



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

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Report of the High-level Committee on Management at its forty-ninth session

(3 and 4 April 2025, Food and Agriculture Organization of the
United Nations headquarters, Rome)

Summary

The forty-ninth session of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) was generously hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome on 3 and 4 April. The session was chaired by the HLCM Chair, the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, Catherine Pollard, and the HLCM Vice-Chair, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, Kelly Clements. The Vice-Chair of the International Civil Service Commission and the staff federations participated, as observers, in the two-day session.

At the heart of the session lay a discussion on transformative changes for a sustainable United Nations system. At its forty-eighth session, in October 2024, the Committee had examined how declining revenues, increasing demands and a shifting global financial climate were placing significant strain on organizations. As the situation deteriorated in recent months, the Committee acted swiftly to devise progressive and far-reaching efficiency measures. Under the overall framework of the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative, HLCM held a dedicated discussion on how organizations can tell the full story of what the United Nations system can do to adapt, modernize and deliver the best value for the resources invested in it by its stakeholders.

HLCM members heard interventions by external experts from Bain and Company, the National Shared Services Office of Ireland and Ernst and Young, presenting thought frameworks and concrete examples of successful transformational change in complex organizations.

The Committee then discussed a collection of key proposals for far-reaching efficiency measures, which had been gathered and assessed by HLCM members over the previous weeks. Discussions highlighted how, in times of increased pressure on the United Nations system, there is a clear need for ambitious and collaborative measures, especially in areas related to procurement, supply chain management, shared services, finance and human resources.



HLCM committed to rapidly implementing the most promising initiatives through the creation of “coalitions of the willing”, led by United Nations organizations with key expertise and resources in each area. The outcome of the present session will feed directly into the broader UN80 Initiative.

The Committee decided to reconfigure its Procurement Network as an end-to-end Supply Chain Network, with an expanded scope and with procurement as one of its key focus areas.

As a continuation of previous extensive deliberations on the sustainability of funding within the United Nations system, the Committee discussed the challenges associated with conditions attached to United Nations funding agreements and highlighted issues such as donor-imposed clauses conflicting with United Nations standards and values, burdensome administrative procedures and the risk of donor influence overshadowing the impartiality and neutrality of the United Nations.

To address these challenges, the Committee is developing a set of common principles to guide the United Nations system in negotiating funding agreements and is establishing a rapid response mechanism to address donor conditionalities in real time through systematic information-sharing, coordinated responses and collective engagement with donors. The Committee considers the mechanism to be not only a safeguarding measure but also a strategic negotiation tool to communicate the value proposition of the United Nations to donors. The final terms of reference for the rapid response mechanism would be ready by May 2025, before the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination session.

The Committee is also preparing for the adoption of sustainability reporting standards – a new accounting standard for climate-related disclosures focused on governance, strategy, risk management and metrics/targets, in which the United Nations may be expected to be a leader.

HLCM also turned its focus to the urgent and interrelated issues of the security, health and well-being of the workforce amid escalating global instability and tightening financial constraints. Members underscored that these challenges lie at the heart of United Nations operational effectiveness, especially as staff work amid increasing threats.

The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security presented a stark picture of the deteriorating security landscape, marked by unpredictability and blatant disregard for international law. He outlined the severe impact of a \$50 million funding shortfall on the Department of Safety and Security, including staffing cuts and withdrawal from lower-risk countries. The ongoing review of the United Nations security management system to adapt the system to current realities, led by Murad Wahba, would deliver preliminary recommendations by June 2025.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources spoke about mental health and psychosocial well-being and emphasized the growing psychological strain on United Nations personnel. She presented information on the progress made through literacy programmes and new risk assessment tools while calling for system-wide implementation and leadership engagement. The Chair of the United Nations Medical Directors Network raised concerns about access to healthcare, the risk of overreliance on outsourcing and the strain on mental health services.

The Committee acknowledged the gravity of the challenges and expressed support for ongoing reforms, recognizing that staff well-being is indispensable to fulfilling the United Nations mandate, even in an era of deep fiscal austerity.

Members heard a briefing by the Vice-Chair of the International Civil Service Commission on the progress of the comprehensive compensation review, which is aimed at ensuring that the United Nations remains a competitive and attractive employer while maintaining financial sustainability. The importance of data-driven, long-term strategies, particularly for technical roles and difficult duty stations, was emphasized. Staff federations underscored the impact on morale and mandate delivery, advocating for inclusive and evidence-based reforms. HLCM reaffirmed its commitment to continued collaboration, recognizing the critical role of a high-calibre workforce in achieving the mission of the United Nations in an increasingly complex global landscape.

