



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

Distr.: General
5 May 2026

English only

Report of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its fifty-first session

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 24 and 25 March 2026)

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its fifty-first session at United Nations Headquarters on 24 and 25 March 2026. The agenda of the session and the list of participants are contained in annexes I and II, respectively, to the present report.

2. In opening the session, the Chair of the Committee, the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Inger Andersen, observed that, in the past year, the organizations of the United Nations system had come together through HLCP to support one another in dealing with the shifting geopolitical landscape and related challenges, including funding cuts. Change and uncertainty continued to characterize the operating environment, and the Chair acknowledged that many entities had been adapting, including by strategically reinforcing their scope, purpose and safeguarding functions and seeking innovative solutions to meet mandates under severe resource constraints. In challenging times, coordination had become even more important. The Chair recalled that HLCP provided a trusted space for entities to discuss programme and policy issues and to help to guide the United Nations system through a period of profound change. She recalled that, at the fiftieth session, members had offered ideas to maximize the Committee's role, work on some of which would be advanced at the current session.

3. The Chair proceeded to outline the agenda for the Committee's adoption. Members would have the opportunity to engage in the inaugural strategic intelligence exchange; take up a new item on critical challenges confronting the United Nations system; participate in an interactive session on shifting programmatic activities and opportunities for enhanced United Nations system collaboration; receive updates on the United Nations Human Rights Group and on training and research related to the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative; consider proposals to include the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics on the agenda of the fifty-second session; be briefed on the work of the Secretary-General's High-level Expert Group on Beyond GDP; provide feedback on the draft annotated outline of the United Nations system common approach to demographic change; and approve the revised United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.



II. High-level Committee on Programmes strategic intelligence exchange

4. The HLCP Chair recalled that, to better equip HLCP to serve as a forum for strategic thought leadership and to help the United Nations system navigate headwinds and emerging challenges, at the fiftieth session it had been suggested that the Committee could more systematically collect intelligence on matters of vital interest to the wider United Nations system. Insights could relate to such topics as geopolitical trends, shifting alliances and governing body dynamics. There could also be space to share leading-edge United Nations system work and sectoral developments of broad relevance. At the current session, a pilot strategic intelligence exchange was being held with the aim of meeting that expressed need.

5. Issues highlighted over the course of the exchange were wide-ranging, interconnected and strategically oriented, including the erosion of international law and agreed norms and standards, attacks on the United Nations values-based and rules-based system, declining trust in institutions, changing perceptions of and pressure on multilateralism, and tensions between sovereignty and mutual accountability. Members addressed the situation in the Middle East, including its human, social, political, economic and environmental impacts; the changing nature of conflict; the erosion of arms control agreements; rising military expenditures and the implications for societies and economies; and the threats of emerging technologies, such as autonomous weapons systems and artificial intelligence, as well as the opportunities presented by digital technologies to accelerate sustainable development. Among other topics raised were: rejection of the principles of the multilateral trading system; the growing role and influence of multinational corporations in modern societies and economies; pressures on social cohesion; persistent inequalities; pushback on gender equality and human rights more broadly; risks associated with the weakening connection between jobs, rights and growth and a lack of economic opportunities; the state of food security, including the impacts of shortages of natural resources (especially land and water) and the ripple effects of geopolitical events (that, for example, drive up the cost of energy or fertilizer) on already fragile agrifood systems; education; and global health security. Members observed that misinformation and disinformation contributed to and intensified many of the challenges confronting the international community. Difficulties notwithstanding, achievements illustrating the vitality and resilience of multilateralism were highlighted.

6. In view of the scale, scope and speed of change, as well as multiplying crises, members felt it was imperative for the United Nations system to stand united and pursue multisectoral responses to the myriad challenges. The importance of the United Nations remaining a values-based institution, which coherently defended norms and standards, especially on human rights and gender equality, was seen as key to maintaining its legitimacy and credibility. In the field of peace and security, reinforcing the vital role of the United Nations in disarmament, stabilization and peacebuilding, as well as in rebuilding the social fabric of countries emerging from conflict, was highlighted, and the need to continue to invest in prevention was underscored. It was also seen as important to make the impacts of increasing military expenditure on development visible and policy-relevant. The case was made for demonstrating that action on the environment supported the United Nations pillars of peace and security, development and human rights, with a view to countering negative perceptions around trade-offs. In the face of misinformation and disinformation, the United Nations needed to continue to serve as a trusted voice and create narratives that were based on facts and evidence. Communications that clearly and concretely described benefits to people were vital to demonstrate the value of the United Nations

system. Specifically, engaging young people and adolescents was underscored as critical to addressing issues of trust and legitimacy. The convening role of the United Nations was key to supporting grass-roots movements, forming new alliances and brokering solutions. Bearing in mind the extensive interlinkages, the point was made that the United Nations system needed to collectively enable and support development pathways that protected global public goods and supported education, health, natural resources, sustainable and resilient food systems, green and inclusive industrial transformation, and digital opportunities.

