UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

CEB

Chief Executives Board

for Coordination

CEB/2025/HLCM/HRN/10

12 December 2025

Summary of Conclusions of 48ᵗʰ Human Resources Network Directors Retreat

I. Opening and Welcome

1. The Human Resources Network (HRN) held its 48th session from 13 – 15 October 2025, hosted by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva. The meeting, held in hybrid retreat format, was co-chaired by Ms. Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General, Human Resources, UN Secretariat, Mr. David Bearfield, UNDP, Ms. Catty Bennet Sattler, UNHCR, Mr. Peter Frobel, IAEA, and Ms. Adelaide Barbier, WIPO.

2. The agenda was adopted as reflected in the table of contents.

3. The list of participating organizations and their representatives at the meeting is provided in Annex 1.

4. The Co-Chairs announced personnel changes among the organizations and welcomed new participants to the HR Network session.

5. During an open mic session, the participants exchanged views on current priorities and highlighted the areas of thematic interest to guide the work of the HRN in 2026.

II. Briefing from Recent HLCM Session, Including HLCM Efficiency Initiatives

6. The aim of this session was to brief the Network on the recent 50th High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) session and the HLCM efficiency initiatives.

7. The Secretary of the HLCM encouraged the HRN to follow the ongoing discussion on review outcomes of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS), the International Computing Centre (ICC), and the Medical Services Optimization (UNMD) as the HLCM is likely to seek input from the HRN in November 2025.

8. In the subsequent deliberations, the Network members shared their view on the presented initiatives and agreed to continue discussions on specific aspects during the designated agenda slots over the following two days.

9. Ms. Catty Bennet Sattler provided the HRN with a debrief of the HLCM breakout session, along with the suggestion that the HRN formulate actionable recommendations to support the HLCM conclusions in time for the spring session of the HLCM in 2026.

10. In the ensuing deliberations, the Network's members shared initial reflections on the presented initiatives.

11. *Conclusion: The HRN agreed to*
    a. *continue the discussions with additional input from subject-matter experts to ensure the development of well-informed recommendations.*
    b. *initiate a workforce composition focus group based on the HLCM request.*
    c. *Support the agreed HLCM Contact Group on Compensation Review, as appropriate.*

III.   Joint Session with FBN Members

Outlook at Expected Funding Situation and Associated Workforce Adjustments in 2026

12. The goal of this session was to strengthen the exchange between the two Networks. The HRN Co-Chair welcomed the Finance and Budget Network (FBN) members following which the FBN Co-Chair delivered a presentation entitled *Delivering Under Pressure: UN System Leadership in the Current Context of Financial Constraints, Reform Imperatives and Challenges to Multilateralism*.

13. The HRN Co-Chair presented findings from the HRN Workforce Adjustment Survey, noting that half of the responding organizations had not yet implemented staff reductions, though many anticipate future impact.

14. UNFPA and UN Women shared detailed experiences of relocation and restructuring efforts, including phased relocation strategies, career support initiatives, and lessons learned regarding cost modeling and staff engagement.

Joint HRN/FBN Panel Discussion

15. Panelists from UNHCR, WFP, ILO, and UNFPA reflected on lessons from recent funding cycles and proposed strategies for future workforce agility.

16. The key themes of the discussion included:
    a.   The shift in donor behavior from partnership to performance-based funding.
    b.   The need for workforce models that thrive in uncertainty and volatility.
    c.   The importance of balancing short-, mid-, and long-term planning.
    d.   The challenge of maintaining strategic workforce planning amid structural changes.

17. Panelists emphasized the need for closer collaboration between HRN and FBN to align workforce planning with dynamic funding realities and proposed bold reforms to enhance system-wide agility and sustainability, e.g. in executive search or performance assessments.

18. Further, the panelists welcomed a culture shift towards embracing the necessary changes and taking decisive and timely action.

Dedicated Structured Experience Sharing Sessions around Workforce and Organizational Alignments

19. This session provided a platform for members to share practical experiences and lessons learned from recent workforce and organizational alignment initiatives. WHO, UNHCR, WMO, UNFPA, and UN Women presented their respective approaches to restructuring, relocation, and strategic workforce planning in response to financial constraints and reform imperatives.

20. The CEB Secretariat presented system-wide workforce composition trends. Comparative analysis across organizations showed varied approaches to agility and workforce structure, with implications for future planning and interagency collaboration.

