



United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1. I am enormously proud of the staff of the United Nations, who are operating and delivering on their mandates in a fractured and sometimes dangerous world. Despite the obstacles in their way, their commitment to a better, brighter future shines through in all that they do. Their resolve is to achieve results for the people of the world and to deliver the help and the hope that every person deserves – and that the human family needs today, more than ever.

2. The past year¹ has tested humanity in every way. Crises and challenges have placed the better future people want and need further out of reach. Conflicts, deepening poverty and inequality, hunger and poor economic prospects for developing countries are being made worse by widening geopolitical divides and mistrust. The climate emergency reached terrifying new heights, with 2023 being the hottest on record. Human rights abuses, discrimination against minorities, women and girls, rising extremism and a surge of hate speech online and in the streets are sowing discord and mistrust across communities, countries and entire regions.

3. The urgent business of rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals and the fight against climate change has been stalled by a lack of sufficient investment and political will. Many developing countries are drowning in debt and lack the necessary resources to invest in a sustainable future for their people.

4. Meanwhile, multilateral principles built over decades are being ignored or flouted with impunity. The Charter of the United Nations and international human rights and humanitarian law are being undermined, as parties to conflict target hospitals, schools, humanitarian aid and civilian infrastructure. Civic space is shrinking under authoritarian regimes, and journalists are killed and abused for doing their vital work.

5. The present report shows that, despite the difficulties, progress is possible, and change is achievable. Those results, however, can come at a tragic cost. The past year witnessed the highest number of United Nations staff and humanitarian workers killed in our Organization's history. The vast majority were staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East working in Gaza. Our hearts go out to their families, friends and colleagues. Their determination and sacrifice only strengthen our resolve to stand with the world's most vulnerable people caught up in humanitarian emergencies.

6. That dedication to staying and delivering on our mandate includes our staff members' work to continue supporting people and communities when large United Nations missions, such as those in Mali and in Darfur (Sudan), draw down and close. Personnel across multiple agencies continue to maintain a presence in those locations, carrying out their vital and often life-saving missions.

7. In 2023, together with our partners on the ground, we coordinated humanitarian response plans for 245 million people across 74 countries and delivered life-saving assistance and protection to nearly 160 million people in urgent need. From food and nutrition to water and sanitation, to emergency education and health services, to shelter and protection, our staff stayed and delivered in countries rocked by ferocious conflicts. This includes Afghanistan, the Sudan, Yemen, the Horn of Africa and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. With our partners, we also responded to devastating

¹ In line with the regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat, the reporting period is from 1 January to 31 December 2023. Given the peacekeeping budget period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, and the presentation of the report to the General Assembly in September, a few key highlights from the first months of 2024 are also included.

disasters, including earthquakes in Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye and floods in Libya, Malawi and Mozambique. We achieved those results despite a record funding shortfall for humanitarian work. The \$22.7 billion provided by donors covered just 40 per cent of the \$56.1 billion required for our life-saving work. Nevertheless, our humanitarian personnel and their partners on the ground spared no effort to reach those in greatest need.

8. Meanwhile, the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit rallied over 6,000 people across various public and private sectors to accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals, only 15 per cent of which are on track. World leaders welcomed our call for a Sustainable Development Goal stimulus of \$500 billion per year and acknowledged the urgent need to reform the global financial architecture – including multilateral development banks – to enable developing countries to invest in the systems that their people require.

9. Several key environmental initiatives were launched in 2023, including the Water Action Agenda, the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste and a landmark agreement by 175 countries to develop a legally binding treaty on plastic pollution. With climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss still threatening the future of our planet, the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Dubai, concluded with calls to transition from fossil fuels, operationalize the loss and damage fund and commit to sustainable cooling, methane reduction and an end to deforestation by 2030.

10. Throughout 2023, the United Nations continued building on our work to defend and advance fundamental human rights, including those of women and girls. The United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women collectively supported tens of thousands of women and girls around the world. The United Nations also supported eight constitutional review processes to ensure that women's views were reflected and represented.