7. The pilot was deemed successful by members, who provided positive feedback and suggestions to refine the format. Of particular value was the opportunity that the strategic intelligence exchange afforded to share information from the different entity perspectives, and to collectively interpret and act on the wide spectrum of signals and trends. Members agreed that the exchange would become a standing item on the HLCP agenda.

III. Confronting challenges together: standing united in defence of United Nations values

8. Introducing the item, the Chair recalled that, at the fiftieth session of HLCP, members had highlighted critical and sensitive issues confronting the United Nations system that increasingly demanded greater alignment and collective responses. Addressing those challenges in a coherent and coordinated manner had been seen as crucial to safeguarding the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations, and to maintaining public trust. Within that context, members spoke with conviction about the need to stand up in defence of United Nations norms, principles and values, and had seen an opportunity for HLCP to provide a dedicated space for candid, system-wide exchanges on challenging issues that might require greater alignment and collective response. At the current session, the Committee was invited to reflect on what it meant, in practice, to stand united in defence of United Nations values, upholding principles and norms in the face of external pressure and diminished public confidence in multilateral institutions.

9. Building on insights shared during the strategic intelligence exchange, members voiced concern over the erosion of respect for the Charter of the United Nations and a growing lack of adherence to international law. United Nations values, principles and norms were under increasing pressure, with direct and dire consequences for United Nations staff on the ground, tangible human costs for the people the United Nations served, in particular women and girls, and a toll on the level of trust in the system. Members were adamant about resisting the shrinking of the Organization's normative space and the need to embed human rights and other core values across all areas of its work. Concrete evidence demonstrated that principled approaches were drivers of more impactful and durable outcomes. The critical role of and challenges faced by senior United Nations leaders at the country level in navigating complex political contexts was highlighted.

10. Members asserted that the value proposition of the United Nations rested in its Charter. In that context, the importance of internal unity and mutual support was stressed; fragmented messaging weakened the collective voice, integrity and credibility of the United Nations. Upholding norms and principles and restoring trust required action on multiple levels: coherent common messaging; setting the right tone from the top; holding firm on norms and values; supporting front-line staff; and refuting misinformation with data, facts and science. It also necessitated reaching beyond traditional constituencies and engaging with broader audiences, including communities, younger generations, the private sector and philanthropic organizations,

around United Nations values and frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals. Members also emphasized the need for more accessible communication, with an emphasis on storytelling, people-centred narratives and jargon-free language.

11. In concluding, the Chair reflected on the richness and timeliness of the deliberations, noting members' resolve to stand together and in solidarity with United Nations front-line staff in defence of the Charter and its norms and principles, as well as to uphold United Nations values and effective delivery as mutually reinforcing imperatives, grounded in data and science. The discussion had reaffirmed the Committee's role as a trusted space for frank, system-wide reflection on critical and challenging issues. She observed that members had signalled an interest in further advancing work in defence of United Nations values, with a view to revisiting the topic at the next session, and requested the secretariat to facilitate follow-up.

IV. Shifting programmatic priorities and opportunities for enhanced system-wide collaboration

12. The Chair recalled that HLCP, at its fiftieth session, had discussed challenges and opportunities for policy coherence and programmatic coordination in times of transition, recognizing the need for more strategic programmatic choices and common solutions to deliver results and optimize the use of resources. Members had seen value in scanning for programmatic shifts and emerging gaps and strategizing on ways to mitigate those gaps and strengthen collaboration to leverage United Nations system capacities for greater collective impact. To that end, the CEB secretariat had conducted two parallel surveys, one among members of the Finance and Budget Network of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) on the financial situation of the United Nations system, and one among HLCP members on the impact on programmatic activities and opportunities for enhanced collaboration at the policy and programmatic level. The findings of the surveys informed an interactive discussion on the topic, which was facilitated by the United Nations System Staff College.

13. The HLCM Secretary, Remo Lalli, presented an overview of the projected financial situation across the United Nations system for the period 2024–2027, noting that the situation was characterized by heightened uncertainty, volatility and growing funding pressures on entities. Total United Nations system revenue had been \$68 billion in 2024 and was projected to decline by approximately 20 per cent by 2027. Projected system-wide expenditures followed a similar downward trend, which would have varied impacts across different functions:¹ humanitarian assistance and peace operations were expected to experience the sharpest reduction in expenses, while development assistance and global agenda and specialized assistance were likely to face a more gradual but sustained decline. Enabling administrative and support functions accounted for around 14 per cent of total expenditures, compared to 86 per cent for programmatic expenses, pointing to the need for programmatic reprioritization and strategic choices, which could have implications for the scale and coverage of programmatic delivery across pillars and mandates.