21. *Conclusion: the HRN agreed to continue experience sharing through dedicated interest groups and collaborative platforms.*

Summary and Wrap-Up

22. *The HRN Co-Chair thanked participants and FBN members for their active engagement and sharing of experiences throughout the day.*

23. *Conclusions: The Co-Chairs of HRN and FBN agreed to consider and propose feasible and efficient means of exchange between the Networks.*

IV.   Recap and Follow-Up from Day 1

24. The morning session resumed discussions from the previous day, focusing on workforce composition and contractual modalities across the UN system.

25. The discussion focused on evolving contract modalities and the tension between flexibility and institutional stability. Participants highlighted structural shifts toward fixed-term arrangements, increased outsourcing to streamline processes, and efforts to make affiliate roles more attractive while avoiding rushed benefit changes.

26. Key concerns included balancing security with adaptability, addressing perceived inequalities, and defining frameworks for core and peripheral roles. The need for clear recommendations to HLCM and a strategic approach aligned with market realities, financial constraints, and organizational priorities was emphasized.

V.   Exchange with JIU on Upcoming Review of Recruitment Practices

27. The aim of this session was to inform the HRN on the scope and objectives of the ongoing JIU Review of Recruitment practices across all 28 JIU organizations and to exchange views on early insights. To this effect, Inspector Hoshino presented the current approach to teh review and invited HRN participants to a dialogue on the topic.

28. The following discussion focused on systemic inefficiencies, the need for greater harmonization, and how to balance competitiveness, flexibility, and organizational priorities while addressing resource constraints.

29. *Conclusions: The HRN thanked the JIU inspector for the informative exchange and confirmed its willingness for further constructive engagement during the review.*

VI.   ICSC Compensation Review – Review of Positioning, Communication, and Next Steps; Implementation of Local Salary Survey Results

30. The goal of this session was to strengthen alignment on compensation policy decisions across the HRN.

31. The CEB Secretariat provided a recap of recent Local Salary Survey results and ongoing compensation discussions, noting significant changes in certain duty stations and the introduction of external data as a pilot approach for the first time.

32. The following exchange focused on operational, legal, and political implications, including angles on methodology implementation such as phasing in increases, managing costs, and ensuring consistency across duty stations. Participants emphasized growing pressure for cost containment, the need to safeguard competitiveness and fairness, and the importance of coordinated messaging to legislative bodies and member states. Clear, accessible messaging supported by robust data was seen as critical to counter misconceptions and maintain trust while adapting to evolving expectations.

33. *Conclusion: The HR Network agreed to*
    a. *discuss local salary implementation challenges in a separate technical videoconference.*
    b. *Continue the dialogue with staff federations on the compensation review.*

VII.   Artificial Intelligence and How It Will Concretely Affect (or Support) HR Operations

34. This session featured a presentation by Microsoft that aimed at informing the HRN on AI developments and their potential impact on HR processes.

35. The following discussion emphasized phased adoption, readiness for organizational change, and the importance of clear strategies to integrate AI as a complement to human roles. Participants noted the need for cost considerations and proactive preparation to leverage AI responsibly and effectively across HR functions.

VIII.   How to Leverage UN Digital ID for Greater Efficiencies

36. This session provided an update on the UN Digital ID initiative and its role in creating a secure, system-wide identity platform to streamline HR processes and inter-agency mobility.

37. The discussion emphasized the benefits of a unified digital identity for efficiency and cost savings, while addressing challenges related to funding, adoption, and communication.

38. Participants highlighted the urgency of collective commitment, the need to illustrate clear business cases, and the importance of framing Digital ID as a strategic enabler for a more connected UN system.

39. *Conclusion: The HRN agreed to*
    a. *actively pursue joining the UN Digital ID.*
    b. *request the CEB Secretariat to liaise with the UNDID project management to provide the relevant information and communication material for internal communication.*

IX.   CIPD Workshop: Navigating Challenges and Change as HR Leaders

40. This session featured a workshop facilitated by external experts from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), focusing on navigating organizational challenges and change as HR leaders.

41. The discussion explored developments in AI and emerging trends in public sector HR, examining their implications for the UN system. Participants emphasized the importance of adaptive

leadership, strategic workforce planning, and clear communication to manage complexity and position HR as a driver of transformation.

