Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-seventh session

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 8 and 9 April 2019)

I. Introduction

1.   The High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirty-seventh session at United Nations Headquarters on 8 and 9 April 2019. The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II.

2.   In outlining the agenda for the session, the Chair of the Committee, Guy Ryder, Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), noted that a key focus of the meeting was to approve the three interlinked system-wide strategies on the "frontier" topics of artificial intelligence-related capacity-building, the future of work, and the future of learning and education, as well as a system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development. Each of the strategies served to promote coherence in United Nations system engagement on addressing the implications of technological advancement and other socioeconomic disruptions. The Committee would also hold an exploratory discussion on improved leveraging of the Committee's knowledge products, agree on follow-up to its decision on strategic foresight, taken at its thirty-sixth session, and provide input to the Board's forthcoming deliberations on climate change.

3.   To inform and orient the Committee's discussions on the interconnected frontier workstreams, the Chair provided an overview of the recent report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, *Work for a Brighter Future*. In its report, consonant with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Commission set out a clear human-centred development agenda for the future of work, which would be shaped by policy choices rather than technology. The Chair reflected briefly upon the three investment areas identified in the report, namely, people's capabilities, institutions of work, and decent and sustainable work. He noted the Global Commission's recognition that the responsibility for achieving that agenda resided at the national level and was shared among Governments, employers and workers. The Global Commission also emphasized the role of ILO and the need to strengthen international policy coherence across multilateral institutions.

II. Promoting system-wide coherence on frontier challenges

A. Future of work

4.   The Chair recalled that the item had been on the Committee's agenda since its thirty-fourth session and that the Committee was expected to reach a conclusion thereon at its thirty-seventh session, once the United Nations system strategy on the future of work, prepared by a task group under the leadership of ILO, had been adopted. In line with the Committee's prior guidance, the strategy had been crafted to exploit and realize synergies and mutually beneficial connections with the related work on artificial intelligence capacity development and education.

5.   Introducing the final draft of the strategy on the future of work, Sangheon Lee (ILO) acknowledged the inputs and support of the task group throughout the development process. He highlighted the key substantive changes made since the Committee's previous review, underscoring that the drafting teams of the three inter-linked strategies had worked closely together in finalizing their proposals to ensure complementarity and consistency. The strategy resonated well with the findings of the Global Commission and would be further informed by the outcome of the 108th (centenary) session of ILO to be held in in June 2019 before its final approval and launch. Subsequent steps towards implementation of the strategy included the development of entity-specific action plans subject to light coordination and monitoring. The strategy should also be promoted in relevant policy settings, such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

6.   Congratulating ILO and the task group, members expressed their full support for the strategy, with several indicating their interest in joining the inter-agency steering group to coordinate and monitor implementation. The Committee recognized the mutual interdependence of its strategies on the future of work, the future of learning and education, artificial intelligence capacity development and sustainable urban development, and emphasized the importance of ensuring coherence in their operationalization. Visual capture of the nexus between the strategies was suggested as a means of clarifying their interconnection. It was also stressed that complementarity should be ensured with a broader range of initiatives, including the United Nations Youth Strategy, Generation Unlimited, and ongoing efforts regarding the future of human capital.

7.   With regard to the suggestions for fine-tuning the draft strategy, early childhood development was considered to warrant reference in the context of laying strong human capital foundations, as was the reflection of job creation in both urban and rural areas within the policy priorities for implementation. A number of proposals were offered for collaborative research and analytical work to support the implementation of the strategy, including on such issues as the role of jobs in building peace and resilience in fragile and conflict-affected contexts in particular, the implications for and a holistic approach to the future of work in the informal sector, the two-way relationship between human mobility and the world of work, and the impacts of increased leisure time on society and human well-being.

8.   The importance of Member State support for the strategy and the contribution of Governments in creating the future of work envisioned by the Global Commission were also noted. Members underscored in particular the need to ensure the effective implementation of that and other interrelated strategies at the country level with consideration of the capacities of United Nations country teams and national stakeholders. For adequate guidance to that end, the Committee stressed that its strategies should inform, and be translated through existing processes into, operational guidance, such as United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks,

the system-wide strategic document mandated by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and national implementation strategies and processes for the Sustainable Development Goals. Capacity-building for country-level staff was identified as critical for the effective implementation of the system-wide strategies. The Committee underlined the key role of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and the responsibility of the respective lead agency or agencies in duly ensuring the link to appropriate mechanisms of the Group.