14. Presenting the findings of the HLCP survey, the HLCP Secretary, Xenia von Lilien, provided an overview of the nature and impact of shifts in programmatic activities. The programmatic landscape across the United Nations system was

¹ Common definitions of functional areas as set out in the data standards for United Nations system-wide reporting of financial data, available at <https://unsceb.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/Data%20Standards%20March%202024%20edition.pdf>.

changing significantly, a trend that was accelerating. Notable programmatic shifts included structural reprioritization of programmatic activities as changes became increasingly embedded in strategic planning instruments; enhanced focus on core mandates, high-impact initiatives, targeted assistance and delivery of critical services; reductions in country presence, consolidation of functions and greater use of regional hubs and platforms; the scaling-back of work on cross-cutting issues, integrated approaches and knowledge generation; and growing emphasis on leveraging digital technologies and artificial intelligence, both internally and in intergovernmental contexts. Against this backdrop, Ms. von Lilien reported that entities had identified a wide range of opportunities for enhanced inter-agency collaboration to mitigate challenges and maximize impact. Suggestions centred around global-level policy and programmatic collaboration suitable for consideration by HLCP; coordination opportunities at the country level and on thematic issues best addressed through other existing coordination mechanisms and processes; and prospects for strengthened coordination on specific sectoral issues among a subset of entities.

15. In the ensuing interactive small-group discussions facilitated by the United Nations System Staff College, Committee members focused on five areas for enhancing policy and programmatic coordination at global level.

16. **Promoting cross-pillar and cross-sectoral coherence.** Participants in the group underscored that a sense of common purpose, based on United Nations mandates, norms and values, was the primary driver for effective collective action, while crises and external shocks served as strategic integrators by strengthening system-wide resolve and cross-pillar coherence. Drawing on lessons from the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and humanitarian crises, meaningful collective cross-pillar and cross-sectoral action required working with communities, local authorities, development partners and the private sector.

17. **Leveraging United Nations system analytical capacities.** Successful system-wide collaboration on analytical capacities depended on clarity of purpose, leadership, inter-agency trust, and sound and shareable data, which enabled the alignment of analytical capacities and expertise with strategic decision-making. The value of pooling analytical and technical capacities, especially at the country level and in crisis contexts was emphasized, while at the same time bottlenecks related to funding, fragmentation of data systems and limited mechanisms for sharing expertise across entities remained persistent challenges. They could potentially be overcome through the strategic use of digital tools and artificial intelligence and the establishment of interoperable data platforms and expertise-on-demand delivery models.

18. **Fostering strategic partnerships.** The value of strategic partnerships was recognized, particularly in delivering tangible results at the country level. To advance progress in that area, legal and policy frameworks needed to evolve to facilitate more diverse and agile forms of collaboration. To support more effective partnerships with a clearer focus on organizational core strengths, it was necessary to establish roles and expectations early and to develop practical cooperation templates that captured how the different capacities could be combined to achieve shared impact. Collectively, those elements pointed to a shift towards more structured, intentional and results-oriented partnership approaches.

19. **Advancing common messages and joint advocacy.** Effective communication in support of multilateralism required clear, simple and audience-specific messaging that demonstrated the concrete impact that the United Nations system had on people's lives. Building public understanding, confidence and trust in the work of the United Nations and in multilateralism required credible, focused messaging that was tailored to and resonated with specific audiences. Other ingredients of success in that area included alliance-building across entities, stronger engagement with young people

and the strategic use of shared narratives, with system-wide efforts to promote the Sustainable Development Goals serving as an example of good practice.

20. **Enhancing coordination on cross-cutting and thematic issues.** Successful inter-agency collaboration across different thematic or cross-cutting issues depended on a clear common purpose, strong senior leadership and the ability to mobilize diverse system-wide expertise towards shared goals. HLCP was an appropriate forum to articulate a collective United Nations system value proposition in the face of growing challenges. Another possible area for collaboration was in the identification and communication of system-wide impacts and collective results in the context of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

21. The Committee concluded the discussion on this item by expressing appreciation for the facilitation by the United Nations System Staff College and requesting the HLCP secretariat to explore options for follow-up.

