



**United Nations System  
Chief Executives Board  
for Coordination**

Original: English  
ADVANCE UNEDITED VERSION  
Word Count: 2620

---

**First Regular Session of 2022**  
Vienna, 12 and 13 May 2022

## **Summary of Deliberations**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The first regular session of 2022 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), chaired by the Secretary-General, was held at Palais Coburg in Vienna, on 12 and 13 May 2022.
2. The session consisted of three segments, on the following themes: (a) state of the world; (b) challenges to the global economic recovery and rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) “Our Common Agenda” and its contribution to the global economic recovery and rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals. The present summary highlights the main discussion points of the session.

### **II. Segment 1 – State of the world**

3. The Secretary-General presented an overview of the current state of the world, reflecting on rising geopolitical tensions and their impact on the multilateral system and on the work of the United Nations system. He underscored the critical role of the system in responding to ongoing crises at the global, regional and local levels, in line with the principles of the United Nations charter, international law and territorial integrity.
4. The Secretary-General discussed the socio-economic impacts of cascading crises, including ongoing conflicts, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the uneven and unequal recovery from its impacts, and the climate emergency. He reiterated the commitment of the United Nations system to strengthen and amplify the capacity of the multilateral system to deliver on the ground and move ahead on all aspects of its human rights, humanitarian and development actions, as well as peace initiatives around the world.
5. In the ensuing dialogue, Board members considered global economic trends, including in international trade, and the implications of the global growth outlook on key issues including food security, health, climate, and rising inequalities. Principals reflected on increasing political polarization and its impact on multilateralism, international law and human rights, and the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. An update was also provided on the need for IAEA to re-establish monitoring capacity over potential nuclear threats.

### **III. Segment 2 – Challenges to the global economic recovery and rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals**

6. In opening the segment, the Secretary-General underlined that the Sustainable Development Goals were not merely a set of targets to achieve, but a development strategy that integrated economic, social and environmental dimensions and included a set of policies that were more essential than ever. He noted that the global economic recovery was facing challenges and that there had been backsliding on achieving goals such as gender equality, human rights and good governance. The Secretary-General encouraged the United Nations system to intensify its commitment and to reverse the current trend by moving together to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals.
7. It was recalled that the creation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a process driven by Member States. The Sustainable Development Goals were a conceptual paradigm shift where the social, economic, and environmental dimensions were integrated. In 2015 three major agendas were agreed upon: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda were important signposts that remained as valid at the present as in 2015.
8. In the context of the multiple crises, including the climate emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the need was articulated for hope and solutions, including being fit for purpose and having the right skill sets within the United Nations. There was a need to build momentum for opportunities and find ways to exit the crises. The United Nations could continue to work in a number of areas encompassing financing for sustainable development; transitions in energy, trade, industrialization, and digitalization; and supporting the development and delivery of vaccines against COVID-19.
9. In the ensuing discussion, members acknowledged the current challenging world context. They highlighted the ongoing conflicts that had not been resolved even prior to the war in Ukraine and observed that rising inequalities, climate change, technological disruption, the spreading of misinformation and disinformation, and the pandemic had exacerbated conflicts. Increasing food and energy prices would affect many countries and could lead to unrest and conflict.
10. The Board recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic was an ongoing public health emergency in many countries where vaccination rates had not reached 70 per cent and that after the challenging economic circumstances of the pandemic the fiscal space of many countries had been exhausted. Concern was also raised about the risk of rising interest rates resulting in debt default. The COVID-19 pandemic was described as a magnifier of inequalities in many areas, including gender. It was considered indispensable to increase public investments in the care economy, and to work on social protection systems, health insurance and pensions to reduce inequalities.
11. There was a real risk of fragmentation in international politics, trade and finance that was already negatively affecting the multilateral system and its ability to respond to the crises. Employment was going downwards in all regions across the world. The global economy was not delivering for the people and failing to allow people to contribute to productive work and benefit from the results of that work. CEB members emphasized the need to integrate the notion of the social contract into crisis reactions and to build solidarity into financial and social policies.
12. In this context, the United Nations system had worked to support many countries through immense challenges, including by encouragement to raise their ambition on nationally determined contributions as part of the Paris Agreement, and by assisting national governments in their socioeconomic response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus was on a nexus approach where sustainable development, humanitarian, peace and

security, and human rights work of the United Nations was coordinated at all levels, from global to local.

