

**Statement by Jorge Moreira Da Silva
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to UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board Annual Session
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr President, honorable members of the Executive Board,

It is a pleasure to join you today.

In my statement today, I will outline details on our operations and reforms, sharing some highlights from our work over the past year.

As we look to our next Strategic Plan cycle from 2026-2029, I will also discuss our vision for the future. This is based on how we will bring practical solutions to respond to the needs of our partners and communities around the world, while supporting the United Nations in efforts to become more effective, nimble, and coordinated, at a time of great uncertainty.

Allow me to start with the moment that we find ourselves in.

As geopolitical tensions rise and wars rage

As the climate crisis continues - while news headlines have shifted away,

As inequalities mount and the debt crisis for developing countries deepens, leaving limited resources for sustainable development.

The annual financing gap for developing countries has reached about \$4 trillion.

And progress on the Sustainable Development Goals has all but stalled, with only 17 percent of targets on track.

Mr President - we are living in a truly unique moment of time.

Fraught with challenges. Filled with opportunities.

The Pact for the future represents one such opportunity, for countries, together, to accelerate changes for a better world.

Simultaneously, our collective responses across humanitarian, development and peace and security operations, are suffering from a proliferation of wars and conflicts not seen in decades

And in parallel, we see funding contexts reshaping the multilateralism that should be the bedrock of coordinated action, for the benefit of all, on our shared planet.

In the face of these challenges, UNOPS continues to focus on action. On making tangible changes to peoples' lives, through our practical solutions.

This year in fact marks 30 years of our practical solutions:

Building schools, hospitals and roads.

Bringing clean energy to left-behind communities.

Bringing critical supplies where they are most needed.

Supporting peace and security efforts.

Helping countries and communities drive climate action.

In short - implementation. Work to improve lives and livelihoods.

From Gaza to Ukraine. From Yemen to Myanmar.

From Afghanistan to Sudan. From Haiti to Somalia and Ethiopia.

We are committed. We are resilient. And we are driven by a determination to “get the job done”, no matter how challenging the context.

But Mr President, these are difficult times.

Only two months ago, we mourned our colleague Marin Marinov, killed by an Israeli military assault on UNOPS premises. Nine others, including six other UNOPS colleagues were also injured in this incident. Last year, we lost another colleague - Loai Yaghi and several members of his family in Gaza - following an airstrike.

As you are all aware, attacks against humanitarian premises are a breach of international law. Over 300 United Nations workers have been killed in Gaza since the conflict began.

Despite these losses, we remain committed to supporting civilians in Gaza.

Honourable members,

Reports from recent days have shown Palestinians killed and injured while seeking aid in Gaza. This is unacceptable.

Aid is simply not negotiable. It cannot be conditional on political and military aims. Humanitarian principles are non-negotiable.

We need immediate and unimpeded entry of assistance at scale to meet the enormous needs in Gaza.

We need our UN colleagues to be allowed to work in safety and security under conditions of full respect for humanitarian principles.

We already have a mechanism to do this.

The UN 2720 Mechanism - that UNOPS manages- is there to expedite, streamline and accelerate the delivery of aid into Gaza. It is recognised by the key stakeholders and broader international community. It is mandated by the Security Council.

It is a proven mechanism that, during the first phase of the ceasefire, worked to temporarily alleviate the suffering of the population.

As a reminder, UNOPS is also focused on the delivery, monitoring and distribution of fuel, and with the UN Mine Action Service, working to mitigate explosive hazards to safeguard critical humanitarian aid efforts.

During the brief ceasefire- 42 days, we delivered more than a million litres of fuel per day to enable the humanitarian response.

And we facilitated the delivery of almost 37,000 tonnes of supplies through the UN 2720 Mechanism.

Even during the brief window to resume delivery of aid into Gaza last month, my UN2720 Mechanism colleagues worked day and night to support the humanitarian response in Gaza.

We worked with our sister agencies in Gaza to supply fuel to bakeries that worked with limited flour. To power hospital generators. To move ambulances.

To do this, our team ran convoys to the destroyed areas and evacuation zones. Operating at great risk to access our fuel storage tanks.

However, all fuel retrieval missions have been denied since 25 May and accessible fuel supplies are now running critically low.

Since 25 May, all attempts to deploy UNOPS humanitarian aid monitors to the Kerem Shalom/ Karem Abu Salem crossing have also been denied by the Israeli authorities.

Mr President

I was in Gaza in February 2025, during the ceasefire, when thousands of trucks were flowing in.

At that time- when aid was flowing- the needs and the scale of the devastation were so immense, that a humanitarian catastrophe was fully visible.