V. Demographic change for sustainable development

22. Returning to the topic of demographic change for sustainable development, the Chair recalled that, at the forty ninth session, HLCP had decided to establish a time bound task team under the leadership of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to enhance United Nations system-wide understanding, coherence and coordination on demographic change. At its fiftieth session, HLCP had approved, and CEB subsequently endorsed, the United Nations System common messages on policy responses to demographic change, which were intended to provide a coherent narrative for the United Nations system to speak on issues related to demographic change. The Chair noted that, in line with the task team's terms of reference, efforts had then shifted towards translating these messages and principles into programmatic and operational deliverables through the development of the United Nations system common approach to demographic change.

23. The Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Co-Chair of the task team, Bjørg Sandkjær, presented the draft annotated outline of the common approach prepared by the task team, noting that consultations to date had reflected strong engagement across the United Nations system. The draft outline was composed of five sections: (a) background and rationale, underscoring that demographic change was reshaping development trajectories in all contexts; (b) the objectives of the common approach, which spanned strengthening system-wide coherence and coordination, enhancing United Nations system capacities and thought leadership, supporting Member States and informing intergovernmental processes; (c) a framework organized around stages of demographic transition, highlighting challenges and opportunities; (d) strategic entry points to leverage and connect existing initiatives for greater coherence; and (e) an indicative list of deliverables, including data, foresight tools, operational guidance and communications products. Ms. Sandkjær stressed that the common approach must remain ambitious yet agile and invited the Committee's feedback and strategic guidance to inform the drafting phase.

24. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) ad interim of UNFPA and Co-Chair of the task team, Pio Smith, noted that the common messages had already strengthened system-wide understanding and visibility of demographic issues. An increasing recognition of the implications of demographic change was reflected, for example, in recent documents of United Nations country teams and through the launch of a new regional collaborative platform on demographic change in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. He emphasized that the guiding principle for the common

approach was to focus on impact rather than new processes. The intent was also to leverage existing coordination mechanisms and identify strategic entry points across all levels of the system. Mr. Smith noted that coordination with other inter-agency mechanisms, in particular the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, was important. In that context, he highlighted the ongoing revision of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework guidance as an opportunity to integrate demographic analysis more systematically, ensuring that programme plans became more responsive to demographic shifts and supported national development priorities. He encouraged members to provide feedback to ensure that the future common approach would meet countries' needs and promote high-impact outcomes through system-wide collaboration.

25. In the discussion, members expressed strong support for the draft annotated outline and commended the Co-Chairs for the inclusive and collaborative approach to develop the common approach. Entities confirmed their readiness to contribute and provide technical expertise throughout the drafting phase. The importance of grounding the document in human rights, gender equality and social inclusion was underscored, and concerns about harmful narratives that contributed to discrimination or exclusion were highlighted. Systematic attention must be paid to both older persons and young people, including through the corresponding intergovernmental processes, and efforts should continue to strengthen intergenerational solidarity. Members emphasized the need to strengthen data systems and called for the integration of demographic considerations into analyses across sectors, including health, labour markets, education, social protection, urbanization and climate resilience. Members welcomed the proposed entry points, particularly the linkages to common country analyses and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and encouraged the development of practical guidance and concrete tools to support United Nations country teams and Member States. The need to prioritize a small number of high-impact deliverables and the importance of leveraging existing coordination initiatives were both stressed.

26. In response, the Co-Chairs thanked members for their constructive comments and reaffirmed their commitment to incorporate the feedback into the draft common approach. They welcomed the strong support for focusing on impact, prioritizing feasible deliverables and ensuring that the approach strengthened collaboration across thematic areas and entities. They recognized the centrality of robust data, the importance of addressing intersectionality and the value of building on and bringing together ongoing efforts. The Chair thanked the task team Co-Chairs and members for their dedication and looked forward to the Committee's considering the United Nations system common approach to demographic change at the fifty-second session.

VI. United Nations System Disability Inclusion Strategy

27. Introducing the item, the Chair recalled that the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy was endorsed by CEB in 2019 following a process initiated by the Secretary-General to strengthen system-wide accessibility for persons with disabilities and to mainstream their rights. The implementation of the Strategy was being supported by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, including through the entity and country team focal point networks. In October of 2021, HLCP took note of a progress report on its implementation. Following an independent system-wide evaluation of the Strategy in September 2025, which recommended revisions to the Strategy and its accountability framework, a consultative process facilitated by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General was launched to develop a revised Strategy aimed at strengthening system-wide institutional capacity for disability inclusion. The draft revised strategy and accountability framework were subsequently circulated to

HLCP and HLCM networks for comments, which were taken into account in the version that was before the Committee for its review and provisional approval, prior to consideration by HLCM at its fifty-first session.

