



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

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Organizational matters

**Report of the annual session 2019
(30 May, 3 to 4 and 6 to 7 June 2019, New York)**

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I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session 2019 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held at the 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 was 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 in 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 process were simplified and reflected in programming and operational guidance.

6. The Administrator drew attention to the ten observations laid out in his annual 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 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 sub-regions, 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 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 the 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? 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 for 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 of 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 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, 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 implementer of vertical trust funds, such as GCF and 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 in 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 on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2018-2021 (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 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 in poverty eradication and reaching those 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 roots causes. There was a call for UNDP to: (a) advance women's political leadership, representation and participation, including on the women, 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 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 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 in 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 fora 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 Organisation for Economic Co-operation 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 United Nations 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 Republic of the Congo and the first one-year country programme extensions for Timor-Leste and Tunisia and the two-year extension for 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 (DP/2019/12), as approved by the UNDP Administrator.

32. The Executive Board approved the second one-year extension of the country programme for Comoros from 1 January to 31 December (DP/2019/12).

VI. Evaluation

33. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), UNDP, presented the annual report on evaluation (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 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) (DP/2017/17), which had been submitted to the Board at the first regular session 2019 in document DP/2014/4.

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 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 on 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 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 rate. UNDP had already established 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 living 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 IMF. 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, 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 toward 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 were 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 the Fund measured 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 UNV: Report of the Administrator (DP/2019/19).

47. Board members commended UNV for progress against its Strategic Framework, 2018-2021, supporting Member States and 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 in their national development plans. They recognized the UNV convener role for global debates on volunteerism, especially in the context of the Plan of Action to Integrate Volunteerism in the 2030 Agenda and the 2018 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report. They welcomed the significant rise in the numbers 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 of the South provided the basis for national ownership of the Goals. There was strong support for UNV advocating gender equality and women’s empowerment by promoting women and youth volunteers, fighting against sexual exploitation and abuse, and promoting UN-Volunteers’ role at country-level in raising awareness for the Goals. They welcomed the role of UNV and UN-Volunteers 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 for 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, United Nations Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC), 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 living with disabilities. They were central in 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 numbers of volunteers and promote volunteerism.

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

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), the statistical and financial review (DP/FPA/2019/4, Part I, Add.1) and the report of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit 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 agreed 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 those furthest behind, including persons living 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 Organization 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 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 ICPD principles and programme of action. They welcomed its steady progress against 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 the 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 multiyear 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 the growing trend of socioeconomic instability, high unemployment, substance abuse and effects of climate change and natural disasters on women. They encouraged UNFPA to secure predictable, multiyear 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 of 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 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 in 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 need 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 those furthest behind. That included allocating greater funding to family planning, which promised greater return on investments. 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 living 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 needs' 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 interagency 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 those 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 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 the annual report on the evaluation function, 2018: Report of the Director, Evaluation Office (DP/FPA/2019/5) and the evaluation of UNFPA response to the Syria crisis (DP/FPA/2019/CRP.3). The UNFPA 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 of 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 benefitted 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 of 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 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 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 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 Programme and Strategy Division and regional monitoring advisors. 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 living 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 stated that 2018 had been record year. UNOPS delivery continued to increase while its greenhouse gas emissions, average fees and management costs 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 the 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 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. 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 crosscutting 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 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 development 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 service 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 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 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 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 Advisor 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 (ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1).

85. In response, 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 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 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, procedures and practices 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 (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 interagency 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 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 investigations 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 the UNFPA internal audit and investigation activities in 2018 (DP/FPA/2019/6), 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 misdeeds 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, and 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 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 the 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 Secretary-General's 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 interagency 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 interagency 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 market place' portal. 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 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.

XV. Working methods of the Executive Board

108. Presiding over the item, the Vice-President, 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 the working methods of the Executive Board.
