Key Messages for USG Ryder's responses to the IAHWG Questions on Mandate Review

3 December 2025

Excellencies, colleagues, thank you once again for the detailed questions submitted after our last session. They point to three central areas where Member States are seeking clarity:

- **first, how mandates can be designed in ways that make meaningful review possible;**
- **second, how review processes themselves can function more strategically;**
- **and third, how the UN system can provide stronger, more consistent inputs to support those reviews.**

Let me address each briefly.

1. Designing mandates for effective review

A recurring question concerned the kinds of **design features that make mandates genuinely reviewable**.

Today, most mandates still lack any instruction on when or how they are revisited. In practice, this means renewal often is the default.

We highlighted several approaches that help avoid this. These include: **embedding review clauses; establishing time-bound mandates; using benchmark- or condition-based phase-outs; and setting explicit end dates or regular review cycles**.

During the drafting phase, delegations have also found value in receiving **technical information on alignment with existing mandates, on measurability, and on the cost implications of new tasks**.

Member States also raised the issue of review periodicity. In general, **short review cycles work well for operational or fast-moving contexts**, where the environment changes rapidly. **Longer cycles – biennial or quadrennial – are better suited for mandates with long-term systemic goals**, where delivery and learning unfold over several years.

In our **UN 80 initiative action plan**, we have a **work package to improve UN staff support to mandate creation**. This will include, for example, mapping existing capacities per mandating bodies and survey you on your needs and priorities.

2. Strengthening the way reviews are conducted

A second theme in your questions was how to make mandate reviews more strategic and less fragmented.

Collective reviews of clusters of mandates – rather than reviewing items in isolation – offer several advantages. They help identify duplication, promote coherence, and enable more strategic steering. They also reduce negotiation burdens and create room for deeper analysis over longer cycles.

Questions on agenda management were also prominent. Several established practices can be used more widely:

- requesting **regular, data-driven insights on how agendas evolve over time**;
- applying **rules to prune inactive items**, as done in the Security Council when items remain untouched for three years;
- **adjusting the periodicity** of agenda items;
- **clustering or merging related items**, including across bodies where appropriate; and
- retaining items **only upon notification** when continuous annual discussion is not required.

A few delegations asked about the role of oversight bodies. Entities such as the **Joint Inspection Unit, or the Board of Auditors** can contribute to stronger reviews by examining system-wide practices, identifying inconsistencies. And the **Committee for Programme and Coordination** can recommend improvements to strategic plans and results frameworks for entities it covers.

There were also questions on the Secretary-General's intent to **propose discontinuation of specific outputs**, particularly where mandates have not been reaffirmed or have been overtaken. This authority has rarely been used in the past, and as part of our **work package on budget and programme management support**, the Secretary-General intends to employ it more systematically going forward, starting with the 2027 budget.

3. Strengthening UN system inputs to reviews

A third cluster of questions focused on whether the system provides the kind of standardized, comparable **information needed for meaningful review**. There is clear room for improvement.

Good practices include: **results-based annual budgets anchored in medium-term strategies; comprehensive results frameworks that cover all activities; budgets organized around results rather than inputs; regular performance reporting; and public transparency portals showing mandates, resources and results with harmonized metrics.**

If you want to see **examples of good practice**, we included links to **open.unwomen.org, and open.unep.org** – online portals where all this information flows easily together in one place.

These approaches, and especially when combined with strong digital and data approaches, give Member States the clarity needed to assess progress, identify challenges and determine whether our work meets the purpose.

That is precisely we have a prominent **work package on system-wide result management in the UN80 Initiative Action Plan**, led by Jens Wandel, who would be happy to engage with you.

Closing

Across all your questions, the direction is consistent: **build mandates that are designed for review; conduct reviews that are strategic, coherent and appropriately timed; and ensure that the UN system provides clear, comparable performance information to support your decision-making.**

These are practical steps that can significantly strengthen the mandate lifecycle and help ensure that collective efforts remain focused on impact.

Thank you, and I look forward to continuing this discussion.