



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

Distr.: General  
12 November 2019

Original: English

**First regular session 2020**  
3 to 6 February 2020, New York  
Item 1 of the provisional agenda  
**Organizational matters**

**Report of the second regular session 2019  
(3 to 6 September 2019, New York)**

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Organizational matters .....	2
<i>UNDP segment</i>	
Statement by the Administrator and interactive dialogue .....	2
II. Structured funding dialogue .....	5
III. Country programmes and related matters .....	5
IV. Evaluation .....	6
<i>UNFPA segment</i>	
Statement by the Executive Director .....	7
V. Structured funding dialogue .....	10
VI. Country programmes and related matters .....	11
<i>UNOPS segment</i>	
VII. United Nations Office for Project Services.....	11
<i>Joint segment</i>	
VIII. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters.....	13
IX. Follow-up to the Programme Coordinating Board Meeting of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS .....	14
X. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.....	15
XI. Working methods of the Executive Board .....	17
XII. Field visits.....	17
XIII. Other matters.....	18

## I. Organizational matters

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

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

### UNDP segment

#### *Statement by the Administrator*

5. In his address to the Board (available on the [Executive Board website](#)), the Administrator of UNDP focused on four broad areas: (a) how UNDP was driving transformational change through integration; (b) the growing UNDP role assisting countries to align public and private capital to finance the Sustainable Development Goals; (c) how UNDP continued to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of its institutional backbone – finances, human resources, business model; and (d) the UNDP focus on assisting countries in harnessing the digital revolution.
6. UNDP was working in a more integrated way to implement the Goals and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This consisted of a ‘systems’ approach that connected issues across sectors and thematic areas and leveraged the creativity and know-how of all of society to build solutions. Those integration efforts included four work streams: (a) ‘next generation UNDP’ programming; (b) data and analytics; (c) financing; and (d) innovation and learning. They represented the missing pieces that made a whole-of-2030-Agenda approach possible, drawing together tools and approaches, such as mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS), the multidimensional poverty index, the human development index, the new finance sector hub, and the collective strength of UNDP flagship initiatives and accelerator labs.
7. The UNDP finance sector hub assisted governments in scaling up financing and private capital for the Goals. UNDP initiatives included helping countries conduct development finance assessments, increase tax collection, and raise money for wildlife conservation and habitat protection through, for example, the Lion’s Share initiative. UNDP fostered ‘practice standards’ as part of its ‘SDG Impact’ initiative on how investors and enterprises managed and measured impact against the Goals, and made available investor maps that pinpointed Goals-enabling investment opportunities and conditions in target markets and sectors. SDG Impact was an example of how UNDP was stepping up its engagement with the private sector to align their priorities with governments’ plans for the Goals.
8. Strengthening the UNDP institutional backbone remained a priority. UNDP had re-established financial stability, balancing the institutional budget for the second year in row, and had become more efficient, channelling 87 per cent of total expenses to programme activities. In 2018, for the fourteenth consecutive year, the United Nations Board of Auditors had awarded UNDP an unqualified audit opinion. UNDP was taking steps to improve its audit and oversight

performance in relation to recurrent audit findings and pursuing transparency and accountability through a strengthened evaluation function. In the meantime, People for 2030 was making UNDP a more family-friendly workplace, where gender parity was a high priority. People for 2030 aimed to make the UNDP workplace inclusive, respectful, and free from bias or harassment. UNDP had made important progress in tackling sexual harassment and, together with the Ombudsman's Office, had set up a new pilot programme to place 'respectful workplace facilitators' in 25 country offices.

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

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

#### *Regional and national statements*

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

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

13. Another group of delegations emphasized that UNDP had to remain at the forefront of the drive to achieve the Goals. Despite progress, many countries lagged behind, especially the most vulnerable, including the small island developing states (SIDS). In that regard, some delegations highlighted the importance of the multi-country office review. The group appealed to the international community to double its efforts to respond to natural disasters and assist the SIDS in preparing for disasters before they strike. Noting that financing the Goals was pivotal to the success of the 2030 Agenda, the group called on UNDP and United Nations organizations to actively participate in the SAMOA Pathway High-level Midterm Review 2019. They commended UNDP on progress against its strategic plan and encouraged it to use the midterm review of the strategic plan to take stock of gaps, challenges and opportunities.

