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Excellencies, colleagues, distinguished members of the Executive Board,

Once more, it is an honour to speak to you all.

In my statement today I will focus on a range of issues, including updates on our operations, ongoing reforms, and our new Strategic Plan - which guides how we will bring practical solutions to our partners.

I will also highlight how our efforts will complement those of the broader UN to deliver effectively for communities at a time of growing needs.

CONTEXT:

Our operations, reforms, strategic direction and the solutions we deliver, respond to the global context that we find ourselves in.

We live in a world that is the most violent it has been since the second World War -- and we know that wars hinder efforts to deliver the promise of sustainable development.

Our planet is facing escalating climate chaos

The global economy is slowing,

Trade tensions are rising.

And inequalities are growing.

At the same time, mounting mistrust is eroding support for multilateralism.

And many countries are scaling back development budgets.

This is the background from where we support the UN's efforts to serve people everywhere.

UNOPS Strategic Plan 26-29, and our reforms are geared to support the system-wide push to drive efficiencies and sharpen impact, to be more relevant and more fit for purpose.

But before focusing on our reforms and Strategic Plan, let me share some examples of how our practical solutions deliver action on the ground, where it is needed most.

OPERATIONS:

Allow me to start, as I have done in recent Executive Board sessions, with our work in Gaza, where words are failing to capture the scale of human suffering.

Here, we are enabling others to deliver, providing the operational backbone, under some of the most complex and constrained conditions anywhere, to help the UN system and its partners reach people in need.

My colleagues continue to manage the 2720 [UN mechanism](#) to facilitate, coordinate, monitor and verify humanitarian relief consignments to Gaza, when we are allowed to do so.

Since the partial lifting of the aid blockade on 19 May 2025 until 19 August 2025, over 67,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid have been brought into Gaza processed through the UN2720 Mechanism, via the southern Kerem Shalom or northern Zikim crossings, including over 57,000 tonnes of food.

These figures represent supplies entering Gaza that have been verified as humanitarian aid through the 2720 Mechanism, dispatched to civilian destinations inside Gaza, along with unique tracking codes for monitoring. This is in line with the functions mandated by the Security Council.

Other supplies enter Gaza outside of the coordinated humanitarian system, when Israel allows, including commercial goods.

Our reporting reflects verified humanitarian aid processed through the 2720 Mechanism. The Mechanism stands ready to track other entries into Gaza that are being permitted by the Israeli side. But to do so, we require consistent presence of our 2720 monitors at the crossing points. To date, the vast majority of attempts to deploy to crossings and staging areas are still being denied.

As our data show, interception of the aid that does get into Gaza remains a huge challenge. Some two thirds of aid is looted inside Gaza before it can reach its destination - a clear sign of how desperate the situation has become. Contrast this with the ceasefire period when aid entered predictably and at scale: looting then was close to zero.

In line with its mandate to expedite, streamline and accelerate aid delivery, the UN2720 Mechanism this week supported the first successful sailing of an aid vessel as part of the Cyprus Maritime Corridor.

This is a crucial step against a background of huge needs. We thank the Republic of Cyprus and all partners for the collaboration on this initiative.

Another key system enabler in Gaza is our continued work on fuel procurement and distribution to keep life-saving services running. Between 9 July - when we were allowed to resume delivery of fuel - and 19 August, 95 trucks of fuel have entered Gaza.

Fuel, as you know, underpins humanitarian operations in Gaza. It keeps hospitals functioning, ambulances running. It allows bakeries to function and it is crucial to water and sanitation facilities.

Our colleagues do their work despite heavy risks.

Since I last addressed this board, our premises in Central Gaza were once again hit in a military offensive in Deir al Balah. Luckily, staff were not killed or injured this time - and we managed to relocate them after a few days. But the attack damaged our buildings, cut power lines and disrupted water supplies.

This is the same deconflicted location struck by a tank round in March this year when a UNOPS colleague was killed and six other colleagues were injured.

Aid workers must be protected. Parties to the conflict must abide by international law, including in relation to the safety and security of UN personnel and premises.

Humanitarian responders in Gaza need unfettered humanitarian access across the Strip, so we can respond to the catastrophic humanitarian situation.

Along with the UN family, I continue to call for an immediate permanent ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and the rapid, unhindered, and safe humanitarian relief for all civilians in need.

Moving to **Ukraine**, 3.5 years have passed since the start of the full-scale invasion, our team is on the ground to strengthen community resilience and provide urgent aid.

With funding from Korea, we are delivering passenger buses to communities in the Sumy region, improving transport connections and making sure vehicles are in place for emergency evacuations.