Human rights with the participation of all

We promoted and protected the work of human rights defenders and civil society organizations across all regions, supporting the work of 3,530 youth-led organizations, and engaged with 1,894 women's rights organizations. We helped to empower different voices, promoted participation in intergovernmental forums, convened a platform of networks for the protection of civil society actors at risk and advocated for human rights in the digital space.

11. The year was also an important one with regard to strengthening the world's commitment to multilateralism and the values enshrined in the Charter. In preparation for the Summit of the Future, we prepared and delivered a series of policy briefs on critical areas from peace and security to youth engagement and future generations. That work extended to governance of the digital world and artificial intelligence. For example, to combat the plague of mis- and disinformation, we continued our work to develop the United Nations Global Principles for Information Integrity.

12. All of this work requires constant strengthening of our operations around the world, led by our resident coordinators and United Nations country teams as they work with host Governments to accelerate efforts and scale up investments in the Sustainable Development Goals.

13. In addition, 2023 saw major strides made in our commitment to building a supportive and respectful workplace for our staff. Our commitment to living our values was reflected in the establishment of the Anti-Racism Office, a new parental leave policy, progress under the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and renewed efforts to combat sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.

14. Ultimately, the effectiveness of our work depends on the availability of cash. We have taken stringent measures to conserve cash to mitigate the impact of the liquidity crisis on our regular budget operations. Late and non-payments of contributions for peacekeeping operations have undermined our ability to pay for contingent-owned equipment. We will continue to seek lasting solutions to ensure we deliver on our mandate as effectively and sustainably as possible.

15. At every step, our Organization and our personnel will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of the world through these trying times, as we seek to forge a more peaceful, healthy, equal and prosperous future together, and a world that leaves no one behind.

Chapter II

The work of the Organization

A. Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development

Context

16. Past the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, only 17 per cent of Sustainable Development Goal targets are on track, according to *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*. Rising interest rates, debt distress and geoeconomic fragmentation are slowing progress. Greenhouse gas emissions are driving climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, which disproportionately affect the poor. Women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making and encounter discrimination that impedes progress towards gender equality.

Our goals

17. The United Nations is helping to get the Sustainable Development Goals back on track with the 2030 Agenda. Guided by the Agenda, our United Nations country teams, led by resident coordinators, are taking decisive steps to scale up support to country needs and priorities.

Data for sustainable development

In 2023, we improved public access to authoritative data through the new “UN Data Commons for the SDGs” platform, strengthened data governance and tracked progress made by 166 countries in adopting artificial intelligence and frontier technologies to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Our achievements

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

18. Despite mounting challenges, at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit in September 2023, Governments reaffirmed their ambition and commitments to implement the 2030 Agenda in the next six years. The Secretary-General urged world leaders to deliver a rescue plan for people and planet. Governments responded with a political declaration, in which they welcomed his proposals for a \$500 billion annual Sustainable Development Goal stimulus and for urgent reforms to the international financial architecture. The Sustainable Development Goals Action Weekend aligned stakeholders on six key transitions for the acceleration of Goal achievement: food systems; education; sustainable energy; climate action and biodiversity; jobs and social protection; and digital connectivity.

19. The Summit also delivered on 12 new high-impact initiatives to help to get the Sustainable Development Goals back on track. *The Global Sustainable Development Report* provided science-backed insights and encouraged transformative national plans that can generate synergies and manage trade-offs. The high-impact initiative on transforming education was focused on equipping teachers for success in a rapidly changing education system, while the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions garnered substantial backing to advance decent work and social protection worldwide.

20. The Local2030 coalition, a high-impact initiative connecting cities, regions and industry, promoted multi-stakeholder action to help to advance progress on Sustainable Development Goal achievement on the local level. This was complemented by the launch of the Advisory Group on Local and Regional Governments, to amplify local voices for global impact.