28. The Director of the Sustainable Development Unit, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Karima El Korri, presented the draft revised Strategy policy and entity accountability framework, noting that the global population of persons with disabilities was approximately 1.3 billion, with increasing prevalence in contexts of protracted conflict. Despite measurable progress since the launch of the Strategy, persons with disabilities remained at heightened risk of exclusion across development, humanitarian, and peace and security contexts. Ms. El Korri emphasized the importance of integrating disability inclusion across United Nations policies, programmes, and operations to effectively support Member States in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Prepared through an extensive consultative process, the revised Strategy aimed to address implementation gaps while balancing increased ambition with feasibility in a context of constrained resources. Key enhancements included clearer objectives, a strengthened accountability framework, new indicators on resource tracking, digital accessibility and data, country-level implementation, more rigorous integration in programming and stronger linkages with other United Nations system strategies and frameworks. The importance of sustained leadership, peer learning, institutional continuity and enabling of inclusive work environments, including through reasonable accommodation and accessibility, was emphasized.

29. In the discussion that followed, members welcomed the draft revised Strategy as an important instrument for advancing disability inclusion across all pillars of the United Nations. Appreciation was expressed for the inclusive consultative process leading up to the revised strategy and its enhanced focus on impact, results and practical actions, including related to physical and digital accessibility and reasonable accommodation. Notably, members supported the strengthened accountability framework, including the new indicators on resource tracking, digital accessibility and disability data. The importance of adequate resourcing and earmarking of funds for the implementation of the revised Strategy was repeatedly emphasized, particularly in the current context of funding constraints. Members also raised the need to address unconscious bias in recruitment processes; the importance of prevention; strengthening linkages with other existing system-wide strategies, including those on youth, gender and sustainability management; and the need to avoid additional administrative and reporting burdens. The development of common tools and shared resources to support implementation was seen as useful, especially for smaller entities. Overall, members expressed strong commitment for disability inclusion in the work of the United Nations and emphasized that the success of the revised Strategy would depend on sustained senior-level accountability, institutional continuity and the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in United Nations processes, policies and programmes.

30. Ms. El Korri thanked members for their constructive feedback, recognizing concerns regarding limited and unpredictable funding and noting that implementation to date had relied largely on voluntary contributions. Progress achieved since 2019 could be attributed to strengthened internal expertise, targeted capacity-building support and inclusive consultations with persons with disabilities across the United Nations system. She emphasized the importance of institutionalizing these gains through the revised Strategy, along with making better use of the Global Disability Fund and regional mechanisms to mitigate funding gaps.

31. In concluding, the Chair invited the Committee to provisionally approve the revised Strategy and the revised accountability framework, subject to their feedback

being taken on board, and with the understanding that the revised Strategy would also be considered by HLCM for approval, prior to endorsement by CEB.

Conclusion

32. **HLCP provisionally approved the draft revised United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (CEB/2026/1/Add.1).**

VII. Any other business

A. Implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries

33. The HLCP Chair recalled that, in the annual progress report to HLCP presented at the fiftieth session, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States had highlighted a role for the Committee in elevating the quality, coherence and impact of the contribution of the United Nations system to the upcoming midterm review of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (March 2027) and in reinforcing the scale and scope of the system's collective support to the least developed countries. The Committee in turn had requested the Office to prepare a succinct note elaborating on its proposal to dedicate an agenda item to the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Committee's consideration at its fifty-first session.

34. A representative of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States delivered a statement on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Rabab Fatima. Underlining that progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the overall development outlook for the least developed countries remained concerning, the statement stressed that ensuring strong and coherent support for the least developed countries must be a matter of the highest priority for the leadership of the United Nations system. HLCP could articulate a coherent United Nations system contribution to the midterm review process, helping to identify strategic entry points for system-wide support to accelerate the implementation of both the Doha Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals while also providing impetus to the review. It was foreseen that the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for Least Developed Countries would pursue a process to identify strategic recommendations to support the timely, effective and full implementation of the Doha Programme of Action while promoting synergies and coherence with other major global processes and commitments, with a view to supporting HLCP deliberations on the subject. Unified and coordinated engagement by the United Nations system would send a powerful signal of commitment to and solidarity with the least developed countries and ensure that the next phase of implementation of the Doha Programme of Action delivered tangible results for those most in need.

35. Members supported including an item on the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action on the agenda at the next session. Furthermore, comments were shared on preparations for the midterm review, as well as on organizations' efforts to support the least developed countries and contribute to the review process. The need to focus on impact and scale was stressed, with the suggestion to convey concrete policy recommendations accompanied by tools that could support the implementation

of those recommendations. It was also remarked that greater emphasis should be placed on risk-informed development to protect gains in the least developed countries.