Since then, the situation has gone from catastrophic to beyond imagination.

We have a system in place. It works. But we need the conditions that allow us to do what we are there to do. To support humanitarian relief for all civilians in need.

I echo calls for a lasting ceasefire, to release all hostages, to end all hostilities, and to allow for rapid, unhindered, and safe humanitarian relief. This atrocity must stop.

Honorable delegates,

Beyond Gaza, examples abound of the relentless commitment of my colleagues to deliver for communities around the world.

Our annual report - which lays out our practical solutions for people and the planet over 2024 - speaks to this commitment.

Last year, my colleagues implemented over 1,100 projects across more than 130 countries.

We supported over 200 partners, delivering about \$2.7 billion in goods and services for peace and security, humanitarian and development efforts.

Collectively, our efforts created 14 million days of paid work for local people. Two million days of this paid work was undertaken by women.

We constructed, designed or rehabilitated 113 schools.

We designed, built or rehabilitated 682 km of roads.

And we built or rehabilitated 23 hospitals and health clinics.

Together, we procured \$1.7 billion worth of goods on behalf of our partners.

Responding as a United Nations

In an increasingly violent and unstable world, two thirds of our work took place in special or fragile situations.

Allow me to share some examples.

In **Ukraine**, over three years into the war, my colleagues continue to respond to needs.

They improve access to healthcare, renovate schools, refurbish homes, keep buildings warm, and help to reduce the threat of explosive ordnance.

In 2024, UNOPS in Ukraine procured over 65 million dollars worth of goods and services. Over 90% of our contracts were with Ukrainian suppliers.

Our work in Ukraine is also an example of how the UN family can pull together resources effectively to better support local and national needs. As an example, UNOPS and the government of Japan worked with local

partners restoring homes in Kharkiv. With a near continuous need for housing repairs, UNOPS established a new format of cooperation with the private sector, to engage construction companies quickly to work on improving living conditions in communities.

Building on this success, we are now leading a process with UNDP and UNICEF for an inter-agency design and engineering agreement for crucial construction services. This will make the three agencies more agile and efficient in responding to needs, increasing resilience, and supporting the Ukrainian private sector.

In **Myanmar**, where UNOPS has the largest UN presence, my colleagues worked to swiftly mobilize almost \$20 million for emergency relief work, following the devastating earthquake in March. Our team worked closely with the UN family, local and other humanitarian partners to provide immediate assistance and support recovery efforts.

Moving to Africa, let me share some examples of impact that I recently observed as part of a visit to Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia.

In **Somalia**, we worked together with UNFPA and WHO to support the construction of the country's first fully functioning national blood bank - which I visited when I was there.

This is a major milestone in the country's efforts to provide safe and reliable blood products to those in need.

In **Sudan**, two years of conflict has led to immense human suffering and widespread destruction. [Nearly half of the population](#) is in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. Sudan is also the world's most pressing displacement crisis.

Our support in Sudan has been varied: Strengthening health infrastructure and services, improving access to clean, safe water, supporting peacekeeping operations to protect civilians, working with the UN Mine Action Service to keep Sudan safer, and facilitating a more sustainable and equitable use of natural resources. Together with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, for example, we are supporting efforts to improve health services for 2.8 million people – including 175,000 internally displaced persons – living in Kassala State.

In **Ethiopia**, among other work, UNOPS has since 2022 been implementing the Response and Recovery Program in Tigray, funded by the Ethiopian Government with a World Bank loan. This programme brings together humanitarian, development, environmental and peace and security strands in a coordinated approach.

It is pivotal in post-conflict recovery, restoring essential services for over half a million people, and creating resilience for those most vulnerable.

UNOPS has supported the distribution of humanitarian aid, provided capacity-building, rebuilt WASH, health and education infrastructure, and restored essential services in 500 sites across Tigray. We have supported agriculture, and fostered social cohesion and economic revitalisation.

This work is built on strong partnerships, with federal and regional governments, with UNICEF and UNFPA, and with local stakeholders.

Elsewhere, in **Syria**, we support humanitarian mine action on behalf of UNMAS. This work is extensive. In 2024, my colleagues surveyed nearly 60 square kilometres and cleared over 640,000 square metres of explosive threats so that communities can return safely to their farms, schools, and homes, and so they can recover. They educated nearly 22,000 members of the community to raise awareness of explosive ordnance risks, and connected over 17,500 victims to assistance services.

This work is part of our broader partnership with UNMAS across 12 countries, which in 2024 led to the destruction of nearly 2 million explosive ordnance items, improved safety for over 900,000 civilians, enhanced national capacities, and significantly reduced risks for UN and humanitarian personnel.

