed the commitment of UNFPA to changing its organizational culture, creating a safe environment for everyone to voice concerns and engaging in open, transparent communication on the progress it made towards achieving these goals.

40. The Executive Director of UN-Women gave her closing remarks, noting that her agency hoped to take full advantage of the discussions to devise recommendations for consideration by the end of the day. Regarding coordination, she pointed to the system-wide taskforce and the network of gender focal points that worked together.

Much remained to be done, such as harmonizing the 20 investigative bodies within the United Nations, particularly with a view to removing the burden of proof on the claimant. The Executive Director highlighted the coordination between UN-Women and Member States, through police forces around the world. The organization was examining the issue of police training, with the ambition of introducing gender sensitivity into every police force in the world. She also noted the need to invest in changing social norms related to male behaviour, affirming that everyone had a role to play in eradicating SEA and sexual harassment.

41. The Administrator of UNDP expressed his alignment with the comments made by his counterparts, noting the clear sense of responsibility and commitment present throughout the discussions. He observed that the increase in reporting was not a sign of increased incidence but rather of the greater credibility of the agencies. He noted the challenges involved in expediting cases, as an increase in the number of investigators had to be matched by an increase in the lawyers available to examine cases. He called for increased investment, at least in the short term, to allow the agencies to clear the backlog of cases that were now coming forward.

42. The President of the Executive Board of UN-Women brought the discussions to a close, highlighting the following points: the underlying issue of power inequalities and their role in perpetuating harassment and abuse; the importance of cultural change; the role of Member States; diplomatic immunity; the need for increased investment and capacity building for investigators; the harmonization of policies and standards; and the importance of collaboration and the sharing of best practices.

IV. Afternoon session: topic 3

Implementation of United Nations development system reform, and innovative financing for the Sustainable Development Goals

43. In his introduction, the President of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS noted the timeliness of the topic, given the Economic and Social Council meeting of the previous week, which had addressed follow-up actions to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the General Assembly resolution on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. Financing was a key element of this.

44. He observed that thus far, discussion on the reform had focused on setting up new institutions and the new resident coordinator system, with the ultimate aim of improving how results were delivered on the ground. In this regard, the recent joint trip to Colombia had offered valuable insight into what was happening at the field level. While there was general appreciation of the importance of the reform process, the President noted that the United Nations country team in Colombia did not yet have access to the road maps and guidance needed to implement change. He suggested that greater engagement with those in the field could help them to better reflect the content of New York-level discussions in their operations.

45. Moving to the subject of innovative financing for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the President noted an abundance of interesting ideas, such as strengthening partnerships with the private sector, implementing the common United Nations development system due diligence approach, exploring further use of the Joint SDG Fund, and generating system-wide lessons learned and best practice. He asserted that the private sector should not be seen simply as a source of income to fill in funding gaps. Instead, the United Nations should use its convening power to redirect private sector resources to achieve the SDGs; examples of this approach

could be found in the SDG Impact Fund of UNDP and the Social Impact Investing Initiative of UNOPS.

46. The Administrator of UNDP traced the connection between the United Nations development system reform and innovative financing, noting that beyond the drive to create new coordination mechanisms, the reform also sought to facilitate new ways of thinking together to achieve the 2030 Agenda and prepare for the future. The unprecedented levels of investment required to do this should be seen as investing the wealth of today into the economy of the future, which was described by the 17 SDGs. This connection was clear in the road map for financing the 2030 Agenda, which examined the alignment of global financial resources and economic policies for the 2030 Agenda; sustainable financing strategies at the regional and country levels; and new technologies and digitalization.

47. At UNDP, a number of task teams had been set up to explore financing the 2030 Agenda. It was clear there needed to be a focus on new sources of funding such as green bonds, blended finance instruments and the sukuk bonds found in Islamic finance. The United Nations was in a position to help governments reduce risk and create mature domestic markets in order to attract investment. The reform represented a vital opportunity to bring together different capabilities within the United Nations family to develop a more contemporary set of inputs for countries seeking to make private financing part of their strategy to achieve the SDGs – an approach that was different from privatization.

