



WHITE COVER PUBLICATION  
TEXT SUBJECT TO OFFICIAL REVIEW

UN80 Initiative: Workstream 2

# **Report of the Mandate Implementation Review**



# Table of contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>STEP 1: MANDATE CREATION</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>STEP 2: MANDATE DELIVERY</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>STEP 3: MANDATE REVIEW</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>WAY FORWARD</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ANNEX</b>	<b>40</b>

# Introduction

---

## ~8 billion

people connected to global goals,  
norms and aspirations

---

## 440 million

lives improved directly on the ground

*Decisions on how or when  
to create, review or retire  
mandates are entirely the  
prerogative of Member States.*

1. Mandates are the property and responsibility of Member States who adopt them. Decisions on how or when to create, review or retire them are likewise entirely the prerogative of Member States. The role of the United Nations system is to implement these mandates, delivering Member States' decisions as effectively and efficiently as possible. This report provides analysis that may offer useful perspectives on the mandate lifecycle. It also offers a number of proposals – both for the UN system and for the consideration of Member States – to strengthen the impact of mandates. It is a part of the second workstream of the UN80 Initiative launched in a letter to Member States on 11 March 2025. Separate UN80 Initiative workstreams are also under way to achieve efficiencies and improvements within current arrangements and to identify possible structural changes and programme realignments across the UN system; their findings will complement this report.

2. These efforts are consistent with the request made in General Assembly resolution 79/318 of July 2025, in which Member States noted, inter alia, that they looked forward to receiving proposals aimed at **“strengthening the impact of the United Nations and enhancing its agility, responsibility and resilience while addressing the issue of duplicative efforts and ensuring effective and efficient mandate delivery across all three pillars of the work of the United Nations.”** Should Member States later decide they wish to initiate a more formal review of mandates, the United Nations system stands ready, if requested, to support them throughout the process.

---

## MANDATES FOR THE GREATER GOOD

3. Since 1946, three principal organs of the United Nations – the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) – and their subsidiary organs have issued

mandates to United Nations entities through more than 40,000 resolutions, decisions and presidential statements. These mandates are not simply texts or numbers on a page: they represent the enormous, accumulated capital of nearly eight decades of global cooperation and multilateralism.<sup>1</sup> They have helped forge agreement and develop global norms on some of the most important issues of our time – from sustainable development to peace and security, from humanitarian action to human rights and many more.

4. Mandates also guide and enable what the UN system<sup>2</sup> does today. Working in over 1,100 locations across more than 190 countries and territories, the UN system serves the aspirations of more than 8 billion people and directly improves the lives of more than 440 million people every year. The UN provides a forum for all Member States to come together to resolve challenges like conflict, climate change, socioeconomic disparities and other crises – while also working to create a fairer world for all through gender equality, disability inclusion and protection of the most vulnerable. Through mandates, Member States and the UN system have worked together to achieve this extraordinary impact. The skill and commitment of UN personnel who carry out these mandates – including in conditions of hardship – remains a cornerstone of the UN system’s ability to deliver.

---

## REPORT OBJECTIVES

5. These collective achievements are the result of mandates created by Member States. They must remain front and centre as we work together to build a UN system that can deliver even greater impact in the years to come. Reviewing the mandate lifecycle is an important step in that process.

6. Specifically, this report offers insights into how mandates are created, delivered and reviewed, as well as proposals for consideration regarding how each of these functions might be strengthened. The report is entirely restricted to the processes and services around mandate creation, delivery and review. It attempts no assessment of the merits of the mandates themselves.

---

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

### 1. Support Mandate Creation:

Provide full visibility of the overall mandate landscape; and support Member States in creating mandates that maximize relevance and impact

### 2. Improve Mandate Delivery:

Establish optimal arrangements for meetings and reports; strengthen delivery management mechanisms; and enhance effective use of resources

### 3. Strengthen Mandate

**Review:** Reinforce mandate review mechanisms; and strengthen the UN system’s accountability for impact.

# 1,100

locations where the UN System  
serves Member States and  
communities

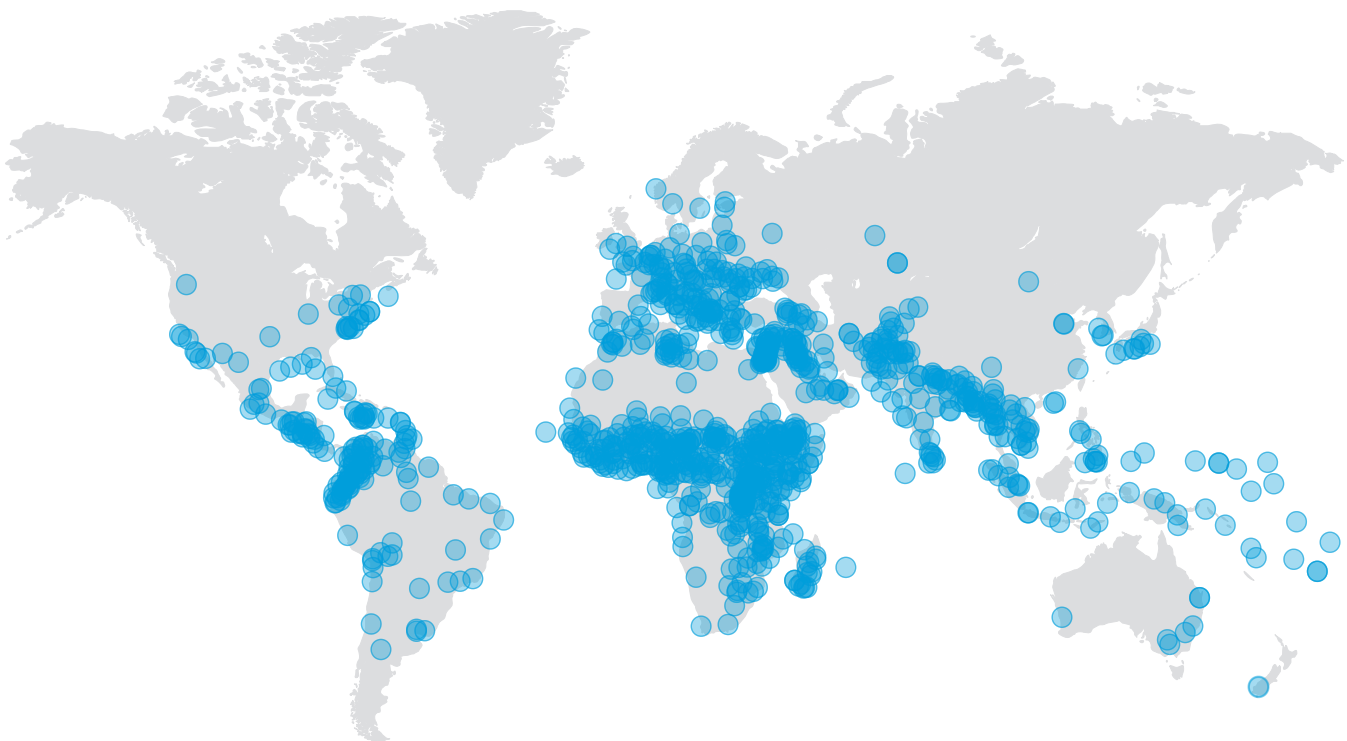
## RATIONALE AND LESSONS LEARNED

7. While mandates are essential, their large number can also bring practical challenges. Member States have expressed that it is difficult to keep full sight of the overall mandate landscape; there is a danger of duplication and overlap between mandates; the aggregated instructions in mandates may place an unreasonable burden on both the UN system and Member States; the mandates may not always translate into clear resource allocations or programmes for maximum impact; and mandates may also outlive their original use and purpose if not subject to regular examination. Shortcomings in UN Secretariat support for Member States may also create challenges throughout the mandate lifecycle.

8. The eightieth anniversary of the United Nations is an appropriate moment to review this situation. The UN80 Initiative provides the

## The UN family serves Member States and communities across the globe

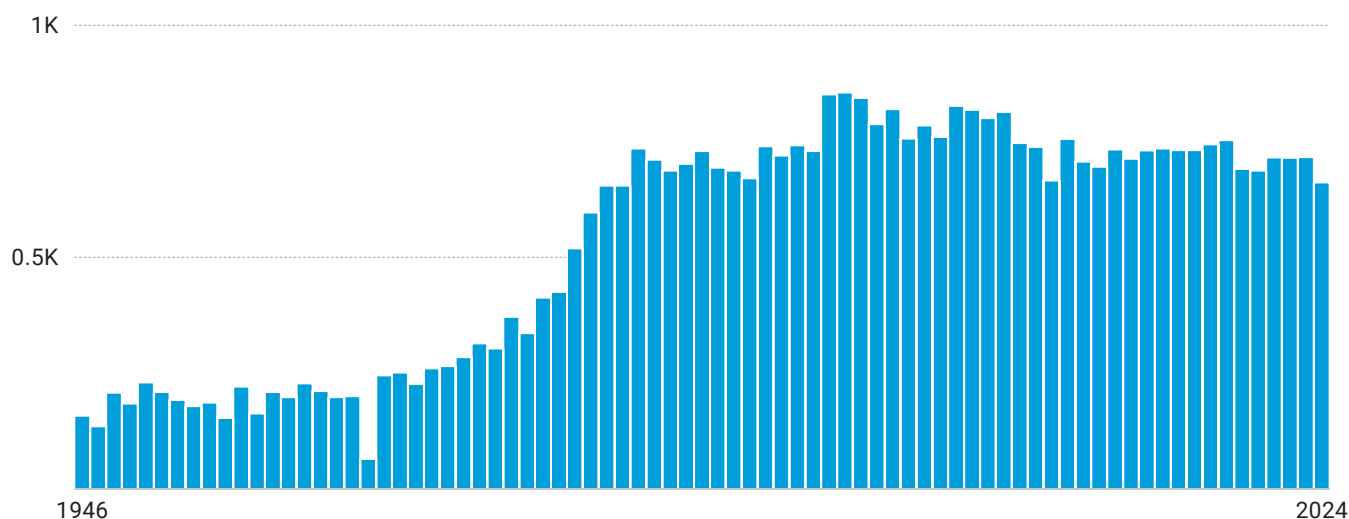
Duty stations of UN System organizations



Source: UN Chief Executive Board statistics (2023), Illustrative map only

## >40,000 resolutions, decisions and presidential statements since 1946

Number of mandate sources adopted by the General Assembly, Security Council, ECOSOC and the Human Rights Council



Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

opportunity, coming at a time when there are just five years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and there is pressing need to fulfil the Pact for the Future. Embarking on this kind of review with the best chance of a successful outcome requires learning from experience. Efforts to streamline mandates go back as far as 1954, with the latest major effort initiated following the 2005 World Summit when Member States called for a review of mandates older than five years. In 2006, the Secretary-General's report initiating that review identified four headline problems: burdensome reporting requirements; overlap between and within organs; an unwieldy and duplicative architecture for implementation; and the gap between mandates and resources.

9. Regrettably, that review and the intergovernmental process which resulted from it by common consent did not yield the envisioned results. The problems it identified are still here today and, unaddressed, have intensified over the last twenty years.

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND APPROACH

10. There are reasons to believe the UN80 Initiative can produce better results than past efforts, on condition that Member States are ready to invest sufficiently in a process which will be demanding and complex. This

---

**Learning lessons from 2006**

Report of the Secretary-General  
from 2006: Mandating and Delivering



Access 2006 report

report seeks to leverage several factors that together can promote strong outcomes. It reflects calls by Member States during informal meetings of the General Assembly on the UN80 Initiative to ensure transformational change reinforces the UN Charter, strengthens all three pillars of UN work equally and builds on existing reforms to deliver concrete results at country level. As noted above, it is also consistent with the request made in General Assembly resolution 79/318.