In **Afghanistan**, amid intensifying needs and a restricted operating space, the Afghanistan Community Resilience and Livelihoods Project provides short-term employment, offering a lifeline for vulnerable households—with the benefits of the work activities extending to entire communities.

This work relies on a strong model of community engagement, inviting the local community to select work activities, manage labourers and provide channels for grievances. Any potential activity is checked against key environmental and social considerations before a final selection is made.

Additionally, the project extends social grants to particularly vulnerable households who are unable to participate in work, prioritizing women-headed households, people with disabilities and those suffering from drug addiction.

Esteemed delegates,

A quarter of humanity lives in countries impacted by conflict. Many of these are protracted, forgotten conflicts.

I thank our partners for your support and trust - that allows us to respond to immediate needs in these contexts, while trying to lay the foundation for a more peaceful and sustainable future.

Infrastructure and procurement are at the heart of SDGs

Excellencies,

As you know, infrastructure and procurement are at the heart of our mandate.

They underpin sustainable development and are central to climate action.

Infrastructure influences 92 per cent of all targets across the SDGs, and is responsible for 79 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions.

From connectivity to education and health, infrastructure touches every aspect of human life.

In order to achieve the objectives of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, we need to profoundly change the way infrastructure is planned, delivered and managed.

This is a key area in which we support our partners - both as implementers, and as advisors, always offering tailored solutions and a holistic approach. Last year, infrastructure amounted to 20 per cent of our activities.

Allow me to share some diverse examples.

In **Sierra Leone**, with funding from the World Bank, UNOPS is working with the government to further increase access to electricity for rural communities, households, businesses, health clinics and schools across the country.

In **Argentina**, we work with the government and local partners to bring clean water to 12 indigenous communities who are facing a critical water crisis.

This work includes constructing 75 rainwater harvesting and storage systems. It relies on active participation from the communities and close collaboration with social organizations.

Similarly, **Public procurement can play a powerful role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

It has the potential to create jobs, drive equality and reduce carbon emissions.

The scale of public procurement makes it so relevant to the SDGs: Around the world, public procurement represents on average [13% to 20% of GDP.](#)

Through our procurement efforts, UNOPS helps countries respond to conflicts and crises, advance their climate priorities, and foster sustainable, inclusive development around the world.

Procurement constitutes over a third of our services (38 per cent).

As an example, in **Guatemala**, we work with the government to strengthen the national health system, by procuring medicines and medical supplies. To date, over 5.5 million units of 67 different types of medicines, 23 different types of medical supplies and 312 medical devices have been delivered under the project. It has reached 70 health facilities - including 10 hospitals - across the country.

Climate Action

Elsewhere, we support efforts to turn climate ambitions into climate action – and address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

From supporting platforms for multilateral action, to helping communities and countries to mitigate and adapt.

Our efforts continue, together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), to co-host the **Santiago network**, which catalyzes technical assistance to avert, minimize and address loss and damage in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.

We host **Sustainable Energy for All**, an international initiative to accelerate progress on the energy transition in emerging and developing countries.

Through the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT), we help countries build robust data and assessment frameworks essential for effective climate action, aligned with national development goals.

In **Madagascar**, we support the government to address high levels of acute food insecurity, by implementing a sustainable agricultural development project. Funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), this will help increase rice yields and enable two rice-growing seasons instead of one. UNOPS is also rehabilitating several kilometres of rural roads to help increase access to agricultural markets and make the roads more resilient.

And in **North Macedonia**, UNOPS is supporting the government's efforts to clean up an industrial pollution site at a former chemical plant, helping to address the severe impact that this contaminated site could have on ecosystems and health.

Reforms:

Honourable members,

I have outlined how my colleagues worked relentlessly to respond to needs last year.

But we have also been dedicated to reforms.

UNOPS has implemented 41 recommendations to planned scope. There are two ongoing recommendations that are by nature longer term. One concerns the multi-year Process Innovation and Digitalization (PID) programme, and the other concerns the recovery of funds from S3i investments. The funds recovery process is led by the UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA). UNOPS organizes a closed briefing in the margins of all Executive Board meetings, with a representative from UN OLA, to apprise Executive Board members on the latest developments. In addition, UNOPS provides quarterly updates to the Board on the PID programme.

Our reforms - as you know - have been wide-ranging. And we have kept Executive Board members closely informed every month for 2 years. We did this through open and transparent Monthly Briefings during which Members had all the opportunities to ask us anything they needed to know.

