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Time to complete

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4. Impacts of multiple crises on the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body.

The current poly crisis shows that key to accelerating implementation of the SDGs, including through humanitarian assistance, is the strengthening of the policy, financing and implementation nexus and alignment. The focus on designing strategies, writing policies and framing of financing for development was made under the assumption that national ownership would ultimately lead to implementation, with support from the UN system organisations mandated to implement on behalf of partners. Discussion on how project implementation to achieve the SDGs is critical and that policy and financing cannot operate in a vacuum of national capacities and action is emerging and there appears to be agreement that the division of labour in the UN development system that hinges on the complementarity of Organisations with different "Programme", "Fund" and "Project Services" mandates need rethinking.

UNOPS, as a project implementation agent and the organization that makes policy and finance actionable, has a key role in exploring how to strengthen project delivery while building national capacities towards making developing countries capable of taking over and generating sustainable results for themselves. UNOPS's experience in responding to Member States' demand for technical capacity to plan, design, tender and in implementing bankable projects for countries in need, based on aligned policies and financing for development and vice-versa, should be tapped on. Thanks to its mandate, UNOPS is uniquely placed to work towards strengthening the alignment of institutions and governance structures of the UN system entities with policy, financing and implementation mandates, with a view to enhance accountability and transparency in SDG implementation, in particular in respect of the delivery of technical assistance to governments. This experience and expertise led UNOPS to strongly support the call for global reforms. Reforms of global governance structures that level the playing field and enable the policies, budgets and investments needed for a better, healthier, more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world will result in the strengthened role of the UN Development system entities mandated to implement projects, in partnership with the private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders to leverage diverse resources and expertise.

5. Three key areas where sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for achieving the SDGs are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2024, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.

UNOPS has been at the forefront of sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructure development globally as well as a leader of and expert in sustainable procurement and project management.

The first key area concerns UN infrastructure projects. By integrating innovative engineering solutions with a focus on climate resilience, and environment-friendly practices, UNOPS has significantly contributed to achieving SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 16 (Peaceful and Inclusive Societies) across regions of the world. UNOPS implements sustainable and inclusive infrastructure projects that not only meet the immediate development needs of communities but also enhance environmental sustainability through nature and positive solutions and strengthen climate resilience for all.

The second key area concerns the field of procurement. UNOPS focuses on creating sustainable and resilient supply chains through innovative procurement strategies. Through UNWebbuy Plus, UNOPS makes procurement more efficient and contributes directly to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). The product offering is expanding to greener solutions, covering green energy solutions, healthcare and waste management products, and electrical vehicles. UNOPS uses a systematic approach to sustainable procurement, resulting in gold level distinctions from the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply.

The third key area is in relation to project management/technical assistance. UNOPS supports practices that incentivize and facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration, emphasizing inclusive decision-making processes, and integrating social, economic and environmental considerations. UNOPS works across SDGs by, for instance, contributing to SDG on Sustainable cities and communities, Target 11.4 which calls for strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, while also contributing to enhanced employment, learning and community development projects. The measures that UNOPS considers important are to strengthen mechanisms for regular consultations and joint planning sessions to ensure the alignment of various stakeholders' efforts towards poverty eradication (SDG 1).

UNOPS is available to provide, separately, examples of specific actions to demonstrate how it responds to calls for help in addressing the challenges arising from these complexities and in respect of the three key areas referred to above. UNOPS has identified the following Infrastructure, procurement and project management approaches/areas as priorities to be worked on in a cross-cutting manner:

- a. Support gender, diversity and inclusion as a means to reinforce the 2030 Agenda, including eradication of poverty: UNOPS' aim is to contribute to the Sustainable Development Agenda not only through the progress of SDGs 5 and 10, but also, in view of interlinkages and transformative pathways, oriented to reduce inequalities in a cross-cutting manner to the agenda as a whole. UNOPS has worked on many projects towards stronger social institutions, quality health services, and advancing gender equality.
- b. Support to the triple planetary crisis and energy transition to reinforce the 2030 Agenda: Strengthen internal and external capacities towards a deeper understanding of the implications and necessary actions regarding the: (i) Climate change crisis, (ii) Biodiversity crisis, (iii) Pollution crisis and ecosystem degradation. This is done through technical support for EU accession, the UNOPS' water, environment and climate partnership and fair public management approaches.
- c. Support to countries in special and fragile situations to reinforce the 2030 Agenda: with unfavorable geographic, and economic and social particularities (such as small island or landlocked states); through tailored approaches to each specific context.
- d. Back on track advisory services to countries with bottlenecks that prevent the successful delivery of their compacts' objectives.

6. Three examples of specific actions, policies and measures that are most urgently needed to effectively deliver sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving the SDGs.

The first specific action is to focus on mainstreaming the capacity development, planning, design, tender and implementation of bankable projects, including by fostering capacity building. Such projects are key to delivering sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to reinforce the 2030 Agenda, in particular eradication of poverty, and must increase in scope and scale to boost SDG implementation.

UNOPS has extremely valuable experience showing that support to expanding government partners' capacities in their project implementation efforts is critical. UNOPS plays a crucial role in enabling or meeting the demand side of financing for sustainable development that contributes to achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 16 (Peaceful and just societies), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). UNOPS has provided governments with technical assistance and advisory services to support activities including project preparation, tender and award, project delivery, and management. It has also provided advice to governments on sustainable infrastructure planning and implementation as well as on strengthening the enabling environment to attract finance. It has helped them better understand the financing options available for their sustainable infrastructure plans and access finance. Specifically,

In Africa, UNOPS initiated a "back on track" programme, aimed at bringing projects with low performance and disbursement rates to acceptable implementation standards while developing local capacities through technical assistance to sustain progress beyond our intervention. UNOPS helps address the following challenges: the low capacity of the recipient government in planning and project implementation, the weak capacity of local contractors and the private sector, the weak institutional capacity for effective project and programme management, and the in-existent or poor monitoring and evaluation systems.

The second specific action that is needed is the systematic development of reliable, resilient and sustainable infrastructure for the shelter of vulnerable populations and support for economic development (SDG 9, Target 9.1). Due to the increasingly recurrent and intense emergencies resulting from climate change, UNOPS, through leveraging on the nature of UNOPS' implementation and advisory services for projects to Member States, further seeks to contribute to strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to the effects of the Triple Planetary Crisis (SDG 13, Targets 13.1, 13.8). These efforts aim at responding more systematically to closing gaps in national needs and promote more just and equitable contexts. UNOPS also leverages its expertise in fragile or conflict-affected contexts for early recovery or reconstruction projects. UNOPS also works towards supporting the development efforts of its partners, with their own characteristics of national public entities that operate in highly complex and volatile contexts, particularly when facing political cycles in LAC and to weakened security contexts.

The third specific action or measure that is urgently needed concerns the role of UN development agencies in significantly contributing to strengthening Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships by systematically fostering collaborative partnerships among UN agencies to clarify respective mandates and roles, and by fostering, in turn, collaborative and joint partnerships between governments, international organizations, private sector entities, and civil society to leverage collective expertise and resources. UNOPS has engaged in such efforts in all its regions but such efforts, especially from a UN development system standpoint, must be further promoted. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, as one among many examples, UNOPS provides support in implementing the Build Back Better approach to address the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic lack of (in crisis contexts) or shortfalls in the quality of education and health services.

7. Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.

