



**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 2022
(6 to 10 June 2022, New York)**

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I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session 2022 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held in person, following two successive years of virtual sessions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from 6 to 10 June 2022.
2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its annual session 2022 (DP/2022/L.2) and approved the report of the first regular session 2022 (DP/2022/13).
3. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the annual session 2022 appeared in document DP/2022/27, which was available on the [Executive Board website](#).
4. The Executive Board agreed in decision 2022/17 to the following schedule for future sessions of the Executive Board in 2022:

Second regular session 2022: 29 August to 1 September 2022.

Statement by the President of the Board

5. The President of the Board highlighted progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while drawing attention to the ongoing socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Inequality was increasing, foremost affecting the most vulnerable, and the number of refugees and internally displaced was higher than ever. The international community was called to act to address multifaceted challenges. Amid this, the Board had to evaluate recent financial mismanagement in UNOPS and identify appropriate actions. The situation was a stark reminder of the importance of the Board's oversight role. UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS needed the Board's guidance to ensure they were fit-for-purpose to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Working together was the only way to ensure transformative change. Board discussions should lead to greater impact for people across the globe, grounded in joint responsibility and efforts.

Joint segment

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

6. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management), the Director, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP, and the Executive Board and External Relations Office, UNOPS, updated the Board on collective efforts to implement General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.
7. A group of delegations acknowledged UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS progress delivering a more effective, efficient One United Nations. Current development and humanitarian challenges however required greater attention to system-wide coherence. The group stressed the need to: (a) integrate responses to prevent, respond and recover from crises and strengthen the collaborative approach to common country analysis (CCA) and programming; (b) assess country presence to ensure the right skills were in place; (c) continue to consolidate common business operations; (d) align entity-specific country programmes with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF); (e) support programme country efforts to fulfil human rights obligations; and (f) strengthen adherence to the management and accountability framework, including performance management of agency heads at country level.
8. A cross-regional group said the United Nations development pillar had to be strengthened and the quadrennial review mandate fully implemented. The Boards had to ensure the organizations complied with their mandates, and Board decisions had to re-emphasize the

quadrennial review mandate. National ownership and leadership were critical for delivery and each country programme should reflect national priorities. The balance in the quadrennial review was being jeopardized by focusing on internal institutional matters; poverty eradication remained the overarching goal of the United Nations development system. They cautioned against pushing for a vision of operational activities exclusively in terms of efficiencies without regard to global development and the SDGs. They drew attention to funding gaps for the development pillar, unfulfilled Funding Compact commitments, and the need to invest more in integrated solutions.

9. There was a strong response to the call to draw down United Nations presence at the country level, especially among countries serviced by multi-country office setups. They appealed to maintain or step-up organizations' country-level presence aligned with proper needs assessments.

10. In response, the UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) said UNFPA remained committed to reform and strengthening the joint character of the CCA; UNFPA country programmes derived from national development strategies aligned with UNSDCF. UNFPA worked with country teams for greater efficiency and joint programming and took a strong human rights-based approach to programming and interagency work. Grounded in the management and accountability framework and mutual accountability, UNFPA ensured resident coordinators appraised UNFPA country representatives' performance and their contribution to UNSDCF.

11. The Director, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP, said UNDP was committed to the CCA and its country programme outcomes derived from collective outcomes. UNDP worked with development and humanitarian country teams to protect development gains and address root causes; its programming was grounded in a human rights-based approach. UNDP had expanded its operational footprint to 170 countries, though its presence depended on core funding. The UNDP business operations strategy platform helped reduce business processing times. UNDP also engaged in the global shared services task team and worked with United Nations entities to leverage finance, including through integrated national funding frameworks.

12. The Executive Board and External Relations Office, UNOPS, said UNOPS provided issues-based coalitions a platform to function and had a light footprint at country level. It had learned to build a multi-country model to better support regions, scale up faster and share services. That model allowed UNOPS to develop as a non-resident agency. UNOPS followed human rights due-diligence policies in procurement, infrastructure and design, and promoted United Nations business and human rights principles. UNOPS always aligned with national ownership.

13. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/14 on the update on implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.

III. Internal audit and investigation

14. The Director, Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI), UNDP, presented the annual report of OAI on internal audit and investigations activities in 2021 (DP/2022/15); the Director, Bureau of Management, UNDP, the management response. The Director, Office of Audit and Investigation Services (OAI), UNFPA, presented the report of OAI on internal audit and investigation activities in 2021 (DP/FPA/2022/6), the annual report of the Oversight Advisory Committee (DP/FPA/2022/6/Add.1), and the terms of reference of the Oversight Advisory Committee. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) presented the management response. The Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG), UNOPS, presented the annual report on internal audit and investigations activities in 2021 (DP/OPS/2022/3); the Executive Director, ad interim, UNOPS, the management response.

15. Delegations welcomed UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS progress addressing audit-related management issues and were pleased that many recommendations from previous audit reports had been implemented fully or were under implementation. They encouraged the organizations

to implement outstanding recommendations and were pleased to see the organizations were in good financial health and using sound financial management practices.

UNDP

16. A group of delegations were pleased the overall OAI opinion on governance, risk management and internal controls for UNDP was, in aggregate, ‘satisfactory/some improvement needed’ and 95 per cent of OAI recommendations for 2020 and 2021 had been implemented. Addressing audit and investigation issues, delegations requested: (a) information on the impact of staffing shortages, increase in planned assignments, and nature/length of complex investigation cases; (b) details on whether UNDP planned to undertake a combined review of OAI, Ethics Office, and Office of Human Resources to ensure investigations involving individuals claiming whistle-blower status were managed fairly; and (c) more management-related reporting shared independently and simultaneously with the Board.

17. Other delegations encouraged UNDP to address the findings of inadequate global-level support to country offices and, given the third-party review of UNDP fiduciary standards, to improve OAI independence. UNDP should address weaknesses in reporting gender equality results. Concern was expressed at the increase in cases of sexual misconduct; and details sought on lessons from the pilot programme to centralize protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment investigation functions.

UNFPA

18. Delegations acknowledged that in 2021 UNFPA governance, risk management and control processes were rated ‘partially satisfactory with some improvements needed’ and expressed appreciation for UNFPA focus on closing audit recommendations. UNFPA was encouraged to continue to strengthen programme management, financial management, procurement and inventory control. Delegations expressed concern with the increased investigation caseload in 2022, while welcoming the increase in cases processed by OAI in 2021 compared to previous years. They requested information on UNFPA plans to increase resources to OAI. UNFPA was commended for improving its country supply chain management in the context of COVID-19.