9.   In conclusion, the Chair confirmed the Committee's support for the United Nations system strategy on the future of work, while assuring members that CEB would review the interlinked strategies as a nexus. He stated his commitment to ensuring that ILO would continue to play its key role in promoting and coordinating the implementation of the strategy together with the steering group composed of relevant entities, and stressed the responsibility of each organization to contribute to the collective endeavour. Agreeing on the importance of national ownership, the Chair informed the Committee that ILO, through its centenary initiative on the future of work, had been encouraging debate and the establishment of structures at the national level, creating fertile ground for the United Nations system-wide initiative.

Conclusion

10.   **The Committee approved the system-wide strategy on the future of work for submission to CEB for endorsement, reserving the flexibility to make adjustments, as needed, on the basis of the 108th (centenary) session of ILO to be held in June 2019 (see CEB/2019/1/Add.2).**

B. Artificial intelligence: capacity development for developing countries

11.   In introducing the agenda item, the Chair emphasized the transformative power of artificial intelligence for driving sustainable development and creating structural change, while also acknowledging its potentially disruptive impact on future societies. He recalled that, at its thirty-sixth session, the Committee had reviewed the interim draft of the United Nations system-wide strategy on artificial intelligence capacity development and had requested that it stay focused on developing countries, especially the "bottom billion", in order to ensure that no one is left behind and that synergy and complementarity were ensured with the interlinked strategies on the futures of work and education.

12.   Preetam Maloor (International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) presented the final draft of the strategy, which had been prepared by a task group led by ITU. In accordance with the Committee's prior guidance, the final draft reflected the fine-tuning of the guiding principles on artificial intelligence-related capacity-building and contained a fully developed road map for commitments and measures supporting such capacity-building with a view to accelerating the achievement of the Goals. He drew the Committee's attention to the implementation of the strategy, which would be pursued through a concrete action plan fostering coordinated action while leveraging the strengths of individual organizations. Implementation of the plan would be achieved through a multi-stakeholder effort with a light-touch approach. With such an approach, synergies would be maximized with complementary initiatives and mechanisms, such as the closely linked Committee initiatives on the future of work and the future of learning, the Secretary-General's strategy on new technologies, the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation and the United Nations

Innovation Network. Mr. Maloor concluded by affirming the willingness of ITU to continue to act as an institutional focal point.

13. Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the topic, external experts had been invited to share their insights and perspectives as input to the Committee's internal deliberations, in particular on the best way to take the strategy forward into effective implementation. Ryan Budish (Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University) stressed that it was particularly important to act on the sixth commitment in the road map and begin collecting data immediately in order to measure and establish baseline metrics, especially on the social impacts of artificial intelligence. He underscored the value of capturing, documenting and sharing technical and policy-related lessons across institutions and disciplines. That would allow for strengthening the understanding among technical experts of the ethical and societal implications of artificial intelligence and for enhancing the technical expertise of policy-makers, thereby facilitating mutually-beneficial dialogue towards improved decision-making. Mr. Budish further noted that the procurement of artificial intelligence-related services was a specific area ripe for the exchange of experiences and the creation of shared standards among organizations.

14. Malavika Jayaram (Digital Asia Hub) stressed the unique role of the United Nations system in placing human rights and universal values at the centre of the discourse on artificial intelligence and fostering inclusion and participation in policy responses on artificial intelligence so that no one was left behind. Especially in countries where legal frameworks and norms were lagging, artificial intelligence research needed to balance innovation and commercial interest with the welfare of individuals, who deserved to be seen as equal participants with rights, agency, and a voice in technological development. Ms. Jayaram also recommended the prioritization of publicly available data sets that were of known integrity and quality in order to test artificial intelligence applications and build the "artificial intelligence for good" narrative.

15. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed its strong support for the strategy, in which it felt its guidance to date had been successfully integrated, and for the valuable contributions of the experts. While valuing the specific focus in the strategy on capacity development in line with the Committee's earlier decision, members also noted the importance of supporting the creation of adequate fiscal, data protection and competition policies in developing countries in particular, as well as the need to enhance United Nations staff capacity-building in order to adequately meet the challenges and harness the opportunities of artificial intelligence. There was also strong agreement on the importance of the strategy contributing to the promotion of coherence and coordination with and across the other closely linked workstreams of the Committee.

16. Emphasizing the transformative effect of artificial intelligence on societies, the Committee underscored the unique role of the United Nations in steering its use of artificial intelligence as a force for social good. The Committee emphasized the ability of the United Nations system to act as global platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue on the best way to use the transformative potential of artificial intelligence as a driver for sustainable development. In that respect, members strongly agreed on the need to view the engagement with artificial intelligence through a human rights lens. Members discussed concerns around the collection, sharing and misuse of data, noting both the benefits of the increased collection of data to inform their programmes and the risks of the potential misuse of such data. With recognition of the ability of artificial intelligence to negatively disrupt societies, in particular by exacerbating existing inequalities or creating new inequalities, there was robust support for addressing the challenges of artificial intelligence through a participatory and inclusive approach that was aimed at leaving no one behind and focused on the bottom

billion. Ongoing work, most notably by the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, to consider ethical and governance issues relating to artificial intelligence and a role for the United Nations system was noted as important but beyond the scope of that particular strategy, which should remain focused on capacity-building for developing countries, as the Committee had agreed in previous sessions and reiterated in the current session.

17.   The Committee recognized the significant relevance and timeliness of the strategy, underscoring a sense of urgency and the need for immediate action in view of the speed with which artificial intelligence was effecting societal transformation. Members underlined the importance of ensuring its effective implementation at the country level with consideration of the capacities of United Nations country teams and national stakeholders. Stressing the necessity for swift progress towards the impactful operationalization of the strategy, members expressed strong support for pursuing the engagement of multiple stakeholders, in particular the private sector, in order to transform ideas into value, while also highlighting the need for a participatory approach involving affected communities. Members further pointed out that the United Nations system needed to adopt a collaborative stance, foster knowledge-sharing and strengthen the link between its engagement on artificial intelligence and its engagement on climate change and environmental sustainability.

18.   In concluding the item, the Chair confirmed the Committee's strong support for the final draft of the system-wide strategic approach and road map on artificial intelligence capacity development, and noted the appreciation of members for the contributions of the external experts, which had enriched the internal discussion of the Committee.

Conclusion

19.   **The Committee approved the United Nations system-wide strategic approach and road map for supporting artificial intelligence capacity development, for submission to CEB for endorsement (see CEB/2019/1/Add.3).**

C.   Future of learning and education

20.   The Chair recalled that the Committee, at its thirty-fifth session, had recognized the importance of building human capacities through education and lifelong learning to prepare current and future generations for societal changes, especially in view of the so-called fourth industrial revolution. As an integral component of the three interlinked initiatives on frontier issues, the Committee had asked the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to co-lead the development of a system-wide strategy on the future of learning and education, with a strong focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized and on leaving no one behind. The Committee had before it for consideration and approval the final draft of the United Nations system-wide strategic approach for achieving inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all, prepared through extensive inter-agency consultations under the leadership of UNESCO and UNICEF.

21.   In presenting the proposed strategy, Marie-Paule Roudil (UNESCO) and Peter de Vries (UNICEF) emphasized the critical role of education and learning in preparing countries and their peoples for the changes resulting from the accelerated development and spread of technological innovations in particular. Formulated to ensure synergies and complementarities with the interlinked strategies on artificial intelligence and the future of work, that initiative aimed to mobilize coordinated United Nations system engagement in priority areas especially suited to joint and

catalytic actions, centred on five core and four cross-cutting themes, with an emphasis on the most marginalized and those at greatest risk of being left behind.