48. In her remarks, the Executive Director of UNOPS emphasized that innovation was key to successful reform. She noted that official development aid was far from sufficient to achieve the SDGs; the shortfall of \$6 trillion would have to come from the private sector. It was clear that development depended on the active, responsible participation of the private sector, and it was imperative that the United Nations found ways to support this.

49. At UNOPS, the Social Impact Investing Initiative sought to address this challenge, focusing on three areas of sustainable infrastructure: affordable housing, renewable energy and health infrastructure. The result was an innovative platform supporting partnerships between governments, UNOPS and private partners. Agreements had already been signed with governments in Kenya, Ghana and India to finance the construction of affordable housing, while in Mexico, the initiative was co-investing in a project to revitalize a 22-MW wind farm to deliver low-cost, renewable energy to 50,000 people in underserved communities. The projects would also generate thousands of local jobs by using local supply chains and local contractors and would support technology transfer.

50. In conclusion, the Executive Director emphasized that the focus should not be on the scale of these current projects but rather on the establishment of a successful funding model. The initiative worked by partnering with the private sector, taking a share of the financial risks and going to market together. The United Nations system needed to embrace partnerships with the private sector to tap into investment and new and better technologies.

51. Member States welcomed the discussion on reform and financing, describing it as both timely and useful. Several delegations thought the topics would require further examination in the future, potentially even at the next JMB. One Member State asked how the new resident coordinator system could support agency innovation, emphasizing that private sector collaboration could be a valuable source of expertise as well as financing. Other questions related to the main challenges faced by the agencies when seeking to work with the private sector and how Member States could help, and how the United Nations reform process was impacting the core funding of

the agencies and whether innovative funding could help offset any reduction in this funding.

52. In response, the Executive Director of UNOPS noted that the business model of UNOPS represented an advantage in working with the private sector. As the agency did not receive core funding, but was simply paid for services rendered, it had a structure that private sector entities could relate to. A lot of procurement involved buying goods and services from the private sector, facilitating an exchange of technology and expertise. In terms of lessons learned, it was important to bear in mind that the private sector was looking for financial sustainability, ahead of social and environmental sustainability. The time to market was another important factor, particularly for small and medium-sized companies.

53. On the subject of the resident coordinators, the Administrator of UNDP said they had a role to play in engaging with governments to establish the degree to which they wished to work with the United Nations on different aspects of financing. The resident coordinators should also ensure that during the country assessments and the development of the cooperation framework, the question of financing was an integral part of the offer of the United Nations development system and the United Nations country team. The resident coordinators could also tap into the expertise of agencies that were not resident in their respective country. The Administrator emphasized that the resident coordinators did not replace the capacities and roles of the programmes and funds, noting that the agencies and Member States needed to learn to work within the new system to avoid duplication.

54. He agreed that the private sector also had much to offer in terms of expertise, citing the example of digital financial technology. Contrary to what could perhaps be imagined, some of the most advanced uses of this type of technology were to be found in developing countries, as the regulatory inertia in established economies often hampered innovation.

55. He identified a number of challenges faced by the United Nations in seeking to work with the private sector, some of which arose from the fiduciary integrity of the United Nations and its occasionally antiquated systems. UNDP was working on improving 152 business processes, which in many cases meant changing the guidance on how to engage with the private sector and creating new legal instruments and platforms to support this type of collaboration.

56. In terms of the impact of United Nations reform on core funding, he estimated the effect on UNDP would amount to \$25 million, generated by the doubling of the contribution and the 1 per cent levy. This shortfall could not easily be made up through innovative financing alone.