UNOPS

19. Delegations said irregularities in the UNOPS sustainable investments in infrastructure and innovation (S3i) initiative would have United Nations system-wide consequences; measures were needed to ensure the financial and risk management of the United Nations system. Delegations requested that UNDP and UNFPA provide information on workloads, office capacities, and Board actions needed on independence and to help strengthen systems. They sought analysis and long-term trends on internal audit and investigation findings in annual reports. The organizations should ensure accurate, direct, balanced reporting to enable the Board to exercise oversight. They were urged to take action to strengthen risk management and compliance through their rules and regulations. They emphasized the importance of finding ways to share information early, timely and transparently with the Board on misconduct and investigations.

20. In response, the Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, said UNDP had updated its internal control framework and was enhancing internal controls through a new enterprise resource planning system. In 2021, UNDP adopted an anti-fraud strategy and action plan; as of May 2022, 68 per cent of actions had been completed. UNDP had fully funded the OAI 2022 request and continued to implement GEF-related recommendations; UNDP was committed to ensuring consistency and full application of upgraded UNDP policies and procedures across business units. As for OAI caseloads, management fully supported the completion of all recommendations.

21. The Director, OAI, UNDP, said OAI under-resourcing affected its ability to process cases and meet key performance indicators for investigation cases – a situation concerning, in particular,

medium-priority cases. The increased volume of investigation cases in 2021 was due to multiple factors, including resources-caseload imbalance and COVID-19. The increasing caseload impacted staff welfare, though the capacity issue concerned investigations only, not audit. OAI was committed to engaging with the Board and, regarding investigations, was ready to discuss practicalities and confidentiality requirements.

22. The Director, ad interim, OAI, UNFPA, said OAI had restructured the investigations branch: (a) splitting it in two units with two chiefs each responsible for three regions to disperse responsibilities for supervision of investigators and review investigation reports; and (b) establishing the Intake, Policy and Reporting Unit with staff hired for three Board-approved posts in the new integrated budget for investigation. The unit assessed all cases that came to OAI to determine if they fell within its mandate, should be referred to relevant offices, or be reviewed for closure or progress to full, formal investigation. Once the unit was restructured, OAI would assess results, ascertain needs, and report to the Board, respecting confidentiality requirements and reporting to donors. OAI had hired external quality assurance experts to perform quality control of investigation reports.

23. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) said the UNFPA zero tolerance policy was reflected in the new ERM policy and hiring of a risk officer in 2022. The ERM policy and internal control framework were compliant with the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission standards and aligned with Joint Inspection Unit recommendations and the High-level Committee on Management risk reference maturity model. UNFPA had a policy against fraudulent and proscribed practices. On resources-caseload for investigation, UNFPA had increased resources under the integrated budget to the OAI investigation branch. UNFPA fully supported OAI restructuring, closely monitored audit trends, and had undertaken root cause analysis through the Audit Monitoring Committee.

24. The Director, IAIG, UNOPS, said senior management fully supported the need for adequate IAIG capacity. The independence of IAIG and audit and investigation functions were a top priority; going forward IAIG would focus on strengthening its independence and report to the Board. On long-term trends, in 2021 IAIG had conducted a detailed root cause analysis of key issues, which was publicly available. Regarding the resources-caseload imbalance, the four fulltime IAIG investigators addressed on average over 200 cases per year, well over the industry standard. IAIG would submit a business case on required resources to the Board.

25. The Executive Director, ad interim, UNOPS, said UNOPS was committed to collaborating with the Board to address S3i initiative irregularities and put UNOPS back on track. He looked forward to receiving the IAIG business case on the resources-caseload imbalance and to working toward a more balanced setup.

26. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/15 on the reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on internal audit and investigation, and management responses.

IV. Ethics

27. The Director, UNDP Ethics Office, the Director, UNFPA Ethics Office, and the Director, UNOPS Ethics and Compliance Office presented their respective reports: the activities of the UNDP Ethics Office in 2021 (DP/2022/16), the UNFPA report of the Ethics Office 2021 (DP/FPA/2022/7), and the activities of the UNOPS Ethics and Compliance Office in 2021 (DP/OPS/2022/4). The management responses were given by the Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, the Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, and the Executive Director, ad interim, UNOPS.

28. Delegations said an independent, adequately resourced, transparent ethic function well-known among staff was essential for a healthy, fit-for-purpose organization. UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS should continue to cultivate a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability. In future

reports, the ethics offices should explain how activities contributed to nurturing a speak-up culture. UNFPA Ethics Office guidance and reporting mechanisms were working in handling and reporting on cases; the UNDP Ethics Office was commended for participating the UNDP task force on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. COVID-19 had curtailed the organizations' ability to work, strained efforts to create a safe working environment, and made visibility of ethics services challenging. They commended the organizations for their efforts and encouraged them to step up ethics work and, while welcoming the record high caseload, stressed that independent ethics officers needed sufficient resources, capacity and access to execute their mandates.

29. The Director, UNDP Ethics Office took note of, and expressed appreciation for, the reflections regarding the need to ensure adequate resources for ethics office activities. The Ethics Office would explore ways to address the increased caseload and measure the impact of its activities to better inform the Board and facilitate its oversight role.

30. The Director, Bureau for Management Services, UNDP, said UNDP would continue to fully resource the Ethics Office resource allocation requests.

31. The Director, UNFPA Ethics Office welcomed the Board's approval of a P4-level post under the new integrated budget, 2022-2025. She said the sharing of resources in the United Nations ethics community was underutilized. The United Nations Ethics Panel was seeking to achieve greater resources-sharing to expand the reach of the ethics offices. The office would continue to build on its successful reporting mechanism and seek opportunities to inform the Board. The office would also work with the United Nations Ethics Panel to identify speak-up culture advocacy impact measures to better inform the Board.

32. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, said UNFPA had increased resources to the Ethics Office under the new integrated budget. UNFPA had also set up an "integrity family" approach that facilitated information sharing among the Ethics Office, the Office for Audit and Investigation Services, the Legal Office, the Office for Human Resources, and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment focal points.

33. The Executive Director, ad interim, UNOPS, said UNOPS decided to remove the 'compliance' element from the Ethics Office function to align it with United Nations ethics standards. It was important for the UNOPS Ethics Office to fully function in line with the United Nations Ethics Panel and the inter-agency ethics network to benefit and learn from them.

34. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/16 on the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS.

XV. Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment

35. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, the Director, Office of Human Resources, UNDP, and the Director, Executive Board and External Relations Office, UNOPS, provided oral updates on their organizations' protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, in line with Executive Board decision 2020/11.

36. A group of delegations recognized the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS commitment to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. Zero tolerance for inaction was paramount. Despite progress, significant challenges remained. They commended the organizations for responding to global and humanitarian crises with sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment risks and urged them to mitigate risks through a coordinated response. They stressed the need for: (a) strong, proactive, visible leadership preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment; (b) effective interagency collaboration; (c) awareness and implementation of protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment policies; (d) building capacity; (e) training implementing partners; (f) accessible, safe,

accountable reporting and follow-up; (g) effective, transparent screening of staff; and (h) a stronger human rights-based, gender-responsive, victim/survivor-centred approach. To achieve a much-needed system-wide approach, the organizations should work with the Special Coordinator and the Victim Rights Advocate to achieve a more consistent, comprehensive approach.

