# Informal meeting of the General Assembly (plenary) on the UN80 Initiative on 24 June 2025

# Background Note

## I.  Introduction

1.    The 80th anniversary of the United Nations comes at a time of intensifying global challenges and unprecedented need for multilateral cooperation. Since its founding in 1945 with 51 Member States, the UN has grown to 193 members, becoming the world's most universal international organization. Over eight decades, the principal organs of the United Nations have adopted over 40,000 resolutions and decisions, shaping global norms, advancing international law and guiding the work of the Organization.

2.    Today, the UN System encompasses 140 entities that connect the world's over 8 billion people to shared global goals - from peace and security to sustainable development and human rights. Last year, UN organizations provided on-the-ground support to improve the lives of more than 440 million individuals across 4,000 locations in over 160 countries. Among these, nearly 140 million people rely on the UN family as a vital source of assistance during times of crisis.

3.    In 2025, the UN System is experiencing an unprecedented resource contraction. Total contributions across all funding streams are slated to decline from roughly $70 billion in 2023/24 to an estimated $50 billion or less - a potential 30 per cent reduction. This shortfall is compelling UN organizations to make significant adjustments to their work and directly impacting their ability to serve Member States and millions of people who depend on the UN's support.

4.    At the same time, the UN has continued to record significant achievements and to position itself to meet future challenges. The adoption of the Pact for the Future last September was a crucial step in that regard. And in March, the Secretary-General launched the UN80 Initiative with a view to reinforcing the effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, resilience and overall impact of the UN System.

## II.    Overview of the UN80 Initiative

5.    To lead the UN80 Initiative, a Task Force, comprising 15 Principals from across the UN system, was established to review actionable proposals for the Secretary-General. Their work is organized around three workstreams:

1) Identifying efficiencies and improvements that can be achieved within current arrangements,

2) Reviewing the implementation of mandates received from Member States,

3) Examining possible structural changes and programme realignments in the UN System.

6.    In his 12 May 2025 address to Member States, the Secretary-General also announced the formation of seven UN80 Clusters which report to him through the Task Force. These Clusters are coordinated by UN organizations at Principals level and cover:

1) Peace and Security;

2) Development (Secretariat);

3) Development (UN System);

4) Humanitarian;

5) Human Rights;

6) Training and Research; and

7) Specialized Agencies.

7.    The Clusters will address all three workstreams and bring system-wide expertise and collaboration to elaborate reform options.

## III.   Updates on Workstream 1: Efficiencies and improvements

8.     The focus of Workstream 1 is to identify efficiencies in core administrative and operational services for the UN Secretariat and UN System.  Broadly, Workstream 1 is considering steps such as the consolidation of administrative functions across Secretariat entities, the creation of common administrative platforms, and the possible relocation or abolishment of functions.

9.     UN Secretariat entities have also been asked to revise their budget proposals for 2026, with a target of 15-20% budget reductions and a 20% reduction in regular budget posts. These proposals will be reviewed by the Secretary-General before being included in the revised estimates report for the consideration of the General Assembly in September 2025. Additional changes that require more detailed analysis will be reflected in the proposal for the Programme Budget for 2027.

10.    In addition, the High-Level Committee of Management is identifying potential UN system-wide efficiency measures in areas such as human resources management, supply chain management, and information and communications technologies. Further efforts are also underway to identify opportunities for efficiencies across organizations that will require more analysis and development in the coming months.

11.    For the UN Secretariat, Assistant Secretary-General Chandramouli Ramanathan will present an interim update on this Workstream to the meeting.

**Next Steps and Timeline**

a)  **For the UN Secretariat**: Proposals for the revised estimates for the 2026 UN Programme Budget are being finalized for the consideration of the Secretary-General. The estimates will be submitted, through the ACABQ, to the Fifth Committee in the Fall of 2025. If approved by the General Assembly, the Secretariat will start with phased implementation in 2026. Other proposals requiring more analysis and development in the coming months will be submitted to the General Assembly in the context of future budget proposals starting in 2027.

b)  **For the UN System**: UN organizations are discussing further initiatives on common back-office services, which may be proposed for consideration by Member States at a later stage.

# IV. Updates on UN80 Workstream 2: Mandate Implementation Review

12. Workstream 2 is dedicated to reviewing the UN System's extensive and complex mandate landscape to better guide the UN System's tasks.

13. For the UN Secretariat, which is being reviewed in the first instance, approximately 4,000 resolutions and other mandate source documents are cited as the basis for resource allocations for its 2026 Programme Budget. Corresponding mandate sources are now being identified across the broader UN System.

14. To inform and assist Member States in assessing current mandate implementation arrangements, a comprehensive online registry is being developed, starting with a dashboard of relevant mandate source documents for the UN Secretariat on the basis of the Programme Budget. Available via https://mandates.un.org, this tool will allow Member States to explore mandate source documents by issuing organ, year, and entity referencing the documents. The goal is to provide transparency and support informed dialogue on mandate coherence and implementation.

15. Under-Secretary-General Guy Ryder will present an overview of the mandate implementation review to date.

**Next Steps and Timeline**

a) **Mandate registry**: In the coming weeks, the registry of mandates and source documents will be iteratively updated with more comprehensive resources, and focus on (i) integrating mandates assigned to UN System entities; (ii) including operative paragraphs from relevant documents into the database; and (iii) adding data on financial resources and results at the entity level.

b) **Analysis and report by the Secretary-General**: Workstream 2 is conducting an in-depth review, with the help of data analytics tools, to review the current mandate implementation landscape and identify potential areas for improvement. The Secretary-General will present a report to Member States at the end of July 2025, outlining key findings for further consideration by Member States.

## V.    Updates on UN80 Workstream 3: Potential Structural Changes and Progressive Realignments

16.    Workstream 3 is examining the scope and advisability of possible changes to the institutional architecture of the UN System and programme realignments. This is with a view to ensuring optimal coherence, eliminating waste and duplication, and promoting efficient resource use and greater impact.

17.    In May 2025, seven Clusters were established to conduct targeted thematic analyses under the three UN80 workstreams. In their initial submissions to the UN80 Task Force on 13 June, Clusters pointed to tangible opportunities to deliver better.

18.    A co-coordinator from each of the Clusters will present preliminary findings to the meeting.

### Next Steps and Timeline

a)    **Findings**: By the end of July 2025, all Clusters will submit their final findings to the UN80 Task Force, which will finalize a set of possible reform options for the Secretary-General's consideration.

b)    **Recommendations**: The Secretary-General will review these findings and, based on their merit and feasibility, initiate consultations with Member States on specific recommendations for implementation.

## VI.    Key Questions

19.    At this pivotal moment, the intention is to engage Member States actively to address three strategic questions that will shape the UN's future effectiveness in serving humanity:

1)    How can the complex mandate landscape be streamlined to enable more impactful delivery?

2)    How can delivery structures be optimized to improve the results for the people and planet we serve?

3)    How can finite resources be strategically allocated to the areas of greatest impact?