22. The draft strategy was aligned with the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, and contained a series of practical recommendations for action by the United Nations system in the following areas: (a) equity, empowerment and support for learning for the most marginalized; (b) skills acquisition and activation; (c) learning throughout the life cycle; (d) synergistic use of innovation and technology; and (e) partnerships, coordination and optimization in financing and resource mobilization. Implementation of the draft strategy would be carried out in line with a light-touch approach through the integration of its operational elements into existing governance, accountability and coordination structures at the country level, under the overall leadership of UNESCO and UNICEF. At the global level, the strategy would also serve as input to the relevant reviews in the context of the High-level Political Forum and the Global Education Monitoring Report process.

23. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed broad support for the draft strategy, emphasizing in particular its appreciation for the strategy's focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized people, communities and countries. Human rights aspects relating to education and the right to education were seen as critical elements of the strategy. The proposal for a universal inclusion approach emphasizing intersectionality and marginalization (with regard to poverty, disability, gender, race and ethnicity, for example) was recognized as particularly important for the engagement of the United Nations system in support of inclusive and equitable education and learning. The integrated nature of the Goals was acknowledged, as was the vital role of learning and education in promoting peace, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, health and well-being, sustainable consumption and climate action.

24. Members appreciated the strong and clearly articulated synergies between the strategy and its closely linked counterparts on the future of work and on artificial intelligence capacity development. Noting the importance of lifelong learning, the Committee highlighted the criticality of the continuous development of skills, including digital skills, to ensure labour market participation, with a strong emphasis on the most marginalized. Furthermore, the need to develop a skills taxonomy in order to promote common language and understanding in relation to skills concepts across the United Nations system was stressed, as well as the importance of a unified approach to advocacy for the development of skills policies at the national level by the United Nations system.

25. Mindful of the need to ensure operational relevance and impact on the ground and to promote the effective implementation of the strategy at the country level, the Committee underscored the importance of supporting United Nations country teams in translating the strategy into country-level action, and highlighted the key role of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and its mechanisms in that connection.

26. In conclusion, the Chair confirmed the Committee's strong support for the system-wide strategy and requested UNESCO and UNICEF, as co-leads, to finalize the document for endorsement by CEB, taking into consideration the feedback and suggestions provided at the session. The Chair also requested UNESCO and UNICEF to continue to play a leading role in translating the strategy into action, in particular at the country level, and encouraged all relevant entities to remain strongly engaged in order to ensure the coordinated implementation and impact of the strategy.

Conclusion

27. **The Committee approved the United Nations system-wide strategic approach for achieving inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all, for submission to CEB for endorsement (see CEB/2019/1/Add.4).**

D. Sustainable urban development

28. The Chair invited the Committee to consider the draft United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development, which was aimed at scaling up the coordinated efforts and engagement of the United Nations system in support of the New Urban Agenda. The draft strategy was developed through an intensive and accelerated process of consultations that were led by the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) and built on the policy paper developed by the Committee in 2016 as input to the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016.

29. Christopher Williams (UN-Habitat) introduced the draft system-wide strategy, noting that it had integrated a new focus of the Committee's earlier analytical work by emphasizing interlinks between sustainable urban development and other frontier issues, such as artificial intelligence, societal polarization and declining support for multilateralism, resource scarcity, climate change and migration. Four drivers of change were proposed as possible system-wide aggregating factors: (a) pro-poor and inclusive urban policies at all levels; (b) adequate and coherent multi-level urban governance mechanisms; (c) long-term and integrated urban and territorial planning and design; and (d) effective, innovative and sustainable financing frameworks and instruments.

30. Under the leadership of UN-Habitat and on the basis of the United Nations system's voluntary collaborative implementation framework, which was organized around data, policy and technical support, partnership and financing, the strategy was to be implemented as agreed in follow-up to the ninth session of the World Urban Forum, held in Kuala Lumpur from 7 to 13 February 2018, by promoting and maximizing integration in and synergies with the existing coordination mechanisms and processes.

31. During the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed appreciation and strong support for the strategy, which it found to be substantively solid, effectively articulated and well conceptualized. In particular, strong support and appreciation were voiced for implementation arrangements that made efficient and maximum use of the relevant structures. In that regard, the Committee requested UN-Habitat to play a leading role in promoting its coherent and coordinated implementation by ensuring effective integration in and linkage with the existing mechanisms and processes.

