



# Chief Executives Board for Coordination

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## First regular session of 2023

Nairobi, 4 and 5 May 2023

## Summary of deliberations

### I. Introduction

1. The first regular session of 2023 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), chaired by the Secretary-General, was held at the Emara Ole-Sereni Hotel in Nairobi on 4 and 5 May 2023.
2. The Secretary-General welcomed the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Cindy McCain, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services, Jorge Moreira da Silva, who were attending a CEB session for the first time. He also welcomed new members of his delegation, the Rector of the United Nations University, Tshilidzi Marwala, and the Under-Secretary-General for Policy, Guy Ryder.
3. The session consisted of three segments on the following themes: (a) the state of the world; (b) securing a fair and inclusive international financial architecture that delivers sustainable development for all; and (c) international drug policy from a human rights perspective. The Board also received a lunch presentation on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. In the present summary, the highlights of the deliberations during the session are provided.

### II. Segment 1: state of the world

5. The Secretary-General presented an overview of the current state of the world, reflecting on several global challenges, including climate change, rising inequalities and the emergence of new technologies, and their impact on the multilateral system and on the work of the United Nations system. He underscored the critical role of the United Nations in responding to the cascading crises confronting the world by utilizing the convening power of the system and by serving as a space for reaffirming universal values and principles and international law.
6. In the ensuing dialogue, Board members considered global economic trends and prospects, including in international trade; the effects of the global economic outlook on key sustainable development issues, including population, gender, climate and the



environment; and rising inequalities. Principals also reflected on the current human rights situation, noting that discrimination, racism and gender-based violence were all on the rise. The exponential growth in technological innovations, nuclear threats and cybersecurity were also issues identified by the Board as requiring a multilateral response.

### **III. Segment 2: securing a fair and inclusive international financial architecture that delivers sustainable development for all**

7. The Secretary-General opened the segment by reflecting on the role of the international financial architecture in enabling the global economy to serve the world's people everywhere. He observed that the current international financial system was designed in and for another time and that the world was confronting challenges and power relations that were markedly different from those experienced after the Second World War. One of those challenges had been the sharp increase in inequalities within and between countries. He noted calls from Member States for a multilateral system that served all countries and was capable of adapting to a world that had significantly changed.

8. Providing framing remarks and moderating the discussion, the Deputy Secretary-General, in recalling the Board's deliberations in the first segment on the cascading crises confronting the world, acknowledged the shared aspirations of the members of the Board for an international financial architecture that could deliver sustainable development for all. Drawing on its convening power and common values and principles, the United Nations offered hope in response to current crises and a pathway for action towards reform of the international financial architecture. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had shifted the global paradigm of development towards a focus on people and planet. To support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, significantly scaled-up investments and financing were required. Given the increased need for financing for sustainable development, the moderator invited the Board to consider the kind of international financial architecture that was needed in the current global context to address existing sustainable development challenges.

9. The Board's deliberations were informed by presentations on international finance and economics delivered by prominent experts and reference material on proposals for the reform of the international financial architecture. Three major reorientations of the international financial architecture were suggested for consideration, namely: recognizing the scale and urgency of addressing the interactions between irreversible ecological changes and development challenges; investing in the energy transition, climate change mitigation, ecological adaptation and technological innovation; and strengthening multilateralism to avoid further polarization or fragmentation. It was also said that the international financial architecture should adopt a longer-term view and act to prevent shocks, incentivize investments in global public goods, promote innovation in the utilization of finance, encourage national platforms to unlock domestic finance and further bolster the global financial safety net.

10. The governance of public, corporate and financial institutions was also identified as an area for reform, including through efforts to embed a more outcomes orientation to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Such reform could facilitate a Goals-centred approach for multilateral development banks, which would take into account equity and justice considerations from the outset and promote a fairer distribution of risks and rewards between the public and private sectors. Increased investments in public administration were also seen as crucial for

Governments to effectively manage finance geared towards achieving sustainable development.