Conclusion

36. HLCP decided to include an agenda item on the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries at the Committee's fifty-second session and welcomed the process to be undertaken by the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for Least Developed Countries to develop a strategic contribution to the midterm review of the Doha Programme of Action.

B. System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics

37. The Chair recalled that the System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics had been endorsed by CEB in 2020 following a consultative process under HLCP, led by the Committee of Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System. The Road Map set targets to modernize United Nations data and statistical outputs and contributed to the objectives of the Data Strategy of the Secretary General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere. In light of recent developments with relevance to data and statistics, the Committee of Chief Statisticians had agreed to update the Road Map to address new challenges and opportunities.

38. The Director of Statistics, Data and Digital Services of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and Co-Chair of the Committee of Chief Statisticians, Anu Peltola, presented the rationale for updating the Road Map and a proposal for HLCP to engage in the process. She noted that, since 2020, the Road Map had served as a backbone for system-wide cooperation, supporting greater alignment in data governance, capacity development and statistical geospatial integration, and enabling joint initiatives. In view of rapid changes in the global data and digital landscape, including the expansion of new data sources, emerging requirements notably linked to the Global Digital Compact, increasing demands for integrated statistical and geospatial information, and the growing need for interoperable and artificial intelligence-ready data systems, the Committee of Chief Statisticians had initiated a comprehensive review of the Road Map. She highlighted the intent to introduce a more agile, modular and innovation-focused workplan and prioritize supporting Member States to bridge the global data divide, enhancing interoperability and shared standards, promoting responsible artificial intelligence-enabled statistical processes, and strengthening the generation of actionable insights. The Committee of Chief Statisticians invited HLCP to provide guidance to inform the revision of the Road Map and proposed that the Committee engage in a discussion on the topic at its fifty-second session, on the basis of a vision paper to be prepared by the Committee of Chief Statisticians.

39. In the exchange that followed, members welcomed the decision to review and update the Road Map. They highlighted the importance of strengthening country-owned foundational data systems, harmonizing analytical frameworks, ensuring multi-sectoral data integration, including human rights and community level data, and aligning the updated roadmap with other United Nations digital initiatives, such as UN 2.0 and work under the UN80 Initiative, including the United Nations System Data Commons, as well as relevant outcomes of the 20-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society. The need to address data equity, capacity-building, responsible data use, challenges related to misinformation and the misuse

of data, and system-wide interoperability, was stressed, along with the importance of prioritization activities in a context of constrained resources.

Conclusion

40. HLCP welcomed the decision of the Committee of Chief Statisticians of the United Nations System to review and update the System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics and decided to include a substantive agenda item on the Road Map at its fifty-second session.

C. Progress beyond gross domestic product

41. The Chair recalled that HLCP had contributed to the process towards developing indicators that complement and go beyond gross domestic product (GDP) since the publication of “Valuing what counts: United Nations system-wide contribution on progress beyond gross domestic product” in 2022. In May 2025, the Secretary-General had established the High-level Expert Group on Beyond GDP in response to action 53 of the Pact for the Future, and in October 2025, the Committee had engaged in a policy dialogue with members of the Group and had offered inputs to its deliberations.

42. The Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Bjørg Sandkjær, provided an update on the work of the Expert Group, noting that the Group’s final report was expected to be launched at the end of April, following extensive consultations. Substantively, it was foreseen that the report would propose a conceptual framework that placed equitable, inclusive and sustainable well-being as the overarching objective of progress; was anchored in foundational principles such as peace and security, human rights, and planetary boundaries; and was underpinned by domains of well-being that went beyond income. It proposed a dashboard of approximately 30 indicators, about half of them were drawn from the Sustainable Development Goals; and a data and research agenda aimed at strengthening national statistical systems and developing complementary indicators over time that captured distributional and non-market dimensions of progress. Ms. Sandkjær further noted possible linkages of that work to future financing decisions, foreign aid eligibility criteria and assessments of debt sustainability, which would require further consideration. Once launched, the report would be considered by Member States through an intergovernmental process led by the President of the General Assembly.

Conclusion

43. HLCP took note of the update on the work of the High-level Expert Group on Beyond GDP.

D. UN80 Initiative

1. Work package 9: United Nations Human Rights Group

44. Directing the Committee’s attention to the item on the UN80 Initiative, the Chair noted that, under work package 9 on the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Group, a principal-level mechanism to institutionalize human rights coordination across the United Nations system was envisaged. Recalling the Committee’s strong commitment to and long-standing record of integrating human rights in its work, the Chair observed that strengthening system-wide coordination on human rights was both necessary and timely.