X.   Update on Current Work and Plans of UN System Staff College

42. This session featured a presentation by the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) on its role as a system-wide learning hub, emphasizing agility and resilience in times of crisis.

43. In the following discussion, the participants stressed the importance of scalable solutions, competitive offerings, and stronger engagement with HR leaders to align learning initiatives with organizational priorities.

44. *Conclusions: the HRN members agreed to*
    a. *thank the UNSSC for its presentation.*
    b. *invited the UNSSC to share the current pricing information with the HRN.*
    c. *sdisseminate the free courses offered by UNSSC with their staff.*
    d. *connect UNSSC with the HRN Community of Practice (CoP) Learning, as appropriate.*

XI.   Inter-Agency Mobility Discussion

45. The goal of this session was to explore options for improving inter-agency mobility and to gauge interest in establishing a working group (WG)

46. During the discussion, the participants acknowledged that the current agreement has served the system well but highlighted challenges such as inconsistent application, unequal burden sharing, and lack of clarity for staff.

47. Rather than a full review, participants stressed the need for a gradual, framework-based approach to address pressing issues without reopening the entire agreement.

48. *Conclusions: the HRN members agreed to*
    a. *Establish a WG on interagency mobility including FBN colleagues to review the existing agreement along:*
        i. *Landscaping the current state.*
        ii. *What can be done in the future.*
        iii. *What needs to be implemented.*
    The WG should make recommendations for interim improvements in implementation of the agreement and propose the any amendments to the agreement as needed.

XII.   Follow-Up Discussion on HR-Related HLCM Efficiency Initiatives

49. The goal of this session was to discuss the HR1 HLCM efficiency initiative and explore practical next steps.

50. The lead agency, UNDP, noted that initial work as started by the related CoP such as common job descriptions, mapping systems, and early career programs would currently benefit from broader consultation to elicit the largest common interest in specific efficiency initiatives.

51. Participants recognized the potential general benefits of more harmonized recruitment tools and corporate-level branding, while acknowledging cost constraints, complexity of meeting

diverse organizational needs across the UN system, and the need for scalable approaches. The discussion emphasized building momentum through incremental steps.

52. *Conclusions: the HRN members agreed to request the CoP Recruitment to identify areas in Recruitment that can be advanced for further efficiencies.*

XIII. AOB, as Appropriate, Including UNDSS Review and UNMD Paper on Partial Disability

53. Based on the HLCM request of HRN input on the UNSMS review, the HRN discussed the proposed scenarios.

54. While opportunities for improvement were highlighted, concerns about rising costs were noted, underscoring the importance of balanced recommendations.

55. *Conclusions: the HRN members agreed to*
    a. *discuss UNDSS Review options with respective Controllers, concentrating on upgraded training, job descriptions, and their general position on the four options.*
    b. *request the UN Secretariat to share information on the Safety Net to increase the recognition of rosters.*

56. In the second part, the HRN discussed the UNMD paper on partial disability.

57. The Network emphasized the need for a close collaboration with UNMD.

58. *Conclusions: the HRN members agreed to*
    a. *Discuss the UNMD review paper with their respective controllers.*
    b. *Invite the UNMD Group Co-Chairs to a joint videoconference on topics of partial disability and return to work, in preparation of a full joint discussion between UNMD and HRN.*

59. Further points noted under AOB prompted agreement on maintaining coordination and ensuring timely follow-up.

60. *Conclusions: the HRN members agreed to*
    a. *collect what "good HR practices" look like across the UN System.*
    b. *circulate the workforce diversity paper for feedback and subsequent finalization.*
    c. *request all HRN CoP and the Field Group to provide an activity update and 2026 workplan.*