11. Through data analytical capacities not previously available, this report provides Member States with more information and a fuller understanding of the current mandate landscape. Even the intensification of the problems identified in 2006 can help to focus attention and political will. But perhaps more importantly, this report takes a markedly different approach from previous efforts, which may open a way forward.

12. Instead of taking up and examining individual mandates one by one as in 2006 in an ultimately unmanageable process, this report proposes an approach which focuses on the system-level or structural issues identified across the lifecycle of mandates. It analyses the conditions in which mandates are first created, then delivered and finally reviewed for impact, offering proposals at each step that could address potential challenges. As such, the report lays the groundwork for a possible renovation of the ways in which the will of Member States expressed in mandates is translated into impact on the ground.

13. It will be for Member States to assess the approach set out in this report and to determine what further steps may be warranted. These might include a carefully designed intergovernmental process to be undertaken within a specific timeframe. Within his existing authority, the Secretary-General also intends to take a number of actions to enhance the visibility of mandates, streamline work, improve mandate delivery and strengthen reviews.



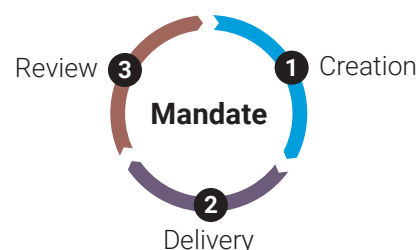
## SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

14. Mandates vary greatly in character, ranging from those setting long-term, wide-ranging frameworks to more targeted directives addressing specific issues. The scope of this report examines the lifecycle of mandates issued by the General Assembly, Security Council, ECOSOC and their subsidiary organs. Although these organs can and do issue mandates that affect the wider UN system – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) being just one notable example – many mandates principally concern the UN Secretariat.

15. Examples in this report often – though not exclusively – draw from data across the UN Secretariat to illustrate issues experienced across the wider UN system. Data sources are cited throughout the report and come primarily from the UN Digital Library; UN Chief Executive Board statistics, data from reports to relevant principal organs; UN system strategic plans; UN programme budgets; system-wide reviews; and donor reports.

### The mandate life cycle

Three key steps examined in this report



Footnote 1: For the purposes of this report, a “mandate” generally refers to a request or directive for action by the United Nations Secretariat or other implementing entities, set out in the Charter of the United Nations, or a resolution or decision adopted by a United Nations intergovernmental organ. This report mainly refers to mandates cited by United Nations entities in support of resource requirements in the 2026 proposed programme budget and 2025-26 peacekeeping budget. “Mandate” (or “mandate source”) may also refer to the various documents that contain these individual requests or directives (e.g., resolutions, decisions, presidential statements, etc.). Mandate sources may also refer to recommendations in reports of advisory, technical or subsidiary committees or bodies, which once adopted by the General Assembly or ECOSOC require action by the Secretariat.

Footnote 2: For the purposes of this report, “UN system” refers to UN entities under the authority of the principal organs or under the authority of separate intergovernmental bodies but which may be addressed by the principal organs.

# Why mandates matters: Our impact

By creating, implementing and reviewing mandates, Member States and the UN System create shared impact for people and planet, when and where matters most. Below is a select view of our impact in 2024.

---

## 8 BILLION PEOPLE

connected to shared global goals, norms and objectives for humanity

---

## >190 COUNTRIES

working together with the UN to keep the global temperature rise well below 2°C / 3.6°F

---

## 68K PEACEKEEPERS

deployed in 11 peacekeeping missions around the world, including civilian personnel

---

## \$50 BILLION

in appeals coordinated for the humanitarian needs of 198 million people worldwide

---

## 139 MILLION PEOPLE

assisted and protected while fleeing war, famine and persecution

---

## 56 MILLION PEOPLE

with improved access to social protection programmes

---

## 83 COUNTRIES

assisted in strengthening laws and policies for women & girls

---

## 80 TREATIES

and declarations to protect and promote human rights

---

## 377 MILLION VOTERS

registered and some 50 countries assisted with their elections

---

## 440 MILLION LIVES

of children under 5 improved with programmes to prevent stunting and wasting

---

## 3 MILLION LIVES

saved per year through vaccines supplied to 45% of the world's children

---

## 49K SURVIVORS

of torture receiving support across more than 90 countries

UNODC provided technical assistance against crime across 156 countries · WMO helped build multi-hazard early-warning capacity in 108 countries · OCHA released \$3.4M to humanitarian responders in Nepal six minutes after verified flood warnings · UNV supported 59 UN partner programmes and field operations worldwide · UN Women strengthened the capacities of 16,600 organizations to support women across 93 countries · UNHCR supported 4.6 million people in securing documentation · WFP provided \$3.3 billion in cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers · DPPA provided electoral assistance for one-third of elections held globally · UNCDF supported 1 million Pacific residents' access to digital finance · UPU supported 4.5 million postal workers worldwide · DPKO deployed over 68,000 peacekeepers across 11 peacekeeping missions · UNEP helped 70 countries update their national biodiversity strategies · IFAD approved over \$800 million in climate finance · DPPA conducted 170 mediation support assignments · UN-Habitat empowered 237 million people through improved urban planning and management · ITU helped improve access to telecommunications for underserved communities globally · UNOPS procured \$1.7 billion worth of goods and services for its partners · ITC supported more than 10,000 women-led businesses · ODA funded 133 arms control-related projects, including 145000 rifles and 1000000 rounds, providing access to 26 million out-of-school children, including 13 million in crisis · OHCHR secured the release of more than 3,000 arbitrarily detained people · WHO supported 7,800 critically ill patients in 45 countries with advanced clinical management at any given time · FAO trained 50,000 government staff, strengthening institutional capacities · UNFPA provided sexual and reproductive health services to 54 million women and young people · UNMAS removed or destroyed 2 million explosive ordnance items · OCHA mobilized 2,000 partners and UN agencies to reach 116 million people in 33 countries · UNITAR trained ~550K individuals worldwide · UNDP helped 160 million people gain access to essential services for health, education, and water · IOM reached 4 million beneficiaries with cash-based support · UN-Habitat benefited 320K people through improved water and sanitation services · ILO supported reforms that improved social protection coverage for 18 million people worldwide · WFP distributed 4.8 million metric tonnes of food · ITU allocated spectrum and satellite resources to ensure global telecom and ICT access · Spotlight mobilized \$250M+ and backed 1,400+ grassroots organizations in fragile settings since 2016 · UNDP helped 51 million people gain access to renewable energy · UNU provided free-of-charge online access to 8,700+ publications · WHO delivered \$44M critical supplies to 22 emergencies in 77 countries · UNAIDS helped ensure 31 million people received life-saving treatment · OCHA supported >370 families of humanitarian workers killed · UNICEF delivered over 1.5 billion polio vaccine doses to 87 countries · UNCTAD delivered over 200 technical assistance projects in more than 70 countries · DCO aligned activities with the development priorities of 98% of host governments · UN Women disbursed more than \$220 million to civil society organizations, local organizations and networks working towards gender equality · OCHA assisted ~120 million people with assistance · UNIDO delivered technical cooperation services worth \$291 million · UNDP helped register 377 million voters · UN Peacebuilding Fund allocated over \$116 million to 32 countries and territories · WFP reached 160 million people with life-saving and life-changing food assistance · UNEP helped bring 1.6 million hectares of land and marine areas under improved management, benefiting about 1 million people · UN-Habitat reached 6.7 million internally displaced people with tailored support · UNHCR assisted

---

## Step 1: Mandate creation

# Mandate creation

## >40,000

mandates, decisions, and presidential statements issued by the General Assembly, ECOSOC, Human Rights Council and Security Council since 1946.

16. By creating mandates, Member States instruct and guide the UN system in how to address global challenges and improve hundreds of millions of lives around the world every year in accordance with the values and objectives of the UN Charter. These mandates aim to produce real-world results. Effective approaches are therefore essential to create mandates that will drive impact.

17. This section identifies two key hurdles facing effective creation:

- **Poor visibility across the landscape of existing mandates and the work of different mandating bodies; and**
- **Challenges in mandate design that may constrain impact during mandate delivery.**

This section examines each of these issues and proposes potential solutions to create mandates that will deliver even stronger impact in the years to come.

**Over 20 mandating bodies**  
for UN System entities

1 GA	6 for related organi- zations	13 for specialized agencies
1 SC		
1 ECO SOC		

*Note: Refer to footnote in this chapter for the definition of mandating bodies. Bodies such as executive boards are not included here. GA = General Assembly, SC = Security Council*

## POOR VISIBILITY ACROSS MANDATES AND MANDATING BODIES

18. An essential precondition for creating impactful mandates is to have full visibility across the mandate landscape: What mandates already exist on the same or related topics? Who adopted them? Who is implementing them, and with what results? Comprehensive answers to these questions are often difficult for Member States to obtain – to the detriment of effective mandate creation.

### Incomplete mandate registries and uneven support

19. Across the UN system, there are more than 20 intergovernmental bodies – including the three principal organs mentioned above – that issue mandates.<sup>3</sup> Yet only a limited number of registries compile mandate texts and make them easily accessible to Member States. This poses a serious practical challenge to obtaining comprehensive information on existing mandates, current responsibilities within the

UN system and a full understanding of the overall landscape. These gaps persist despite calls by the General Assembly and others to expand the use of digital repositories to strengthen institutional memory (e.g., A/RES/77/335).

20. Although the UN Secretariat provides dedicated substantive support to individual mandating bodies, few services exist to promote visibility or coordination across these bodies. As a result, they may work in relative isolation, without full awareness of the others' programmes of work. Capacity to provide intergovernmental support also varies widely across UN system entities, and there is little formal interface across these entities that can quickly channel collective UN system expertise on relevant issues to Member States during mandate creation. As a result, Member States may need to consult many different UN counterparts in order to obtain the information they want during the mandate creation process. This raises transaction costs – particularly for smaller delegations – and can contribute to less impactful results.

### Overlap across mandating bodies

21. Poor visibility and uneven coordination across mandating bodies also contribute to overlap in the subjects these bodies address. For example, since 1990, an average of 20 subjects covered in General Assembly resolutions every year have also appeared in resolutions adopted by ECOSOC or the Human Rights Council. Such overlap may be beneficial where it fosters complementarity across mandating bodies on a given subject. This can only occur, however, if the decision to address a subject across different bodies is intentional and based on full information.

22. Otherwise, it may lead to potentially unproductive duplication. There are already examples of this, such as parallel reporting requirements across mandating bodies on the same subject matter. This kind of duplication may dilute impact and generates considerable additional costs, while again placing a heavy burden on Member States. Assessing in advance whether potential overlap will prove productive depends in large part on the visibility across the mandate landscape which currently remains elusive.