The Committee took up the subject of ongoing efforts to combat sexual harassment across the United Nations system. The United Nations Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in the United Nations System, led by the United Nations Children's Fund, reported progress on key initiatives, including updated managerial guidance, a stakeholder communication road map and findings from a survey on policy implementation. Challenges remain in relation to consistent policy application, screening mechanisms and victim support, particularly amid financial constraints and job insecurity. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to sustained leadership, safe reporting spaces and cultural change to ensure zero tolerance for sexual harassment across the system.

The Committee noted the progress report on the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. Emphasis was placed on upholding the United Nations values of dignity, respect and non-discrimination. The Committee encouraged use of the Charter of the United Nations and the wording of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to express core principles, ensuring consistency and alignment with Member State expectations.

Committee members were updated on progress on the review of the United Nations International Computing Centre, conducted by a task force led by the Chair of the Digital and Technology Network. Members noted the importance of ensuring continuity in the provision of critical services to United Nations system organizations by the Centre while looking forward to receiving recommendations from the task force at the Committee's next session.

The Committee endorsed guidance on risk appetite statements, developed by the HLCM Risk Management Forum. The practical guidance will help United Nations organizations to identify, articulate and ratify, for their own planning and other decision-making, their appetite for risk-taking in pursuit of organizational objectives.

The Committee reaffirmed its sponsorship of the United Nations Digital ID programme as a strategic transformation that underpins the Organization's journey towards its eightieth anniversary. Committee members had already noted the high potential of the programme in achieving far-reaching efficiency gains during the session on transformative changes for the United Nations system and agreed to continue rolling out United Nations Digital ID to have an all-in-one digital solution for the whole United Nations family.

The Committee agreed to hold its fiftieth session on 30 September and 1 October 2025, at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination held its forty-ninth session in Rome on 3 and 4 April 2025, generously hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The meeting was chaired by the HLCM Chair, the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, Catherine Pollard, and the HLCM Vice-Chair, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, Kelly Clements.
2. The HLCM Chair welcomed new HLCM members as well as guests, including representatives of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the staff federations.
3. The agenda, as adopted by the Committee, focused on the following themes:
 - (a) Transformative changes for a sustainable United Nations system;
 - (b) Security, health, safety and well-being;
 - (c) Conditionalities of funding;
 - (d) Review of the United Nations system compensation package;
 - (e) United Nations Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in the United Nations System;
 - (f) Information items:
 - (i) Sustainability reporting for the public sector;
 - (ii) Review of the International Computing Centre governance structure, business challenges and opportunities;
 - (iii) United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy;
 - (iv) Risk Management Forum;
 - (v) United Nations Digital ID;
 - (vi) Inter-Agency Security Management Network.
4. The list of participants is provided in annex I and the checklist of documents in annex II to the present document.

II. Transformative changes for a sustainable United Nations system

5. The HLCM Chair introduced the topic with an initial presentation, observing how an increase in geopolitical tensions and major donors reconsidering their support result in financial strain for the United Nations system. In this context, crises are multiplying and deepening, resulting in the system's capacity to respond often being overwhelmed. These issues have an impact on lives and communities while producing uncertainty and emotional exhaustion among United Nations staff. The Chair stressed that the moment called for strong and decisive action to transform crises into opportunities, while ensuring the sustainability and credibility of the United Nations for future generations. In this context, HLCM will work closely with the UN80 Task Force launched by the Secretary-General.
6. The Committee was then shown the results of two surveys conducted among HLCM members, first to collect and then to assess proposals for far-reaching

efficiency measures for the United Nations system. The presentation highlighted 22 proposals arranged in a prioritization framework, based on feasibility and expected impact, for further consideration by the Committee.

7. This was followed by two keynote speeches by external speakers. A senior partner at Bain and Company, Simon Henderson, presented a thought framework for structural change, with examples of successful business transformations in the private sector, including extensive process automation and the redesign of operational models. Chief Executive of the National Shared Services Office, Bernie Kelly, presented a case study on the centralization of services in a public administration setting, highlighting the challenges incurred in implementation and key lessons learned.

8. Key proposals were then briefly presented by the respective proponents, after which a discussion followed, focusing on the areas that would constitute the highest priority and concrete steps for a potential way forward towards implementation.

9. The discussion highlighted how the largest efficiency gains could be achieved by seeking economies of scale in key areas such as procurement, information and communications technology, human resources and other shared services. While a fit-for-purpose approach is desirable in some instances, considering the complexity and diversity of United Nations system operations, the Committee agreed to explore possibilities for forming, merging or sharing common service functions. There was broad commitment to ensuring the sustainability of the United Nations system, as well as to any measures that can help system entities to focus on their core mandates and deliver for their beneficiaries in the most effective way possible.