37. In response, the Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, highlighted the interagency integrated response in emergencies, which UNFPA coordinated and monitored and for which it determined the most pressing needs: assessing/training implementing partners, using clear-checks to prevent rehiring of perpetrators, merging agencies' resources and strengthening country-level resources. UNFPA led interagency efforts to harmonize the approach to implementing partners. UNFPA adhered to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recommendation on ending sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee minimum operating standards

38. The Director, Office of Human Resources, UNDP, said UNDP reported to the Board using a set of integrated results and resources indicators to track sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. UNDP country offices would report how they implemented their action plans and collaborated with United Nations entities on monitoring and reporting. UNDP was engaged with implementing partners to set standards, integrate sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment language in agreements, and build capacities. UNDP pursued a victim-centred approach that provided protection from retaliation. The UNDP strategy was aligned to the OECD DAC recommendation and Interagency Standing Committee minimum operating standards.

39. The Director, Executive Board and External Relations Office, UNOPS, said UNOPS had hired a fully dedicated professional to support headquarters coordination efforts and provide technical inputs. Additional coordination and technical support were being considered at country level on a risk assessment basis. UNOPS engaged with interagency protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment networks, benefitting from knowledge-sharing, coordination and best practices from the humanitarian and development community. Based on a 2021 gaps analysis, UNOPS developed a workplan and implemented clear-checks since April 2019.

40. The Executive Board took note of the update on protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment.

UNDP segment

V. Interactive dialogue with the UNDP Administrator and annual report

41. In his statement ([available on Executive Board website](#)), the UNDP Administrator presented his annual report for 2021 (DP/2022/17 and DP/2022/17/Add.2) and highlighted the multiple crises setting back years of hard earned development gains across the globe. That included the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, devastated economies, famine and debt accumulation, not to mention a crisis of faith in the international system. Against this backdrop, he spoke to three main issues: (a) the need to invest in development systematically and at scale, recognizing that no country could walk away from the Goals; (b) the impossibility of separating development from crisis because emerging from crisis depended on development; and (c) how well-placed UNDP was to meet those challenges as a development organization that delivered in a world in crisis.

42. To address those challenges, UNDP viewed far-reaching, quality development as the way forward. The Administrator drew attention to UNDP development work in a crisis-torn world and its unique agility and effectiveness as a transformational organization responding to change and emerging challenges. He highlighted how UNDP was: (a) redefining how it achieved development that linked the local and global by managing risks and constraints, mobilizing and

promoting financing for development, leveraging digitalization and technology innovation, and fostering green economies through its Climate Promise; (b) helping close persistent, systemic development gaps that left people vulnerable, building on COVID-19 lessons, and setting up social protection systems; and (c) remaining strong internally and driving results-based United Nations reform that delivered at country level, with new skills, service offers, digital capacities, knowledge resources and effective risk management.

43. The Administrator highlighted UNDP progress against the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, in its first six months of implementation. This included the launch of phase 2 of the People for 2030 strategy, consolidation of its digital architecture, launch of its new knowledge and learning strategy, and streamlining of its policy services to countries. Its new strengths allowed UNDP to navigate and steer the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as recognized by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), as it continued to leverage capacities and services to work for country teams spearheading operational and efficiency innovations. But while UNDP was equipped to address systemic change, financing needed to follow so UNDP could deliver on its promises to countries. The Administrator closed with an appeal to reinvigorate multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre.

44. Members of the Bureau of the Board commended the Administrator for his leadership and UNDP staff for results achieved against the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025. The group recognized the growing UNDP capacity to trigger transformative results and encouraged it to move towards bigger, coherent portfolios and programmes. UNDP was redefining how to achieve far-reaching sustainable development through innovations in finance, digitalization and climate action, and its new service to assist countries negotiating fossil fuel reforms. UNDP should strengthen its focus on sustainable and renewable energy to ensure countries' energy security and transition. The group commended UNDP for reaching its highest level of programme delivery in over a decade and its work on social protection, conflict/crisis, especially in Ukraine, and gender. They welcomed that the new UNDP gender strategy, 2022-2025, prioritized tackling root causes of discrimination. UNDP was a driver of United Nations reform, as evidenced in MOPAN and UNDP independent evaluation findings.

45. A group of delegations drew attention to the devastating impacts of COVID-19, climate change, and geopolitical tension on achieving the 2030 Agenda. Bold, immediate actions were needed, including addressing unsustainable debt burden, rising commodity prices, and inflation. UNDP efforts were welcomed as was Board guidance ensuring United Nations entities were fit-for-purpose. UNDP should: (a) ensure poverty eradication remained its core focus; (b) expand its work in developing countries; (c) complement countries' access to liquidity with other immediate measure, including encouraging countries to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA) and \$100 billion in climate finance; (d) undertake consistent, concerted efforts to ensure universal access to social protection; and (e) mobilize investment in quality, reliable, sustainable, resilient infrastructure, energy, agriculture, communications, transport, and technology as part of COVID-19 recovery, sustainable development and climate action. The group said funding cuts to UNDP core resources threatened the viability of the United Nations development pillar and put the most vulnerable at greater risk.

46. Delegations from the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) said multiple crises were threatening and turning back development gains amid increasing debt and food and energy prices as small island developing States (SIDS) retrofitted infrastructure to resist climate disasters. The United Nations development system needed to do more to achieve the SAMOA Pathway, Paris Climate Agreement, and 2030 Agenda. UNDP was a vital AOSIS development partner that assisted with concessional financing and intervened for SIDS to address debt and climate finance issues. UNDP should assist AOSIS by promoting the \$100 billion climate finance and facilitating access to special drawing rights. They welcomed the UNDP role in developing the multidimensional vulnerability index. UNDP should continue to advocate for SIDS in Global Crisis Response Group and G20 discussions, and Board decisions addressing financial irregularities in UNOPS should not hamper other organizations' work. UNDP should maintain its checks and balances.

47. Delegations from the regional group for Africa highlighted the successes of development in addressing poverty and disease, even in least developed countries (LDCs), and expressed staunch objection to increasing inequalities between and within countries. UNDP was an important actor in that collective effort. The group expressed concern with cuts in core resources when countries were recovering from a pandemic and struggling with high debt. The group called for cross-regional collaboration to stay the 2030 Agenda course and invest in development to prevent conflict, maintain peace and leave no one behind. UNDP should work with Governments to build national capacities for accelerated development through renewable energy, digitalization, industrialization and trade, and investments in LDCs.