### Mandate registries can help

Examples of detailed registries



mandates.un.org



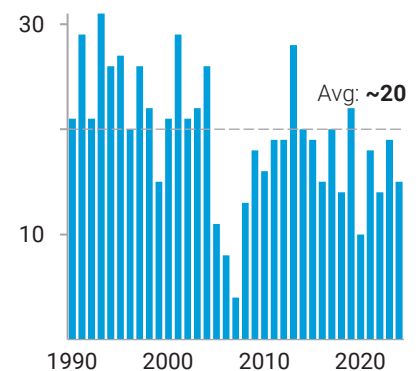
hrcmap.ohchr.org



unfccc.int/decisions

### Same subjects across bodies

Resolutions on identical subjects from more than one of GA, ECOSOC or Human Rights Council



Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

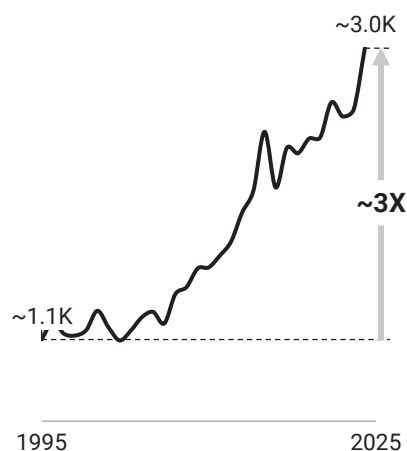
## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

23. A number of initiatives are already under way to improve visibility across the mandate landscape. These include a digital mandate registry created through the UN80 Initiative, a digital mandate registry covering the Human Rights Council created by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and a digital registry covering documents and decisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The General Assembly is also continuing to develop a catalogue of relevant provisions to revitalize its work. In addition, the following proposals could help further improve visibility, coordination and support for Member States during mandate creation.

- 1 **Accelerate the creation of comprehensive registries** of existing mandate texts issued by all mandating bodies
- 2 **Improve UN Secretariat support for Member States during mandate creation**, based on priorities established by Member States
- 3 **Strengthen support by UN Secretariat entities to coordinate and promote greater visibility** across the work of mandating bodies
- 4 **Develop tools using artificial intelligence to assist with mandate drafting**, including by producing summarized information to support Member States' decision-making, flagging potential complementarities or duplications in draft texts or meeting agendas across mandating bodies

### Resolutions tripled in length

Average word count GA, SC, ECOSOC



1995

2025

Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

## CHALLENGES IN MANDATE DESIGN

24. Optimizing mandate design from the start helps to ensure maximum impact during delivery. However, recent trends in mandate design may give rise to concern. Mandates are growing longer and more prescriptive and are also less likely to make provision for resources to fund the new activities they call for.

### More and longer resolutions

25. There has been a substantial increase in both the number and length of resolutions adopted by mandating bodies over time. Numbers of resolutions per year grew sharply in the General Assembly in the 1980s and the Security Council in the 1990s and have now mostly plateaued at these high levels. Increases in the

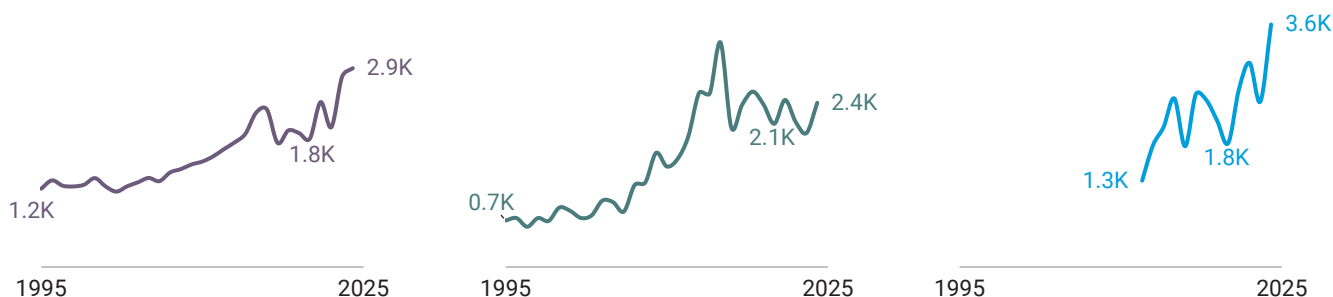
## Resolution word count increased for all 3 principal mandating UN organs

Average word count of resolutions

General Assembly

Security Council

Economic and Social Council



Note: ECOSOC resolutions data available from 2012. Source: Estimates based on data from UN Digital Library & DGACM

length of individual resolutions are even more striking. Since 2020, General Assembly resolutions have seen average word counts rise by 55 per cent, and ECOSOC resolutions have grown by more than 95 per cent. Security Council resolutions have more than doubled their word counts since 1995. Last year, resolutions adopted by these three principal organs averaged more than 3,000 words each – nearly triple their average length thirty years ago.

26. Longer texts may add value, addressing issues comprehensively, citing relevant considerations and advancing important objectives. But more complex texts can also obscure priorities and detract from potential impact. In addition, the costs associated with producing and processing texts rise as they get longer. These trends have taken place against a backdrop of largely stagnant Regular Budget funding since 2020. Mandating bodies recognize these challenges, with the General Assembly, for example, recommending shorter, action-oriented texts to facilitate impact (A/RES/77/335).

## More tasks with fewer resources and less flexibility

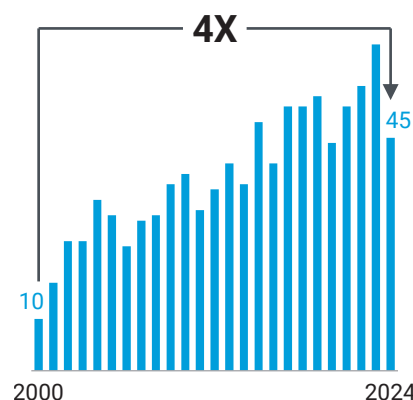
27. Even more concerning from the perspective of resource availability, mandating bodies are now also increasingly requesting new tasks without providing corresponding resources. In 2024, more than 15 per cent of General Assembly resolutions mandated new activities “within existing resources”. Resolutions requiring implementation “within existing resources” are over four times more prevalent today than they were in 2000. The 2006 mandate review had already identified inadequate resourcing as a critical problem, yet it has intensified since. Continuing to mandate new activities without resources is unsustainable. It undermines capacity to deliver impact

# >15%

of GA resolutions in 2024  
mandating work “within  
existing resources”

## “Within existing resources”

General Assembly resolutions  
containing the phrase “within  
existing resources”



Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

---

~50%

of active mandate sources now  
instruct specific entities to carry  
out tasks

and limits flexibility to allocate resources strategically. Over time, this is creating a growing disconnect between expectations and real impact, ultimately eroding trust in the Organization.

28. A related issue is the tendency of mandates to specify which entities should implement them. Nearly half of active mandates<sup>4</sup> include at least one instruction to a specific entity to carry out tasks. Anecdotal evidence also suggests a rise in mandates that prescribe in detail the activities to be undertaken and how. Such prescriptive assignments may fail to take account of available resources or capacities across the UN system, potentially weakening impact and disrupting other activities. Prescriptivism also constrains efforts to determine the most effective arrangements for mandate delivery based on comparative advantages across the UN system, which may further limit impact.

## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

29. Efforts to improve mandate design must proceed in full respect of the prerogatives of Member States who adopt them. The proposals below are intended for Member States' consideration and to help them craft clear, concise and actionable texts that are more likely to deliver impact during implementation.

- 1 **Reduce the length of mandate texts wherever possible** in order to ensure mandates are effectively implemented and with greater impact (in line with recommendations in A/RES/77/335, para. 45)
- 2 **Frame mandates that allow the Secretary-General appropriate flexibility to assign tasks** based on comparative advantages and resources across the UN system
- 3 **Refrain from mandating new tasks which are not backed by corresponding resources** or an explicit reduction in other mandated tasks
- 4 **For new mandates, complement estimates of regular budget expenditures** prepared by the Secretary-General (in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly) with additional information on related programmatic activities across the UN system and all sources of funding

---

Footnote 3: For the purposes of this report, "mandating bodies" will be the term used to refer to any of these intergovernmental bodies, including the relevant principal organs of the UN and their subsidiaries.

Footnote 4: "Active mandates" refers to the nearly 4,000 mandate sources cited in Programme and Peacekeeping budget documents from 2026 from UN Secretariat and those entities whose secretariats are part of the UN Secretariat.



achieved 41 institutional changes for social protection in 10 countries · UNODC benefited 500,000 families globally with technical assistance to reduce illicit crop cultivation · UNHCR provided legal assistance to 1.4 million people · UN Women strengthened leadership and capacity of 3,500+ civil society and women-led organizations · UNEP helped bring 1.6 million hectares of land and marine areas under improved management, benefiting about 1 million people · WMO helped LDCs and SIDS improve early-warning systems for 397 million people · UNRWA provided emergency food or cash assistance to 2.6 million people · DPPA conducted 100 Rapid Response deployments of staff and envoys · UNICEF delivered humanitarian assistance to millions of children across 448 emergencies in 104 countries · WHO delivered \$44M critical supplies to 22 emergencies in 77 countries · Spotlight reached 384 million people, engaged 8M youth and aided 3 million gender-based violence survivors · UN-Habitat reached 6.7 million internally displaced people with tailored support · UNAIDS expanded coverage of ~3.5M people to oral pre-exposure prophylaxis · FAO provided agricultural inputs to 158,000 households · OHCHR assisted 10,500+ slavery survivors in 36 countries · ITU allocated spectrum and satellite resources to ensure global telecom and ICT access · UNCDF developed the Gambia River Basin master plan benefiting 1 million people · OCHA provided 300,000 families of humanitarian workers killed · UNICEF provided safe water to more than 33 million people · UNIDO delivered technical cooperation services worth \$291 million · IFAD helped create 195,000 agriculture jobs for rural communities · UNFPA reached 11 million marginalized girls with life-skills programmes · UNU provided free-of-charge online access to 8,700+ publications · WFP supported 88 countries with national social protection programmes · UPU served 7.3 billion people through the international postal network · UNESCO trained 850,000 teachers to better prepare learners for the future · IAEA delivered \$8.6M in equipment for nuclear safety, security and safeguards in Ukraine · IOM reached ~6.5 million people in Ukraine and neighbouring countries · UNICEF provided basic sanitation, and hygiene services to over 21 million people · OHCHR supported 49,000+ torture survivors in 93 countries · OCHA delivered nearly \$54M in anticipatory financing helping communities prepare for crises · UNDP helped register 377 million voters · UNMAS confirmed 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> of roads safe through mine action programmes · UNITAR provided training for 40K medical officers in India · WHO supported 7,800 critically ill patients in 45 countries with advanced clinical management at any given time · UNV mobilized ~15K volunteers in 169 countries and territories · UNOPS procured \$1.7 billion worth of goods and services for its partners · UNFPA provided sexual and reproductive health services to 54 million women and young people · ITU supported 160 countries in adopting a broadband plan or national digital agenda · OCHA disbursed \$1.5B to the worst and most underfunded crises · UNEP helped 70 countries update their national biodiversity strategies · ITC supported more than 10,000 women-led businesses · IOM assisted ~20,000 individuals with safe evacuation, return and voluntary transfer in crisis situations · DPPA's Geoguard tool delivered climate and environmental data to 29 countries · WIPO enrolled more than 150,000 participants in education courses · UNICEF treated over 9 million children for severe wasting and severe acute malnutrition · WFP supported more than 28 million people with malnutrition treatment and prevention · IFAD approved over \$800 million in climate finance · OPCW inspected over 5,000 industrial facilities · UNMAS removed or destroyed 2 million explosive ordnance items · UNODC provided technical assistance against organized crime across 156 countries · UNAIDS supported 84

---

## Step 2: Mandate delivery

# Mandate delivery

## >240

intergovernmental bodies, including committees and other forums established by principal organs and serviced by the UN Secretariat

30. Mandate delivery is how the UN system implements the tasks entrusted to it by Member States, from major global initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals and the Pact for the Future to specific programmes and activities. It is how the UN system helps translate agreements on key objectives like gender equality into real and meaningful improvements on the ground. Mandate delivery is also the basis on which Member States and the wider public assess the value of the UN system. As with mandate creation, impact must therefore remain the guiding principle.