In the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions, we recently completed repairs at 10 schools, as part of a project funded by the European Union. As the new academic year approaches, thousands of children will be able to attend classes offline again.

Additionally, together with the World Bank, we are working to establish and equip 60 mental health spaces at healthcare facilities across the country. With a professional psychologist on duty, they bring mental health services closer and make them an everyday thing.

In **South Sudan**, we work to build resilience and support vulnerable households by providing cash transfers and access to jobs. We do this as part of a four-year World Bank-funded project that aims to benefit 157,500 vulnerable households, including refugees and host communities, across 20 selected counties. This work allows us to support vulnerable households through labour-intensive works and direct income support, to promote food security, restore livelihoods, and build community resilience. It also includes providing economic opportunities for young people to empower them, while also enhancing the government-led institutional capacity and social protection system in the Republic of South Sudan.

And in **Afghanistan**, four years after the Taliban takeover, the needs remain immense, with women and girls pushed to the margins. The humanitarian crisis is worsened by conflict and economic instability and frequent climate disasters including floods and droughts. In addition, the 1.5 million Afghans forcibly returned from Iran and Pakistan in this year alone are facing significant challenges re-establishing lives and livelihoods in Afghanistan.

We are committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan in these challenging times. Together with our partners and donors, we're working with communities to address urgent needs, build resilience, create livelihood opportunities, providing hope and dignity in the face of hardships.

This includes our work as part of the Afghanistan Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project, which is funded by the World Bank and the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund. So far, this has led to over 9,500 kilometres of roads rehabilitated in rural and urban areas, improving access to essential services for over 14 million people, half of whom are women. Most of this is being done through a cash-for-work programme, providing temporary incomes to communities. Local

solutions are at the heart of this approach - where the communities are empowered to lead their own recovery, for fairer and longer-lasting progress.

Alongside this, Awaaz Afghanistan serves as a lifeline for people in need. Through its toll-free hotline, communities can access critical information, provide feedback on aid, and safely report issues such as gender-based violence or exploitation. Since its establishment in 2018, Awaaz has handled more than 612,000 calls, reaching over 4.2 million people and strengthening accountability by sharing feedback with over 220 humanitarian agencies. This work is built on strong partnerships, including multiple UN agencies, such as OCHA, UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, IOM, WFP and UNHCR.

Delivering as one with the UN family is at the heart of our approach.

In one example from **Yemen**, with funding from the World Bank's International Development Association, we are working with UNICEF, WHO and local stakeholders to provide vital water and sanitation services to more than 2.5 million people.

In **Costa Rica**, we rely on the strong partnership with UNDRR to strengthen the country's approach to resilient infrastructure. Here, we work together to drive resilient reconstruction by promoting the continuity of critical functions, sustainability and inclusivity. So that critical infrastructure can recover quickly after disasters. In this approach, UNDRR will contribute technical expertise to integrate resilience and the Sendai Framework into planning, and analyze disaster risk data for recommendations. UNOPS is providing technical assistance, including planning, monitoring, reporting, and communication. Together, we can improve decision-making and governance for reconstruction projects through the integration of risk analysis and inclusive, resilient infrastructure practices.

And in Greater Tripoli in **Libya**, we work with UN-Habitat to build capacities for plastic waste management. Here, with funding from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, we are working with communities in three municipalities to reduce plastic waste, promote sustainable waste management practices, improve recycling infrastructure, and raise awareness about the impact of plastic pollution.

In another example of our implementation support, we provide platforms for multilateral action for the SDGs.

One example is through the Ocean Coordination Mechanism. This is a ground-breaking regional governance platform for the wider Caribbean, that brings together countries, intergovernmental

organizations, and regional stakeholders to address shared marine opportunities and challenges.

Marine resources of the Wider Caribbean are shared among a total of 44 States and Territories, of which 16 are Small Island Developing States. So in all these areas - coordination is key.

Across the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems, the Mechanism is providing an inclusive platform to share knowledge, align actions and make the best use of limited resources. It is driving collaboration to find solutions - in areas such as sustainable fisheries, pollution control, biodiversity conservation, marine spatial planning, and climate-resilient blue economies.

Similarly, UNOPS is partnering with the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank and regional governments to help protect the Black Sea by reducing pollution and supporting sustainable development in the region. Designed as a regional platform, this \$6 million project, implemented in close coordination with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, strengthens the capacity of governments and the private sector in Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Türkiye to safeguard the sea, with plans to expand to other Black Sea nations in future phases.