45. Briefing on the context, purpose and structure of the United Nations Human Rights Group, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in New York, Ilze Brands Kehris, recalled that, in his report entitled “Shifting paradigms: united to deliver”, the Secretary-General had proposed the establishment of a human rights group, composed of entities from across the United Nations system and led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to ensure that human rights considerations were systematically integrated into United Nations policies and activities to enhance collective impact. Human rights constituted a core pillar and cross-cutting obligation of the United Nations system, yet implementation across the system had been uneven and fragmented. In contrast to other substantive areas, such as development, peace and security, humanitarian and management, which benefited from both technical and principal-level coordination mechanisms, human rights lacked a comparable high-level coordination structure. The Group was intended to build on the Secretary-General’s call to action for human rights and complement existing mechanisms by providing a trusted and dedicated safe space for principals to engage in strategic reflections and address sensitive human rights issues; and advance coherence and the integration of human rights norms, standards and values into advocacy, policy, programming and accountability mechanisms at all levels. The Group’s terms of reference had been endorsed by the UN80 Steering Committee, chaired by the Secretary-General, in February 2026, following a consultative process. The Group would be open to participation by all United Nations system entities, with a first meeting planned in the margins of the CEB first regular session of 2026. The Group would be a light mechanism and provide space for strategic reflection, aimed at enabling meaningful engagement and collective leadership. It would meet twice a year, aligned with the biannual meetings of CEB.

46. In the discussion, members welcomed the establishment of the Group, noting it would be an important vehicle for upholding the values of the Charter of the United Nations and the universality of human rights, reaffirming the collective responsibility of the United Nations system in that regard. The initiative was also considered very timely as it would help to safeguard United Nations norms and values amid growing challenges, including highlighting the positive contribution of human rights to advancing sustainable development and building peace and security solutions. Feedback was also provided on the need to ensure coherence with existing coordination mechanisms and build upon previous initiatives. Members expressed their readiness to work together, including on sensitive issues, as well as emerging issues such as human rights in the digital and technology space.

Conclusion

47. **HLCP welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Group.**

2. Work package 17: training and research

48. Drawing the Committee’s attention to the second sub-item pertaining to the UN80 Initiative, on work package 17 on training and research, the Chair recalled that the Secretary-General had identified the learning, training and research architecture of the United Nations system as an area requiring strengthening to better support both United Nations personnel and Member States. The Committee was to receive a briefing on the possible merger of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations System Staff College, foreseen as part of an evolution of the United Nations learning landscape in the Secretary-General’s report entitled “Shifting paradigms: united to deliver”, with a view to creating a more coherent and system-serving “United Nations learning engine” In view of the

institutional connection between the United Nations System Staff College and CEB – under whose auspices the College had been created to serve as an inter-agency resource – members were invited to share their perspectives to inform the design of the proposed merged entity.

49. In her opening presentation, the Executive Director of UNITAR, Michelle Gyles McDonnough, outlined the rationale for the proposal, noting that learning, training and research were core to how the United Nations delivered on its mandates internally and in support of Member States, yet the current system was fragmented, with parallel platforms and duplicated functions. She explained that the proposed learning engine aimed to enhance coherence across policy, research and implementation and boost capabilities and training results. The proposal envisioned a unified institution, while preserving the individual mandates, able to serve both United Nations personnel and Member States, which would improve efficiency and scalability, expand multilingual delivery and strengthen the connections between policy guidance, advisory services and capacity building. She informed the Committee that the initiative had recently moved from the assessment phase into design, with broad consultations under way, and requested members' perspectives on how the learning engine could link knowledge, skills and implementation more effectively across the United Nations system.

50. Providing complementary remarks, the Deputy Director for Learning and Knowledge Services at the United Nations System Staff College, Silke Weinlich, highlighted the College's role as a United Nations system asset that provided safe learning spaces, supported leadership development, facilitated policy to practice translation and learning on cross-cutting priorities, and fostered effective inter-agency collaboration. She noted that the proposed learning engine could amplify this role by elevating learning as strategic infrastructure and supporting the translation of norms, reforms and policies into real capability at the headquarters, regional and country levels. In addition, she observed that the learning engine could become a more central system asset, supporting cost efficiency, shared standards, greater coherence and higher quality learning across entities and, ultimately, for Member States. She encouraged members to identify existing strengths to be retained and amplified, emerging needs that the learning engine should address, and the governance, standards and collaboration modalities required to ensure that it would operate as a system-serving backbone that complemented rather than duplicated entities' capacity-development efforts.