48. In other interventions, delegations said multilateralism was more important than ever and UNDP was key in implementing Our Common Agenda through a coordinated, coherent United Nations system. They welcomed UNDP work in conflict and multidimensional crisis contexts, human security, and the humanitarian-development-peace continuum. UNDP should continue to promote digitalization and innovative technologies and solutions, ensure energy security and sustainable, renewable energy. Delegations called on UNDP to integrate lessons from its socioeconomic response to COVID-19 when implementing the Strategic Plan. UNDP support to countries should be development-driven; the downward trend in core funding should not compromise development plans. UNDP and the United Nations development system were asked to address the negative effects of unilateral coercive measures against certain countries. Delegations welcomed UNDP focus on gender equality and women's empowerment and strengthening governance systems/institutions, safeguarding human rights and upholding the rule of law. Given its broad country presence, UNDP was well-positioned to reduce inequalities between and within countries and accelerate SDG progress. UNDP and the United Nations system should always act with integrity and principled leadership and strengthen risk management and compliance. UNDP should motivate donors to increase flexible, predictable core funding.

49. In response, the UNDP Administrator underscored UNDP efforts to reposition its partnerships with United Nations organizations and regularize and intensify those with non-United Nations partners. UNDP was at its best when embedded in an ecosystem of partnerships and was more than ever committed to its development mandate. Quality development depended on investments and priorities, and UNDP was able to help countries articulate country-tailored poverty reduction and digitalization strategies that ensured no one is left behind. Leveraging financing was a central focus of its partnerships and a top corporate priority. The impact of the global economic crisis and funding cuts would affect 10 to 15 per cent of UNDP core funding. Such cuts would have consequences for the ability of UNDP and the United Nations development system to deliver. In addition, the current 0.33 per cent average in GNI allocations to ODA was far below the 0.7 per cent promise and inadequate, especially in a time of crisis, to meeting Member States' expectations. For the reform agenda to succeed, core funding as envisioned in the Funding Compact was crucial. It was unrealistic to ask more of developing countries without mobilizing the minimum of co-financing and investment promised. Major international agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement, were being jeopardized. The situation was creating disappointment among the public and forcing the Common Agenda to be undermined.

50. The Administrator said, during the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, UNDP investments in upgrading institutional efficiencies and systems enabled it to spend three more cents of every dollar on development programming compared to the previous Strategic Plan cycle – the equivalent of over \$500 million more for development programming over four years. UNDP was one of the largest providers of services and funds to the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund, Peacebuilding Fund, and others. Considering the positive MOPAN assessment, UNDP continued to invest in results-based management. By international standards, UNDP had best practice systems in place in governance, accountability evaluation, audit, ethics and oversight mechanisms. UNDP was rated the third most transparent development organization on the international transparency index. The Administrator said reported S3i irregularities in UNOPS was an organization-specific issue. Punishing the United Nations system for the governance and accountability irregularities of one

organization – and of one project within that organization – was not appropriate. Immediate action was needed to contain the S3i crisis and respond in a way commensurate with what had occurred.

51. On the topic of United Nations system inadequacies in delivering the SAMOA Pathway and Paris Climate Agreement, the Administrator said UNDP was one of the most focused United Nations entities on not leaving behind the SIDS. UNDP had developed a new SIDS offer and was a major protagonist accelerating the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index. United Nations system adaptation and risk mitigation in SIDS was more important than ever. UNDP was extremely concerned with the looming debt burden disaster on developing countries. The international community had to work through the United Nations and partners to address the issue. Similarly, as part of its contribution to the international \$100 billion climate pledge, UNDP was helping developing countries optimize how they invested resources to support the Paris Climate Agreement. In responding to the global climate crisis, UNDP helped Governments act in the absence of adequate international responses and, at global level, informed the priorities of climate change global responses. The Administrator appealed to Member States to work with the United Nations to revitalize trust and the promise in multilateralism and development.

52. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/7 on the annual report of the Administrator for 2021.

VI. Gender equality at UNDP

53. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, introduced the item and the Director, UNDP Bureau for Programme and Policy Support presented the new UNDP gender equality strategy, 2022-2025, (DP/2022/18) and the annual report on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2018-2021, (DP/2022/19).

54. A group of delegations welcomed the new strategy's ambition, focus on addressing structural barriers and root causes, and grounding in experience. They commended the priorities set for signature solution six and others. They asked how the focus on multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination would be put into practice. Country offices should develop engagement strategies for each of the strategy's programme portfolios; UNDP should develop guidance on integrating gender equality in country programming and serve as United Nations system convenor/integrator for gender equality. The goal of allocating at least 15 per cent of the UNDP regular budget to gender was strongly supported. The new strategy should help change corporate culture and strengthen leadership for gender equality.

55. Other delegations stressed the need to engage men, enhance women's leadership capacity, establish institutional foundations and enabling environments for gender equality, secure quality gender-responsive, sex-disaggregated data, and build data collection, monitoring, evaluation and accountability practices, based on the COVID-19 gender-response tracker. They were pleased the strategy addressed gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, care and unpaid work. Delegations welcomed the partnerships and whole-of-society approach and the three enablers: mobilizing financing through gender-sensitive fiscal policies, extending women's access to digital technology, and using a transformational lens to address gender inequalities.

56. In response, the Associate Administrator, UNDP, said the new gender strategy used meta-analyses, evaluations and assessments to determine why gender equality had not seen more progress. UNDP learned the strategy needed to: (a) go beyond gender parity to empowerment and changing the power balance; (b) strengthen capacities to analyse complexities and interconnectedness with development challenges; (c) connect country-level actions to upstream policy; (d) expand United Nations and non-United Nations partnerships for gender equality; and (e) redirect funding toward gender equality through innovative programming tools.

57. The Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, said UNDP had made good progress against the previous strategy's indicators, though fighting structural barriers and

prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse suffered setbacks. This was due to a complex operational environment and backlashes against gender equality, which UNDP addressed in the new strategy. UNDP was committed to its system-wide integrator role on gender. UNDP strived to meet the 15 per cent of the regular budget for gender while working to leverage financing. UNDP was committed to zero tolerance and had a strong gender accountability framework at the global, regional and country levels.

58. The Director, Gender Team, UNDP, said 80 per cent of country offices had developed gender strategies; regional bureaux were developing their own. Data gaps were a persistent challenge to gender strategy development and action, especially on the impact of policies and measures to address unpaid care work. Online violence emerged as a priority in the strategy's gender-based violence approach; UNDP was prototyping an early warning system to track online misogyny and hate. The previous strategy offered two major lessons: integrating thematic gender expertise in each portfolio and strengthening gender-focused data and analysis capacities.

59. The Executive Board took note of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2022-2025, and the annual report on the implementation of the UNDP gender equality strategy, 2018-2021.