We have focused heavily on culture, delivering our very first Integrated People Strategy to put our people at the centre of all we do.

We have submitted proposals to revise our financial regulations and rules.

We are overhauling our legislative framework.

We have taken key steps to strengthen our risk management framework.

And we place integrity as a cornerstone of our operations and organizational culture.

We have an enhanced accountability framework - designed to strengthen governance through clear lines of responsibility and transparency in all aspects of operations.

We have turned a page.

And the independent third party assessment, shared with you all, recognizes these efforts.

The Third Party assessment of the Comprehensive Response Plan (CRP), recognizes the 'meaningful progress" made by UNOPS and that the Comprehensive Response Plan can be considered completed. The review also recognizes that several recommendations require long-term action to achieve the intended impact - which is something that I have always mentioned - and to this end UNOPS has since 2024 integrated these actions into ongoing transformation initiatives and workplans.

We are proud to have come to the end of one chapter of our reforms.

But we remain committed to going above and beyond, with further transformation.

Because we want to be an agile and fit for purpose partner in today's world, always building on what we have learnt.

And we take that spirit with us - as we look to our next chapter, under our new strategic plan 2026-2029.

Strategic Plan 2026-2029

In a global context beset by compounding challenges, this is a plan that confirms our intention to **scale up and speed up practical solutions for partners to help people build a more peaceful, fair and sustainable world.**

It is based on our mandate to provide infrastructure, procurement and project management services.

Our focus is on implementation, across development, humanitarian and peace efforts.

We want to work with all sister agencies and entities with a normative function, to bridge implementation gaps and deliver peace and stability, sustainable development and climate action.

Rather than competing, UNOPS is committed to finding alignment, complementary and collaboration.

This is all the more important in the spirit of UN80.

UNOPS is fully committed to supporting our collective efforts to become more effective, cost-efficient and responsive to the people we serve.

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. And I and my colleagues continue to reach out to Resident Coordinators to make our implementation expertise known and available.

In the same spirit, our Strategic Plan 2026-2029 is fully aligned with the [quadrennial comprehensive policy review](#).

Distinguished delegates,

We live in a moment defined by uncertainty, polycrisis and lack of trust.

This is impacting development cooperation 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 and financing converge in practice.

It is in the doing—not just the promising—that development regains momentum.

For those most left behind, meaningful action could not come soon enough.

Implementation matters- not just because it improves lives, restores dignity and creates hope.

But also because it builds trust, creates partnerships, and leads to lasting change, in our challenging global context.

UNOPS is committed to offering practical solutions, to accelerate the 2030 agenda and bridge implementation gaps affecting hundreds of millions of vulnerable people in challenging contexts.

Our new vision will enhance our focus on solutions, driven by clear missions and dedicated to creating impact for the people we serve.

We will manage for impact based on knowledge and learning from eight mutually reinforcing missions.

The missions are a way for us to capture and frame the knowledge that exists across the organization, so that we are better prepared and so that we can be more agile and respond better when we are needed.

They are not about making our focus programmatic or normative. We will continue to respond to our partners needs as they arise - as per our mandate.

We aspire to advance key transitions to achieve sustainable development:

By addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution;

By increasing energy access and accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels, promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency;

By shaping just digital transformation, promoting developing countries' access and use of digital infrastructures, technology and data; and by helping the transition to sustainable food systems.

Similarly, we aspire to bridge implementation gaps in challenging contexts. We want to do this by supporting small island developing States to increase their resilience to environmental and economic shocks and harnessing the benefits of a sustainable ocean economy, and by addressing the root causes of fragility, advancing equity and strengthening the resilience of communities affected by conflict and disaster.

And finally, we will leave no one behind.

By enhancing the availability of essential supplies, equipment and facilities necessary for quality healthcare and services; And by providing essential and sustainable goods, services and infrastructure, rooted in the social development values of the UN Charter and the 2030 Agenda, to reduce inequalities and achieve inclusive social development.

We will go where needs are greatest, across humanitarian, development and peace operations. And in everything we do, we will work with partners.

We will design and manage projects for impact, learning from our experience to enhance our solutions.

We will account for projects' effects on people's lives and on countries' capacities.

And we will go beyond the tried and tested and will help shape new coalitions to address the implementation gap.

Mr President,

At a time of global upheaval, I choose to be hopeful that a better future is within reach.

And looking at what UNOPS has achieved over the past year gives me hope.

We have achieved concrete results - by joining forces, by pulling our resources together, and by focusing on tangible actions.

As we look to the future, we will bring that spirit to our partnerships, in the service of those left behind, for a more peaceful, fairer and greener world for all.

Thank you.