32. Members provided feedback that highlighted certain elements meriting further articulation and were encouraged to share detailed or further comments in writing as necessary. Issues attracting attention included the consideration of urbanization as a global phenomenon affecting global rights and the impact of urban policies on job creation. The interrelationship among cities as drivers of change vis-à-vis the role of central States was also discussed, and views on engagement with local authorities were exchanged.

33. Some members noted the need to connect sustainable urban development and inequalities more strongly, for example, in relation to indigenous peoples, children and young people, refugees and migrants, and highlighted the importance of public participation in urban planning. Members further underscored the importance of air quality and other health-related challenges. Other issues deemed to require closer

attention included the rural/urban links, the phenomenon of land-grabbing and its impact on indigenous peoples and small-holders, the importance of developing local-level polices for engaging children and young people, and engagement with the private sector for insurance-based solutions.

34.   Members highlighted the need to further strengthen the environmental dimension, decouple migration from more noxious criminal activities and underscore the importance of protecting people without documentation, especially in urban settings affected by protracted conflicts.

Conclusion

35.   **The Committee approved the system-wide strategy for sustainable urban development, for submission to CEB for endorsement (see CEB/2019/1/Add.5).**

III.   Contributing system-wide analysis for CEB deliberation: climate change

36.   In introducing the agenda item, the Chair noted that CEB was due to hold a dedicated discussion on climate action at its forthcoming session in order to ensure United Nations system coherence ahead of the climate summit called for by the Secretary-General to be held in September 2019. To that end, the Committee had been tasked with developing a joint appeal from the United Nations system to be launched at the Summit that would articulate the vision of the system and its commitment to achieving the ambitious goals agreed by Member States. The Chair stressed that, while the United Nations system played an important role in supporting Member States in their efforts to tackle climate change, the system itself also needed to do more to integrate climate action into its work across all pillars and mandates.

37.   Daniele Violetti (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) introduced the draft joint appeal, which had been prepared through extensive inter-agency consultations and informed by the special report entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and by the 2030 Agenda. The appeal covered the two main elements: (a) the role of the United Nations system in supporting Member States in achieving their climate commitments; and (b) the specific actions that Member States and the United Nations system itself can take to raise its own level of ambition for combating climate change, with a particular emphasis on mitigation, adaptation, finance and innovation in respect of climate change.

38.   In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed its appreciation for the collaborative and consultative approach in developing the joint appeal and for the high quality of the appeal's substance. Members recognized the timeliness of the discussion and expressed support for the focus in the joint appeal on ensuring that the United Nations system worked collaboratively to support Member States in implementing the necessary adaptation and mitigation measures. Members also reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations system to raising its own level of ambition in order to take concrete steps to combat climate change and integrate more systematically sustainable development considerations into the way in which the system operated.

39.   There was strong support from the Committee for the importance of aligning the work of the United Nations system on climate action with the relevant agreements and initiatives, To that end, a number of members requested that the appeal integrate synergies with the preparations for the twenty-fifth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, reports from the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and be anchored strongly in the 2030 Agenda. Conversely, some members expressed caution with regard to the possible overspecificity of the targets, stressing the importance of consistency with the Paris Agreement.

40.   Several members suggested that the appeal should include a reference to other key stakeholders in the climate change debate, such as the scientific community, young people and local government, as well as a reference to the impact of climate change on human mobility through forced displacement and migration. The Committee was pleased to see the strong focus on human rights in the joint appeal and proposed additional elements for inclusion, such as the impact of climate change on food security and the world of work, and the link to disaster risk reduction and management. The inclusion of a reference to related high-level events, such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be chaired by the President of the General Assembly and the climate summit called for by the Secretary-General, was also suggested.

41.   In conclusion, the Chair noted the Committee's strong support for the joint appeal while noting the need for its further streamlining, with full consideration of the guidance and clarification provided by the Secretary of CEB on the expectations of the Board for a document that was strategic in scope and focus as well as suitably executive in format and style.