List of Participants

Organization	Name and Title
UN Secretariat	Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
	Nataliya Myronenko, HR Director UNOG
UN Tourism	Paolo Velasco, Chief, Human Resources
UN Women	Prasun Chakraborty, Director, Human Resources
UNAIDS	Stephan Grieb, Director, Division of People and Culture
UNDP	David Bearfield, Director of the Office of Human Resources in the Bureau for Management Services
	Irina Stavenscaia-Botezatu, Deputy Director, OHR/UNDP
UNESCO	Otilia Gisca, Head of HR Policy Development and Coordination
UNFCCC	Masaharu Jesse Kakumoto, Chief, HR Management
UNFPA	Arturo Pagán, Deputy Director
UNHCR	Catty Bennet Sattler, Director, Division of People Management
	Diego Ruiz, Deputy Director - Division of Human Resources
UNICC	Frederic Laval, Chief. HR
UNICEF	Filiz Aktas, Chief, HR Policy, Employee Relations and Social Benefits
UNIDO	Micheal Conneely, Director, Human Resource Management
UNOPS	Valerie Kushata, Director, People & Culture Group
UNRWA	Paolo Bernasconi, Director HR
UNV	Naoual Driouich, Chief, UN System Affairs, UNV
UPU	Louise Razafy, Director of Human Resources
WFP	Robosa Gbinoba, Director Human Resources
WFP	Camilla Dupont, Chief, HR Policy & Compliance
WHO	Jasna Arsic-Dapo, Manager, HR Policy
WHO	Patrick Cronin, Coordinator, HR Policy and Internal Justice
WIPO	Adélaïde Barbier, Director, Human Resources Management Department
	Yamfwa Chinyanta, Senior Manager Employee Experience Unit
WMO	Johannes Kratzheller, Chief, HR
WTO	Alison Holmes, Director – Human Resources

CDB	Filip Borkowy, Advisor to the Director, Human Resources and Administration
CTBTO	Joo Young Hong, Senior HR Policy and Coordination Officer
	Juliana Gomes Lacchini, Human Resources Officer Legal and HR Policies
FAO	Serge Nakouzi, Director, Human Resources Division
IAEA	Peter Frobel, Director of Human Resources
ICC	Stefanie Küfner, HR Legal and Policy Officer
IDLO	Cornelia Moussa, Director of Human Resources and Office Services
IFAD	Stella Atela, PCD (HR) Director
ILO	Danielle Guiho, Director, Human Resources Development Department
IOM	Michael Emery, Director, Department of Human Resources
IPU	Aushee Malika Gupta, Legal and HR officer
	Andrée Lorber, Director of the Division of Support Services
ITC	Helen Kwon-Karaul, Chief of HR
ITU	Maria Traficanti, Chief Human Resources Management Department
	Lyndsey Bochaton, Strategic HR Policy Advisor
OAS	Joao Daniel Freitas da Silva, Human Resources Director
OPCW	Katherine Hummel, Human Resources Director
OSCE	Mariam Kakkar, Human Resources Director
PAHO	Jorge A. Ballestero, Human Resources Management Director
PAHO	Sarah Arneson, Human Resources Specialist
The Global Fund	Andreas von Richthofen, Manager HR Business Partnering
CEB	Michael Rosetz, Senior Inter-Agency Adviser on Human Resources / Coordinator, Human Resources Network
	Ioanna Kopasaki, Associate Expert (JPO)

FBN participants in the joint session

Organization	Name and Title
UNFCCC	Frank Rauch, Budget Team Lead
UNOPS	Karl Soll, Chief Financial Officer
ICAO	Olga Nam, Chief, Finance Branch
UNFPA	Iva Goricnik Christian, Comptroller and Director, Division for Management Services

Organization	Name and Title
WMO	Brian Cover, Controller
UNHCR	Hans George Baritt, Controller and Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management
FAO	William Marvin, Deputy Director, Finance Division
FAO	Aiman Hija, Director and Treasurer
IAEA	Helen Brunner de Castris, Director, Chief Financial Officer, Division of Budget and Finance
WIPO	Chitra Narayanaswamy, Director, Department of Program Planning and Finance (Controller)
CEB	Laura Gallacher, Senior Inter-Agency Adviser on Finance and Budget / Coordinator, Finance and Budget Network
IAEA	Ivica Pepovski, Section Head (Programme and Budget)
ILO	Adnan Chughtai, Treasurer and Financial Comptroller and Director

Presenters

Organization	Name and Title
JIU	Toshiya Hoshino, Inspector
	Hwa Hyun Min, Associate Expert
	Fernanda Verissimo Soule, Associate Evaluation and Inspection Officer
Microsoft	Jivtesh Singh, Architect, Microsoft – Tech for Social Impact
	Jean-Francois St-Pierre, Account Executive, Microsoft - Tech for Social Impact
UNSSC	Miguel Panadero, Acting Director
CIPD	Mohinder Dhiman, Account Director UN & Europe
	Adam Stanbury, Head of Employer Solutions