And finally - an example from our efforts to strengthen access to health services. In **Ecuador**, UNOPS supported the procurement of 311 advanced ambulances, which were delivered to the Ministry of Public Health and the country's social security service, enhancing access to critical health services across the 24 provinces of the country.

An efficient procurement process resulted in savings of 16%, allowing for the procurement of an additional 30 ambulances and consequently multiplying the benefits for the population. Since the first deliveries 10 months ago, more than 9000 emergency calls have been responded with the support of these ambulances —providing emergency aid to traffic accidents, health complications, prenatal emergencies and other emergencies.

Across all of these examples - our focus remains on offering practical solutions to improve lives and livelihoods.

Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Our new Strategic Plan further underlines our commitment to supporting our partners to implement projects, and deliver for communities around the world.

This new plan - which guides our efforts from 2026 to 2029 - is rooted in our expertise in supporting partners to implement projects, providing infrastructure, procurement and project management services.

Over the past 30 years - we have proudly offered our partners practical solutions across development, humanitarian and peace efforts.

We want to build on that experience - to scale up and speed up impact through our practical solutions.

In doing this - we will stay true to our role:

As a non-programmatic service provider

Driven by demand from our partners

And operating on the basis of full cost recovery.

UNOPS does not receive any core funding.

Our focus is on implementation -- on practical solutions.

Our focus is on responding to the needs of our partners, both within the United Nations family and beyond.

And we are keen to bring our implementation focus to other sister agencies and entities which have a normative function, so that we can bridge implementation gaps and deliver peace and stability, sustainable development and climate action.

This is a model that is fully aligned with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (79/226).

It responds to the complexities of our current global development context - supporting our partners to deliver sustainable development and climate action.

By offering agile, efficient and cost-effective implementation services, we help our partners deliver on the Pact for the Future.

UN80

Distinguished delegates,

UNOPS is fully committed to supporting the Secretary General's UN80 initiative.

We believe it is both crucial and urgent - to improve efficiency and efficacy, both to respond to needs but also to reinforce the value of multilateralism, at a time of mounting needs and fragile confidence.

Both myself and my team are heavily involved in various workstreams of the UN80 initiative, building on our ongoing support for the Secretary General's reform agenda.

I am personally heavily invested in conversations on structural change and programme realignment - and as you may know I co-coordinate the development system cluster, one of the seven thematic clusters under the UN80 Task Force.

We are also actively engaged in the operational efficiency workstream. UNOPS supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Business Innovations Group (BIG), which works to maximise programmatic gains by promoting efficient back-office operations. My colleague Sonja Leighton-Kone co-chairs the BIG.

We are also fully involved in the work towards Common Back Offices (CBO), as a service provider but also as a service recipient where possible. And UNOPS chairs the CBO Task Team.

And of course, our active involvement in the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) is another indication of our commitment to improve UN processes. UNOPS leads on five of the HLCM's 22 far-reaching efficiency initiatives, and participates actively in many more.

Strategic Plan designed to support UN80

Our Strategic Plan 26-29 further underpins this commitment to support the UN80 Initiative.

It is my firm belief that integration is key to these efforts.

To succeed, it is imperative for UNOPS - and for other sister agencies - to find a better way to integrate policy, financing and implementation.

We recognize that other entities are also engaged in implementation.

But we live in a world of mounting needs and shrinking official aid and development resources, where the UN system is called on to achieve more with less.

To respond at the scale and pace required, we need a dynamic market for services across development, humanitarian and peace efforts, so we can drive efficiencies in the UN system's support for countries and the people we serve.

Our self-financing and operational model- as you know- is distinctive in the UN system.

To this system, we bring our unique strengths, to help derisk implementation, and increase impact.

We bring our agility, cost-effectiveness and reach.

We bring our ability to scale our presence up or down quickly to meet demand, support the Resident Coordinators and the UN system, and respond in emergencies, even where UNOPS is not resident in a country.

We bring our partnership expertise, our ability to connect public and private partners for implementation, including in special or fragile situations, across development, humanitarian and peace work.

And we bring our capacity to manage platforms for multilateral networks that accelerate the SDGs and climate action.

Throughout - we ensure transparent, efficient, and cost-effective use of resources through a fee-for-service model with full cost recovery.

Our focus is **on finding alignment, complementarity and collaboration** - to ensure that across the UN family we can deliver effectively in this crucial moment.

Over the past years, we have consistently relied on - and benefited from - our engagement with UN Resident Coordinators, to ensure alignment so we can better support national and international development priorities.

