**Chief Executives Board
for Coordination**

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First regular session of 2024
Santiago, 2 and 3 May 2024

Summary of deliberations

I. Introduction

1.   The first regular session of 2024 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), chaired by the Secretary-General, was held at the Hotel Pullman Vitacura in Santiago on 2 and 3 May 2024.

2.   The Secretary-General welcomed the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Arsenio Dominguez, the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, Celeste Saulo, and the Acting Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Michal Mlynár, who were attending a CEB session for the first time.

3.   The session consisted of three segments, on the following themes: (a) the state of the world; (b) organized crime with a focus on governance and the rule of law; and (c) Summit of the Future: multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow. The session also included a presentation on addressing racism in the United Nations system.

4.   The present summary provides the highlights of the deliberations during the session.

II. Segment 1: state of the world

5.   The Secretary-General presented an overview of the current state of the world, reflecting on several global challenges, including climate change; the rise of digital technologies, in particular artificial intelligence; and growing inequalities and their impact on the multilateral system and on the work of the United Nations system. He underscored the critical role of the United Nations in responding to the many crises confronting the world, as well as the importance of upholding the Charter of the United Nations and universal values and principles, and of utilizing the convening power of the system to promote justice, peace and sustainable development.

6.   In the ensuing dialogue, Board members considered global economic trends and prospects, including in international trade; the current situation with regard to human rights and humanitarian affairs; and the state of affairs in relation to nuclear safety and security, disarmament and counter-terrorism. Members also reflected on the many challenges to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including

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environmental degradation, food insecurity and the rising debt burden of many developing countries.

III. Segment 2: organized crime with a focus on governance and the rule of law

7.   In opening the segment, the Secretary-General observed that organized crime was a severe global problem that undermined the capacity of governments and institutions to protect societies. In an environment in which it was increasingly difficult to distinguish organized crime from terrorism and where organized crime had a multiplier effect on other forms of violence, stronger international cooperation was needed, both to prevent crime and to strengthen the rule of law to combat it. The United Nations system needed to pay more attention to and place greater importance on fighting organized crime. The Secretary-General stressed the need to prioritize crime prevention, which would also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and for the United Nations system to work together to combat organized crime, with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in a central role.

8.   Moderating the discussion, the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed, characterized organized crime as a "silent war", which exacerbated conflicts and fuelled terrorism, with devastating effects on communities around the world. She recalled that the objective of the discussion was to focus on understanding the trends and politics, identifying gaps and finding solutions to address organized crime.

9.   The Board's deliberations were informed by presentations on organized crime and the rule of law delivered by the co-founder of the Igarapé Institute, Robert Muggah, the Executive Director of UNODC, Ghada Waly, and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Achim Steiner.

10.   Organized crime, which was omnipresent and yet often invisible, presented a major international threat that lacked a commensurate global strategy and constituted one of the most urgent and least understood challenges to peace and security, humanitarian action, human rights and sustainable development. Organized crime was worsening owing to three interconnected megatrends that accelerated and amplified the issue: hyperglobalization, digital transformation and rising geopolitical volatility. Organized crime was accelerating everywhere, with the majority of the global population living in countries that were experiencing high levels of organized criminality.

11.   It was noted that organized crime had undergone at least six major shifts: (a) it was increasingly transnational and diversified, overwhelming the capacity of police and justice institutions; (b) criminal groups were proliferating and fragmenting; (c) crime networks were infiltrating and subverting national and subnational institutions; (d) some governments were directly and indirectly sourcing products and services from criminal markets; (e) organized crime could generate perverse benefits and public goods, with millions of people depending on informal and illicit economies; and (f) organized crime was generating increasingly high rates of violence with cascading political, economic and social impacts. The shifts were notable for their implications for the design, development and deployment of solutions.

12.   In view of these shifts, the current global strategy on organized crime was viewed as disjointed, reactive and insufficient. To foster multilateral cooperation to confront the challenges of organized crime, a shared understanding of the rapidly evolving threats and the development of differentiated enforcement, criminal justice and prevention strategies at all levels was necessary. Trust had to be built between

police, justice, human rights and development institutions. The underlying structural challenges that enabled organized crime had to be addressed, and more resilient institutions and communities needed to be built. Value was seen in leveraging the convening power of United Nations entities to bring countries together and play a role in helping to build trust.

13.   Furthermore, it was observed that no country was immune from the effects of organized crime and that no country and no United Nations system entity could address the issue alone. Organized crime exploited gaps in the rule of law and governance and at the same time widened rule-of-law deficits and fed the conditions that enabled it, undermining stability and citizen security. In dealing with such a fluid and agile phenomenon, United Nations system entities had to work together and with governments to support them in responding to the complexity of the challenge. It was noted that there was no global formula for success, and approaches to addressing the issue needed to be context-specific.