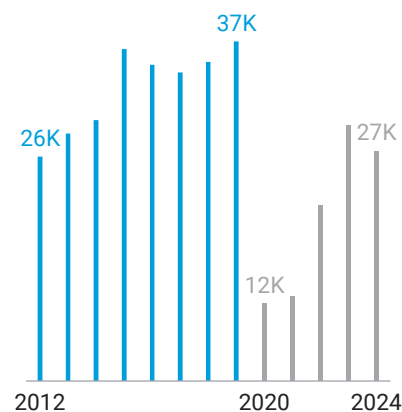
31. This section identifies three concerns that may hinder mandate delivery and reduce impact:

- **Proliferating meetings and reports;**
- **Inadequate management of mandate delivery; and**
- **Misaligned funding modalities.**

This section considers each of these issues and proposes potential solutions that build on the 2018 UN reforms and complement other efforts under way through the UN80 Initiative.

## Meeting numbers rising again

Meetings serviced by UN Secretariat



Source: DGACM data

## PROLIFERATING MEETINGS AND REPORTS

32. Meetings and reports are an essential component of mandate delivery. They enable dialogue and information exchange – both of which are critical to create agreement on important issues and develop the norms that guide the international system. Meetings and reports keep Member States informed of key developments and allow them to provide necessary guidance. Ultimately, they are key means of enabling stronger impact.

33. But they are also expensive: in 2024, the UN Secretariat spent more than \$360 million on direct costs associated with meetings and reports like editing and translation, or more than 10 per cent of the Regular Budget. Indirect costs – including research and drafting

– would raise that figure considerably. Given both their important functions and substantial resource consumption, it appears appropriate to review these mandates to ensure they deliver maximum impact.

### More meetings

34. The United Nations facilitates thousands of meetings every year, including 27,000 last year alone. These are the essential platforms where Member States come together to resolve challenges and set priorities. But meetings and associated support requirements have also increased in recent years. As a result, a larger share of overall capacity is now devoted to meeting support. The number of meetings peaked in 2019 but fell sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have since resumed a strong upward trend, though not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

35. In 2025, more than 240 bodies – including committees and other forums established by the three principal organs – required UN Secretariat support. Despite earlier efforts to streamline these bodies, there are now eight more than a decade ago, with more than 60 new bodies created and more than 50 discontinued during that period. Work associated with the cycle of establishment and closure of these bodies places additional demands on UN Secretariat resources beyond regular meeting services. New technology

## >\$360M

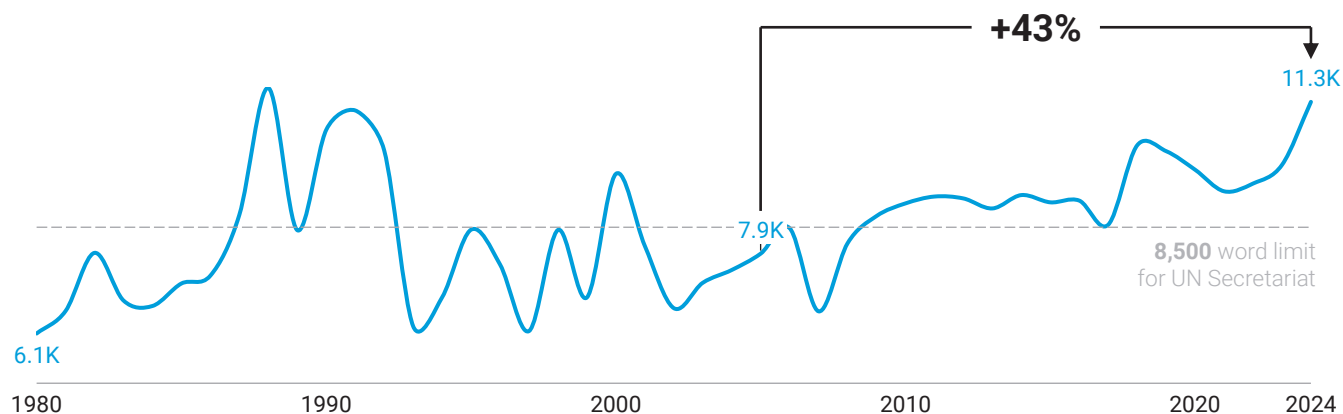
direct costs associated with  
meetings and documentation  
services for inter-governmental  
bodies serviced by the Secretariat

## +8

net increase in inter-  
governmental bodies  
between 2016 and 2024

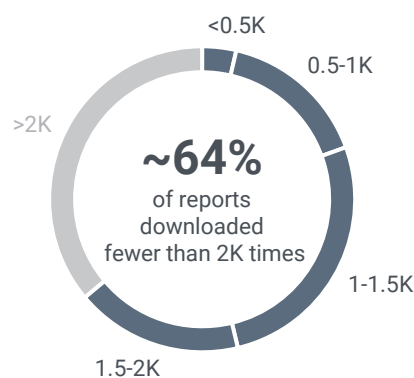
### Length of reports has grown and is now more than 40% longer than 20 years ago

Average word count of reports to principal UN organs



### Most reports: Few downloads

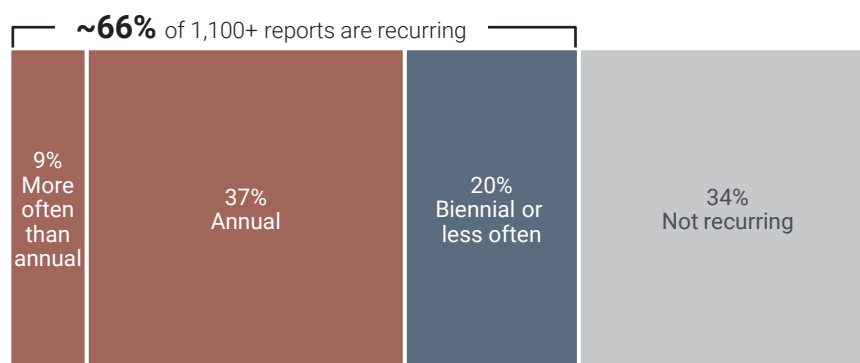
Downloads of reports (2024/25)



Source: UN Official Document System (ODS)

### Most reports recur – nearly half are annual or more frequent

Distribution of reports by frequency (2024 reports)



Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

like artificial intelligence could strengthen efficiency and better support Member States during meetings. While some of these tools are already being used, wider adoption could lead to even further improvements.

### More reports

36. Mandated reports represent a large share of UN Secretariat deliverables, with about 55 per cent of active mandate sources requiring reports. Like meetings, reports are an important part of mandate delivery. Last year, the UN Secretariat published more than 1,100 reports – an increase of nearly 20 per cent since 1990. More than 60 per cent of these reports cover recurring topics. Reports also address similar issues for different bodies.

37. Reports are also growing longer, with average word counts rising by 40 per cent since 2005. Reports to the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC now average around 11,300 words each – about one-third longer than the recommended limit for UN Secretariat reports. Despite the vast output, or perhaps partly because of it, most reports are not widely read. Last year, nearly 65 per cent were downloaded fewer than 2,000 times, compared to the top 5 per cent of reports that were accessed at least 5,500 times. Download statistics alone are not proof of a report's utility: important issues may not always find wide public leadership. But these figures are indication of a need for wider discussions when considering reports.

## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

38. The proposals below are presented with a view to maximizing the value of meetings and reports and seek to promote an appropriate balance between supporting functions for Member States and direct impact.

- 1 **Prioritize and streamline requests** in mandates for reports or meetings
- 2 **Provide shorter reports** and reduce maximum word counts
- 3 **Combine reports covering similar issues and contexts wherever feasible** (for example by merging separate regional reports on the same issue or submitting one report to different mandating bodies requesting reports on similar issues)
- 4 **Introduce different report formats** based on needs and content type; first reports could be longer followed by shorter updates, visual dashboards, in-person briefings or other formats
- 5 **Publish download statistics for all reports** to inform further discussions on reporting practices

## INADEQUATE DELIVERY MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

39. Whilst meetings and reports are a means to an end, Member States' ultimate objectives for mandates are to improve people's lives and resolve challenges. Achieving this kind of impact depends heavily on effective management of mandate delivery. Any shortcomings in this regard would detract from Member States' objectives and ultimately reduce impact.

### Poor division of labour within the UN system

40. Efficient and impactful delivery requires a clear allocation of responsibilities based on agreed competencies and accountabilities. But current processes and practices do not enable the UN system to achieve a clear division of labour. Effective coordination across entities when preparing budgets and programmes is limited. Although recent reforms have strengthened coordination at country-level, these have not yet been matched by similar improvements at the global level.

# ~4,000

resolutions and other mandate sources cited in the UN Programme Budget to explain why programmes exist and require resources

### Entities cite same mandates

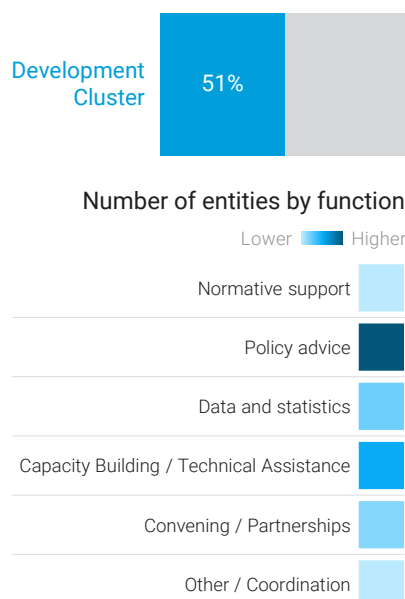
Share of mandates cited by more than 1 entity in the UN Secretariat Programme Budget for 2026



Source: Proposed Programme Budget for 2026

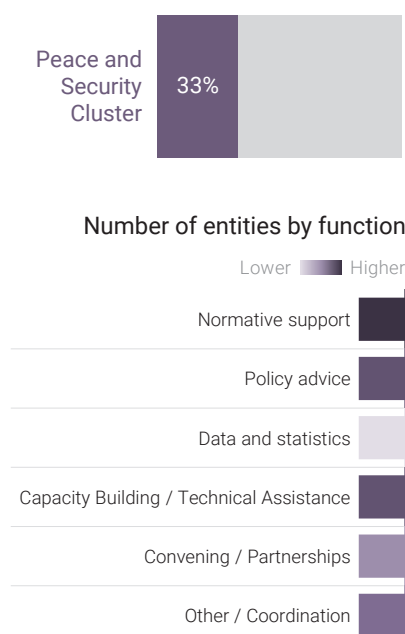
### Duplication risk: Development

Share of mandates cited by more than 1 UN Secretariat entity



### Duplication risk: Peace & sec.

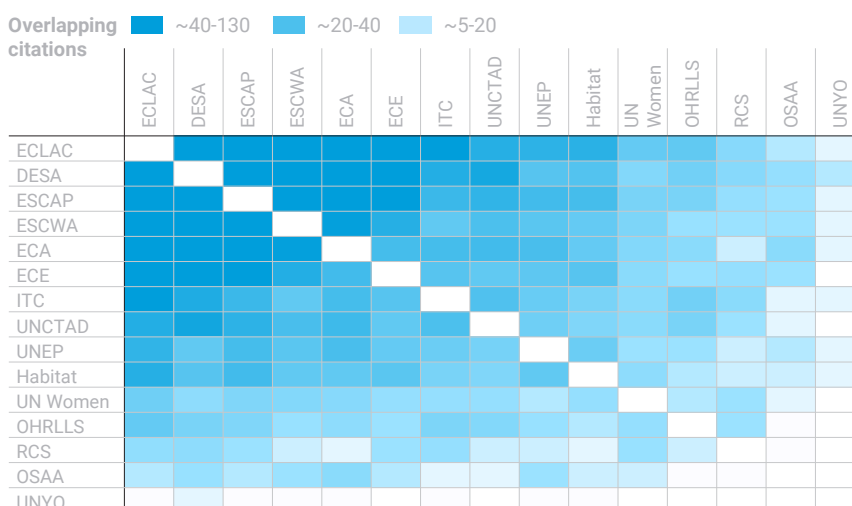
Share of mandates cited by more than 1 UN Secretariat entity



Source: Proposed Programme Budget for 2026

### Shared development mandates need clear division of labour

Number of overlapping mandate citations between entities in the UN Secretariat Programme Budget (excerpt for the development cluster, see Annex for more)



Source: Proposed Programme Budget for 2026

41. Existing oversight in the UN system mainly focuses on programme planning, budgets and operational issues of individual UN entities in isolation, rather than seeking to ensure strategic alignment across the system to drive impact and efficiency. This is especially visible in the UN Secretariat, where entities cite nearly 4,000 mandate sources as a legislative basis for proposed programme budgets. Many entities cite the same mandates. About 50 citations refer to mandates that appear inactive, like the Millennium Development Goals.