VII. UNDP country programmes and related matters

60. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, provided an overview of the country programme documents (CPDs) for Kenya, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as the first one-year extension of the country programme for Angola. In turn, the regional directors for the Regional Bureau for Africa and Regional Bureau for the Arab States provided details from their regional perspectives.

61. Following adoption of the CPD for the Syrian Arab Republic, a group of delegations expressed serious concern with certain aspects of the United Nations Strategic Framework for the Syrian Arab Republic, including the absence of language around armed conflict. They said United Nations operations had to adhere to the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence. Other delegations said the country programme was formulated in line with national priorities in consultation with the Government and underscored the need to preserve the principles of national sovereignty and ownership. It was stressed that the primary focus of Executive Board proceedings was operational activities for development.

62. The Executive Board approved, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, the country programme documents for Kenya (DP/DCP/KEN/4), the United Republic of Tanzania (DP/DCP/TZA/3), and the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/DCP/SYR/4).

63. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Angola, as presented in document DP/2022/20.

VII. Evaluation

64. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) introduced the annual report on evaluation for 2021 (DP/2022/21) and financing for recovery: formative evaluation of the UNDP response to the COVID-19 pandemic and SDGs financing (DP/2022/22). The Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, provided the management commentaries to the annual report on evaluation for 2021, and the management response to the financing for recovery: formative evaluation of the UNDP response to the COVID-19 pandemic and SDGs financing (DP/2022/23).

Annual report on evaluation, 2021

65. Delegations stressed the importance of evaluation and IEO work ensuring Board oversight. They welcomed IEO efforts to improve its capacities and help UNDP management and country offices improve capacities to conduct decentralized evaluations. They stressed the importance of improving decentralized evaluations and urged UNDP management to approve the satisfactory rating from 47 to above 50 per cent. They appreciated efforts to improve the quality of evaluations, as articulated in the roadmap for strengthening decentralized evaluations. They said IEO was an example of how United Nations evaluation offices should work and communicate with the Board. They asked how UNDP management would increase the IEO budget and how Member States could contribute. IEO should improve the report's quality and allow better understanding of areas UNDP work adequately covered. UNDP should allocate adequate resources to the evaluation function (as per the evaluation policy target) and address the finding that gender equality programmes remained underfunded. UNDP should continue to step up interagency coordination on evaluation.

66. In response, the Director, IEO, said IEO was committed to supporting the Board's oversight function and improve the quality of decentralized evaluations. Despite difficulties during the pandemic, IEO continued to ensure full coverage of independent country programme evaluations. IEO was adjusting its data architecture and external data sources to facilitate evaluations. It would continue improving the quality of annual reports and coordinate with United Nations evaluation offices to streamline interagency working arrangements. By 2025, partnering with the United Nations Evaluation Group, UNDP planned to deliver synthesis reports on the five SDG pillars.

67. The Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, said UNDP was working with IEO to continue to improve decentralized evaluations and further allocate funding for IEO. UNDP was committed to moving from project-focused to portfolio-focused evaluations and to reaching its target to fund gender equality programmes.

68. The Chief, Effectiveness Group, UNDP, said UNDP had improved results-based management practices, policies and procedures by: (a) strengthening the integrated results and resources framework to track the theory of change so programmes were rooted in evaluative evidence; (b) rolling out the new programme finance architecture – Quantum – linking results to resources; and (c) upgrading the risk management architecture linking project to programme-level risks and establishing links between risks and results. On programme quality, the framework contained a new indicator tracking how much country programmes integrated evaluation lessons.

Financing for recovery: formative evaluation of the UNDP response to the COVID-19 pandemic and SDGs financing

69. Delegations welcomed the UNDP approach to financing for development built on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. They welcomed plans to develop a more strategic approach to SDG financing but sought details on its capacity to do so. They encouraged UNDP, through the integrated national financing frameworks, to work with international financial institutions and multilateral development banks at country level. UNDP should work to create a meaningful division of labour built on mutually reinforcing comparative advantages. Delegations welcomed the analysis and value-added of UNDP socioeconomic impact assessments in the system-wide response to COVID-19. They welcomed the positive impacts of the Tax Inspectors Without Borders programme, and UNDP climate finance leadership, including as implementing partner for the Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility. UNDP was encouraged to outline a strategy and metrics to mobilize public and private resources for sustainable development.

70. In response, the Director, IEO, said UNDP was already a player in SDG financing through its work with countries to align national planning systems. The current crisis however required innovative approaches; the formative evaluation could help UNDP adjust. IEO was encouraged by UNDP management's effort to spell out a road map to align the strategy. The integrated

national financing frameworks had a significant role making this alignment happen by imbedding investment platforms in national systems to rally support. In financing for development, UNDP had the comparative advantage of advocating for leaving no one behind.

71. The Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, said its role in SDG financing was two-fold: leveraging financing and promoting SDG impact standards. In 2018, UNDP set up a centralized financing for development function and in 2019 established its sustainable development financing hub. UNDP aimed to complement the work of international financial institutions to achieve development effectiveness and impact.

72. The Director, Sustainable Finance Hub, UNDP, said international financial institutions were increasingly involved in the integrated national financing framework process at country level. Well over 50 per cent of countries engaged in 2022 had finalized a financing strategy creating tangible platforms for country-level investments. More were expected in subsequent years, requiring policy reforms for which UNDP, through its integrator role, could rally Member States' technical and financing capacities to help countries implement financial instruments, building on financing platforms and expertise of the international financial institutions and capacity-building mechanisms such as the UNDP SDG Financing Academy.

73. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/8 on UNDP evaluation.

IX. United Nations Volunteers

74. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, introduced the item and the Executive Coordinator, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), presented UNV: Report of the Administrator (DP/2022/24).

75. A group of delegations welcomed implementation of the UNV strategic framework, 2018-2021, and UNV response to COVID-19 in supporting development and humanitarian coordination, demonstrating the importance of volunteerism in the United Nations system. They highlighted the role of UN-Volunteers in crises and encouraged UNV to focus on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. They welcomed the UNV digital transformation and looked forward to seeing how it enhanced organizational efficiency, volunteer services, transparency and accountability. UNV should continue to advocate for and include persons with disabilities in the United Nations workforce, in line with leaving no one behind. They recognized the ambitious results matrix that contributed to UNV success and its relevance in the United Nations system. They underscored the special role of the Special Voluntary Fund which enabled UNV to respond to crises, foster research and innovation, and implement digital transformation. Member States were encouraged to consider funding the Special Voluntary Fund.

76. Other delegations highlighted UNV as a system-wide service provider responding to country needs and promoting an inclusive cadre of UN-Volunteers and volunteer solutions. With many UN-Volunteers from the South, their unique role in sustainable development in developing countries and in South-South cooperation was highlighted. UNV and UN-Volunteers had a special role to play bridging the digital divide. They commended the rapid deployment of UN-Volunteers in Ukraine and in countries hosting refugees. They drew attention to the UNV full-funding programme providing professionals and youth a chance to gain on-the-ground experience in peace and development, and potential of the UNV knowledge platform. They highlighted UN-Volunteers' work contributing to the voluntary national reviews.