10. Furthermore, it was observed that most efficiency initiatives could rely on the solid groundwork found in the extensive guidelines, approaches and toolboxes adopted by HLCM in the past, as well as on leveraging the vital work carried out in HLCM networks and communities of practice.

11. Particular attention was placed on the need to coordinate across efficiency initiatives that are being considered and prioritized across different forums within the United Nations system, to ensure that urgency in action does not lead to a duplication of efforts and a lack of interoperability in solutions.

12. HLCM members also heard from staff federations, who shared concerns about the multifaceted impact of the funding crisis on staff morale, well-being and job security. They thus stressed the importance of staff engagement in discussions related to efficiency measures, especially when they were to bear an impact on staff resizing, relocation or conditions of service.

13. A significant portion of the discussion was focused on procurement and supply chain processes as the main bridge connecting procurement expenses to beneficiaries and results. While it was recognized that some agencies are less operational in nature, the Committee noted how seeking further efficiencies in procurement is particularly urgent, and that optimization should be sought after in the context of a broader end-to-end supply chain. This would include considering upstream activities such as demand planning and category and vendor management, as well as downstream activities such as warehousing, shipment and logistics, commercial insurance and other related processes alongside core procurement activities.

14. The HLCM Chair noted with appreciation the Committee's response to the challenges posed by the funding crises and its clear commitment to reacting quickly, proactively and with a concrete action plan for the next steps.

Conclusion

15. The Committee acknowledged that the current financial crisis in the United Nations system calls for unprecedented swiftness of action, including in finding efficiencies, avoiding duplication and ensuring that United Nations system organizations stay focused on delivering on their mandates in the most efficient and effective way possible;

16. The Committee decided on a set of proposals for far-reaching efficiency initiatives to be taken forward in coalitions of the willing, each developed by one or several lead United Nations organizations in cooperation with participating entities. The HLCM secretariat would collect the interests of organizations in leading, participating in or being informed of these processes.

17. The Committee tasked leading organizations with presenting a working plan, including a feasibility outline, project requirements and a high-level implementation plan, within four weeks.

18. The Committee agreed to redefine the scope of the HLCM Procurement Network, broadening it and transforming it into a Supply Chain Network, which should operate with a more holistic approach, with procurement as one of its key focus areas.

III. Security, health, safety and well-being

19. The HLCM Chair introduced the item by stressing that the security, health and well-being of United Nations personnel remain central to the United Nations system's operational effectiveness and resilience. Against a backdrop of global instability and financial austerity, the Chair emphasized the importance of recognizing these domains not only as workforce support mechanisms but also as integral components of risk management and institutional sustainability. The Committee was invited to focus on four key aspects: emerging threats, shortcomings in support mechanisms, the need for system-wide coordination and embedding resilience across institutional strategies.

20. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, Gilles Michaud, presented a sobering overview of the evolving security landscape. Crises in several regions were cited as emblematic of the deteriorating global environment in which United Nations personnel are deployed. The United Nations currently faces high levels of unpredictability, compounded by actors increasingly disregarding international law. Against this backdrop, the Department of Safety and Security must contend with a 20 per cent reduction in its regular budget and a steep decline in extrabudgetary funding. These constraints will lead to significant adjustments to the Department's global footprint, including staff reductions and withdrawals from certain locations. Mr. Michaud urged HLCM members to provide clarity on organizational footprints, ensure flexibility in budget execution and support the application of human resources policies that enable the Department to retain critical talent. He also underscored the need to revisit danger pay and rest and recuperation entitlements to achieve efficiency gains while maintaining protection in high-risk areas.

21. The lead for the comprehensive review of the United Nations security management system, Mourad Wahba, outlined the evolving mandate and methodology of the review. The effort will assess the alignment of current security structures with contemporary operational needs, examining functional governance, budget models and varying risk tolerances across entities. Mr. Wahba noted that structural shifts since the establishment of the Department of Safety and Security, coupled with expanded field-based operations and growing humanitarian risks,

demand a recalibration of the security management system framework. Consultations are under way, and initial findings will be presented by June, with the timeline expedited in response to HLCM members' concerns.

22. The Chair of the Implementation Board of the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy, Martha Helena Lopez, provided an update on the Strategy's progress. The consolidated scorecard issued to organizations revealed varied levels of institutional readiness and practice. Key risks to staff mental health were outlined, including conflict-related trauma, financial anxiety and the inability to deliver on mandates due to resource constraints. Emphasis was placed on leadership communication and the role of managers in mitigating psychosocial risks. Recent outputs include guidance for navigating financial uncertainty, a mental health literacy programme and a psychosocial risk assessment tool – an evidence-based dashboard adopted by several entities. Ms. Lopez urged broader uptake and encouraged the inclusion of well-being indicators in managerial performance evaluations.