### Duplication risks

42. One potential outcome of unclear division of labour is duplication, which becomes more likely when many UN entities are working to deliver the same mandates. Such situations are not inherently negative: partners working together on complex issues can add complementary value when part of an intentional, coherent strategy. Global frameworks like the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future show how mandates can bring the UN system together to deliver and multiply impact rather than duplicate efforts. In some cases, positive overlap may be required to achieve this multiplier effect.

43. But there are signs of duplication risks in mandate delivery that merit closer review. In the development pillar, for example, about half of mandates cited in the programme budget are cited by multiple entities. In the peace and security pillar, the rate is about 33 per cent. Overlapping mandate citations may also contribute to functional

overlap, in which multiple entities carry out the same functions to deliver the same mandates.<sup>5</sup> This kind of overlap is clearly visible in a number of functions, including policy, data, statistics, capacity-building, technical assistance, normative support and coordination. Common services like IT, procurement and human resources are also widely replicated across the UN system. Separate UN80 Initiative workstreams are examining these issues in greater detail. Recent evaluations of ongoing reform efforts, including the repositioning of UN Country Teams, are also shedding light on opportunities to consolidate efforts across the UN system to deliver better, together.

---

~40%

over Member States report  
earmarking as their preferred  
funding approach

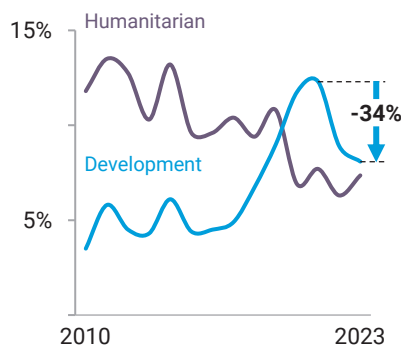
## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

44. UN reforms adopted in 2018 have improved mandate delivery, resulting – for example – in generally higher satisfaction among Member States on support for SDG implementation. These efforts are helping to move the UN system towards a more coherent, joined up approach. The proposals below aim to build on these improvements to strengthen the division of labour across the UN system – supported by more rigorous strategic oversight – to deliver even greater impact in the years to come.

- 1 Strengthen internal strategic oversight of the UN system division of labour at all levels** to ensure effective, efficient programmatic and operational support. This builds upon 2018 reform commitments and efforts to strengthen Resident Coordinator system leadership.
- 2 Ensure UN entities review mandate citations in their programmes and budgets** so that entities only cite mandates for which they have demonstrable comparative advantages
- 3 Make better use of system-wide coordination platforms** (e.g., Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UN Sustainable Development Group and UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination) to avoid duplication and ensure strategic use of resources across the UN system

### Share of pooled funding down

Percentage of earmarked voluntary contributions provided via inter-agency pooled funds, trend by pillar



Source: UNDS Financing Report; UN DESA statistics

## MISALIGNED FUNDING MODALITIES: ENTRENCHING FRAGMENTATION

45. Funding is an essential precondition for mandate delivery. The overwhelming majority of UN system funds comes from voluntary contributions – about 80 per cent in 2023. For the Secretariat, that figure is about 40 per cent. Most country-level delivery comes from these voluntary contributions and is particularly vulnerable in the current environment of funding cuts. With regards to assessed contributions, Member States have an obligation under the Charter to pay fully and on time. Assessed funding should be predictable, but it is also extremely specific.

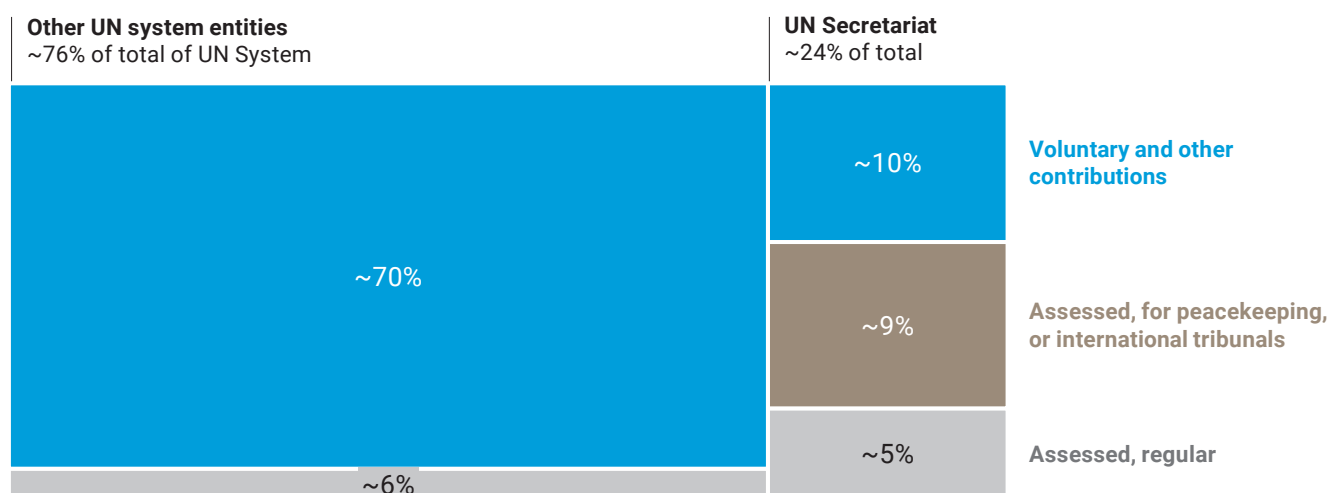
46. Therefore, Member States' practices in allocating funds have far-reaching consequences. These practices – including earmarking and small grant sizes – often hinder maximum impact and can exacerbate existing challenges for programme fragmentation.

### Funds heavily earmarked and spread too thin

47. Despite commitments in the Funding Compact, which was adopted in 2019 and most recently revised in 2024, earmarking remains a widespread and growing challenge. In 2023, over 85 per cent of voluntary funding for the UN system was earmarked, and nearly 40 per cent of Member States reported earmarking as their preferred approach in the 2024 QCPR survey. This impedes UN entities' agility in directing resources to maximize impact.

### Partners provide different types of funds: Voluntary contributions account for ~80% total

Share of UN System revenue by funding type, UN Secretariat and other UN System entities (2023)

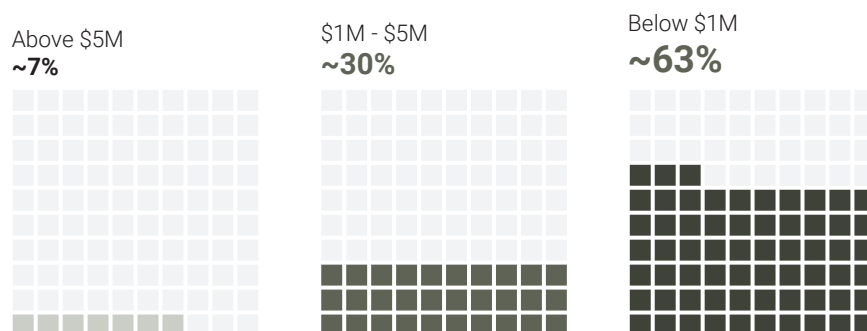


Source: UN Chief Executive Board statistics



## Most government partners provide small grants

Share of government contributors by average grant transaction size (2023)



Source: Estimates based on OECD data (2023)

48. In addition to earmarking, donors tend to allocate relatively small amounts in each grant, essentially spreading funds thinner across many activities. In 2023, more than 60 per cent of grant transactions with Government contributors were below \$1 million. As a result, about 75 per cent of grant transactions covered just 16 per cent of total voluntary funds that year. Smaller, more numerous grants push up overhead and transaction costs, requiring UN entities to spend more time on process at the expense of impact.

## Declining support for pooled funds

49. In 2023, less than 10 per cent of voluntary funding was channelled through pooled funds – far below the 30 per cent target established in the Funding Compact. Pooled funds offer a mechanism to overcome challenges arising from earmarking and smaller grant sizes, but donor support for them is declining. The share of humanitarian funding channelled through pooled funds has been decreasing long-term to around 7 per cent of all funds. After an earlier rise, contributions to pooled funds with a development focus have also recently fallen again, dropping by more than 30 per cent since 2021.

## Entrenching programme fragmentation

50. Member States' highly specific funding modalities can interact with existing fragmentation of programmes in the UN system, to the detriment of mandate impact. This fragmentation can be seen in delivery across key themes like the SDGs, for example. In 2023, an average of four UN entities accounted for more than 80 per cent of expenditure on each SDG. The remaining 20 per cent of funding was scattered across up to 20 other entities, raising questions about whether these entities are leveraging comparative advantages or spreading themselves too thin.