77. The Executive Coordinator, UNV, said COVID-19 underscored the need for data and evidence to inform policy discussions. UN-Volunteers' contribution to national voluntary reviews was a case in point; UNV would work with national partners to ensure priorities in the reviews were reflected in policies and programmes. UNV digital transformation remained a top priority and offered a granular view of organizational challenges and gaps that UNV was actively addressing, including implementation of safeguards and preventive actions. The UNV knowledge

platform launched in 2021 offered development data that would help improve the impact of volunteerism at country level. That included diversity and inclusivity in the UN-Volunteer cadre, including refugees, persons with disabilities, and a new category of ‘community volunteers’.

78. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/9 on United Nations Volunteers: Report of the Administrator.

X. United Nations Capital Development Fund

79. The UNDP Associate Administrator introduced the item and the Executive Secretary, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), presented the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2021 (DP/2022/25).

80. Members of the Bureau of the Board called on UNCDF to continue to support LDCs in achieving the goals of the Doha Programme of Action for sustainable development. UNCDF should continue to offer innovative financial solutions and support green inclusive growth to help LDCs recover from the pandemic and reverse the effects of climate change, including by expanding access to technologies and resources to build LDC capacities. They welcomed UNCDF work to improve markets and comprehensive financial systems to help LDCs address the debt crisis and provide economic empowerment opportunities for women and girls.

81. A group of delegations welcomed UNCDF financing solutions for last-mile populations and support for financial inclusion. They welcomed UNCDF expansion of digital financial services so LDCs could seize digital finance opportunities and digital transformation that allow economies to grow and increase productivity. UNCDF should continue to support SDG financing for local governments and actors for local government financing, including through the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility. They encouraged expansion of the UNCDF loan and guarantee portfolio focused on small and medium-size (SME) enterprises in LDCs to mobilize SDG financing, and the Bridge Facility to deliver catalytic investment capital for SMEs and small investment projects.

82. A second group of delegations welcomed the rise in United Nations entities’ requests to access UNCDF capital investment tools. UNCDF had an important role to play within the United Nations system as the competent entry point for work with financial instruments and innovations with public and private partners. They encouraged United Nations organizations, the World Bank and development banks to seek partnerships with UNCDF and learn from its wealth of expertise in innovative finance. UNCDF should intensify its cooperation with private investors to access their growing potential for SDG-related investments.

83. A third group of delegations commended UNCDF for providing catalytic capital to mobilize public/private resources for SDG-aligned investments, strengthening market systems and financing mechanisms, and accelerating inclusive, diversified, green economic transformation. They encouraged partners to support UNCDF scaling of the Bridge Facility and Member States capitalizing the facility so it could deploy flexible concessional financing and de-risk capital to attract resources for private sector SDG-aligned investments. UNCDF should continue to expand cooperation with the United Nations system providing innovative and blended finance solutions.

84. In response, the UNCDF Executive Secretary said UNCDF would continue to unlock public and private capital to support developing countries, especially LDCs. UNCDF was working to strengthen its climate-focused work expanding the scope and funding of its Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility to assist municipal climate programmes in local climate adaptation. UNCDF was stepping up investments to support LDCs by creating bankable projects for SDG-positive SMEs. She appealed to Member States to consider contributing to the UNCDF Bridge Facility, aligned with the Doha Programme of Action call for an LDC catalytic financing facility. UNCDF actively engaged with multilateral development banks and development finance institutions given its capacity to support early-stage SMEs and small investment projects. UNCDF

was a strong supporter of financial inclusion in domestic capital markets and partnered with private sector companies on digital financing, local infrastructure, and SME investment.

85. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/10 on the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2021.

UNFPA segment

XI. Statement by the UNFPA Executive Director and annual report

86. In her opening remarks ([available on the UNFPA website](#)), the UNFPA Executive Director focused on the impacts on women and girls of COVID-19 and other crises related to conflict, food insecurity and climate-related disasters. UNFPA remained committed more than ever to achieving the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the SDGs, a commitment built on accountability. She highlighted UNFPA successes during the previous Strategic Plan across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum. UNFPA was building results and sharpening its normative work to leave no one behind, including by developing its first-ever disability inclusion strategy and programming for people of African descent, indigenous peoples and other marginalized populations. UNFPA continued to engage with all partners to garner commitment and adequate, sustained investments for predictable, long-term funding and financing for UNFPA and the ICPD. At the centre of those efforts was the UNFPA drive to be more innovative and strengthen its data and evidence-gathering capacities. She noted that UNFPA continued to reinforce zero tolerance for all forms of wrongdoing and had deepened investments in audit and investigation, evaluation and ethics offices. The Executive Director drew attention to UNFPA work in humanitarian settings, especially in the Ukraine crisis to provide essential sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence prevention services to local populations, refugees and internally displaced persons.

87. The Director, UNFPA Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean drew attention to UNFPA country-level assistance, highlighting: (a) its commitment to United Nations reform, through for example the joint programme to ensure indigenous women's access in the Amazon to sexual and reproductive health and protection services; (b) efforts to strengthen disaster response and preparedness, notably in SIDS, ensuring access to sexual reproductive health and gender-based violence services and distributing dignity kits; and (c) using data to position adolescent pregnancy as a priority national policy agenda and establishing adolescent-friendly health services, raising awareness, and providing expert technical assistance.

88. Across the board, delegations acknowledged UNFPA frontline work to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services for all. Sustainable development could not be achieved without gender parity and attention to the entire population. They stressed the importance of taking stock of experiences and lessons from the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and COVID-19 response. They appreciated UNFPA leveraging United Nations reform and Our Common Agenda to contribute to achieving the Goals and its synergistic actions with other United Nations organizations and partners based on comparative advantages tailored to national priorities and the quadrennial review. They called on UNFPA to further improve partnerships and participate in development-themed initiatives led by Member States to form synergies to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

89. Members of the Bureau of the Board commended UNFPA for tailoring its work to countries' self-defined priorities in implementing the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025. They welcomed UNFPA collaboration with partners to accelerate progress towards the three transformative results, close gaps at national and subnational levels, and achieve inclusion of women and girls. Institutional capacity-building was key to ensuring access to quality information and packages of essential services to eliminate avoidable maternal deaths, unsatisfied family planning needs, gender-based

violence and harmful practices. Private sector participation in implementing UNFPA programmes was key. They stressed the importance of evaluation and results monitoring through multilateral and multisectoral approaches focused on long-term national impact and a set of SDG-compliant indicators to quantify progress and gaps in achieving the three transformative results. UNFPA should continue to pursue results-based programming through the integrated results and resources framework. They recognized its record resource mobilization in 2021 and encouraged UNFPA to continue to provide support and greater resources to transparency, accountability and monitoring.