14.   In the ensuing discussion, CEB members elaborated on various trends in relation to organized crime, noting that organized crime often emerged and thrived in ungoverned spaces and that in some instances actors in the public and private sectors actively colluded with organized crime to commit illegal activities, breeding corruption. Citizens were increasingly supporting hardline responses, in particular in regions where crime was perceived as the number one risk. It was observed that organized crime was enabled by sophisticated use of technology, which required better global predictive capabilities. Cyberattacks and cybercrime had reached all-time highs, and cybersecurity policies and investments had not kept pace with ever more sophisticated attacks.

15.   Members highlighted a range of impacts of organized crime, including on women, children and other vulnerable populations, on democracy and human rights, and on economies and trade. Organized crime was a multilayered issue that required a multilayered response, including identifying the root causes, adopting a human rights perspective and leveraging the full range of mandates of United Nations system entities. CEB members highlighted ongoing efforts to provide capacity development, technical assistance and policy advisory services in a wide array of areas, as well as to monitor and measure the economic impact of illegal trade in drugs, food and wildlife.

16.   Given that current solutions were not sufficient, it was asserted that it was necessary to rethink the approach, not merely redouble efforts. There was a web of multilateral frameworks that could benefit from better integration at the country and regional levels. CEB members supported the idea of its High-level Committee on Programmes looking at organized crime holistically, bringing the United Nations system together more coherently at a policy level and providing strategic guidance to country-level action.

17.   In terms of possible actions, Board members variously identified the need to provide more support to countries in implementing and enforcing the rule of law, bring the policymakers from the Global North and the Global South together to harmonize responses in the face of growing cross-border crime, and mobilize regional and subregional organizations to cooperate to address organized crime. There were also suggestions to engage local governments, institutions and actors in the design of comprehensive and integrated solutions, to generate more sex-disaggregated data to inform responses to organized crime, and to combat the drivers leading to organized crime by supporting better development interventions. Technology was identified as an important tool to fight organized crime.

18.   In their reactions to the discussion, the presenters noted the need to recognize the differentiated nature of organized crime and the differentiated capabilities of

State, non-State and civil society actors to address organized crime. The United Nations system was well placed to pursue opportunities to address some of the challenges and deficits. In particular, technology was highlighted as a game changer with the potential to help countries to overcome capacity gaps and accelerate and amplify solutions. The United Nations had a critical role as a long-term player that provided support to sustain integrated strategies to fight organized crime. Recalling that organized crime touched every United Nations system entity, the presenters stressed that significant work was already under way at different levels and in a wide array of contexts, and that it was important to connect the various initiatives. Indeed, the complex phenomenon of organized crime warranted more in-depth dialogue. Opportunities were identified for the United Nations system to consider developing a common position on organized crime, undertaking a stocktaking of the capabilities gaps and comparative advantages of the different parts of the United Nations system in this field of work, and preparing a periodic report on the topic.

19. In his concluding remarks, the Secretary-General observed that the problem of organized crime was complex and multidimensional and that many United Nations system entities were working to address it within their respective mandates but without a common strategy or platform. Consequently, he asked UNODC to lead a process to expeditiously prepare a concept note for the Executive Committee's consideration, proposing how the United Nations system could work together more coherently to tackle all components of organized crime, with a focus on governance and the rule of law. He stated that such a concept note could contain a proposal regarding the most suitable platform or coordination mechanism to take the work forward.

IV. Segment 3: Summit of the Future: multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow

20. The Secretary-General opened the segment by noting that his vision for the outcome of the Summit of the Future was one of the highest ambition. The Summit of the Future provided a pivotal moment to recognize the challenges and shortcomings of the multilateral system, acknowledge the need for change, initiate a process of transformation and indicate an orientation for future reforms. The Secretary-General stressed the importance of the United Nations system working together to present a common vision throughout the process, leveraging its convening power and capacity to support Member States to overcome obstacles and promote an ambitious outcome of the Summit.

21. The moderator of the segment, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy, Guy Ryder, provided an overview of the negotiation process and the stakeholder consultations for the Summit of the Future and its anticipated outcomes, namely, the Pact for the Future and the two annexes thereto: the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy noted that the majority of Member States had shown a deep appreciation for the benefits of multilateralism and a desire for a positive outcome of the Summit of the Future. He stressed the imperative for the United Nations system to maintain coherence in supporting the ongoing intergovernmental consultation process. The Action Days prior to the Summit would be important to create additional opportunities for stakeholder engagement. Lastly, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy stressed the importance of supporting Member States in carrying forward the momentum beyond the Summit of the Future and creating linkages to forthcoming events, such as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development, both to be held in 2025.

22.   In the ensuing discussion, members acknowledged that multilateralism was facing many challenges. At the same time, there was a recognition of the significant, global advances that had been made by the United Nations, and of the need to present alternatives to the often-critical image of the United Nations portrayed in mainstream media by showcasing its significant accomplishments. In fact, sustained progress had been made over many decades to improve the lives and livelihoods of the people the United Nations served. Thus, a balanced narrative was required that highlighted not only the challenges but also offered solutions and suggestions for the way forward.

