



Permanent Mission of Jamaica
to the United Nations



Interim Report back by the Co-Chairs of the Informal Ad Hoc Working Group on the Mandate Implementation Review

11 December 2025

Context

President,

Earlier this year, the Secretary-General launched the UN80 Initiative to strengthen the effectiveness and coherence of the United Nations. He did so in recognition of the growing political and fiscal challenges facing this organisation even as it celebrates its eightieth anniversary.

The UN80 Initiative encompasses a broad range of proposals to strengthen the UN's effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. These include efficiency measures within the UN Secretariat, structural reforms and programme

realignments across the UN system, and measures to strengthen the implementation of UN mandates.

To address the latter, the General Assembly, through decision 79/571, established this Informal Ad Hoc Working Group (IAHWG) on the Mandate Implementation Review on 2nd September this year. HE Brian Wallace and I were honoured to be appointed co-chairs to lead this process. Our mandate is "to consider the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General and to identify principles and follow-up actions in order to improve the creation, delivery and review of mandates".

Mandates remain at the heart of how the UN organizes its operational, policy-oriented and normative work. Ensuring that mandates are created, implemented, and reviewed effectively is essential for strengthening the Organization's impact.

At this important moment for the Organization, and in this period of reflection and adjustment, this Working Group must contribute in a meaningful way to supporting a long-term effort to improve mandate practices to better reflect Member State priorities and operational realities and, critically, help deliver greater impact for those we serve.

Process

President,

From the outset, we, as Co-Chairs, deliberately designed a process that is open, transparent, and Member State-driven. Mandates reflect decisions made by Member States. Any refinements to mandate practices should similarly be Member State-led. Drawing lessons from the 2006 mandate review, we took a future-focused, system-level approach, rather than attempting to revisit individual mandates during this process.

The first stage of our work has been a “Discovery Phase”. Its purpose has been to listen, gather perspectives, and develop a shared understanding of the key issues, options, challenges and opportunities before considering any outcome.

During this period, the Co-Chairs convened three technical briefings and three consultations structured around the three stages of the mandate lifecycle: creation, implementation, and review.

The briefings provided delegations with deeper insights from the Secretariat, former and current leaders and experts from the UN system and Permanent Representatives experienced in leading intergovernmental processes and initiatives. Their briefings focused on best practices, challenges, and tools across the UN system. Their briefings offered a foundation for reflection and further inquiry.

The subsequent consultations provided an opportunity for delegations to explore issues in greater depth, receive clarifications, and share perspectives informed by the briefings and their own experience with the mandate lifecycle. Taken together, these exchanges offered a more complete understanding of the mandate lifecycle.

Briefings and Consultations

President,

Allow me to give a brief overview of some insights that emerged from the briefers.

The briefing on **mandate creation** highlighted the need for greater visibility across mandates to enhance coordination and harmonization and reduce duplication,

for the design of clearer and more actionable mandates, for more discipline in mandating tasks, and for enhanced technical and practical support to Member States in drafting and adopting mandates.

Challenges identified by briefers included increasingly lengthy and complex mandates, inadequate alignment between mandates and resource allocation, ambiguous drafting, and limited and inconsistent investment in evaluation, all of which hamper implementation.

Briefers suggested solutions such as standardizing review clauses, linking resources and actions more clearly, and providing the Secretary-General with greater flexibility to assign tasks based on comparative advantage, in a neutral manner consistent with Member States decision-making primacy. Briefers also proposed leveraging digital tools, such as online registries and AI, to improve access to information and reduce duplication, while noting the need for adequate safeguards to ensure security and maintain effective human oversight.

The briefing on **mandate implementation** underscored the administrative burden generated by the continued proliferation of meetings and reports, the prevalence of

recurring reporting with limited demonstrable uptake, and the fragmentation caused by funding modalities.

Briefers posited that extra-budgetary funding, much of which is heavily earmarked, shape behaviours across the system, sometimes requiring UN system leaders to spend inordinate time and effort on fundraising and often resulting in UN entities taking on activities outside the scope of their comparative advantage. We heard that implementation was also affected by weaknesses in Secretariat and Member State coordination and the absence of a comprehensive knowledge management system to support system-wide coherence.

Briefers again noted the potential of AI and other digital tools, as long as appropriately safeguarded, to support knowledge management and improved implementation.

The briefing on **mandate review** pointed to the lack of clear review mechanisms in most mandates. This often resulted in automatic renewal through inertia rather than deliberate decision. Delegations heard that many recurring agenda items tend to be reproduced with limited change, reducing opportunities for strategic steering.