23. The Chair of the United Nations Medical Directors Network, Gloria Dal Forno, highlighted the complex structure of United Nations medical support, with over 160 clinics globally and multiple systems for clinical, occupational and emergency care. While affirming the indispensable role of in-house medical and mental health services, especially during emergencies such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, areas for optimization were acknowledged. The fragmentation of service models, growing reliance on outsourcing and disparities in insurance coverage were raised as key challenges. The speaker called for a coordinated, expert-led review of medical facilities and underlined the need for investment in joint resources such as emergency medical response teams and unified digital systems. Proposals for efficiency included revisiting mandatory medical examinations, consolidating medical evacuation contracts and expanding the use of shared tools such as the United Nations-wide health survey.

24. In the ensuing discussion, HLCM members broadly acknowledged the criticality of maintaining robust security and staff support systems despite financial constraints. Several participants cautioned against outsourcing mental health services, citing the need for United Nations-specific expertise and trauma-informed care. Members expressed concern over the implications of security drawdowns, particularly for field-based and humanitarian operations, and urged transparent prioritization. The importance of collective inter-agency planning was emphasized, alongside calls to preserve staff incentives such as danger pay and rest and recuperation in high-risk duty stations.

25. Strong support was expressed for the mental health strategy, with members citing the effectiveness of the psychosocial risk assessment tool and mental health literacy training. Participants stressed the need to equip managers with skills to support staff and address generational and cultural shifts. On the health front, there was agreement that medical clinics should be reviewed, but that closures must be evidence-based and coordinated within the United Nations system. Members also urged the acceleration of the review of the United Nations security management system, calling for initial recommendations by the middle of the year.

Conclusion

26. **The Committee reaffirmed the central importance of staff safety, health and well-being as institutional priorities and risk management imperatives.**

27. **The Committee welcomed the ongoing review of the United Nations security management system and requested a preliminary set of recommendations by June 2025.**

28. The Committee took note of the planned footprint adjustments to the Department of Safety and Security and committed to providing timely data on the operational presence to support security planning.

29. The Committee expressed continued support for the implementation of the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and encouraged uptake of the psychosocial risk assessment tool.

30. The Committee recognized the need to rationalize and modernize United Nations medical services through a review and asked the United Nations Medical Directors Network to identify the most critical aspects to be assessed.

IV. Conditionalities of funding

31. The Chair introduced the agenda item as a continuation of the Committee's discussions at the forty-eighth session on funding challenges in the United Nations system, emphasizing its direct link to the broader issue of financial sustainability of the system. Building on previous exchanges, the Chair recalled concerns about the growing complexity of donor-imposed conditions, including incompatibilities with United Nations operational standards, administrative burdens and the risk of undermining the neutrality and impartiality of United Nations system organizations. The Committee was invited to consider two key initiatives: the development of common principles for the United Nations system related to donor conditionalities; and the establishment of a rapid response mechanism to address such challenges in a coordinated and timely manner.

32. The United Nations Controller presented an overview of the current funding environment, noting a marked increase in contributions with restrictive or problematic conditions attached to them. While the issue is not new, the Controller observed that recent geopolitical developments and shifting global alliances have brought sharper conditionalities tied to domestic policy frameworks. He characterized these conditions as potentially legally tenuous, politically sensitive, operationally impractical and administratively burdensome.

33. An update was provided on the progress made by the Finance and Budget Network in defining a set of common principles for the United Nations system related to donor conditionalities. The work has been structured in two phases: a first set of high-level principles reflecting the shared values of United Nations system organizations, followed by a second set of practical, annotated guidance to help agencies to manage specific conditions while ensuring consistency in communication. The Network underlined the need for collective positioning to protect the operational independence of the United Nations system, particularly for entities with limited administrative capacity or negotiating leverage.

34. A representative of the United Nations Population Fund, the co-lead of the HLCM task force to develop terms of reference for a rapid response mechanism on donor conditionalities, presented the proposed terms of reference for the mechanism. The mechanism is intended to foster early information-sharing among entities, provide coordinated advice on appropriate responses and, where suitable, support collective engagement with donors. While the mechanism will not be a decision-making body, it will enable agencies to align their positions when faced with complex or sensitive requests to accept conditions. The terms of reference envision a rotating co-chair arrangement and a network of designated focal points with cross-functional expertise. The mechanism will also draw on the common principles being developed by the Finance and Budget Network and will leverage existing inter-agency initiatives

as appropriate, such as workstreams of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee related to donor conditions.

35. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee expressed strong support for both the common principles and the rapid response mechanism. There was broad recognition of the increasing pressure on agencies to accept conditions that may compromise core United Nations principles or operational independence. Members underscored the value of a shared, system-wide mechanism that can facilitate timely coordination, promote consistency, and enhance negotiating leverage. The importance of designating appropriately empowered focal points and ensuring real-time information flow was emphasized, as was the need for agility in the mechanism's design and functioning.

36. The potential for the mechanism to serve not only as a safeguard but also as a strategic platform to facilitate negotiation was widely supported and seen as essential in promoting coherence and avoiding fragmented responses. The Committee noted that a number of existing initiatives across the United Nations system, including in humanitarian coordination and donor engagement, could be leveraged to enhance the impact of the mechanism.

37. The need for the close involvement of legal, financial, audit and investigation experts in the work of the mechanism was also highlighted, alongside a call for the mechanism to contribute to strengthening the collective voice of the United Nations and reinforcing communication of its value proposition.

Conclusion

38. The Committee emphasized the importance of consistency in managing funding conditionalities and supported efforts to strengthen the collective capacity of the United Nations system to negotiate and communicate with, and respond to, donors;

39. The Committee endorsed the terms of reference for the establishment of a rapid response mechanism for donor conditionalities, subject to revisions raised during the meeting, and agreed that approval of the final version of the terms of reference would be sought virtually by email prior to the first session of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2025;

40. The Committee accepted the nomination made by the United Nations Population Fund to co-chair the mechanism for the first year of its operation, and called on HLCM members to nominate a second co-chair;

41. The Committee took note of the progress made in drafting common principles related to conditionalities of funding for the United Nations system and requested the Finance and Budget Network to finalize the draft and submit it to HLCM for endorsement prior to the next session.

V. Review of the United Nations system compensation package

42. The Vice-Chair of ICSC gave a briefing to participants on the work currently undertaken by the Commission, including the current status of the comprehensive review of the compensation package. He informed the Committee that ICSC had recently concluded the review and update of the United Nations standards of conduct, and provided information on the deliberations at the main session of the Fifth Committee during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly. The compensation review was progressing as intended, with the aim of balancing financial sustainability with the need to maintain the attractiveness of the United Nations

system as an employer. Highlights from the recently concluded working group meeting and the spring ICSC session included further discussions on how best to support disability inclusion, as well as discussions on the adjustment of entitlements in the case of long-term remote working arrangements. Lastly, the recent Noblemaire study confirmed the United States of America civil service as the comparator while a reference study with other international organizations was still under way.

43. The representative of the Human Resources Network thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Commission for the constructive collaboration in the review so far and pointed out the need for further data- and evidence-driven decision-making in the review. He stressed the need for the review to be driven by longer-term competitiveness perspectives, in particular for highly technical profiles that are needed for organizations to deliver their mandates and drive the current transformation initiatives. This view was seconded by various Committee members and the Chair. The representative noted that the previous compensation review had already led to significant savings that translated into reductions for staff benefits and take-home pay. The results of the recent Noblemaire reference study with other international organizations were expected to serve as a useful indication for the positioning of the United Nations common system in this specific labour market.

44. Staff federations emphasized the need for the United Nations system to remain an employer of choice, in particular in difficult duty stations. They highlighted the impact of the current situation on staff morale, cautioning against further reductions to the package as a risk for mandate delivery by organizations. The federations stressed the need to consider the diversity of the workforce in the discussions, as well as aspects of mental health and disability inclusion, and advocated for evidence-based decision-making in the entire course of the review. Federations renewed their commitment to active collaboration in the course of the review.

45. In the ensuing discussion, various Committee members highlighted the fact that programme delivery is achieved by people, and employer attractiveness must be maintained to recruit and retain the high-calibre workforce that the United Nations system needs in the present challenging times. Technical agencies reported on current challenges in recruiting people for specific occupations and pointed out the need for high-calibre staff to conduct the necessary transformative initiatives. Others highlighted the need to ensure a focus on the situation in deep-field locations, pointing out the need to further facilitate posting and mobility in such difficult places.

46. The HLCM Chair concluded by thanking the ICSC Vice-Chair for his engagement, committing to further active collaboration by the organizations. She also highlighted the challenges ahead, reiterating the Committee's expectation for a long-term view on competitiveness and programme delivery. She recalled that the United Nations operated in the most difficult places, where many other humanitarian organizations were reducing their footprint or closing down. Competition for high-calibre talent was increasing globally, not only in the most developed countries.

Conclusion

47. The Committee expressed appreciation to the ICSC Vice-Chair and to the staff federations for their constructive engagement in the current phase of the compensation review;

48. The Committee reiterated that the comprehensive review of the compensation package was seen by the Committee as a long-term effort to maintain and enhance the United Nations system's employer attractiveness and ability for mandate delivery, which it deemed critical in the current challenging environment;

49. The Committee confirmed its commitment to continue its engagement, through the Human Resources Network, with all stakeholders involved in the review, including through the ad hoc Human Resources Network working group and by participating in and contributing to forthcoming ICSC working groups.