14. Other Board members encouraged UNDP to continue efforts to expand its donor base in pursuit of sustainable, long-term funding, while cautioning against overdependence on non-core and private sector funding and competition among United Nations organizations to attract resources. The private sector nevertheless had an important role to play in financing the Goals, including through the SDG Impact initiative, through which UNDP should continue to work to

create the enabling environment for private sector financing. They welcomed that 87 per cent of UNDP expenditures had been allocated to programming in 2018 and encouraged UNDP to continue optimizing and streamlining institutional expenditures. Overall, the core/non-core resources imbalance continued to be a matter of serious concern among Board members and they stressed the importance of predictable, multi-year core resource allocations to allow UNDP to fulfil its mandate.

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

#### *Financing the Sustainable Development Goals*

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

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

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

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

## II. UNDP structured funding dialogue

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

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

21. The Director, Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, reaffirmed UNDP commitment to implementation of the Funding Compact. UNDP was implementing the 1 per cent coordination levy and would report on its consequences on the overall funding portfolio. On Funding Compact reporting, UNDP would work with other United Nations organizations on a more harmonized approach and methodology for reporting progress to the Board. UNDP would continue to expand its work on financing the Goals, including by attracting private investment for the sectors of the Goals. UNDP sought to be a strong platform for financing the Goals, including with partners such as UNCDF. With regard to conflict prevention, the new set up of the Crisis Bureau would allow UNDP to play a more visible role within collective efforts by the entire United Nations system and beyond in pursuit of sustaining peace.

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

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

## III. UNDP country programmes and related matters

24. The Associate Administrator, ad interim, UNDP, introduced the three country programmes for Board approval, as well as the extensions of two country programmes. The Director, Regional Bureau for Africa and Director, Regional Bureau for Arab States, presented and elaborated on the

country programmes for Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as the first one-year extension of the country programme for Madagascar, and the fourth extension of the country programme for Yemen for one year.

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

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

#### **IV. Evaluation**

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

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

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

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

responsibility; and (c) establishment of a deputy-director-level annual review of the evaluation policy.

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

## **UNFPA segment**

### *Statement by the Executive Director*

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

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

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

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

36. The Nairobi Summit would focus on five themes: achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health as a part of universal health coverage; mobilizing financing to finish the ICPD programme of action; drawing on demographic diversity to drive economic growth and

sustainable development; ending gender-based violence and harmful practices; and upholding the right to sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian and fragile contexts. The ICPD Agenda belongs to everyone, and many more partners are urged to join the diverse coalition and help make the Summit a success. More than 3,000 people from across the globe have registered for the summit so far; they will join the many heads of State and Government who have already confirmed their participation. The new UNFPA gender equality strategy aimed to strengthen institutional accountability and foster an integrated, rights-based approach, while the new adolescents and youth strategy – My Body, My Life, My World! – sought to reflect the needs, aspirations and ideals of young people at the centre of the ICPD agenda and the Goals, in line with the Youth 2030 strategy. Preliminary results of a UNFPA costing exercise show that meeting the need for family planning in priority countries by 2030 is going to cost in the range of \$40 billion.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

working to raise that percentage and was an active member of the Business Innovation Group looking into harmonizing and consolidating back-office functions.