We also heard that inconsistent performance information and wide variation in results frameworks limited the ability of Member States to assess implementation and impact. Examples from across the system, such as the Security Council's time-bound mandates and annual pruning of its agenda, and the QCPR's collective assessment of related mandates, offered illustrations of how structured review systems have the potential to support better decision-making. UNEP's provision of technical notes illustrated how more careful design can support improved implementation and effective review of mandates.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our thanks to the briefers, all of whom provided valuable inputs and context, setting us up for a shared understanding of the challenges we face, and possible options to consider.

IAHWG Member Perspectives

President,

During our consultations with Working Group members, several recurring themes emerged.

Many delegations reaffirmed the enduring importance of the UN system and its role as the custodian of global norms, a forum for diplomacy and cooperation, and a platform for delivering practical assistance on the ground, particularly to the most vulnerable.

At the same time, delegations expressed concern that the system does not always deliver to our expectations. Fragmentation, duplication, inefficiencies and lack of adequate resourcing were frequently mentioned as barriers to achieving greater impact.

Delegations noted the increasing volume and complexity of mandates. This proliferation affects the capacity of the UN system to deliver effectively, but it also affects the ability of Member States to meaningfully engage and provide effective oversight and accountability in a strategic and coherent manner. Smaller delegations, in particular, noted that the volume of mandates and mandated activities was at times overwhelming.

However, several delegations stressed that the mandate implementation review process should not simply be an exercise to reduce the number of mandates, but rather to enhance the effectiveness of their implementation. Many highlighted the need for greater clarity in mandate

design, stronger alignment with collectively agreed priorities, and better visibility across mandates to help avoid unintended duplication.

Delegations pointed to a persistent misalignment between mandate decisions and available resources. Many stressed that this was not about making new mandates conditional on the approval of new resources. Rather, they stressed that where mandates are created or renewed without sufficient clarity on the resource implications, implementation suffers, with difficult decisions sometimes required on relative prioritization without clear criteria or mechanisms to guide them.

We also heard that monitoring and impact assessment varies widely across the UN system. The fact that only 15 percent of mandates have built-in review clauses and the inconsistent availability of performance information were highlighted as areas requiring closer scrutiny.

Most delegations also underscored the importance of ensuring that this Working Group's efforts are well coordinated with other UN80 reform processes, particularly those focused on structural reform and programme realignment, as well as with revitalization workstreams.

President,

A range of views were also expressed on how mandate practices could be improved across the lifecycle.

Delegations offered differing perspectives regarding the extent to which greater structure or standardization could be useful in the design phase, the degree of flexibility that should be available during implementation, and the kinds of mechanisms that might support more consistent review over time.

Some delegations emphasized the importance of enhancing coherence, predictability and discipline in mandate practices. Others highlighted the need to preserve flexibility, noting that mandates vary in nature and context so approaches suitable in one area may not be appropriate in another.

Views were expressed on the extent to which improvements agreed by the Working Group could be applied to the existing stock of mandates, with some calling for retrospective application and others wishing to focus on new or renewing mandates.

Working Group members commented on the need to take a balanced approach in determining the degree of Secretariat support or discretion that should apply, noting Member States' overarching decision-making responsibilities.

Perspectives were also shared regarding the balance between strengthening administrative efficiency and safeguarding the analytical depth and accountability functions that reporting and oversight processes are intended to provide. Delegations expressed a range of views on how these elements should evolve. Maintaining confidence in the system would need to be balanced with practical considerations.

Overall, Working Group members underscored the value they placed on this process and the importance of approaching the next phase of our work in a manner that accommodates this breadth of perspectives while supporting practical improvements across the mandate lifecycle.

Principles

President,

In decision 79/571, we were tasked with identifying principles and follow-up actions to improve the creation, delivery and review of mandates.

Across our various engagements, delegations raised several possible principles that could guide future improvements in the mandate lifecycle.

- There was broad agreement that our approach to mandates across all phases of their lifecycle across the UN system must be focused on maximising impact for the people we serve.
- Working Group members were united in emphasizing that decisions on mandate creation, renewal, and termination are the exclusive prerogative of Member States.
- Delegations acknowledged that mandates are diverse in nature and cautioned against a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Most called for a balanced approach to mandates across the three pillars of the UN – peace and security, sustainable development, and human rights.

- Many encouraged enhanced visibility, transparency, clarity, coherence and discipline in the design of mandates.
- Many requested the Secretariat to provide enhanced, appropriate and impartial assistance to support more effective mandate formulation and decision-making by Member States.
- Adequate and appropriate resourcing of mandates was emphasised by many.
- There was wide agreement that Member States should be informed by relevant data and analysis when designing mandates.
- Mandates should be designed to deliver tangible outcomes to ensure accountability.
- Many delegations stressed the value of reviewing mandates to better assess their implementation and impact, and to inform decisions on their future.
- Delegations pointed to the value of improving strategic coordination and fostering a culture of continuous improvement across the UN system.