~75%

of transactions add up to only 16% of voluntary funding

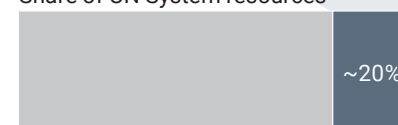
## Many entities, few resources

While accounting for 20% of UN System resources, the UN Secretariat houses 80% of ASG/USG-led entities

Share of UN System entities



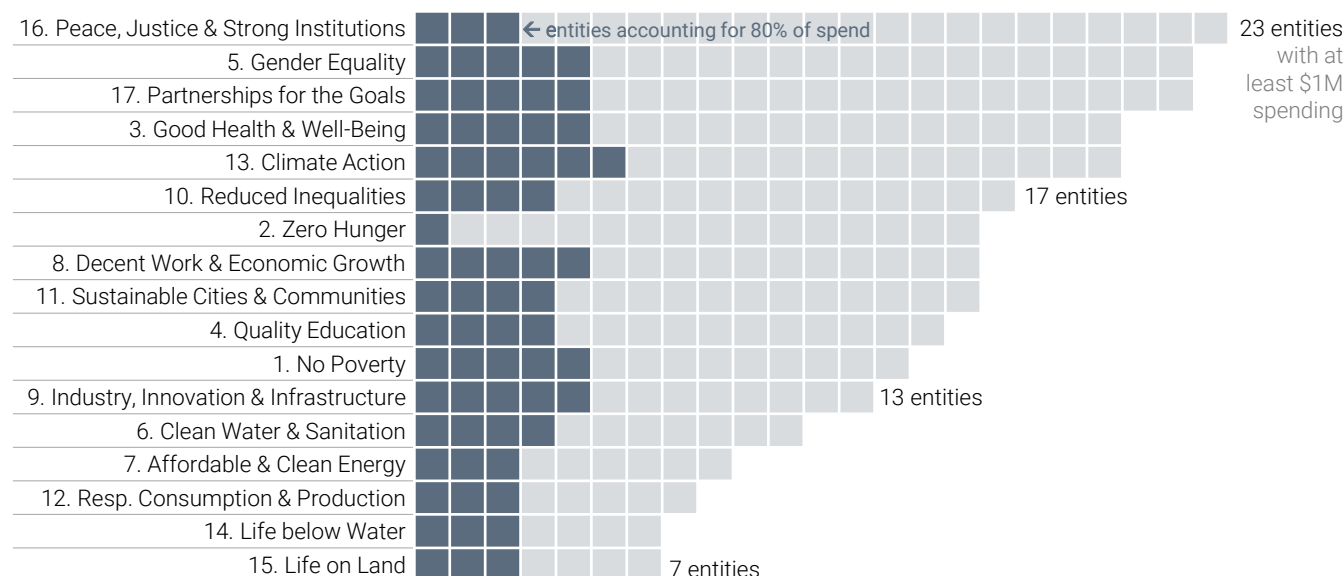
Share of UN System resources



Source: UN System chart; UN Chief Executive Board statistics

## Just 4 entities usually account for >80% of expenditure on each SDG – with the rest scattered thin

Dark squares show entities accounting for >80% spending per SDG; light squares are entities spending the remainder



Note: UNEP, UNHABITAT, UNODC included in Secretariat. Analysis covers 35 entities with spend tagged with an SDG. Source: UN Chief Executive Board statistics

51. Fragmentation is also clearly visible in the UN Secretariat, which receives only about 20 per cent of UN system resources yet houses about 80 per cent of UN system entities led at the Assistant Secretary-General level or above. And it is especially apparent in the UN Regular Budget, which represents only 5 per cent of total UN system resources but is divided into hundreds of programmes and subprogrammes, some covering activities with as few as three staff.

52. In the current environment of declining total funds, fragmentation is likely to intensify and competition for resources grow, incentivizing more opportunistic and less strategic approaches by individual entities. Practical options to address these challenges are being developed through the workstream examining structural changes and programme realignment.

## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Several actions can be proposed to adapt funding modalities for impact.

- 1 **Fully apply all commitments by Member States and the UN system through the Funding Compact** and strengthen dialogue to this end
- 2 **Allow UN system entities greater flexibility to redeploy resources** quickly with reasonable justification, including to protect essential country-level delivery from funding cuts
- 3 **Consider implementing relevant forthcoming recommendations from the UN80 Initiative workstream on structural changes and programme realignment**

UNCTAD delivered over 20 technical assistance projects in more than 70 countries · UNHCR reached 1.7 million people with gender-based violence prevention support · UNFCCC supported 170 countries in preparing their nationally determined contributions · UNDP helped 51 million people gain access to renewable energy · DPPA carried out 140 mediation expert deployments in 27 contexts · UNESCO helped protect 1,200 world heritage sites across 168 countries · UNICEF helped detect wasting early in 251 million children under five · IFAD reached 96 million people with agriculture finance support · WFP reached 160 million people with life-saving and life-changing food assistance · OCHA allocated \$64M to anticipatory and early action initiatives · UN Women disbursed more than \$220 million to civil society organizations, local organizations and networks working towards gender equality · ITU supported 160 countries in adopting a broadband plan or national digital agenda · WIPO enrolled more than 150,000 participants in education courses · UNODC monitored 1,300 new psychoactive substances in 150 countries and territories · WHO allocated \$52 million to respond to 51 health emergencies in 89 countries and territories · UN-Habitat enabled over 5.7 million people to live in its developed urban plan areas · UNOPS delivered \$600 million worth of projects in landlocked developing countries · IOM assisted over 100 individuals escape and join voluntary humanitarian country transfer in crisis situations · UNICEF supported health centres where 1 in 4 babies worldwide were born · IMO disbursed \$22 million to maritime partners · UNEP provided \$200M in grants to help 35 developing countries advance low-carbon development, reached 17 million people, and cut emissions equal to 65M cars · UNMAS cleared more than 4.4 million m<sup>2</sup> of explosive ordnance-contaminated land in Afghanistan · Spotlight mobilized \$250M+ and backed 1,400+ grassroots organizations in fragile settings since 2016 · ILO improved the operations of social protection systems in 21 countries · UNRWA conducted recreational activities for >350K children · OCHA disbursed \$1.5B to the worst and most underfunded crises · OHCHR helped over 12,600 victims of gender-based violence gain access to urgent support · UNFPA reached 14 million people with sexual and reproductive health services · UNAIDS helped ensure 31 million people received life-saving treatment · ITU supported over 90 countries in adopting e-waste regulation · IOM reached ~6.5 million people in Ukraine and neighbouring countries · WHO prequalified 48 pharmaceutical products, 21 pharmaceutical ingredients and 22 cold-chain products · OCHA mobilized 2,000 partners and UN agencies to reach 116 million people in 33 countries · UNDP assisted 20 million people in situations of forced displacement · WFP supported 88 countries with national social protection programmes · UNICEF provided safe water to more than 33 million people · OHCHR secured the release of more than 3,000 arbitrarily detained people · OCHA released \$3.4M to humanitarian responders in Nepal six minutes after verified flood warnings · UNCDF developed the Gambia River Basin master plan benefiting over 6 million people · UNV supported 59 UN partner programmes and field operations worldwide · IOM reached 4 million beneficiaries with cash-based support · UNODC benefited 500,000 families globally with technical assistance to reduce illicit crop cultivation · IFAD helped create 195,000 agriculture jobs for rural communities · UPU supported 4.5 million postal workers worldwide · UNMAS removed over 5,000 explosive ordnance items in South Sudan · WHO expanded access to mental health services to 70 million people · SRSG-CAAC aided 16,500 children formerly associated with armed groups · UN Women strengthened the legal and policy environment protecting the rights of 3 billion women and girls in 83 countries · OCHA mobilized

---

## Step 3: Mandate review

# Mandate review

## >370

agenda items and sub-items are recurrently discussed in the General Assembly

**53. Regular reviews of mandates are essential to assess their impact and ensure they remain relevant, actionable and aligned with priorities. Such reviews serve to clarify where the UN system adds the greatest value and where resources can be most productive.**

54. This section identifies two principal challenges:

- **Limited review mechanisms; and**
- **Gaps in UN system-wide accountability for impact.**

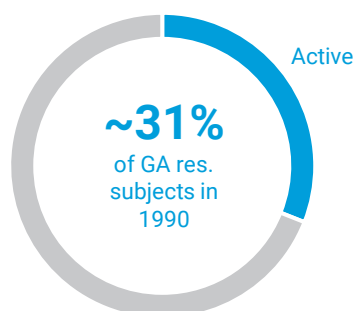
This section examines each of these issues and proposes solutions to strengthen mandate review processes.

## LIMITED REVIEW MECHANISMS

55. Many mandates continue for extended periods and are discussed repeatedly with varying degrees of frequency. This is not in itself necessarily problematic, given the enduring nature of many of the challenges involved and the essential role of interactions among Member States to address them. But the high rate of recurring business over the decades – combined with a frequent lack of formal provisions for review – suggests room to strengthen mandate review mechanisms.

### Long-standing subjects

Share of General Assembly resolution subjects from 1990 still being discussed in 2024



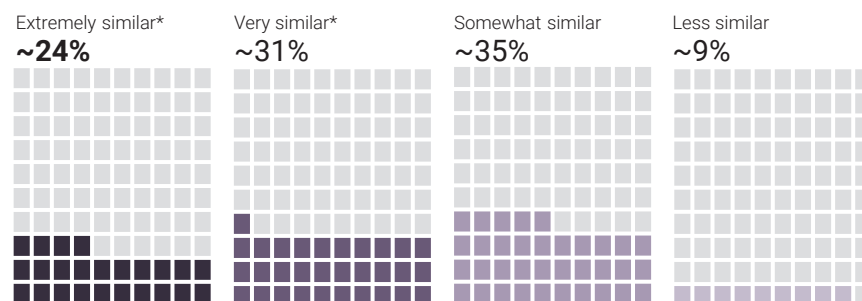
Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

### Frequently recurring business with limited changes to mandates

55. There is a tendency to repeat discussions on mandates over long periods of time. More than 30 per cent of General Assembly resolution subjects in 1990, for example, were still the subject of resolutions in 2024. The General Assembly agenda last year included 371 items and sub-items that are regularly discussed, including 215 which are discussed every year. Discussions of these items do not always lead to concrete, intergovernmentally agreed outcomes: about one in five annually recurring agenda items or sub-items did not result in any resolution or decision last year. When resolutions on recurring business are adopted, the texts often remain similar to previous versions. Since 2010, more than half of General Assembly

### Most recurring resolutions almost identical to previous version

Textual similarity of 420+ recurring General Assembly resolution texts (2010-2024)



\*"Extremely" and "very similar" mean >90% and >80% identical content to preceding resolution, respectively.

Note: Calculated using the Levenshtein method (character-level)

Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

resolutions adopted on recurring subjects were either extremely or very textually similar to previous versions.

56. This does not mean all repetition is negative or superfluous. Repeated discussions are often productive – even without resolutions – as they may provide needed focus on important issues, contribute to establishing norms for the international system or help build consensus for future action. Small textual revisions may also lead to significant practical changes for implementation. But in general, the high rate of recurring business – including without major textual changes to previous discussions – merits consideration of how to ensure time and resources are used as effectively as possible.<sup>6</sup>

### Lack of review instructions or standard review processes

57. This high share of recurring business coincides with a frequent lack of clarity on precisely when or how to review mandates, including consideration of when to retire them altogether or stop certain activities. Some mandates – like for peacekeeping missions – do have clear review procedures. But most do not: more than 85 per cent of active mandates lack instructions on review or termination. In addition, the Secretary-General has not frequently used the existing authority to propose to the General Assembly a list of deliverables for termination. Even when review instructions are clear, there may also be a certain degree of mandate “inertia” – or a tendency to renew mandates as the default.

# ~215

agenda items and sub-items are discussed every year in the General Assembly

### Lacking sunset clauses

Share of active mandates without instructions on review or termination

Lacking a sunset clause:  
~86%

Source: Estimates based on UN Digital Library data

58. Member States may wish to regularly review all mandates, either at the individual level or as part of a collective assessment of multiple mandates addressing the same issue. Collective reviews are more likely to promote wider coherence across the mandate landscape and the UN system, identifying activities to expand, reduce or terminate. Although collective mandate reviews do occur – such as for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly – they remain relatively rare. Member States have also put in place other review processes that – even if not explicitly linked to mandates – could offer inspiration for collective mandate reviews. The QCPR process to provide guidance on policy across the entire UN development system every four years is one example.

## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

59. Mandate review mechanisms remain the prerogative of Member States, who have already taken important steps to strengthen them. These steps include ongoing efforts in the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC to streamline work, adjust frequency of recurring business and review outputs. Member States have also recognized that more should be done in this regard. The following proposals aim to support and complement ongoing efforts, with a view towards effective, system-wide mandate reviews for maximum impact. Member States may wish to consider the following proposals:

- 1 **Systematize and reinforce efforts under way to strengthen mandate review mechanisms** and ensure these efforts are in place across mandating bodies
- 2 **Include expiry clauses in new resolutions** (as recommended in A/RES/77/335)
- 3 **Introduce processes to facilitate more collective reviews of mandates** that address specific issues, learning from existing practices (e.g., General Assembly revitalization) and similar processes (e.g., QCPR)
- 4 **Increase use of existing mechanisms** to identify opportunities to consolidate and streamline work, including recommendations by the Secretary-General to terminate specific outputs (as per Rule 105.6 of ST/SGB/2018/3)
- 5 **Streamline how mandates are discussed**, including by revising intergovernmental bodies' programmes of work, consolidating agenda items of individual bodies, and aligning work across the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council

## GAPS IN UN SYSTEM-WIDE IMPACT ACCOUNTABILITY

60. This report maintains a consistent focus on impact. For mandate reviews to obtain a clear picture of impact, it is important for UN system entities to be able to link their activities, resources and results. Results-based management provides a way to do this. Despite improvements, considerable differences persist in how UN entities manage for results. This may affect the ability of individual entities and the system as a whole to demonstrate collective achievements. This, in turn, may rebound on the ability to mobilize and direct resources to maximum effect.

### Incomplete results chains

61. The overarching accountability<sup>7</sup> objective is clear: to align UN system resources around measurable outcomes and offer a view of collective impact that demonstrates value to Member States and informs any necessary adjustments. This requires effective, consistent results chains at two levels: individual entities and system-wide.

62. Recent reforms have seen significant improvements in how individual UN system entities manage for results. About 40 per cent of these entities now have strategic plans in place to organize resources around outcomes, and about 30 per cent already possess integrated results and resource frameworks to support their strategic plans. However, there remains significant scope for more entities to introduce these results chains.

63. At the system level, the considerable variation in how individual UN system entities manage for results makes it more difficult to assess the system's aggregate impact. This is both because about 60 per cent of individual UN entities lack key elements of the results chain and because the tools to support results chains – such as strategic plans or results frameworks – differ across the entities who use them. Harmonizing these tools to the greatest extent possible would create robust, system-wide results chains that can provide clear, compelling evidence of the UN system's collective impact.

### Gaps in communicating results

64. Demonstrating UN system impact clearly and with evidence – both at the entity level and system-wide – is essential for accountability and for successful resource mobilization. It is also central to making mandate reviews effective. UN system entities invest heavily

### Inconsistent

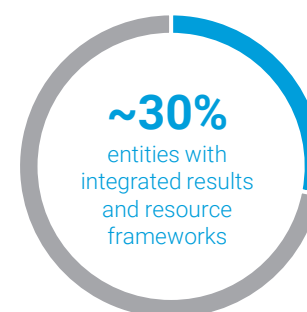
Share of entities with publicly available strategic plan



Source: Estimates based on publicly available UN system strategic plans

### Gaps

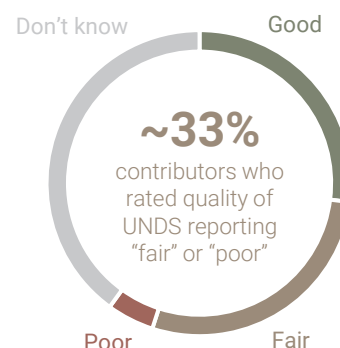
Share of entities with integrated results and resource framework



Source: Estimates based on publicly available UN system strategic plans

### Concerns

Assessment of joint results reports by Member State contributors



Source: 2024 Survey of Governments on UN operational activities for development



---

~60%

UN Country Teams with dedicated  
joint annual communication budgets

in communicating their achievements and have recently achieved significant improvements: for example, all UN Country Teams now produce collective results reports, compared to 64 per cent before the 2018 reforms.

65. But gaps in results chains across the UN system may undermine the effectiveness of these communications. Lack of resources to support such efforts is also an issue: in 2024, only 62 per cent of UN Country Teams had dedicated joint communications budgets. These factors – in addition to fragmentation in funding that leads to multiple reporting requirements – may partially explain why concerns about reporting persist among some donors. For example, in the 2024 QCPR survey, about one in three donor countries rated their satisfaction with the UN development system’s results reporting as “fair” or “poor”.

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

66. Mandate reviews strengthen the UN system’s accountability for impact and should pay close attention to how mandates are translated across the UN system’s results chains. Recent progress – including in managing for results – are encouraging and should be built upon. The recommendation below builds on this improvement:

- 1 **Strengthen and harmonize management for results mechanisms across the UN system**, including how results are measured and communicated

---

Footnote 6: The UN Secretariat already takes a number of measures to promote efficiency when it comes to recurring business, including adjustments to ensure translators spend less time translating reprise resolutions than new resolutions, without sacrificing accuracy.

Footnote 7: The General Assembly defines “accountability” in its resolution A/RES/64/259 (2010), in part, as follows: “Accountability includes achieving objectives and high-quality results in a timely and cost-effective manner, in fully implementing and delivering on all mandates to the Secretariat approved by the United Nations intergovernmental bodies and other subsidiary organs...”



UNMAS removed over 5,000 explosive ordnance items in South Sudan · OCHA assisted ~120 million people with assistance · IAEA supported 150 countries, including 35 LDCs, through its technical cooperation programme · UNESCO supported 43 million people in 133 countries affected by conflict and disaster · WHO prequalified 48 pharmaceutical products, 21 pharmaceutical ingredients and 22 cold-chain products · UN Peacebuilding Fund allocated over \$116 million to 32 countries and territories · UNICEF delivered over 1.5 billion polio vaccine doses to 87 countries · UNIDO helped countries reduce 82 million tonnes of CO2 emissions through phasing down ozone-depleting substances and hydrofluorocarbons · SRSG-CAAC aided 16,500 children formerly associated with armed groups · DCC aligned activities with the development priorities of 98% of host governments · UNOPS delivered \$1.3 billion worth of projects in least developed countries · UNDP assisted 20 million people in situations of forced displacement · UN Women strengthened the legal and policy environment protecting the rights of 3 billion women and girls in 83 countries · IOM reached over 32 million people on the move with support · ILO improved access to social protection for nearly 56 million people between 2021 and 2024 · UN-Habitat enabled over 200,000 people living in slums and informal settlements to access basic services · UNEP launched adaptation initiatives for 3.5 million people in 50 countries facing climate impacts · ITU supported over 90 countries in adopting e-waste regulation · OPCW inspected over 5,000 industrial facilities · UNV mobilized ~15K volunteers in 169 countries and territories · DPPA's Geoguard tool delivered climate and environmental data to 29 countries · UNICEF treated over 9 million children for severe wasting and severe acute malnutrition · OHCHR provided legal aid, relocation, and family reunification for 15,000+ people in extreme violence situations · WFP supported more than 28 million people with malnutrition treatment and prevention · UNAIDS supported 84 countries in scaling up HIV prevention programmes · UNHCR assisted over 37 million displaced people worldwide · UNFPA helped prevent 158,000 HIV infections through the provision of female condoms · IOM delivered ~7 million primary health consultations in crisis settings · UNODC facilitated the safe disposal of over 1,000 tons of drugs · WHO expanded access to mental health services to 70 million people · UN-Habitat enabled over 5.7 million people to live in its developed urban plan areas · OCHA delivered nearly \$54M in anticipatory financing helping communities prepare for crises · UNDP helped 160 million people gain access to essential services for health, education, and water · UNICEF provided education access to 26 million out-of-school children, including 13 million in crisis · DPO deployed over 61,000 peacekeepers across 11 peacekeeping missions · FAO trained 50,000 government staff, strengthening institutional capacities · WMO helped LDCs and SIDS improve early-warning systems for 397 million people · DPPA provided electoral assistance for one-third of elections held globally · WFP provided \$3.3 billion in cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers · OCHA allocated \$64M to anticipatory and early action initiatives · UNHCR provided legal assistance to 1.4 million people · IFAD reached 96 million people with agriculture finance support · UNMAS cleared more than 4.4 million m2 of explosive ordnance-contaminated land in Afghanistan · OHCHR assisted 10,500+ slavery survivors in 36 countries · UN Women strengthened the capacities of 16,600 organizations to support women across 93 countries · ILO improved the operations of social protection systems in 21 countries · ITU helped improve access to telecommunications for underserved communities globally · UNCDF supported 1 million Pacific residents' access to digital finance · UNRWA provided emergency food or

---

## Way forward

# Way forward

**67. This report provides data, analysis and proposals across the mandate lifecycle, with a view to support the creation, delivery and review of mandates for maximum impact. Proposals are made in full recognition that it is Member States who own the mandates they give to the UN system and who will decide next steps.**

68. The hope is that this report and its proposals may prove useful as Member States consider options for the way forward. Proposals are divided into actions that the Secretary-General intends to take under his own authority mainly to strengthen support to Member States throughout the mandate lifecycle, followed by additional proposals for Member States' consideration. All these proposals are part of the broader UN80 Initiative, which is working to create a more coherent, efficient, effective and results-oriented United Nations system – fit for the present and for future challenges.

---

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

69. Specific proposals for each phase of the mandate lifecycle are summarized below. Actions by the Secretary-General to support these proposals, within his existing authority, appear in the next section, followed by possible steps for Member States' consideration.

- 1. Support Mandate Creation:** Provide full visibility of the overall mandate landscape; and support Member States in creating mandates that maximize relevance and impact
- 2. Improve Mandate Delivery:** Establish optimal arrangements for meetings and reports; strengthen delivery management mechanisms; and enhance effective use of resources
- 3. Strengthen Mandate Review:** Reinforce mandate review mechanisms; and strengthen the UN system's accountability for impact.

---

## PATH FORWARD

70. In resolution 79/318, the General Assembly called upon **“the entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to align their reform efforts with this approach, as appropriate.”**

Although this report focuses principally on mandates issued by the General Assembly, Security Council and ECOSOC and their subsidiary organs, its proposals are relevant for the entire UN system and could be considered for wider application through the appropriate mechanisms.

71. UN80 Initiative workstreams complementary to this report also continue. The Secretary-General will broaden the analysis of mandate delivery across the UN system, with a particular view to identifying potential needs for structural changes and programmatic realignments, as well as proposing measures to strengthen internal efficiency and effectiveness. These efforts will feed into, benefit from and support the work of the seven thematic clusters established under the Initiative. Upon completion of this further analysis, the Secretary-General will submit relevant proposals.

72. The UN system stands ready to continue engaging with Member States and to provide technical support and analytical insights, as requested. In his letter of 11 March 2025 launching the UN80 Initiative, the Secretary-General underlined that success will depend on both the UN system and Member States assuming shared and complementary responsibilities. This will require vision, leadership and resolve to carry forward a bold transformation in how mandates are conceived, delivered and reviewed. Together, this can build a more agile, coherent and impactful United Nations.

---

## ACTIONS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

73. Based on the findings in this report and under his existing authority, the Secretary-General will act in the following areas to improve support to Member States throughout the mandate lifecycle.