11. In the ensuing discussion, CEB members deliberated on potential reforms to the international financial architecture to meet global challenges. The Board noted recent reform proposals, including the call of the Secretary-General for a Sustainable Development Goal stimulus to deliver the 2030 Agenda, “Our Common Agenda policy brief 6: reforms to the international financial architecture” ([A/77/CRP.1/Add.5](#)), the 2022 Bridgetown Initiative for the reform of the global financial architecture and “Evolving the World Bank Group’s mission, operations, and resources: a roadmap”, which had suggested changes to the current international financial system and sought to build political consensus in the international community for reform. In that context, members emphasized the importance of effective and inclusive multilateralism to deliver sustainable development for all. They were especially concerned about the escalating inequalities within and between countries and reflected on the role played by the international financial architecture in that regard. Both long-term global economic governance reforms and more immediate debt and other financial relief and investments were considered by the Board. Hope was expressed that State-led initiatives and processes would advance the inclusiveness and sustainability of the international financial architecture.

12. Members also emphasized the need to increase the volume of financing for sustainable development through existing and additional resources. Multiple options to expand financing were suggested, including improving the deployment of existing capital by increasing leverage, mobilizing private capital with appropriate conditionalities, building up domestic capital markets, supporting more effective revenue collection systems and implementing progressive tax policies. The issue of special drawing rights was also addressed and it was suggested that they could be rechannelled to the International Monetary Fund and further distributed to countries or regional multilateral development banks to unlock additional resources.

13. Beyond focusing on measures for boosting financing, members expressed concern regarding the international debt architecture and its impact on vulnerable countries. Suggestions for reform to increase the fiscal space for countries at risk of defaulting on their debt were discussed and initiatives, such as debt round tables, were welcomed in that context. Actions for further reforms could include, inter alia, an update of the debt sustainability analysis methodology, enhanced debt transparency, sovereign debt restructuring and debt workouts, as well as collective action clauses in debt agreements.

14. In addition to unlocking financing and addressing debt, members discussed priority areas for investments. Attaining national development objectives and safeguarding global public goods were viewed as interrelated goals and both were considered critical areas for receiving financial support. Longer-term and more predictable financing to build national and global resilience to enable countries, individually and collectively, to effectively respond to future shocks was also urgently needed. In that context, it was emphasized that financial investments should be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and support human rights. Specific areas for enhanced financing were also suggested, including increased resources for addressing the climate and other environmental crises, health, education, inclusive development and trade. Concerning the delivery of finance, it was emphasized that countries in the greatest need of support be given special consideration and that vulnerability be factored into the eligibility criteria for concessional finance.

15. In order to effectively deploy finance for sustainable development, it was necessary to strengthen States’ capacity. Members expressed support for capacity development initiatives to better manage public debt, understand complex and

interlinked development challenges, create the necessary infrastructure for finance to achieve impact towards the Sustainable Development Goals and mobilize domestic resources through actionable projects and investments. Enabling effective public administration was considered critical for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Collaboration across multilateral institutions and between the United Nations system and international financial institutions were both seen as essential in order to support Member States. It was suggested that an indicator might be developed to effectively measure collaboration between multilateral institutions.

16. In concluding the discussion, the moderator thanked the presenters and members for their thoughtful insights and forward-looking ideas on a complex subject. She noted that the discussion had been held against the backdrop of multiple global crises resulting in significant and growing gaps in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals by their target date. The current crises might generate the needed momentum for action towards a fairer and more inclusive international financial architecture that delivered sustainable development for all. In that regard, she appreciated that the Board's deliberations had brought forth a range of policy solutions that could strengthen the international financial architecture to better address existing challenges. In closing, the Secretary-General expressed optimism regarding the potential for making positive changes in reforming the international financial architecture and stressed, in that context, the importance of collaboration across the whole United Nations system and with international financial institutions to ensure the system effectively supported Member States.