51. In the discussion, members commended both entities for their partnership and support to date. Broad support was expressed for the concept of a United Nations learning engine and its potential benefits of greater coherence, efficiency and impact across the United Nations learning and capacity-development ecosystem. Among the points emphasized was the importance of clearly distinguishing between, while at the same time effectively linking, internal United Nations learning needs and external capacity-building for Member States; preserving mandate clarity and independence of internal learning; and ensuring that value creation, not merely institutional consolidation, would drive the design. The need for strengthened leadership development, mentoring and talent pipelines; attention to governance and the sustainability of cost recovery; engagement with existing specialized academies; and safeguards to avoid duplication and ensure complementarity with specialized capacity-building efforts delivered by entities as part of their programming and technical assistance were mentioned. It was stressed that the future model should remain sensitive to differing internal and external capacity needs while achieving synergies; maintain trusted inter-agency learning spaces; and leverage learning, science and digital tools to support delivery at scale. The co-leads confirmed that these considerations would inform the design phase.

Conclusion

52. HLCP took note of the update on the proposed merger of the United Nations System Staff College into UNITAR.

VIII. Dates and location of the fifty-second session of the Committee

53. It was proposed that the fifty-second session of the Committee be hosted by UNEP in Nairobi on 6 and 7 October 2026.

Conclusion

54. The Committee approved the dates and location of its fifty-second session: 6 and 7 October 2026 in Nairobi.

Annex I

Agenda

1. High-level Committee on Programmes strategic intelligence exchange.
2. Confronting challenges together: standing united in defence of United Nations values.
3. Shifting programmatic priorities and opportunities for enhanced system-wide collaboration.
4. Demographic change for sustainable development.
5. United Nations System Disability Inclusion Strategy.
6. Any other business.
7. Implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.
8. System-wide Road Map for Innovating United Nations Data and Statistics.
9. Progress beyond gross domestic product.
10. UN80 Initiative:
 - (a) Work package 9: United Nations Human Rights Group;
 - (b) Work package 17: training and research.
11. Dates and location of the fifty-second session of the Committee.

Annex II

List of participants

Chair: Ms. Inger Andersen (United Nations Environment Programme)

Secretary: Ms. Xenia von Lilien (High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination)

<i>Entity</i>	<i>Name</i>
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Beth Crawford
International Atomic Energy Agency	Constanze Westervoss
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Courtney Hood
International Labour Organization	Dino Corell
International Maritime Organization	Alexandra M. Szczepanski
International Monetary Fund	Robert Powell
	Samuel Chung
International Organization for Migration	Ugochi Daniels
International Telecommunication Union	Ursula Wynhoven
	Riefqah Jappie
International Trade Centre	Iris Hauswirth
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Angeli Achrekar
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Sivanka Dhanapala
United Nations	
Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Björg Sandkjær
Department of Global Communications	Maher Nasser
Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Peacebuilding Support Office	Awa Dabo
Development Coordination Office	Helena Fraser
	Gonzalo Pizarro
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Karima El Korri
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Quynh Tran
Office for Disarmament Affairs	Gizem Sucuoglu
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Ilze Brands Kehris
	Rio Hada
Regional commissions	Thilmeeza Hussain
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction	Sujit Mohanty
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Candice Welsch

<i>Entity</i>	<i>Name</i>
United Nations Children's Fund	Carlos Acosta
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Juan Jose Martinez Badillo
	Anu Peltola
United Nations Development Programme	Michelle Muschett
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Eliot Minchenberg
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda
United Nations Environment Programme	Ligia Noronha
	Isabella Marras
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat	Daniele Violetti
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	Andre Dzikus
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Cecilia Ugaz Estrada
United Nations Office for Project Services	Rahul Malhotra
United Nations Population Fund	Pio Smith
	Soyoltuya Bayaraa
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Natalie Boucly
United Nations System Staff College	Silke Weinlich
United Nations University	David Passarelli
World Bank Group	Maria Dimitriadou
World Food Programme	Matthew Hollingworth
	Ally-Raza Quereshi
World Health Organization	Werner H. Obermeyer
	Igor Pokanevych
World Intellectual Property Organization	Edward Kwakwa
World Meteorological Organization	Laura Paterson

Guests

<i>Entity</i>	<i>Name</i>
Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States	Rabab Fatima
	Aniket Ghai
United Nations Institute for Training and Research	Michelle Gyles-McDonnough

United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination secretariat

Maike Jansen

Remo Lalli

Federica Pietracchi

Cheryl Stafford

Laura Ribeiro Rodrigues Pereira

Laurent Mottier

Justus Laubsch

Emnet Tezera Bekele

Fabienne Fon Sing