VI. United Nations Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in the United Nations System

50. The HLCM Chair reaffirmed that the prevention of and response to sexual harassment remains a standing and critical agenda item for HLCM. While acknowledging the systemic efforts made to strengthen response mechanisms, the Chair emphasized the collective focus on fostering safe and respectful environments across the United Nations system and stressed the need for continued attention, especially in a context of financial constraints and contract insecurity, which may deter victims and witnesses from speaking out.

51. The Chair of the United Nations Executive Group to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Harassment in the United Nations System provided an overview of progress under the Group's workplan for 2024–2025. Since the previous update, the Group has advanced several workstreams and produced several tools to support system-wide efforts. Among the most notable developments was the forthcoming release of an updated guide for managers, designed to provide practical steps and considerations for addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. In addition, the Group is developing a road map for stakeholder communication and engagement, which compiles internal and external messaging approaches and highlights good practices across entities.

52. Variability in the use of vetting tools, particularly for non-staff personnel, was noted as an area requiring further system-wide alignment. The Executive Group also began conducting “deep dive” sessions on emerging priorities, with the first focused on creating safe environments. A pilot initiative by the United Nations Children's Fund on this topic, including focus groups, generated strong interest and prompted inter-agency collaboration at the country team level.

53. Members expressed appreciation for the leadership and sustained efforts of the Executive Group. Interventions from HLCM members and staff federations highlighted the importance of embedding a culture of zero tolerance for sexual harassment, irrespective of contract type or location. Several members emphasized the importance of leadership accountability and communication to reinforce staff trust and safety in speaking out. Entities shared ongoing initiatives, such as the development of campaign materials, staff theatre sessions and manager training focused on victim-centred approaches. Strong support was expressed for expanding the use of ClearCheck, as well as for enhancing participation in the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme. Members also noted that current organizational transitions and resourcing constraints may exacerbate the risk of the occurrence of sexual harassment and must be taken into account in prevention efforts.

54. In conclusion, the Committee welcomed the progress made by the Executive Group and reaffirmed the centrality of this agenda item for the United Nations system. The Committee requested a further update from the Group at its next session. Lastly, the Committee reiterated that efforts to combat sexual harassment must be sustained and visible, particularly in times of institutional change.

Conclusion

55. **The Committee took note with appreciation of the progress update on the Executive Group's work and requested a further progress update at its fiftieth session.**

VII. Information items**A. Sustainability reporting for the public sector**

56. The Committee received a short briefing on the new sustainability reporting requirements that will come into effect for United Nations system organizations once the new standard on climate-related disclosures is approved by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board. Sustainability reporting for the public sector will include requirements for climate-related disclosures focused on governance, strategy, risk management and targets. The Finance and Budget Network has coordinated with the Greening the Blue initiative to provide feedback on the Board's exposure draft, and will have further in-depth discussions at the Network's next session on preparations for the adoption of sustainability reporting and the associated implications, challenges and opportunities.

Conclusion

57. **The Committee took note of the ongoing discussions within the Finance and Budget Network in preparation for the adoption of sustainability reporting standards and requested an update on the developments at its next session.**

B. Review of the International Computing Centre governance structure, business challenges and opportunities

58. Established at the previous HLCM session, the International Computing Centre task force – led by the Chair of the HLCM Digital and Technology Network, Bernardo Mariano Junior – was tasked with recommending ways to strengthen the Centre's effectiveness, review its cost structures, broaden business representation on the management committee and assess the Centre's operational challenges and opportunities.

59. Mr. Mariano Junior gave a briefing to the Committee on discussions, delving deeper into the Centre's legal, procurement and governance aspects and business model. Two workstreams – on procurement and legal aspects, and on governance and the business model – were informed by recent stakeholder surveys. An interim update was provided, noting forthcoming industry engagement organized by the United Nations Advisory Alliance and additional consultations with original signatories to the memorandum of understanding with the Centre.

60. Participants in the discussions emphasized the need for careful change management, expanded information and communications security services, clear data and intellectual property ownership in contracts and clarity on the role of business representation within the Centre's governance structure. There was consensus on the importance of maintaining the Centre's stability in delivering core services.

61. The task force will continue its analysis before submitting its final recommendations.

Conclusion

62. The Committee took note of the interim report and looked forward to discussing options identified by the task force during its next session.