13. The Board noted that cooperation to address inequalities and support Member States in making policy and budget decisions that were in their long-term interests were areas where the United Nations system could contribute. Members identified opportunities where the system could further help Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including in the areas of energy security and access to energy, digital infrastructure, digital ecosystems and digital economies, pandemic response and preparedness, national revenue collection through taxation and support for social protection.
14. Observing a change in the context of financing for development, members expressed concern about declining donor support for development at a time when it was most needed. The reductions in Official Development Assistance, including diversion to domestic spending, had further compounded the threat to multilateralism. It was acknowledged that humanitarian appeals were generally underfunded and that with the many competing priorities, including the war in Ukraine, there was a risk of development aid being diverted. In concluding the segment, the Board agreed that investing in development was the best way to prevent crises and maintain international peace.

### **III. Segment 3 - “Our Common Agenda” and its contribution to the global economic recovery and rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals**

15. In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General expressed concern that even without crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine the world would not be on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals due to issues of global governance and the limited power of multilateral institutions. He recalled that the creation of these institutions after the Second World War had been influenced by the philosophy and attitudes of the time, and stated that the composition of institutions and mechanisms was no longer aligned with the modern realities.
16. Concerned about the prevalence of short-term perspectives in policymaking, which insufficiently addressed the problems of the future, the Secretary-General called for the introduction of a long-term perspective in the way international institutions and Member States operated. He reminded that Our Common Agenda had underlined the need for strategic, future-oriented policymaking and that it aimed to identify options for the multilateral system to improve its capacity to take transformative action. In this context, the Secretary-General also noted that addressing governance issues, in particular in relation to global public goods, was one key requirement to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
17. In his framing remarks, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy, recalled that Our Common Agenda aimed to lift the thinking about what the world of the future could look like and to encourage consensus on what was desirable and not desirable. Describing the current situation as a new “triple San Francisco moment”, with the international community confronted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the triple planetary crisis, the Under-Secretary-General highlighted that Our Common Agenda also presented an occasion to reinvigorate effective, inclusive and networked multilateralism, based on sustainable development. He called for a need to look beyond 2030 and to consider the effects of decision-making on future generations. The recent global shocks had only further illustrated the need for Our Common Agenda and its call for inclusivity and networking if the multilateral system were to maintain its relevance in the future. The Under-Secretary-General concluded that more needed to be done to overcome fragmentation in geopolitics and within multilateral institutions and to better connect the peace and security, development and human rights pillars.