## V. UNFPA structured funding dialogue

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

45. Board members welcomed the Fund's lead in arranging structured funding dialogues throughout the year, ensuring process-oriented interactive dialogue with and among Member States on financing the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021. They appreciated the Fund's resource mobilization successes in 2018, which had helped to address funding gaps, and its success in remaining within Funding Compact targets, despite the increasing core/non-core resources imbalance. Delegations stressed that the private sector had to play a greater role and commended UNFPA efforts to diversify partnerships and modalities. They welcomed the plan to mobilize \$100 million per year in donations by 2030 through the new individual giving strategy, and requested an update on the launch of the start-up and market-entry phases of the private giving strategy and creation of the supporting donor recruitment and stewardship infrastructure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

53. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Madagascar, Timor-Leste and Tunisia; and approved the first two-year extension for the country programme for Afghanistan, the second two-year extension for the country programme for Comoros, and the fourth one-year extension of the country programme for Yemen, as contained in document (DP/FPA/2018/11).

### **UNOPS segment**

## **VII. United Nations Office for Project Services**

### *Statement by the Executive Director*

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

55. Gender was a top UNOPS priority, including gender parity within the organization. As of September 2019, women constituted 41 per cent of UNOPS workforce while 60 per cent of new hires were women. UNOPS was determined to go beyond United Nations staff targets to include all personnel in gender goals, and encouraged all United Nations organizations to expand gender principles throughout the workforce. UNOPS was committed to United Nations reform. As the new chair of the High-level Committee on Management, the Executive Director was working to

refine the system-wide management approach to ensure less bureaucracy and greater innovation. She highlighted that UNOPS budget estimates for the biennium 2020-2021 (DP/OPS/2019/5) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the budget estimates for the biennium 2020-2021 (DP/OPS/2019/6) demonstrated that UNOPS was in good financial shape. Projections for 2020-2021 showed that management expenses would increase by the expected inflation rate only. At the same time, revenue was projected to increase faster than management expenses. UNOPS was diligent in controlling its expenses and would continue to improve efficiencies as demand for services increased.

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

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

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

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

60. In response, the Executive Director stated that UNOPS had long worked to determine how best to engage in SIDS individually and collectively through the United Nations system, working

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

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

## Joint segment

### VIII. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

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

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

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

64. In response, the Chief Finance Officer, UNDP, said that creating separate budget lines for coordination and oversight ensured separate appropriations from the institutional budget. The two budgets followed different legislation: coordination under the General Assembly, oversight under the Executive Board. Harmonization allowed for a better attribution of costs and a higher degree of comparability among organizations, including better costing of similar results. System-wide efforts toward harmonization were growing but further harmonization would require legislation at the General Assembly level and other governing bodies. The difficulty of full harmonization lay in organizations' differing funding, business models and mandates. The quadrennial review sought to avoid cross-subsidization and protect core resources, with the majority of core going to programme. Full harmonization risked leading to cross-subsidization. On the issue of core/non-core resources proportions per organization, the harmonization of cost classification was one phase of the process; the most important phase was determining the purpose of core resources and

where it should be spent. Going forward, the organizations would reclassify costs to better reflect where funds were being allocated.

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

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

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

*Report of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS on joint procurement activities*

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

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

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

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

71. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, and the Director, Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, UNDP, jointly presented the report on implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (DP/2019/30 – DP/FPA/2019/10).

72. A group of Board members noted that the global AIDS response was at a precarious point. Inequalities and other social factors continued to undermine efforts to achieve HIV-related Goals targets. The joint programme was key in supporting countries to scale up multi-sectoral HIV responses. They welcomed the appointment of the new UNAIDS Executive Director and looked forward to working with her and her team. They underscored that the management action plan, if fully implemented, with strong leadership from the Executive Director, would provide solid basis for addressing reported issues of harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and abuse of power within the UNAIDS secretariat. They welcomed feedback given through the UNDP-

UNFPA report on implementation of the joint programme action plan and the transformative results across their respective strategic results areas. They welcomed contributions made by both organizations and expressed appreciation for UNDP and UNFPA work in addressing stigma, violence and discrimination towards people living with HIV and other structural drivers of HIV. The delegations stressed the UNDP and UNFPA role in reducing gender inequality, combatting harmful masculinity norms and bringing about positive behavioural/cultural change. They welcomed the report's focus on HIV and health services integration, and UNFPA work in creating awareness and commitment to increasing utilization of integrated sexual reproductive health and reproductive rights services. They welcomed the discussion at the June 2019 Programme Coordinating Board meeting on strengthening and integrating comprehensive HIV responses in sustainable health systems for universal health coverage.