Global disaster resilience through space technology

The United Nations helps all countries to gain access to and leverage the benefits of space to accelerate sustainable development. This includes training on space law, the registration of objects launched into space and service provided to multilateral bodies that address urgent problems such as space debris. Through the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), we train country experts, for example in the Dominican Republic, on gaining access to satellite information that helps them to prepare for and respond to disasters.

Scaling up financing for development

21. The Secretary-General made reforming the international financial architecture a key priority. In May 2023, he published a policy brief, in which he advocated changes in global economic governance, financial safety nets and international tax cooperation to support the acceleration of Sustainable Development Goal achievement. In his stimulus proposal, he also emphasized the need to reform multilateral development banks and address sovereign debt distress.

22. In partnership with Member States, we advanced proposals from the 2022 Bridgetown Initiative for the Reform of the Global Financial Architecture at the high-level retreat on a global financial architecture for a world facing global shocks, culminating in the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact, held in Paris in 2023. To unlock national investment, Summit participants supported the General Assembly resolution on developing a new framework convention on international tax cooperation to advance fair and universally applicable rules.

23. New public-private partnerships were promoted through the United Nations Global Compact and the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance, focused on blended finance, de-risking, transparency and increasing private finance for sustainable development.

Leaving no one behind

24. We kept our commitment to equitable sustainable development, in particular for marginalized groups and people in vulnerable situations.

25. We collaborated with 45 least developed countries to implement the commitments of the Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. At the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, we helped to launch 15 new multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote sustainable energy, digital connectivity and sustainable tourism, and five transformative deliverables, on food stockholding, resilience-building, investment promotion, an online university and graduation support.

26. We published new progress reports on the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, ahead of the third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in 2024, providing insights on the unique challenges faced by those countries, such as high transportation

and transit costs and limited global market access. We supported negotiations for a new programme of action for the next decade, establishing a network of national focal points to drive implementation and follow-up.

27. We convened the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States and adopted the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States. We also supported the work of a new high-level panel on the development of a multidimensional vulnerability index for all vulnerable countries and the subsequent intergovernmental process.

28. In addition to Member States, we supported young people, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples and older persons. This included establishing a new United Nations Youth Office and appointing the first-ever Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs to amplify young voices in global decision-making.

29. At the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we supported progress in addressing equal access to sexual and reproductive health care for persons with disabilities, including women and girls.

30. In support of Indigenous Peoples, we promoted their inclusion and rights in over 20 countries globally, including by working with over 8,000 Indigenous women in Latin America to develop business and digital skills.

31. In support of the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030), we worked with Member States to achieve a 22 per cent increase in national policies on health and social care needs for older persons in 136 countries.

Climate action

Local climate action

Cities are key for delivering climate solutions and halting the destruction and degradation of natural habitats. Although cities are significant drivers of planet-warming emissions, they are also engines of climate action and at the forefront of delivering solutions. At the first Local Climate Action Summit, held during the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, 72 Governments signed the Coalition for High-Ambition Multilevel Partnerships for Climate Action pledge, committing themselves to collaborating with subnational authorities in planning, financing, implementing and monitoring climate strategies.

32. In 2023, we advocated transformative global climate action. At the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a new loss and damage fund was operationalized, and commitments were made on sustainable cooling, on methane reduction and on halting deforestation by 2030. The Africa Carbon Markets Initiative was also operationalized in 2023, with the aim of dramatically boosting carbon credit production across the continent. Through the exchange of carbon credits, these markets offer a unique pathway to improve energy access, create new green jobs and preserve biodiversity.

33. We underscored the urgency of more climate action through new reports on the emissions gap, the production gap and the adaptation gap. According to those reports, if current trends continue, the Earth will warm by 2.5°C to 2.9°C during the twenty-first century, far exceeding the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5°C.

34. Our Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants advanced national plans to reduce short-lived pollutants in 50 countries, with 5 more joining the Global Methane Pledge to cut emissions by 30 per cent by 2030. Over 250 mayors and governors attended the first Local Climate Action Summit, resulting in a new pledge signed by 72 Governments for more local and multilevel climate action.