23.   Members expressed hope that the outcome of the Summit would articulate a clear vision of a future that was green and more inclusive; supported the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; leveraged digital technologies for the greater good; and connected with forthcoming events, such as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development. The United Nations system organizations had a role in promoting an ambitious vision for the future and strengthening multilateralism. Members highlighted specific issues that they considered critical for the future of multilateralism and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and that they felt merited being addressed in the Pact for the Future, including: green and inclusive trade, demographic changes, green growth, the energy transition, urbanization, digitalization, climate change, financing for development and the reform of the development cooperation architecture. Furthermore, the need for the implementation of the Summit outcomes to be pursued at multiple levels was highlighted, and the roles of regional institutions and local actors were underlined.

24.   Members shared the view that outreach on the Summit of the Future needed to be improved and saw the need for a more effective communication strategy to promote the goals and ambitions of the Summit to a variety of stakeholders, including the general public. The need to widely communicate inspiration and ambition was stressed, not only in the lead-up to the Summit but also in its follow-up.

25.   Inspiring and gaining the trust of young people was seen as key to the success of the Summit. Consequently, the importance of engaging youth in the Summit was emphasized by several members. Young people were excited for the Summit and looking forward to participating meaningfully. It was also stressed that youth could play an important role in revitalizing the multilateral system.

26.   The need to advocate for strong language on gender equality and the empowerment of women to be mainstreamed throughout the five chapters of the Pact was underscored. In that context, broad engagement with Member States, as well as targeted technical support, would be important. In the outreach, it would be useful to demonstrate what had been accomplished for women and girls around the world, while pushing for further progress. The sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which would mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, was identified as another milestone in 2025 for advancing commitments made at the Summit.

27.   On the Global Digital Compact and artificial intelligence governance, several members noted that the Compact was an important opportunity for the United Nations to bring stakeholders together. The Compact had the potential to accelerate digital transformation, address the digital divide, and strengthen capacity-building initiatives. It was emphasized that the Compact needed to be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and promote a multi-stakeholder approach, notably in relation to artificial intelligence and data governance. Several members voiced support for anchoring the Global Digital Compact firmly and appropriately in the United Nations system and for drawing on existing expertise and institutions.

Different parts of the United Nations system had important contributions to make with respect to artificial intelligence governance, as indicated in the United Nations system white paper on artificial intelligence governance (CEB/2024/1/Add.1) that had been produced by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence of the High-level Committee on Programmes, and subsequently endorsed by CEB. The financing of digital transformation was noted as a critical component that could be further advanced at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development Conference.

28.   In his concluding remarks, the Secretary-General reiterated his call for the highest level of ambition in all negotiations, while ensuring that all voices, including those of civil society and young people, were heard and considered. With regard to the Global Digital Compact and artificial intelligence governance, he stressed the need for the capacity and expertise of the United Nations system and its leadership to be fully and coherently utilized to ensure that the most effective system was put in place following the Summit of the Future.

V.   Other matters

A.   Tributes to Board members

29.   The Secretary-General paid tribute to the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, Miguel de Serpa Soares, who was attending a CEB session as a member of his delegation for the last time.

B.   Presentation on addressing racism in the United Nations system

30.   The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, Catherine Pollard, and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Addressing Racism in the Workplace, Mojankunyane Gumbi, provided an overview of efforts to address racism in the United Nations system. The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance reminded Board members that, over the past four years, the United Nations Secretariat had embarked on a journey to combat racism and racial discrimination. She recalled the anti-racism architecture that had been put in place in the Secretariat, outlined in the Strategic Action Plan on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for all, and elaborated on the three-pronged approach to address interpersonal, institutional and systemic racism, based on advocacy, transparency and accountability.

31.   The Special Adviser noted that the mere mention of racism invoked feelings of pain, shame and denial, and indicated that the first step to address the problem was to seek to understand it, name it and interrogate it in order to find appropriate solutions. She reminded members that racism was a social construct, linked to the exercise of power or authority, and shared her enriching experience of engaging with United Nations leaders and staff who had embraced the transformative agenda. She concluded by encouraging leaders to be brave enough to be the light.

32.   In responding to the presentations, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, Natalia Kanem, outlined the Fund's engagement in efforts to end racism along a two-track approach that was inward-looking and outward-looking, and which included training programmes, data collection and collaboration with governments and civil society partners. She stressed the importance of advocacy and awareness-raising. In ensuing interventions, other members of the Board stressed the need to revise policies that were designed many years ago, noting that effective action against racism required training leaders, allocating adequate financial and human

resources, developing methodologies and collecting data, establishing accountability mechanisms, and pursuing cultural change and awareness-raising efforts.

33. In his concluding remarks, the Secretary-General requested principals to intensify concrete actions to dismantle and eliminate racism in their organizations.

C. Endorsement of documents

34. The report of the High-level Committee on Programmes on its forty-seventh session (CEB/2024/4), the United Nations system white paper on artificial intelligence governance (CEB/2024/1/Add.1), the United Nations system-wide strategy for water and sanitation (CEB/2024/1/Add.2) and the report of the High-level Committee on Management on its forty-seventh session (CEB/2024/3) were endorsed electronically outside the CEB session.

D. Date and venue of the forthcoming session

35. The Board members were informed that the second regular session of 2024 would be held in New York on 7 and 8 November.

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