We acknowledge that this is a non-exhaustive presentation of ideas for high-level guiding principles that we as Co-Chairs heard from you during the Discovery Phase. Nonetheless, we do consider that these could serve as the basis for further discussion during the upcoming Production Phase. We look forward to engaging further with you on them, and on other ideas you may bring.

I now have the honour to pass the floor to my Co-Chair, Ambassador Wallace.

Transition: Ambassador Wallace takes the Podium

Actions

Decision 79/571 also tasked us with identifying **actions** to improve the creation, delivery and review of mandates.

It is our view that any actions should flow naturally from the principles we identify. It is our further view, which we believe most Working Group members share, that the

overall objective of any agreed actions should be to make UN mandates more efficient and impactful across their lifecycle.

The Discovery Phase of this process unearthed many ideas for specific actions that the Working Group could agree to improve mandates.

As with the principles outlined by Ambassador Schwalger, we look forward to further discussions during the Production Phase of this process to determine which actions should form part of a package of outcomes, bearing in mind the need to achieve the highest possible level of ambition in our outcome.

Working Group members acknowledged the importance of the **creation** phase of the mandate lifecycle. We heard strong recognition that improving this stage of the lifecycle would set us up for success from the outset.

Working Group members encouraged a tailored approach based on mandate type and context, with the form and frequency of resolutions or decisions creating or renewing mandates to be determined by their nature and purpose.

Working Group members asked for enhanced Secretariat support for Member States in the creation or renewal of mandates. Some actions proposed in this regard included the following:

- Tasking the Secretariat to develop options for providing more systematic advice to support Member State decision-making. This could include making available comprehensive information and analysis on relevant existing mandates, improved guidance on resource implications, and technical advice on effective drafting to facilitate implementation and assessment of impact. Practical suggestions included the development of mandate templates, checklists, “codes of conduct”, and drafting guidance, as well as the provision of technical notes or “mandate landscape briefings”.
- Tasking the Secretariat to further develop practical tools to support Member State decision-making. This could include improving the functionality of the online mandates registry and taking advantage of AI tools, while ensuring appropriate safeguards to maintain security and effective human oversight.

Many Working Group members also emphasised the role of Member States in making our own work more efficient

and impactful. Some actions proposed in this regard included:

- Committing to draft and adopt shorter, clearer, more focused, and more actionable mandates, grounded in realistic expectations and informed by available information on the resourcing required.
- Enhancing efforts to promote coherence and avoid unnecessary duplication across the UN system, drawing on the enhanced visibility provided by Secretariat tools and guidance.
- Providing the Secretary-General with the flexibility to allocate mandated tasks to parts of the UN system with a clear comparative advantage in delivering the outcomes sought, noting that some delegations stressed that this should only be done in a manner consistent with transparent criteria and direction provided by Member States in the relevant mandates.

Working Group members highlighted the criticality of mandate **implementation**. Our ability to effectively deliver on the mandates we adopt will, to a large extent, determine how the UN is judged by our citizens, and rightly so.

We heard significant concerns that the existing stock of mandates places heavy workloads on delegations, in particular preventing smaller delegations from participating in the strategic decisions of the Organization, hampers implementation, and dilutes impact. Actions proposed to improve this included:

- Taking a more strategic approach to the frequency with which mandates are considered and/or renewed based on their nature and purpose.
- Showing restraint in commissioning reports, meetings, including High-level Meetings, and other activities to allow resources to be better aligned with the strategic priorities agreed by Member States.
- Encouraging the Secretariat to prepare shorter, higher quality, more readable reports in formats more suitable to the information provided, without reducing transparency or the visibility of important issues.

Many Working Group Members stressed the importance of adequate and reliable funding to support effective mandate implementation and acknowledged a misalignment between mandates and the resources

necessary for their implementation. Actions proposed to improve this included:

- Committing to upholding our funding obligations by paying assessed contributions in full and on time.
- Reducing barriers to the flexible and effective use of resources which support mandate implementation, such as the earmarking of voluntary contributions.
- Considering further the Secretary-General's request to allow UN System entities greater flexibility to redeploy resources quickly with reasonable justification, based on further clarity of the criteria and processes to be employed.
- Resequencing the budgetary process to enable the Secretary-General to provide earlier information to Member States on the resource implications of mandates, well in advance of their approval or renewal.
- Agreeing to refrain from adopting mandates without allocating the resources necessary for implementation or reprioritising existing activities.