### Enhance Mandate Visibility and Design:

1. Accelerate the creation of comprehensive registries of existing mandate texts issued by all mandating bodies
2. Improve UN Secretariat support for Member States during mandate creation, based on priorities established by Member States
3. Strengthen support by UN Secretariat entities to coordinate and promote greater visibility across the work of mandating bodies
4. Develop tools using artificial intelligence to assist with mandate drafting, including by producing summarized information to enable Member States' decision-making, flagging potential complementarities or duplications in draft texts or meeting agendas across mandating bodies
5. For new mandates, complement estimates of regular budget expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General (in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly) with additional information on related programmatic activities across the UN system and across all sources of funding

### Improve Reporting:

1. Provide shorter reports and reduce maximum word counts
2. Combine reports covering similar issues and contexts wherever feasible
3. Introduce different report formats based on needs and content type; first reports could be longer followed by shorter updates, visual dashboards, in-person briefings or other formats
4. Publish download statistics for all reports to inform further discussions on reporting practices

### Improve Mandate Delivery Management:

1. Strengthen internal strategic oversight of the UN system division of labour at all levels to ensure effective, efficient programmatic and operational support. This builds upon 2018 reform commitments and efforts to strengthen Resident Coordinator system leadership.
2. Ensure UN entities review mandate citations in their programmes and budgets so that entities only cite mandates for which they have demonstrable comparative advantages
3. Make better use of system-wide coordination platforms (e.g., Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UN Sustainable Development Group and UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination) to avoid duplication and ensure strategic use of resources across the UN system
4. Fully apply all commitments by the UN system through the Funding Compact and strengthen dialogue to this end

**Establish Effective Review Mechanisms:**

1. Increase use of existing mechanisms to identify opportunities to consolidate and streamline work, including recommendations by the Secretary-General to terminate specific outputs (as per Rule 105.6 of ST/SGB/2018/3)
2. Strengthen and harmonize management for results mechanisms across the UN system, including how results are measured and communicated

---

## PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY MEMBER STATES

74. This report presents a number of proposals for the consideration of Member States. They are offered with full respect for Member States' sole authority in every stage of the mandate lifecycle and recognize that decisions on next steps lie entirely with them. The report offers information and insights that may support Member States in their stewardship of mandates, should they wish to draw on them.

75. Progress in the objectives and proposed actions set out in this report could be made through a dedicated UN80-related intergovernmental process, the modalities of which would be determined by the President of the General Assembly. Should Member States decide they wish to launch such a process, the United Nations stands ready to assist and support as requested.

### Effective Mandate Design:

76. Member States may wish to consider the following proposals to enhance mandate design:

1. Reduce the length of mandate texts wherever possible in order to ensure mandates are effectively implemented and with greater impact (in line with recommendations in A/RES/77/335, paragraph 45)
2. Frame mandates that allow the Secretary-General appropriate flexibility to assign tasks based on comparative advantages and resources across the UN system
3. Refrain from mandating new tasks which are not backed by corresponding resources or an explicit reduction in other mandated tasks

### Improve Mandate Delivery:

77. Member States may wish to consider the following proposals to strengthen mandate delivery:

1. Prioritize and streamline requests in mandates for reports or meetings
2. Fully apply all commitments by Member States through the Funding Compact and strengthen dialogue to this end
3. Allow UN system entities greater flexibility to redeploy resources quickly with reasonable justification, including to protect essential country-level delivery from funding cuts
4. Consider implementing relevant forthcoming recommendations from the UN80 Initiative workstream on structural changes and programme realignment

### Support Mandate Review:

78. Member States may wish to consider the following proposals to support mandate review:

1. Systematize and reinforce efforts under way to strengthen mandate review mechanisms and ensure these efforts are in place across mandating bodies
2. Include expiry clauses in new resolutions (as recommended in A/RES/77/335)
3. Introduce processes to facilitate more collective reviews of mandates that address specific issues, learning from existing practices (e.g., GA revitalization) and similar processes (e.g., QCPR)
4. Streamline how mandates are discussed, including by revising intergovernmental bodies' programmes of work, consolidating agenda items of individual bodies, and aligning work across the General Assembly, ECOSOC and the Security Council



# Annex: UN system overviews

## UN system (Simplified)

Showing entities by type, 1 box per entity (typically USG / ASG-led)

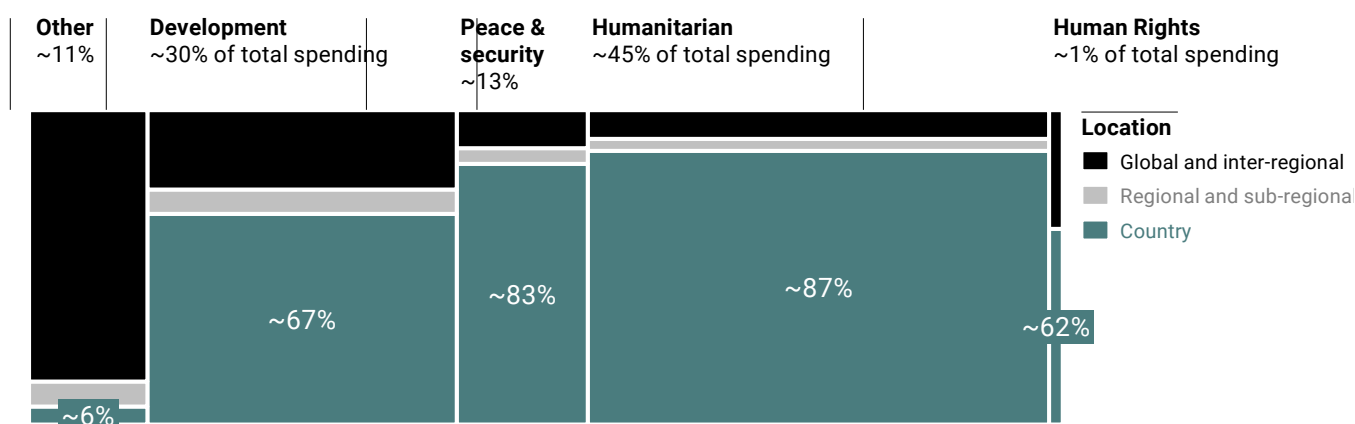
CAAC	DCO	DESA	DGACM	DGC	DMSPC	DOS	Secretariat Departments, Offices, etc.	67+
DPO	DPPA	DSS	EOSG	OAJ	OCHA	OCT		
ODA	ODET	OHCHR	OHRLLS	OICT	OIOS	OLA		
OMS	OOSA	OSAA	PESG WS	PG	SEA	SVC		
UNDRR	UNGC	UNODC	UNOG	UNON	UNOP	UNOV		
UNROD	UNYO	VAC	VRA	Other	BNUH	CNMC	Peacekeeping Operations, Political Missions, etc.	33+
MINURSO	MINUSCA	MONUSCO	OSASG CYP	OSESG GL	OSESG Horn	OSESG MYR		
OSESG SYR	OSESG YEM	UNAMA	UNDOF	UNFICYP	UNIFIL	UNISFA		
UNMHA	UNMIK	UNMISS	UNMOGIP	UNOAU	UNOCA	UNOWAS		
UNRCCA	UNRGID	UNSCO	UNSCOL	UNSMIL	UNSOM	UNSOS		
UNTSO	UNVMC	Other	ECA	ECE	ECLAC	ESCAP	Regional Commissions, Other Bodies, etc.	7+
ESCWA	UNAIDS	Other	ITC	UNCTAD*	UNDP	UNEP*		
UNFPA	UN Habitat*	UNHCR	UNICEF	UNIDIR	UNITAR	UNOPS	Funds, Programmes, etc.	17+
UNRWA	UNSSC	UNU	UNV	UN Women	WFP	Other		
FAO	ICAO	IFAD	ILO	IMO	ITU	UN Tourism	Specialized Agencies	14+
UNESCO	UNIDO	UPU	WHO	WIPO	WMO	Other		
CTBTO	IAEA	IOM	ISA	OPCW	WTO	Other	Related Organizations	6+

\*The secretariat of these entities are part of the UN Secretariat

Note: Entities that are subsidiary organs of General Assembly, incl. Training & Research and Other Entities, are included in "Funds, Programmes, etc." Some entities are not

## UN system expenditure by pillar and location

Share of total spending by pillar and in 2023, Global, Regional, Local (CEB)

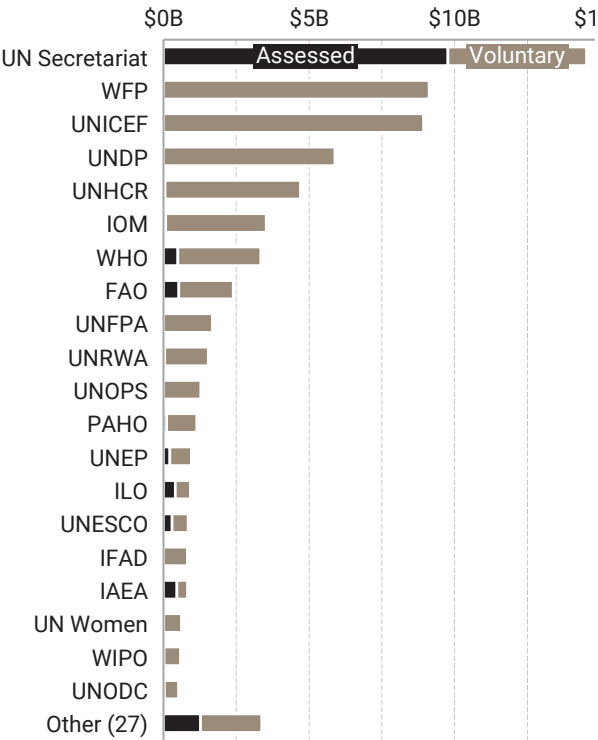


Source: UN Chief Executive Board statistics



UN system revenue by entity

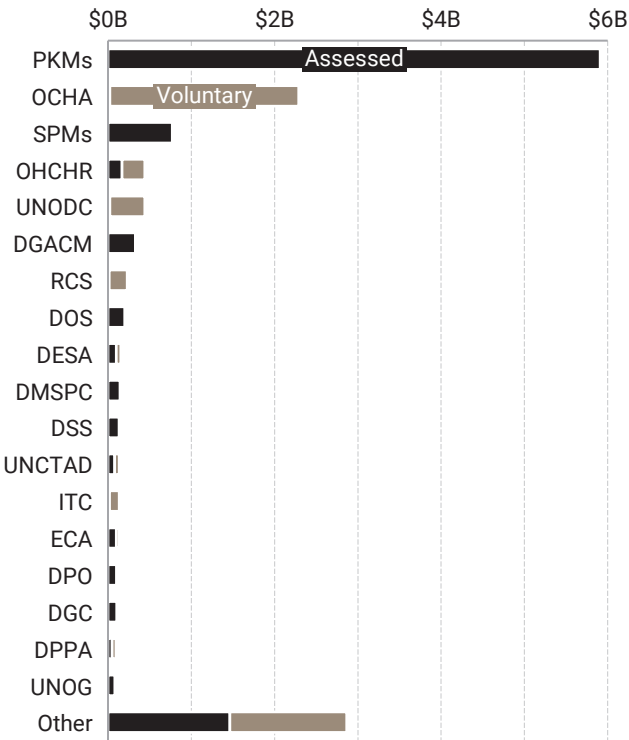
Total revenue by type (assessed, voluntary / other), 2023



Note: UN Secretariat includes Secretariat and Peacekeeping revenue  
Source: UN Chief Executive Board statistics

UN Secretariat revenue by entity

Total revenue by type (assessed, voluntary / other), 2023



Source: UN Secretariat

Number of mandates cross-cited between one entity and another

Note: H/R = Human Rights.

Source: UN Secretariat Proposed Programme Budget for 2026. Peacekeeping Budget for 2025/26.