#### **IV. Segment 3: international drug policy from a human rights perspective**

17. The Secretary-General opened the segment by noting the strong intergovernmental underpinnings of international drug policy. He recalled that the topic had been one of his priorities when serving as Prime Minister of Portugal and that, in 1999, his Government had enacted a national strategy on combating drugs. Despite decades-long efforts to combat drug trafficking and related challenges, States and public administrations worldwide continued to struggle and people continued to suffer. He observed that the United Nations had made important contributions over time, especially in relation to drug consumption and human rights, as complements to combating production and drug trafficking. The CEB discussion was aimed at strengthening the implementation of the United Nations system common position supporting the implementation of the international drug control policy through effective inter-agency collaboration (see [CEB/2018/2](#), annex I); identifying ways to engage Member States in evaluating evidence and implementing drug policies that would put people, health and human rights at the centre; and encouraging the development and implementation of balanced policies that supported these priorities, promoted international cooperation and addressed impunity for serious human rights violations in the context of drug control efforts.

18. Setting the scene for the discussion, the moderator, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, described the global drug problem as a complex global challenge to human well-being, sustainable development, peace and security and human rights and, therefore, a topic of relevance to all CEB member. She recalled that CEB had endorsed the United Nations system common position in 2018. The multifaceted nature of the problem required a comprehensive approach and, through the common position, the United Nations system had committed to working together to find evidence-based, sustainable solutions, rooted in human rights. She encouraged members to reflect on specific ways to fully realize the commitments captured in the common position and to strengthen the implementation thereof.

19. The discussion was informed by presentations by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. They recalled statistics on drug consumption and production and the impacts, in particular on vulnerable groups, and recounted the substantial history of intergovernmental processes driving international drug policy. It was observed that attempts to achieve “a drug-free world” had failed. The presenters outlined a range of related challenges, including in relation to human rights and securing the right to health and the right to development in particular. It was stressed that alternatives to punitive measures for personal consumption should be considered. Prevention, treatment, harm reduction, rehabilitation and other measures were required to help to secure individual rights to health and avoid incarceration.

20. The presenters underlined the importance of the United Nations system coming together in a concerted manner to deal with the complex and multifaceted challenges and to implement the commitments to which the Board had agreed in the common position. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak had diverted the attention of United Nations system entities, as well as Governments, from the global drug problem. Efforts should, therefore, be redoubled to advocate for human rights-based and people-focused approaches. It was underscored that United Nations country teams were well positioned to support the implementation of the common position at the national level.

21. In the ensuing interactive discussion, numerous national and regional situations were used to illustrate the complexity of the challenge and to underscore the need for action tailored to countries’ needs and societal contexts. Some members felt it was important to clearly separate the issue of production from consumption when engaging Member States. It was important to distinguish between the supply side, where drug production and trafficking, and related concerns such as corruption and terrorism, were criminal matters that should be aggressively pursued using punitive measures, and the demand side, where consumption required a human rights-based approach and should be treated as a health issue, including with respect to mental health. However, the counterpoint was made that the dichotomy was not currently reflected in the criminal justice system, where users and small peddlers largely constituted the incarcerated population. It was stated, therefore, that a more nuanced approach remained necessary. The discussion reinforced that the United Nations should advocate for the decriminalization of consumption on the basis of evidence and data, but not for the legalization of drug use, which contravened drug conventions. There was agreement that use of the death penalty for drug-related offences must be rejected, along with other human rights violations. Members recognized the range of views held by Member States on certain aspects of the topic and underscored the role of the United Nations system in providing data, knowledge and evidence to inform national policies.

22. In that vein, members agreed that the United Nations system needed to redouble efforts to promote a human rights-based approach to drug policy, guided by the shared objectives in the common position. It was stressed that communities, including women, who tended to be disproportionately affected, and young people, should be involved in policymaking. Strengthened action was needed to put women’s rights, human rights and health at the centre of drug policy and to address the root causes of drug consumption (e.g. poverty) and, in that context, the importance of pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level was emphasized. It was necessary to focus on intersecting inequalities and important to take a feminist approach, by combating stigmatization and discrimination in particular.