90. A group of delegations welcomed UNFPA progress against the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, and focus of the new plan on accelerating achievement of the three transformative results. UNFPA should continue to: (a) advance women and girls' human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, skills, knowledge and education through comprehensive sexuality education, and strengthen its normative work; (b) expand its humanitarian response capacity to safeguard the lives and rights of women, adolescents and youth and combat gender-based violence through a holistic humanitarian-development-peace continuum approach; and (c) pursue data for evidence-based programming and monitoring to reach those furthest behind. They welcomed UNFPA work on innovative solutions and partnerships with United Nations actors, Governments, civil society, development partners, international financial institutions and private sector to achieve the three transformative results and the Goals.

91. In individual interventions, delegations welcomed the launch of the Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group and asked how UNFPA planned to contribute to fulfilling its vision. They called on UNFPA to be more efficient and leverage innovations and digital tools to advance leaving no one behind. They highlighted UNFPA work at country level to address COVID-19 and gender-based violence in crisis settings and among refugees and internally displaced persons. They welcomed UNFPA humanitarian leadership and prioritization of its normative role, given growing opposition to gender equality.

92. Delegations encouraged UNFPA at country level to boldly advocate for the full sexual and reproductive health and rights agenda and to work with resident coordinators as important advocates for its mandate. They commended UNFPA work and policies to address the needs and rights of women and girls of African descent, indigenous peoples and young people, among others, empowering them to be agents of change. They expressed strong support for UNFPA work on bodily autonomy and comprehensive sexuality education and encouraged UNFPA to continue to tackle the structural causes of gender-based violence and change social norms that perpetuated patriarchal systemic discrimination and prejudice, gender inequality, and stigmatization of victims and survivors. UNFPA should review its expenditures and ensure country offices and implementing partners had the capacities to implement transformative programmes. UNFPA should ensure its governance and internal controls were sufficiently robust, strengthen fraud prevention measures, and increase transparency and accountability to the Board.

93. Delegations emphasized that country programmes should be prepared in line with national development priorities and ownership. They said the pandemic had jeopardized progress, particularly in LDCs, and led to increased gender-based violence. They sought UNFPA expertise, thematic studies and exchanges of useful experiences and practices in addressing low fertility and ageing. UNFPA was requested to consider the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures when reporting on Strategic Plan implementation in its annual reports.

94. Delegations welcomed UNFPA support to conducting national censuses through improved data collection to ensure no one was invisible. They commended UNFPA for exceeding targets in several of its output indicators and welcomed its development of a population data set for humanitarian assistance. UNFPA should improve its capacity for population data collection and analysis, expand investment in big data collection, and increase data availability and timeliness on key indicators to provide data for research. They expressed concern with the reported drop in core resources and urged UNFPA to continue to motivate donors to increase levels of flexible,

predictable core funding. They underscored the need for UNFPA to have a long-term vision and funding streams to achieve sustainable, transformative impact through the three transformative results and implement its role in the humanitarian-development-peace continuum.

95. In response, the UNFPA Executive Director said there was growing demand for upstream, high-level, high-quality technical assistance implementing the Strategic Plan on the ground. UNFPA focus on innovation and integrating policy and data to achieve the ICPD Programme of Action was central to accelerate action and to a whole-of-United Nations approach. The aim was to build inclusive, accountable institutions at national and subnational levels and create the enabling and policy environment to achieve the three transformative results, grounded in leaving no one behind. She said some 60 per cent of Strategic Plan outcome indicators were in common with other United Nations entities. Joined up action was key to UNFPA presence throughout the humanitarian-development-peace continuum and work to build resilience and ensure sustainable results. LDCs were a priority; UNFPA supported LDCs to develop cost-effective solutions and was working to disaggregate data to make its value proposition more applicable to LDCs.

96. UNFPA worked to apply lessons in its operations at all stages while using its experience in accelerated action to mobilize resources. Building on COVID-19 lessons and collaboration with United Nations organizations, UNFPA was strengthening its innovation and digitalization architecture and normative role, working to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights to address the needs and protect the rights of women and girls. UNFPA data work gave Governments a basis on which to ground development planning and brought to light gaps and exclusions populations such as indigenous peoples and those of African descent experienced. To integrate such perspectives, UNFPA had fielded its first cohort of young professionals of African descent. An exclusive, civil workplace grounded in zero tolerance was at the heart of its people strategy and its engagement with vendors and implementing partners. UNFPA pursued zero tolerance against fraud and was committed to transparency and corrective measures.

97. On the pushback against the ICPD mandate, UNFPA worked to ensure its advocacy for women and girls was grounded in evidence. Bodily autonomy was a fundamental, protected human right. UNFPA work to address underlying systemic structural issues and promote comprehensive sexuality education were crucial to achieving the three transformative results. That included efforts, under new WHO guidelines on abortion care, to ensure access to comprehensive post-abortion care in all situations. In all its work, including on gender, climate change and transforming attitudes, UNFPA aligned with nationally determined priorities. UNFPA continued to implement its gender equality strategy in programming and corporately with the understanding that gender equality meant equality for all: UNFPA recognized diversity in demography and the need to adapt to ageing societies to prepare them accordingly.

98. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Programme) said UNFPA was committed to a whole-of-United Nations approach as underscored in Our Common Agenda and its 12 commitments. UNFPA worked through the Chief Executives Board to ensure a coherent approach to implementing the three transformative results and the Strategic Plan at country level and through the system-wide issues-based coalitions at regional level. UNFPA always showed the same commitment to delivering its mandate whether in development or humanitarian settings.

99. The Director, UNFPA Humanitarian Office, said in its crisis work UNFPA made an impactful contribution to data provision on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence, promoting a multisectoral approach, and prevention and preparedness for future crisis by building national and local-level partnerships.

100. The UNFPA Deputy Executive Director (Management) said UNFPA was working to ensure a faster, more integrated and efficient approach in its humanitarian response that encompassed the entire organization's expertise. This was required to meet Member States' high demands for the UNFPA humanitarian mandate. UNFPA mainstreamed its humanitarian actions in all programming and budget areas. Since the Ukraine conflict began, UNFPA had moved from

development to humanitarian action and reached over a million people with information on access to sexual and reproductive health services, protection from gender-based violence, and psychosocial services. On food insecurity, UNFPA was collaborating with other United Nations organizations within its mandated areas.

101. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/11 on the implementation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021: Report of the Executive Director.

XII. Evaluation

102. The Director, Evaluation Office, UNFPA, presented his annual report on the evaluation function, 2021 (DP/FPA/2022/5) and the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) presented the management response to the report (DP/FPA/2022/CRP.1).