18. In the discussion that followed, the Board echoed the observations that global governance presented a fundamental challenge and that the current system reflected the power dynamics of a very different era, not mirroring present geopolitical realities. It was observed that finding agreement on global conventions had become increasingly difficult and that normative standard-setting remained an important tool for engagement with different actors and stakeholders to create a common frame of reference. Against this backdrop, Our Common Agenda was perceived as an important opportunity for decision makers to exhibit leadership and adopt a longer-term approach to governance. United Nations system organizations could assist by providing Member States with strong, positive visions of the future.
19. A recurrent observation in the discussion was the need to build trust in institutions, including to strengthen governance, foster solidarity, support multilateralism and realize Our Common Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Members stressed that trust was easy to lose and difficult to rebuild. Different options to restore trust were identified, for example increasing the accessibility of data, opening and defending civic space, standing up for fundamental freedoms and taking steps toward a more equitable distribution of income. The Board emphasized the need to strengthen networked multilateralism and support reform efforts that aimed to increase participation and inclusion of marginalized groups, local and regional governments, and promote dialogue with civil society and the private sector. Giving greater weight to the collective interests of younger and future generations was also considered vital in preparing for the future, in particular against the backdrop of changing demographics.
20. The New Agenda for Peace proposed in Our Common Agenda was highlighted by CEB members as key to addressing the root causes of conflict, including non-traditional threats like climate change, and dealing with the negative aspects of new technologies and regulating weapons. It was noted that regional multilateralism was indispensable to political efforts on peace and security, in particular to protect nations against powerful non-state actors, and that the United Nations system could contribute to strengthening it. Our Common Agenda could be leveraged to help build stronger consensus on emerging drivers of conflict in order to factor them into peacekeeping mandates and the related resource allocations.
21. Referring to the digital world, Board members expressed concern about a general lack of regulation and standards on transparency of digital platforms' algorithms. Governing and harnessing digital data for the global good was considered a key governance challenge, as the power concentration increased, and digital and data divides continued to grow. It was observed that data governance was a politically sensitive subject, requiring a multidisciplinary approach, including human rights, privacy, security and economic aspects, to deal with the data divide and concentration of economic power.
22. Members also emphasized the role of governance in cyberspace. Anticipating problems and building processes in the short-term that would achieve long-term goals was considered crucial in dealing with cyber in intergovernmental processes. Recognizing the applicability of existing international law, members felt that it was essential to adopt a human-centered approach to cyber affairs, in particular to advocate for adherence to humanitarian law in cyberspace. Cyberspace was perceived as an area where the United Nations could become more active and visible as convenor and accelerator in promoting international agreements on security.
23. On outer space, the Board acknowledged that the United Nations was well-placed to deal with governance issues, given its strong track record over the past decades, and to bring the benefits of space to everyone and everywhere as part of the Global Commons.
24. Members recognized the impact of the United Nations system and underscored the need for its organizations to continue working in good faith and based on principles. Members welcomed that work on Beyond GDP, contributing to measuring and valuing what matters to people and the planet as part of the renewed social contract, had been

progressing well within the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP). It was recalled that the effort was rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG target 17.19) and that it was in support of Our Common Agenda. The Board agreed to work even closer together to help realize the Sustainable Development Goals in order to meet expectations that the United Nations system deliver as one in an integrated approach. It was also recognized that United Nations system organizations were embracing change in order to better serve a fast-changing world and be fit for the future. The role of the Board's High-level Committee on Management in helping to shape the next generation United Nations was highlighted.

25. Based on the experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was considered key to strengthen the organizations' communication capacities, also drawing on behavioural science. In view of increasingly common spread of mis- and disinformation, members called for redoubled efforts to ensure that United Nations data and other official statistics were trusted and available to monitor progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in countries.
26. In closing the session, the Secretary-General expressed appreciation for the insightful discussion and reiterated his appeal for synchronizing the work to realize Our Common Agenda with efforts of the United Nations system to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. He called for accelerating actions that were within the organizations' mandated authority and proceeding with implementation of initiatives that had received support from Member States.

#### **IV. Other matters**

##### **A. Tributes to Board Members**

27. The Secretary-General welcomed Mr. Masahiko Metoki, Director General of the Universal postal Union (UPU), Mr. Gerd Müller, Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Ms. Catherine M. Russell, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Mr. Mario Cimoli, Officer in Charge of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), who were attending a CEB session for the first time in their current roles.
28. The Secretary-General paid tribute to Mr. Guy Ryder, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO) and Mr. Gilbert Huongbo, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), who were attending a CEB session for the last time in their current roles.

##### **B. Endorsement of documents**

29. The reports of HLCP (CEB/2022/4) and of HLCM (CEB/2022/3) at their RESPECTIVE forty-third sessions were endorsed electronically outside of the CEB session.

##### **C. Date and venue of forthcoming sessions**

30. The Board members were reminded of the CEB second regular session for 2022 - scheduled to be held in person in New York, dates to be identified.

--