Among key follow-up actions and measures undertaken by UNOPS to support the implementation of the Political Declaration is UNOPS' technical assistance to design bankable projects so they attract financing for development. UNOPS is consolidating and strengthening its capabilities to deliver more needed capacity development to help governments enable the implementation of sustainable infrastructure. Through technical assistance, UNOPS has responded to the demand by Member States to provide expertise in infrastructure development. This is critical for the advancement of the SDGs as limited sovereign debt capacity limits the needed investments to reach those populations left behind. As an example, UNOPS has advised on alternative mechanisms for infrastructure financing, mobilizing national savings for transparent infrastructure investments with clear social impact such as the case with the government of Cordoba in Argentina on how to operate and maintain water infrastructure where the local capacities were already strained helping create a model to attract private participation by local cooperatives, generating local jobs and developing the local capacities to provide operation and maintenance of water production and treatment plants.

Another key action is in relation to UN collaboration aiming at strengthening the policy and implementation nexus. UNOPS's strengthened collaboration with DESA through the Joint Working Group on Infrastructure Asset Management (IAM) supports project implementation in (six) countries on a pilot basis. UNOPS is exploring the scaling up of the initiative which would ensure that SIDS, LLDCs and LDCs in particular benefit from the expertise to support long-term change through capacity building and the implementation of projects on the grounds to increase sustainability, resilience and inclusion. UNOPS intends to make all infrastructure related tools as developed jointly with DESA (CAT-I, IAM) known and available to the UNCTs and to SIDS and LDCs in particular including through specific capacity development modules in the soon to be established Centre of Excellence for SIDS in Antigua and Barbuda as per Art. 42 of UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/78/232.

A third key measure is through the private sector. UNOPS promotes local procurement and procurement from developing countries, women-owned businesses and micro, small or medium-sized enterprises as a way to foster sustainable development. Building a local supply base can aid in the economic development of the countries UNOPS works in and can also assist in sustainability efforts, including through the reduction of transport-related emissions. In 2022, around half of UNOPS procurement was sourced from suppliers registered in the same country as the project. UNOPS also focuses on procurement from least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS). In 2022, over 17 percent of procurement was from LDCs, including \$72 million from Yemen and \$69 million from Mozambique. Goods and services worth \$120 million were recorded from LLDCs, including Ethiopia (\$32 million) and South Sudan (\$18 million). Meanwhile, \$21 million was spent in SIDS, including Haiti (\$14 million) and Singapore (\$2.1 million). Through the DRIVE programme, UNOPS is strengthening its collaboration with local vendors to identify improvement actions that can enhance their reputation, increase efficiency, drive innovation and boost their competitiveness internationally. UNOPS supports the development of diverse and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including in developing countries, by giving them the tools to grow their businesses. The UNOPS Possibilities (UP) programme also helps strengthen their capacity to bid in public procurement tenders while expanding and diversifying the UNOPS supplier base.

8. Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF.

Key to accelerating the implementation of the SDGs is a strengthened nexus and alignment between policy, financing for development and implementation (including humanitarian emergency relief implementation). Member States require technical capabilities to establish the enabling environment to attract more sustainable investments in SDG projects and to address humanitarian emergencies require the capacity to prepare and tender bankable or fully funded projects. This enabling context is key to project implementation to accelerate achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Policy and financing for development cannot operate in a vacuum. The three pieces must be realigned and operationalised as one. UN development agencies involved in implementing large scale development or humanitarian projects such as UNOPS must focus on making policy and financing for development actionable by designing and implementing bankable projects for its partners based on aligned policies and financing for development and vice-versa.

Leveraging linkages and building synergies and alignment between policy, financing and implementation to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and address humanitarian emergencies is critical to operationalise global governance structures that are able to rise to present and future challenges. Commitment must be made to support the UN development system entities that assist Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda through bankable project implementation, including through technical assistance and capacity building. Such support, in particular for UN system entities mandated to implement procurement and infrastructure projects, must be through enhancing engagement with external partners, including the private sector and civil society, to leverage their unique resources and perspectives. This would also further promote UN entities' ability to monitor and evaluate the impact of their activities on the SDGs, in order to continuously improve their effectiveness.

In sum, leveraging a strengthened and aligned nexus between policy, financing and implementation across the UN system is critical to promote the holistic planning, design, and implementation of bankable projects that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNOPS stands ready to support.