57. In closing, he warned that it was unrealistic to think that private organizations were keen to fund United Nations work. While there were opportunities to collaborate where interests coincided, it was unlikely that the private sector would become an alternative source of financing for the United Nations.

58. In her remarks, the Deputy Executive Director (Management) of UNFPA described a costing and impact estimation initiative under way in her agency, which examined the financial investment needed to achieve the three transformative results of UNFPA: ending preventable maternal death; ending unmet need for family planning; and ending gender-based violence and all harmful practices. The initiative also supported efforts to fill the financing gap of \$2.5 trillion per year needed to achieve the SDGs in developing countries, and it facilitated the establishment of new partnerships and the strengthening of existing ones. Highlighting examples of the work, the Deputy Executive Director mentioned an exercise by UNFPA Ukraine to

calculate the economic cost of violence against women and a costing and gap analysis for achieving the transformative results conducted by UNFPA El Salvador.

59. In terms of private sector partnership, she described an initiative with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with support from McKinsey, which sought to develop a guarantee mechanism for the sexual and reproductive health commodity procurement capacity of UNFPA. The fund was also working with the Islamic Development Bank on insurance in Cameroon and with the ministries of health and finance in Guatemala on a scheme to use taxes collected on the sale of alcohol to replenish a revolving fund used for emergency procurement.

60. In her remarks, the Executive Director of UNICEF reported that her agency had been co-chairing the public-private partnership section (the Results Group for Strategic Partnerships) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, which had set up a common due diligence screening system and was facilitating efforts to modernize and streamline United Nations rules, as well as acting as a platform for agencies to share their expertise and experience. She suggested that resident coordinators could tap into host country companies, helping to overcome the system-wide problem of a lack of suppliers to the United Nations in the global South. Following on from comments by the UNDP Administrator, the Executive Director agreed that public-private partnerships helped to reduce risk for governments, but she also noted the scope for finding completely private solutions to challenges faced by governments and United Nations agencies, for example, in emergency situations when a mobile phone operator might be the entity best placed to trace people who had been left homeless by a natural disaster. In response to a question about core funding, she noted the difficulties associated with earmarked funding. She referred to the UNICEF project Conceptos Plásticos as an example of an innovative way of working: the project used plastic waste collected by communities and transformed it into bricks that could be used to build schools.

61. Noting that both UNDP and UNICEF received generous support from Member States for innovation, she saw the potential to graduate from the current network of innovation labs to a more collaborative approach between the two agencies, whereby UNDP could be the lead in searching for and identifying innovations and UNICEF could play a role in developing and scaling up solutions. She stressed that innovation was being sought in all areas but that innovative financing could not help the agencies with their basic core financing.

62. The Executive Director of UN-Women underscored the importance of addressing the regulatory measures within the United Nations that made it impossible to attract innovative financing. An example of these challenges included accessing funding from companies who sought tax benefits when they donated; in such cases, donations often passed through intermediaries, who took a big cut of the money. Companies were also unhappy with this system, preferring to be associated directly with UN-Women. The Executive Director observed that for investment in gender equality, there appeared to be a psychological barrier that prevented Member States from donating above a certain threshold, which therefore restricted the progress that could be made. This was in contrast to the rhetoric in favour of gender equality, which was much stronger than the financial backing it received.

63. As an example of positive private sector partnership, the Executive Director described the Unstereotype Alliance, a platform for the marketing departments of private companies to access and implement a programme designed by UN-Women to combat stereotypes in advertising campaigns, with a view to shaping a more inclusive culture for the future. She noted that as the United Nations could never dream of having the resources of major multinationals, the approach was to ask these

companies to implement change themselves, with UN-Women adopting the role of Ombudsman to check they were following up on their commitments. The initiative was reinforced by Cannes Lions, which was using the standards set by UN-Women for acceptable unsteretyped advertising as one of their criteria for selecting award-winning campaigns. The initiative therefore extended the influence of the work of UN-Women far beyond what it could achieve alone.

64. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS brought the topic to a close, expressing his hope that the agencies could build upon the discussion to strengthen partnerships with non-State partners, especially the private sector, and to share best practices. He paraphrased the Secretary-General, observing that the resources were already out there to achieve the 2030 Agenda, it was a question of joining the dots.

V. Afternoon session: closing

65. Bringing deliberations to a close, the President of WFP gave the floor to the Executive Director of UN-Women, who gave a follow-up on the discussions of the morning session regarding the potential fast-tracking of investigations and a speedier settlement of reports of SEA and sexual harassment. She called on the other agencies to support UN-Women by asking their respective heads of investigations to come together to define a costed inter-agency proposal to improve the investigative function, ensure timelier investigations, pool their resources and elaborate on the standards for a victim-centred approach, including ensuring there was support and protection for victims against any type of retaliation, particularly at the country level, acknowledging that services, especially for SEA survivors, remained limited. UN-Women also called for United Nations support in harnessing the resident coordinator system and the country teams to implement a coordinated inter-agency response to SEA and sexual harassment at the country level.

66. The President of the Executive Board of WFP thanked all present for their active participation in the discussions, recalling that in all deliberations, it was vital to remember the needs and priorities of the people served by the respective agencies. He observed that the United Nations was on the brink of a new era, with new infrastructure that could better respond to global challenges. He called on all present to embrace the opportunity presented by the United Nations reform, working together and listening to governments and people on the ground in order to make it a success.

VI. Joint statement following the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP held on 31 May 2019

- Following the closing of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP held on 31 May 2019, the Principals of the agencies welcomed Member States' ongoing attention and support to ending sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment.
- In order to truly implement zero tolerance for SEA and sexual harassment and to embed victim-centred approaches, the Organizations are committed to focusing on the following:
 1. **Strengthening investigation and accountability functions** by exploring options for ensuring speedy and robust investigations with victim-focused communications, procedures and guidelines; greater coordination and

consistency across investigation teams; and commensurate and speedy internal accountability mechanisms.

2. **Strengthening victim-centred approaches throughout the entire process** by ensuring ease of access for those who have experienced SEA and sexual harassment to high-quality and timely support, including in relation to investigations and access to justice. Services for those who have experienced SEA, in particular, are scarce. Confidential services for those who have experienced sexual harassment are also limited.

3. **Systematically embedding efforts to eliminate SEA and sexual harassment/workplace abuse into the Resident Coordinators' agenda** by leveraging the role of the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country teams, thus ensuring the coordinated implementation of prevention and response activities as well as adjustment to local contexts and cultures.

4. **Ensuring continued discussion and coordination on these issues** among the United Nations Representatives of Investigations, as well as through the Office of Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to SEA, the Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate and other appropriate avenues.

- We reaffirm our strong commitment to improving this work as discussed at the Board and to consulting with other agencies on how to further strengthen inter agency coordination on this agenda. We stand ready to work on joint detailed costed proposals on the above issues. We estimate that \$40 million¹ will be needed over the coming two years to take this work forward collectively, with the bulk of the investment to be made into victim-focused work on (a) prevention, (b) ensuring the availability of services for victims and (c) strengthening investigation capacities as well as strengthening a victim-centred approach in existing policies, processes and procedures. We count on Member States to make sure resources are made available to deliver on these collective priorities.
- We welcome steps taken by Member States in response to General Assembly resolutions on the criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission, and we will provide support to strengthen the efforts of Member States to ensure accountability for all forms of sexual misconduct – including those that may amount to criminal acts – by Member States taking all appropriate measures including by establishing jurisdiction over crimes committed by their nationals while serving as United Nations officials or experts on mission while simultaneously respecting due process; cooperating with each other in the exchange of information while respecting privacy and confidentiality; and facilitating the conduct of investigations in compliance with applicable procedures.

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¹ UNOPS needs no further resources for investigations.