Conclusion

42.   **The Committee requested the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to finalize the draft joint appeal, taking due account of the Committee's feedback, for submission to CEB for consideration at its first regular session of 2019 (see CEB/2019/1, annex I).**

IV.   Building system-wide knowledge/capacities: scoping discussion on the theme "Towards a 'thinking' organization: contributing knowledge and promoting dialogue within the wider United Nations system"

43.   In opening the exploratory discussion, the Chair recalled that, in adopting the United Nations system leadership framework in 2017, the Committee and CEB had strongly advocated steering the United Nations towards becoming thinking organization that was willing to learn, think creatively and truly connect cross-pillar knowledge and experience. In its role as a think tank, the Committee had been tasked over recent sessions with preparing input to deliberations of CEB in the form of a series of analytical think pieces on emerging challenges and strategic opportunities for the accelerated achievement of the Goals. As argued in the orientation paper prepared by the secretariat of the Committee, the Committee's analytical and intellectual work might be leveraged more effectively and systematically to contribute to enhancing knowledge, invigorating thinking and stimulating dialogue among a wider United Nations system audience on long-term strategic issues affecting the work of the Organization.

44.   To stimulate the discussion, some member entities had been contacted in advance and asked to share their experiences. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, represented by Marion Barthelemy, had been making conscious efforts to disseminate, and raise staff awareness of, its global-level research, analytical, normative and policy work using the Department's well-

established communications tools (DESA News, DESA Alerts and publications), and through engagements including in-person events, webinars and live chats on social media. In order for the Committee to disseminate its knowledge products more widely, Ms. Barthelemy stressed the importance of making use of professional networks, enhancing the accessibility of the information, utilizing a variety of media and considering the needs of United Nations staff working at the country level.

45. As a research institute and think tank, the United Nations University (UNU), represented by Sebastian von Einsiedel, had promoted its knowledge products and used external expertise to inform policy-setting and enrich United Nations discourse. During reflections on the experience of UNU, Mr. von Einsiedel emphasized that the role of a think tank was to "dare to tease, not please", and that engaging external experts in internal United Nations debates could be useful in addressing challenging, and possibly uncomfortable, policy questions rather than merely confirming or reinforcing the policy status quo. Furthermore, to stimulate thinking and debate across the system, the comprehensive knowledge products of the Committee needed to be made more easily digestible and communicated through channels that facilitated broad dissemination and feedback loops, such as blogs.

46. The experience of the United Nations Environment Programme, represented by Maaike Jansen, underscored the potential role of individual members of the Committee in promoting staff awareness of its work in their own organization by becoming internal advocates championing the Committee's products and deliberations, conceivably on the basis of an easily sharable and digestible newsletter or similar low-cost communications tool. Ms. Jansen also emphasized the need for links with operationally oriented inter-agency mechanisms to ensure the application of the Committee's knowledge and policy products at the country level. In that regard, the respective lead agencies of the Committee's system-wide initiatives had a particularly important responsibility in promoting and ensuring operationalization via relevant mechanisms, most importantly the strategic results groups of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

47. In the ensuing discussion, members underscored the unique role of the Committee as an internal forum for thought in which global challenges and emerging issues were addressed substantively through the lens of integrated systems thinking and with analytical and intellectual rigour. They stressed that its distinct function as an internal thinking space was the unique advantage of the Committee and needed to be preserved. In line with the Secretary-General's vision for the Committee as a think tank for the United Nations system, the Committee had contributed an important body of deep-dive analyses, often in the form of forward-looking think pieces, to substantively support the deliberations of CEB while fulfilling the responsibility of developing system-wide strategies, positions and approaches in order to enhance policy coherence and programmatic coordination on concrete themes. It was acknowledged that the Committee's role was necessarily hybrid and that the Committee was driving change and forward thinking at the strategic and system-wide levels through its dual role.

48. All members, in particular lead agencies of the Committee's workstreams, had a special responsibility to disseminate and communicate its work and take its system-wide strategies forward towards implementation, including through existing mechanisms such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for country-level action. In that context, members reflected on the relevance of the Committee's system-wide strategies and knowledge products for such action. It was observed that the Committee and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group needed to work closely together to ensure that the Committee's global-level policy products were effectively communicated to United Nations country teams and smoothly translated into action at the country level. In that regard, the Task Team on Integrated

Policy Support of the Strategic Results Group on Sustainable Development Goal Implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, as well as the United Nations Development Cooperation Office, were seen as partners with particularly important roles.