23. It was stressed that the issues were complex, with each country facing unique circumstances, and that there was no one-size-fits-all response. It was important to

collect data on and analyse the whole ecosystem of well-being – the economic structure, social infrastructure, health services and other relevant factors – in each particular country context. Members observed that health systems had to be strengthened to provide needed services related to mental health and rehabilitation. The environmental impact of the criminal dimensions of the drug trade, including deforestation, pollution, biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, was also important to address.

24. Members observed that the response to the drug problem was severely underfunded. It was noted that more investment in resources and expertise was needed to bring actors together around the global drug problem and to scale up and expand effective programmes and policies. The pharmaceutical industry had a responsibility to provide financial support for the response; it also needed to be engaged in providing affordable treatment.

25. Between the presentations and the discussion, members shared how their organizations were contributing to addressing drug-related problems and identified actions that could be taken by the United Nations system at the different levels, including:

- (a) Increase the membership of, and strengthen cooperation within, the task team on drug policy, established within the framework of the Executive Committee, to ensure coherent efforts to realize the commitments set out in the common position;

- (b) Increase the engagement of United Nations system entities in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs;

- (c) Pool resources for inter-agency collaboration on global drug policy work and continue to pursue pilot projects and joint initiatives with a balanced approach;

- (d) Invest in and cooperate on research, data collection and analysis, including the study of countries' responses and approaches, to fill data gaps and produce evidence to inform drug policy and help to build national data collection and monitoring systems, as well as statistical capacity;

- (e) Construct comprehensive country profiles to understand the baseline situation and key issues as a basis for action;

- (f) Provide technical support and share best practices when working with Member States to develop national strategies and support the implementation of global policies on rights-based and health-based approaches, while respecting their cultures;

- (g) Jointly support policy dialogues and the exchange of expertise on human rights and health-oriented policies, at all levels and particularly at the country level;

- (h) Take a behavioural science approach, focusing on changing conduct to achieve the desired results, and pursue strategies on early warning and drug use prevention;

- (i) Work together to quantify and expose the impact of illicit economies, in terms of the destruction of lives and communities;

- (j) Advocate for better funding for effective responses in addressing the world drug problem.

26. The Secretary-General thanked members for the frank and thoughtful discussion on an extremely complex problem and concluded that the United Nations system common position remained the reference point for informing organizations' policy work, advocacy and capacity-building activities. He commended entities' efforts and

urged them to persist in pursuing an evolution towards a more human rights-based and health-based, including mental health, approach in drug policy.

## **V. Other matters**

### **A. Tributes to Board members**

27. The Secretary-General paid tribute to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, Olga Algayerova, who was attending a CEB session as a member of his delegation for the last time.

### **B. Lunch presentation on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

28. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights delivered a brief presentation about the year-long commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He explained that the commemoration had three goals: promoting universality and indivisibility; looking to the future; and bolstering the human rights ecosystem. During the year, there would be national, regional and global dialogues, expert thematic consultations and monthly thematic spotlights, as outlined in a road map that he had presented to Member States. He highlighted two pivotal events: a high-level event marking the thirtieth anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, on 5 and 6 June 2023, and the Human Rights 75 high-level event, on 11 and 12 December 2023, which would serve as the culmination of the year's activities. The High Commissioner's vision statement for human rights would bring together outcomes from the Human Rights 75 high-level event and be fed into the 2024 Summit of the Future.

### **C. Endorsement of documents**

29. The report of the High-level Committee on Programmes ([CEB/2023/4](#)) on its forty-fifth session, including the United Nations System Common Principles on Future Generations ([CEB/2023/1/Add.1](#)) and the paper entitled "International data governance: pathways to progress" ([CEB/2023/1/Add.2](#)), as well as the report of the High-level Committee on Management ([CEB/2023/3](#)) on its forty-fifth session, were endorsed electronically outside the CEB session.

### **D. Date and venue of the forthcoming session**

30. The Board members were reminded of the confirmed dates of the second regular session of 2023, namely, 9 and 10 November, to be held in New York.