Annual report on the evaluation function, 2021: Report of the Director, Evaluation Office

103. In the sole intervention, a group of delegations commended the Evaluation Office for its flexibility adapting the evaluation function to the COVID-19 context and enabling evaluations to function as accelerators for COVID-19 recovery. The office was commended for developing the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan, 2022-2025, evaluation strategy, 2022-2025, and strategy to enhance evaluation through communications and knowledge management. They appreciated the achievement of almost all key performance indicator targets and recognized the decentralized evaluation system had been strengthened, with a high implementation rate of evaluations of good quality. They highlighted the need to ensure timely, high quality, decentralized evaluations and appreciated the office's efforts to address it. They recognized the progress using decentralized evaluations for programme development and centralized evaluations for strategic planning and welcomed the push to involve youth in evaluations. They commended the office for the first-ever developmental evaluation that led to the development of more adaptive management with results-based management principles. They welcomed UNFPA efforts to strengthen national evaluation capacities and systems to accelerate the Goals and evidence-based decision-making and learning. They appreciated management's continued commitment to provide financial and human resources to support the evaluation function and encouraged UNFPA to increase investments for evaluation. They also welcomed the office's commitment to United Nations reform and joint evaluations at the central, regional and country levels.

104. In response, Director, Evaluation Office, UNFPA, welcomed the Board's expression of appreciation for progress on centralized and decentralized evaluations, and efforts to enhance United Nations coherence around evaluation and national evaluation capacity development. The office would maintain its current high performance by remaining flexible and adaptive and by addressing remaining challenges under Board guidance.

105. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/12 on UNFPA evaluation.

XIII. UNFPA country programmes and related matters

106. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) provided an overview of the CPDs for Kenya, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania. In turn, the regional directors for the East and Southern Africa region and for the Arab States region provided details from their regional perspectives.

107. Following adoption of the CPD for the Syrian Arab Republic, a group of delegations expressed serious concern with certain aspects of the United Nations Strategic Framework for the Syrian Arab Republic, including the absence of language around armed conflict. They said United Nations operations had to adhere to the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence. Other delegations said the country programme was formulated in line with national

priorities in consultation with the Government and underscored the need to preserve the principles of national sovereignty and ownership. It was stressed that the primary focus of Executive Board proceedings was operational activities for development.

108. The Executive Board approved, in accordance with its decision 2014/7, the country programme documents for Kenya (DP/FPA/CPD/KEN/10), the Syrian Arab Republic (DP/FPA/CPD/SYR/9), and the United Republic of Tanzania (DP/FPA/CPD/TZA/9).

UNOPS segment

XIV. Statement by the UNOPS Executive Director and annual report

109. In his opening address ([available on the UNOPS website](#)), the UNOPS Executive Director, ad interim, drew attention to UNOPS failures managing the sustainable investments in infrastructure and innovation (S3i) initiative. He said the results of a thorough investigation by the Internal Audit and Investigations Group was shared with the UNOPS Office for Human Resources and the United Nations Office for Legal Affairs for potential disciplinary and legal action. UNOPS would carry the costs and potential losses and keep the Board abreast of progress to guarantee such situations never recurred. To address this situation, UNOPS would: (a) organize an independent review of UNOPS internal controls and governance; (b) conduct an immediate evaluation of S3i; (c) strengthen communication between internal audit and investigation, the ethics function, and the Board; (d) accelerate implementation of oversight body recommendations; (e) create a definition of ‘maximum reserve’ and move surplus into development action; and (f) ensure access to more transaction data to give confidence to partners. The Executive Director, ad interim, sought the Board’s guidance on these priorities.

110. Members of the Bureau of the Board said the UNOPS situation constituted a political crisis of trust in the ability of the intergovernmental system to respond to global challenges. They urged the Board and Member States to enact controls and mechanisms to prevent reoccurrence of the situation and ensure accountability, based on clear understanding of underlying causes so the Board could exercise its oversight function. Bureau members called for UNOPS to: (a) fully cooperate with the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and One Human Resources; (b) freeze all S3i projects and withdraw funding for new S3i-related projects; (c) initiate an independent evaluation of UNOPS internal controls and management model; (d) provide assurances of whistleblower protection across the three organizations to counter the reported ‘culture of impunity’ in UNOPS; and (e) devise a media communication strategy to ensure uniform communication from the Boards, Member States and organizations to the public on ongoing processes. They urged Board members to act collectively to ensure swift resolution and remediation of damages from S3i and revitalize trust in UNOPS and the United Nations.

111. A group of delegations expressed deep concern that UNOPS leadership allowed the handling of the S3i to jeopardize UNOPS and the United Nations reputation. They welcomed the expertise and reform-mindedness of the Executive Director, ad interim, to facilitate Board efforts and move forward in mutual respect and partnership with full transparency and accountability. They called for UNOPS to: (a) suspend new S3i investments pending further Board instruction; (b) ensure clear accounting of current S3i investments and robust efforts to recover lost funds; (b) ensure S3i failings did not corrupt the integrity of the rest of UNOPS portfolio and project delivery; (c) create an expert working group to provide recommendations to the Board and to increase transparency around UNOPS management fees and costing structure; (d) initiate a third-party assessment of the use of portfolio and internal controls, including those related to S3i; (e) strengthen ethics and internal audit and investigation functions, including independence; (f) design a plan to address outstanding recommendations; (g) pursue full transparency and accessibility on whistle-blower protections; (h) ensure staff had space to raise concerns and

engage leadership; and (i) release the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services investigative report as soon as possible.

112. Other delegations expressed serious concern that reported irregularities related to S3i were not transparently reflected in Board documents presented by UNOPS. They expressed extreme concern with the issues raised in the forensic audit reports by the Internal Audit and Investigation Group on sustainable housing solutions holdings and We are the Oceans. They welcomed the independent assessment of the UNOPS business model and internal control structures and independent audit of S3i investments. They stressed the importance of establishing a transparent, accountable, healthy organizational culture and an effective, accessible whistle-blower system. They called for full independence and capacity-building of UNOPS Independent Audit and Investigation Group and the Ethics and Compliance Office.

113. In response, the UNOPS Executive Director, ad interim, welcomed the Board's guidance and said UNOPS would step up efforts in the areas highlighted by the Board for the organization to address the S3i crisis. This included implementing a strict policy of zero tolerance for mismanagement, irregularities and fraud and ramped up transparency and accountability measures, including through clear communication with the Board, partners and stakeholders. UNOPS was developing real-time monitoring instruments so the Board would have unhindered access to progress. UNOPS would adhere to United Nations standards as an integral part of the reform agenda and to the highest international standards in monitoring and reporting. He stressed that UNOPS needed the strong support of all Member States and partners to succeed in getting back on track. The UNOPS Executive Director, ad interim, would regularly keep the Board informed of its efforts in formal and informal sessions going forward.

114. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/13 on the annual report of the Executive Director and the sustainable investments in infrastructure and innovation (S3i) reserve.