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

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

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

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

76. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, the Director, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP and the General Counsel and Director, New York Office, UNOPS, each updated the Board on their organizations implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system – and Funding Compact commitments.

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

78. A group of delegations sought details on how UNDP and UNFPA plans to ensure country-level documents (including for reporting cycles) were modified and streamlined to comply with UNSDCF guidance and informed by the common country assessment, expected of all United Nations development system organizations, including specialized agencies. They welcomed steps UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS – and other United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) members – were taking to follow up on Funding Compact commitments, and

encouraged all organizations to pursue efforts to reach Funding Compact targets. They commended UNDP and UNFPA for reporting on Funding Compact commitments as part of the structured funding dialogue, a good basis for annual Board reporting, but expressed concern over differing interpretations among UNSDG organizations of ‘entity-specific commitments’ and how to report on them. They suggested that the organizations schedule, as part of structured funding dialogues, an annual review of follow-up to the Funding Compact at each second regular session, a reflection on collective commitments, and narrative on how each entity was contributing.

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

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

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

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

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



Nations reform. On the resident coordinator system survey, UNDP reaffirmed its commitment to continue exploring ways to receive feedback from partners on how the United Nations system was performing a country level.

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

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

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

## **XI. Working methods of the Executive Board**

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

88. Delegations made no comments on this item.

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

## **XII. Field visits**

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

of the Congress of the Republic, some of the Presidential High Counsellors and other national authorities that worked with United Nations organizations.

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

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

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

### **XIII. Other matters**

*Address by the Chairperson of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) Staff Council*

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

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

important, including a strong conflict resolution function and more cost-effective mediation, followed through with timely investigations and implementation of findings.

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

97. The Director, Division for Human Resources, UNFPA, said the Fund had a 50/50 staff gender split, although senior management did not reflect that parity – an issue UNFPA continued to address. The UNFPA disability policy would tackle issues of workplace inclusivity, while the culture initiative focused on workplace civility. On sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, UNFPA put policies to ensure staff felt comfortable reporting. The global staff survey 2018 indicated staff felt confident to report cases of misconduct, including sexual harassment. UNFPA was committed to conducting a similar survey to that of UNICEF. On mental health and well-being, UNFPA took a preventive, proactive stance, including training mental health first aiders. UNFPA would introduce 'respectful workplace advisers' at country level, in addition to its employee assistance programme, to support other forms of workplace harassment or violence. On recruitment, UNFPA would address concerns about transparency. UNFPA worked with managers so they understood their role in ensuring a healthy, safe and engaging working environment.

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

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

### **Adoption of decisions**

#### *UNFPA structured funding dialogue*

100. A group of delegations, while accepting the decision by the Bureau of the Board to continue negotiations on the UNFPA structured funding dialogue decision, noted with regret that the discussion had been unnecessarily politicized. The group was unequivocal in its position on maintaining the UNFPA mandate of protecting and progressing sexual and reproductive health and rights. Any effort to retreat to 1994 was a direct encroachment on the advancement of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and human rights and progress on the agenda to date – especially unacceptable during the 25th anniversary of the Cairo Conference and the adoption of the ICPD programme of action, and the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNFPA.

They stated that the issues raised went well beyond the scope of the structured funding dialogue, which aimed to allocate donor funding where most needed to achieve the three transformative goals of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The group noted that the decision text had been placed under silence procedure and that Member States supporting this statement had not received notification that the silence procedure had been broken. It appreciated that the Bureau members had decided to recommend a deferral with due consideration; however, the group was unable to support that approach. The decision text presented by the facilitator contained one minor adjustment to previously agreed language, namely the structured funding dialogue decisions from 2016, 2017 and 2018. The group stood fully behind the Fund's mandate and sought clarification on how decisions were arrived at, both in the Bureau and the Board.

---