49.   In order to ensure that the Committee's efforts delivered results, it was proposed that periodic reviews, coordinated by the respective lead agencies, be conducted on the status of implementation of system-wide initiatives prepared under the auspices of the Committee. The United Nations system shared framework for action on equality and non-discrimination, of which an in-depth progress review was due at the next Committee session, could serve as a potential candidate for that purpose. Concerning the need to make the Committee's collective knowledge and policy products more visible and accessible to a wider United Nations system audience, including United Nations staff working at the country level, members were of the view that further reflections were needed on the content, audience and format of such communication, while opportunities that might arise should be exploited in the meantime.

Conclusion

50.   **The Chair concluded by suggesting that the Committee continue to pursue and scale up its unique dual-function work while keeping in mind, and seizing appropriate opportunities to act on, the various issues and perspectives raised during the discussion, in addition to seeking the directional guidance of the Board as necessary.**

V.   Other business

A.   Strategic foresight

51.   The Chair recalled that, at its thirty-sixth session, the Committee had agreed to initiate system-wide engagement on strategic foresight and, specifically, had decided to pursue a pilot exercise to further assess the practicality of integrating strategic foresight into its work and explore options for promoting foresight capacities and fostering collaboration across the system. He drew the Committee's attention to a proposal for its consideration, prepared by the secretariat of the Committee and based on a simple mapping of existing foresight activities and capacity across the United Nations system. It envisioned a light-touch one-day pilot exercise to be conducted at the thirty-eighth session on a suitable topic of general system-wide concern. The creation of an informal network to promote the sharing of foresight-related experiences and expertise was also put forward for the Committee's approval as an initial basis for promoting the use of foresight more broadly across the system.

52.   Members strongly agreed on the relevance of applying foresight methodologies to the Committee's work, a strategic initiative described by many as the type that would distinguish the Committee uniquely and suitably in its role as a think tank for the United Nations system. Integrating foresight into the Committee's practices could help to achieve a common vision and understanding of areas in which the United Nations system should engage and to identify gaps in policies and research that may enhance the Committee's agenda-setting, and could also lead to robust and fresh policy recommendations that could inform the Committee's deliberations and products. The importance of leveraging external foresight professionals to enrich the Committee's future engagement and of a safe space for internal reflections that was offered uniquely by the Committee was strongly underscored.

53.   The Committee expressed extensive support for conducting a light-touch pilot exercise to trial its feasibility and learn about its usefulness. Members had an active exchange of views on suitable topics, including the four proposed in the orientation paper: ageing societies, migration and climate change, the future of work in sub-Saharan Africa, and rural transformations. Suggestions addressing mobility or population movements more broadly or focusing on the context of fragile States were also made. A broad consensus was formed around integrating the theme of the future of work in sub-Saharan Africa and the theme of population movements, especially those due to climate change. To that end, the Committee requested its secretariat, in consultation with relevant actors, to develop a coherent package combining those themes in the manner most suited to a light-touch, resource- and time-efficient exercise, building on existing base data and analytical knowledge.

54.   The Committee broadly affirmed the value of establishing an informal network to share experience and lessons on coming together around a common approach, including a common taxonomy or typology, with several entities expressing interest in joining the group. Some suggested that the core foundations of such a network could form naturally in connection with the preparation of the pilot exercise, with the opportunity to subsequently build upon the initial set of core contributors as the network grows.

55.   In concluding, the Chair noted the Committee's robust support for the proposed way forward. He reiterated the intent for engagement on strategic foresight to provide fresh ideas and insights into the Committee's work, which could usefully inform its forward agendas and orient and enrich its products. The Chair observed that the approach could enable the Committee to take its work to a new level, and ever closer to realizing his expectation that CEB should serve as a think tank for the United Nations system.