As we move forward, we are committed to building a more systematic approach to manage for impact, so we complement our measurement and delivery of "outputs", with attention to outcomes. So we don't just report on the number of schools built, but on pupils that benefited from them. Not just on kilometres of road, but of the people who as a result had better access to local markets and schools and hospitals.

REFORMS

We are building on the learnings and the success of our ongoing reforms.

Over the past three years, UNOPS has undertaken extensive reforms to enhance our operational effectiveness, risk management, and overall governance structure.

Our reforms have been truly wide-ranging: from establishing a more robust governance and management system and improved oversight, to better risk management, strengthening our organizational culture, overhauling our whistleblowing processes, and a more transparent approach to financial and performance reporting.

In doing this - we responded to third-party recommendations. The Comprehensive Response Plan - developed together with our Executive Board - guided our efforts.

But we went beyond these - because we believe that in a healthy organization - reforms and continuous improvement are an ongoing necessity.

We have completed the Comprehensive Response Plan.

A third-party review of our reforms recognized the "meaningful progress" made by UNOPS and said the Comprehensive Response Plan can be considered completed.

But we do know - and the third party assessment confirms - some areas of action are long-term by their very nature.

They continue to be at the heart of reforms and transformation at UNOPS.

Simply - we are going beyond the recommendations of the Comprehensive Response Plan in our reforms.

We are reviewing our entire legislative framework and further strengthening our enterprise risk management framework.

We are implementing an enhanced accountability framework.

We are embedding practices for outcome-based reporting and managing for impact.

And we will continue to prioritise crucial efforts to transform our organizational culture - which underpins all our actions.

As we move to deliver our new Strategic Plan- we are also paying attention to our business model and adapting. We want to optimize aspects to ensure that we are fit for purpose.

My colleagues will shortly elaborate on various aspects of our ongoing reforms - in their respective updates on the Comprehensive Response Plan and our multi-year Process Innovation and Digitalization (PID) programme.

Across all of these reforms - we are committed to being part of the joint effort to make our multilateral system more effective and well-suited to respond to today's challenges.

Implementation Gap

Distinguished delegates,

There is no sugarcoating this - our multilateralism system is in trouble, in a world facing an unprecedented period of transition.

This is impacting the development cooperation system as we know it.

Two of its pillars—policy and financing—both anchored in strong multilateral cooperation, are rapidly shifting.

A third and crucial, yet often overlooked pillar of sustainable development cooperation is implementation.

Implementation is where policy, intent and financing converge in practice.

It is about achieving tangible sustainable development and peace outcomes for communities around the world.

For our collective development agenda and multilateralism to succeed, sound, effective and impactful implementation is central.

Because effective implementation can help restore trust in the effectiveness of the multilateral system to deliver global public goods, in a world where trust is in deficit.

And if these debates sound academic - our joint failure to implement and deliver has a very tangible impact on the lives of millions of people around the world.

Around 750 million people lack access to electricity.

Almost [700 million people](#) (8.5 percent of the global population) live in extreme poverty.

About 4.5 billion people - half of the planet - were [not fully covered](#) by essential health services. And one in four people on earth live in [fragile and conflict-affected countries](#).

We owe it to these people to bring our house in order - to deliver on the promise of peace and sustainable development for all.

I feel passionate about this topic - not just because UNOPS has a sole focus on implementation.

But because- in a time of shrinking trust and resources - effective implementation can restore trust in the multilateral system, and help us make good use of resources within and particularly beyond ODA.

Against all odds - there is renewed energy for multilateral solutions.

Last year's adoption of the Pact for the Future highlighted this momentum.

Earlier this year in Nice, we saw more countries ratifying the High Seas treaty, and further progress in reducing plastics and tackling illegal fishing in our seas.

In July in Sevilla, we saw cautious hope - and a commitment to reforming the international financial architecture and addressing the development financing gap.

And as we look to the crucial COP30 in Belem, we look forward to seeing ambitious national plans to help us collectively limit global heating to 1.5C above preindustrial levels -our last chance to make this a reality.

These are challenging times - but also moments of huge opportunity.

Channeling the collective energy of the multilateral system into results for people requires effective implementation.

For 30 years, UNOPS has been focused on action.

And at times of great upheaval and opportunity, we at UNOPS see our role as supporting global efforts to deliver peace, sustainable development, and climate action.

In this, we are driven by hope and determination.

Peace is possible.

Delivering prosperity for the people and the planet is possible.

These are choices to be made.



And UNOPS stands ready to support our partners in making those choices real.
By offering practical solutions, for a more peaceful, fair and sustainable world.