We also heard that strengthening mandate implementation will require a system-wide approach. Actions proposed to improve this included:

- Committing to taking a consistent approach to mandate reform across the UN system, applying shared principles and actions, where appropriate.
- Committing to strengthen internal strategic oversight mechanisms within the UN system and to utilise existing system-wide coordination platforms more effectively to avoid duplication and enhance delivery.
- Encouraging the chairs and facilitators of UN bodies, committees, boards and processes to work collectively to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and contemporization of the UN's working methods.

On mandate **review**, Working Group members called for improved mechanisms to support Member States to assess progress and adjust mandates as required, and to inform decisions on renewal or termination when they are successfully completed or become obsolete.

Working Group members discussed examples of good evaluation and review practices that exist across the UN

system and made specific proposals for action on evaluation, including:

- Committing to including evaluation and review clauses in all new mandates, and in existing mandates when these are renewed, with clauses to include clear objectives, timelines, criteria and mechanisms.
- Standardizing resources allocated for evaluation in mandate budgets.
- Agreeing to assess mandates based on relevant data, expertise, and analysis provided by the Secretariat and, where appropriate, credible independent sources.
- Agreeing to explore greater use of collective reviews of similar or related mandates, across mandating bodies, to improve coordination and coherence.
- Encouraging the Secretary-General to make active use of his existing authority to make recommendations on inactive or duplicative mandates that could be merged or discontinued for Member States to consider.

Several delegations stressed that, once adopted, mandates ought to remain valid until completed or

terminated by a decision of Member States. Others noted that timelines and expiry clauses could be included in mandates from the outset, citing examples of where these have been successfully employed. Acknowledging the sensitivity of this issue and cognizant of the diverse nature of mandates, specific proposals for action included:

- Agreeing a clear and objective set of criteria to guide decisions on continuing, adjusting, or retiring mandates.
- Committing to ensure that mandate renewal, adaptation, or termination of mandates are informed by implementation assessments which focus on outcomes and impact rather than activities and outputs.

We stress again that this is a non-exhaustive presentation of possible actions that we as Co-Chairs heard from you during the Discovery Phase. While not all of these currently enjoy the support of all Working Group members, we consider it our duty to discuss them with you during the upcoming Production Phase. We therefore look forward to engaging further with you on them, and on other ideas you may bring.

Production Phase

To close, please allow us to outline our vision for the forthcoming Production Phase of the Working Group's work.

As we have mentioned, we will undertake further consultations with Member States and stakeholders in Nairobi, Geneva, and Vienna in early January. We likewise remain available to engage with you here in New York and across the UN ecosystem.

Throughout the Discovery Phase we have heard broad support for a high-ambition outcome to our work. Working Group members broadly agree that we are at an important inflection point for the UN, and as such, decisive action is needed to vastly improve mandate implementation. We have therefore concluded that this requires the adoption of a General Assembly resolution.

To this end, we as co-chairs will prepare a Zero Draft of the resolution to be circulated to Working Group members in early January.

We consider that the resolution may include:

- principles to guide mandate creation, delivery, and review;
- actions to be taken by Member States;
- instructions for the UN Secretariat; directions to General Assembly subsidiary bodies; and recommendations for other parts of the UN system, as appropriate.

Decision 79/571 requires us to finish our work by the end of March 2026. It is our intention for consultations on the Zero Draft to begin in New York during the week of 19 January. We will provide further details and a more comprehensive Production Phase Roadmap in due course.

We will continue to conduct the Mandate Implementation Review in an inclusive and transparent manner. Please be aware that we intend to continue the majority of engagement in this process at Permanent Representative-level, given that these issues require executive leadership and a strategic and long-term approach. Conscious of the demands on Ambassadors' time, we will continue to design the process with due regard to these constraints.

Your engagement and inputs to date have been thoughtful, innovative, timely and extraordinarily constructive. We take this opportunity to thank you once again for your participation and spirit of collaboration, warmth and collegiality. We rely on you all to continue engaging in this spirit in the next phase of our endeavours.

We also wish to thank the President of the General Assembly and her office, the Secretary-General and his Executive Office, and the Secretariat, including DGACM, for their tireless support, on both logistics and substance.

I also take this opportunity to thank our teams from Jamaica and New Zealand for their commitment and dedication to this process.

Excellencies, we have a monumental task ahead of us, and just a short amount of time to achieve an outcome worthy of these United Nations. As we said at the outset, the UN is at a critical juncture. This Working Group is a mechanism for us as Member States to demonstrate that concrete progress can be made on reforms that can strengthen this organisation and improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of its work. As the leaders of our UN community, we have a particular

responsibility to build trust and mutual understanding to ensure we collectively deliver concrete outcomes for all our people, as envisaged in the UN Charter.

Enjoy your holidays, and we look forward to seeing you again in the new year to continue our work.