Conclusion

56.   **The Committee supported the proposed way forward and agreed to pursue the creation of an informal Committee network on foresight and conduct a pilot exercise at its thirty-eighth session.**

B.   Rights of persons with disabilities

57.   Prior to the session, the members of the Committee had conducted electronic reviews from global-level policy coherence perspectives and provided their feedback on the draft United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy as input to the finalization of that strategy by the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Conclusion

58.   **The Committee noted the draft United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, to be finalized by the Inter-Agency Support Group for submission to CEB for endorsement (see CEB/2019/1/Add.6).**

C.   Dates and location of the thirty-eighth session of the Committee

59.   The Chair proposed the dates of 10 and 11 October 2019 for the Committee's thirty-eighth session, to be held at the International Training Centre of ILO in Turin, Italy.

Conclusion

60.   **The Committee agreed on the dates and location for its thirty-eighth session: 10 and 11 October 2019 at the International Training Centre of ILO in Turin, Italy.**

Annex I

Agenda

1. Promoting system-wide coherence on frontier challenges:

    (a) Future of work;

    (b) Artificial intelligence: capacity development for developing countries;

    (c) Future of learning and education;

    (d) Sustainable urban development.

2. Contributing system-wide analysis for CEB deliberation: climate change

3. Building system-wide knowledge/capacities: scoping discussion on the theme "Towards a 'thinking' organization: contributing knowledge and promoting dialogue within the wider United Nations system"

4. Other business:

    (a) Strategic foresight;

    (b) Rights of persons with disabilities;

    (c) Dates and location of the thirty-eighth session of the Committee.

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Guy Ryder (International Labour Organization)

Secretary: Kayoko Gotoh (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)

United Nations

Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Michelle Gyles-McDonnough Masumi Ono
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Marion Barthelemy
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Hansjoerg Strohmeyer
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Craig Mokhiber
Regional commissions	Maria Ortiz De Urbina
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Daniele Violetti (Presenter) (via videoconference)
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction	Kirsi Madi
Office for Outer Space Affairs	Simonetta Di Pippo
Global Pulse	Robert Kirkpatrick Josiane Toundzi
International Labour Organization	Andre Bogui Shengjie Li Sangheon Lee (Presenter)
Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations	Carla Mucavi David Maciejewski Lucas Tavares Halka Otto
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Marie-Paule Roudil (Presenter)
International Civil Aviation Organization	Mitchell A. Fox
World Health Organization	Werner Obermeyer Ivana Milovanovic
World Bank Group	Björn Gillsäter
International Monetary Fund	Christopher Lane
Universal Postal Union	Abdellatif Meskine
International Telecommunication Union	Ursula Wynhoven Preetam Maloor (Presenter)
World Meteorological Organization	Paul Egerton Laura Paterson

International Maritime Organization	Arsenio Dominguez
World Intellectual Property Organization	Naresh Prasad Ola Zahran
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Charlotte Salford Zachary Bleicher
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Tsung Ping Chung
International Atomic Energy Agency	Tracy Brown
International Organization for Migration	Michele Klein-Solomon Kieran Gorman-Best
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Olivier Combe
United Nations Development Programme	Abdoulaye Mar Dieye
United Nations Environment Programme	Maaike Jansen
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Andrew Harper
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Peter Mulrean Andrew Mcindoe
United Nations Children's Fund	Ted Chaiban Peter de Vries (Presenter) Viktor Damjanović Juan Pablo Giraldo Ospino Gautam Narasimhan Vidhya Ganesh
United Nations Population Fund	Dereje Wordofa Alexander Pak
World Food Programme	Gernot Laganda Coco Ushiyama
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Jean-Luc Lemahieu Bo Mathiasen
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Christopher Williams (Presenter)
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	Shahrashoub Razavi Verona Collantes
United Nations University	Sebastian von Einsiedel
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Shannon Hader Simon Bland Nertila Tavanxhi
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	José Rosemberg

United Nations System Staff College	Miguel Panadero
Harvard University	
Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society	Ryan Budish (Presenter) (via videoconference)
Digital Asia Hub	Malavika Jayaram (Presenter) (via videoconference)
Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination	Simona Petrova Remo Lalli Federica Pietracci Xenia von Lilien Cheryl Stafford Cansin Karakus Marije van den Berg Anja Bossow

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