C. United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

63. The Committee acknowledged the advancements achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. Specifically, the Committee noted the progress made by the Sub-working Group on Disability Inclusion across its various workstreams, including disability-inclusive human resources, disability-related medical aspects, digital accessibility and technology, and the accessibility of conferences, meetings and event services.

64. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that, at its fiftieth session, it would receive a comprehensive report detailing the progress made, along with a presentation of proposals for the Committee's consideration. This will facilitate an in-depth five-year evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy.

Conclusion

65. The Committee took note of the progress report of the Sub-working Group on Disability Inclusion.

D. Risk Management Forum

66. The Committee considered updated guidelines for risk appetite statements, to be used as a practical guide to help United Nations organizations to identify, articulate and ratify, for their own planning and decision-making, their appetite for risk-taking while pursuing organizational objectives. The guidelines were developed by the Risk Management Forum, which meets quarterly and aims to facilitate system-wide harmonization of risk management practices.

Conclusion

67. The Committee endorsed the 2025 update to the risk appetite statement guidelines, to be used as a practical guide to help United Nations organizations to identify, articulate and ratify, for their own planning and other decision-making, their appetite for risk-taking in pursuit of organizational objectives.

E. United Nations Digital ID

68. The Committee received a written update on the progress of the United Nations Digital ID programme, which is playing a critical role in addressing data fragmentation across the United Nations system. Digital ID is helping to align processes and operations with the Organization's broader vision of unity and transformation, supporting the UN80 Initiative and the United Nations 2.0 agenda. Since the successful launch of phase 1 in June 2024 – enabling retiring staff to instantly share verified data with the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund – the programme has demonstrated significant value. Pension processing times have been reduced from weeks to just days or minutes. Phase 2, which includes use cases related to BSAFE security training and inter-agency movement entitlements, is well under way and on track to go live in June 2025.

69. Initial returns on investment are already clear. Manual workloads have decreased significantly, benefiting both individual staff and administrative teams by streamlining tasks, reducing errors and eliminating outdated processes such as reconciliation and email-based data-sharing. Looking ahead, the next phase of the initiative is aimed at unlocking even greater value through features such as digital wallet-enabled payments, seamless United Nations premises access and single sign-on. These far-reaching ideas were presented to HLCM and will be considered and developed by the programme's executive steering committee.

70. Committee members voiced overall support for and interest in finding out more about joining the programme, while emphasizing the need for more clarity on the total cost of ownership. Staff federations also voiced their appreciation for being engaged in the development and adoption of the United Nations Digital ID solution, while requesting to be consulted from the onset when new use cases are developed.

71. The Committee was asked to take note of the written progress update and to support continued coordination across the six participating organizations and HLCM networks. Other organizations were encouraged to join, and a group of interested organizations will be convened as part of the Committee's far-reaching efficiency proposals. The United Nations Digital ID programme will provide another update at the Committee's fiftieth session.

Conclusion

72. The Committee took note of the progress of the United Nations Digital ID programme.

73. The Committee requested the United Nations Digital ID programme to continue its work in extending the digital transformation solution to new business scenarios to realize far-reaching efficiency gains and in expanding to other organizations across the United Nations system.

F. Inter-Agency Security Management Network

74. The Inter-Agency Security Management Network submitted the report of its forty-first session for consideration and endorsement by the Committee, along with a revised policy on the United Nations security management system personnel information management system.

Conclusion

75. The Committee agreed that any comments on the report of the forty-first session of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network and on the revised section on the United Nations security management system personnel information management system in the Security Policy Manual would be considered as approved by the Committee.

VIII. Dates and venue of the next session

76. HLCM accepted with appreciation the kind offer by the International Atomic Energy Agency to host the Committee's fiftieth session in Vienna on 30 September and 1 October 2025.

Annex I

List of participants

Chair of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM): Catherine Pollard (Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, United Nations Secretariat)

HLCM Vice-Chair: Kelly Clements (United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees)

HLCM Secretary: Remo Lalli (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) secretariat)

CEB Secretary: Maaïke Jansen (CEB secretariat)

Organization	Participant
United Nations	
Department of Safety and Security	Gilles Michaud (<i>remotely</i>)
	Unaisi Lutu Vuniwaqa (<i>remotely</i>)
	Mourad Wahba (<i>remotely</i>)
Office of Information and Communications Technology	Bernardo Mariano Junior
Office of Programme Planning, Finance and Budget	Chandramouli Ramanathan (<i>remotely</i>)
Office of Human Resources Management	Martha Helena Lopez
Department of Operational Support	Lisa Bittenheim
	Giovanna Ceglie
Office of Legal Affairs	Kathryn Alford (<i>remotely</i>)
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Jens Wandel
	Arnab Roy
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Justin Brady (<i>remotely</i>)
	Jean Verheyden (<i>remotely</i>)
Department Coordination Office	Larai Musa
International Labour Organization	Hao Bin
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Maurizio Martina
	Aiman Hija
	Serge Nakouzi
	Rodrigo de Lapuerta
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Jennifer Linkins (<i>remotely</i>)
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Tim Martineau (<i>remotely</i>)
World Health Organization	Raul Thomas (<i>remotely</i>)
International Civil Aviation Organization	Arun Mishra

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Participant</i>
Universal Postal Union	Louise Razafy
International Organization for Migration	SungAh Lee Andrea Verhas (<i>remotely</i>)
International Telecommunication Union	Stephen Bereaux Fei You
World Meteorological Organization	Thomas Asare
International Maritime Organization	Liya Dominic
World Intellectual Property Organization	Andrew Staines Alex Zegrea
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Guoqi Wu Yann Kervinio
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Yuko Yasunaga
International Atomic Energy Agency	Margaret Doane Peter Frobel
United Nations Development Programme	Linda Maguire David Bearfield
United Nations Environment Programme	Soomi Ro
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Hans Baritt (<i>remotely</i>) Catty Bennet Sattler (<i>remotely</i>)
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Antonia De Meo
United Nations Children's Fund	Hannan Sulieman (<i>remotely</i>) Flaminia De Agostini
United Nations Population Fund	Andrew Saberton Mona Khurdok (<i>remotely</i>)
World Food Programme	Rania Dagash-Kamara Sara Adam Robert van der Zee
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/United Nations Office at Vienna	Ann de la Roche
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	Justin Bonongwe
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	Kirsi Madi Mitushi Das

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Participant</i>
United Nations Office for Project Services	Sonja Leighton-Kone
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat	Chhaya Kapilashrami
World Bank	Maria Dimitriadou (<i>remotely</i>)
International Monetary Fund	Brian Christensen
World Trade Organization	Alison Holmes
	Andrew Rizk
Other representatives	
International Trade Centre	Dorothy Tembo
	Philip Compte
United Nations System Staff College	Miguel Panadero
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Uday Dayal
International Criminal Court	Ivan Alippi
United Nations Volunteers	Toily Kurbanov
International Computing Centre	Massimiliano Merelli
United Nation Medical Directors	Gloria dal Forno
International Civil Service Commission	Boguslaw Winid
Federation of International Civil Servants Associations	Wadzanai Garwe
	Silvia Mariangeloni
Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System	Giammichele Demaio
	Uktamjon Shomurodov
United Nations International Civil Servants Federation	Karin Esposito
	Narda Cupidore
United Nations Representatives of Internal Audit Services	Julie Nyang'aya

Annex II

List of documents

	<i>Title/description</i>	<i>Document symbol</i>
	Revised provisional agenda	CEB/2025/HLCM/1/Rev.2
A	Report of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) survey on proposals for far-reaching efficiency measures	CEB/2025/HLCM/2
	Comprehensive list of far-reaching efficiency measures collected through the HLCM survey in March 2025	CEB/2025/HLCM/14
B	Terms of reference for the comprehensive review of the United Nations security management system	CEB/2025/HLCM/3
	United Nations System Mental Health Strategy for 2024 and beyond: progress report (revised)	CEB/2025/HLCM/4/Rev.1
	Mental health and well-being of United Nations personnel: key messages for discussion	CEB/2025/HLCM/4/Add.1
	Briefing note by the United Nations Medical Directors	CEB/2025/HLCM/5
	Progress update on the United Nations occupational health and safety mechanism	CEB/2025/HLCM/6
C	Draft terms of reference for a rapid response mechanism for donor conditionalities	CEB/2025/HLCM/7
	Update on the drafting of common principles related to conditionalities of funding	CEB/2025/HLCM/8
D	Briefing note by the Human Resources Network on the review of the compensation package by the International Civil Service Commission	CEB/2025/HLCM/9
F.a	Finance and Budget Network: United Nations common system feedback on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board exposure draft on climate-related disclosures	CEB/2025/HLCM/FB/1
F.b	Progress report by the HLCM task force on the review of the International Computing Centre	CEB/2025/HLCM/10
F.c	Progress report of the Sub-working Group on Disability Inclusion	CEB/2025/HLCM/11
F.d	Guidelines on risk appetite statements: 2025 update	CEB/2025/HLCM/12
	Guidelines on risk appetite statements	CEB/2025/HLCM/12/Add.1
F.e	Building a United Nations identity and paving the way to its eightieth anniversary: progress report on the United Nations Digital ID programme	CEB/2025/HLCM/13
F.f	Final report on the forty-first session of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network	Not applicable
	United Nations security management system Security Policy Manual: revised United Nations security management system personnel information management system	Not applicable