35. We launched initiatives on zero waste, water resources and food systems in support of climate action. The first International Day of Zero Waste showcased the potential of zero-waste initiatives for global sustainable development. The 2023 United Nations Water Conference, the first in nearly 50 years, highlighted the importance of freshwater resources. The world agreed to the new Global Framework on Chemicals and a dedicated fund for follow-up. In his call to action for human rights, the Secretary-General promoted climate-friendly food system transitions, reinforced by momentum from the Sustainable Development Goal Summit, the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and recent General Assembly resolutions.

Cool Coalition organizes Global Cooling Pledge

More than 60 countries joined the Global Cooling Pledge, organized by the Cool Coalition and supported by the United Nations. The agreement is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions linked to the cooling sector by at least 68 per cent globally by 2050.

Gender equality

36. Our gender snapshot report for 2023 revealed an annual funding shortfall of about \$360 billion to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by 2030. On the basis of current trends, over 340 million women and girls will still be living in extreme poverty by 2030.

37. We are bringing partners together to address some of the most glaring gender gaps through initiatives like our United Nations trust fund in support of actions to eliminate violence against women, which helped grantees to reach over 15 million individuals with resources and services. Our Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund mobilized about \$50 million to empower grass-roots efforts by women human rights defenders and civil society organizations. Our Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women reached nearly 50,000 women in six countries, to support their livelihoods, rights, food security, nutrition and resilience.

38. Under the \$545 million Spotlight Initiative, progress was made in addressing gender-based violence in 30 countries, through significant increases in perpetrator conviction rates and support for dedicated national budgets to address the scourge. Also through the Initiative, women and girls gained greater access to relevant services and national action plans to eliminate gender-based violence were strengthened. The initiative was translated into a United Nations high-impact initiative for the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit.

39. Through the Women Count programme, we provided technical support and quality assurance for projects in six regions and more than 25 countries to shift how gender statistics are used, created, shared and accessed. In a publication entitled *Feminist Climate Justice: A Framework for Action* we highlighted ways to address environmental challenges while promoting women's rights. Recognizing the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls, we supported 50 countries

in integrating or strengthening gender equality in national HIV strategies, in line with global efforts to end AIDS by 2030.

40. The culmination of our work resulted in the United Nations System-wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan, which was launched on International Women's Day 2024. The launch followed an extensive review by a task team and advisory board, comprising representatives of 12 United Nations entities, assessing the successes and shortcomings of the United Nations in advancing and protecting gender equality, women's empowerment and women's and girls' rights globally.

Regional support

41. The regional collaborative platforms, a key outcome of the United Nations development system reform, are now firmly established and provide inter-agency analysis and expertise in support of our resident coordinators and country teams.

42. Our five regional commissions convened annual forums on sustainable development, serving as regional intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platforms to enable policy dialogues and assess progress made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They also provided regional input for the high-level political forum on sustainable development and peer learning on the voluntary national reviews. The 2024 forums also helped to shape regional perspectives on the Summit of the Future and its anticipated outcome document entitled, "A Pact for the Future".

Resident coordinator system

43. Resident coordinators, as the highest-ranking representatives of our development system at the country level, helped to bring together the full breadth of United Nations resources and expertise to support action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They convened partners to unlock financing and other means of implementation for sustainable development. Resident coordinators also enabled effective United Nations support for disaster preparedness and response, ensuring immediate and coherent crisis response across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions in complex settings, so as to lead response activities along sustainable development trajectories. The efforts of the resident coordinators have led to significantly reduced duplications and optimized resources to maximize impact.

44. Of the host Governments surveyed, 92 per cent viewed resident coordinators as effective leaders in delivering strategic support for national development priorities. Two thirds of resident coordinators are new appointees, selected through a revamped process to ensure diverse and skilled leadership with an impact tailored to specific country contexts, while achieving gender parity and geographical balance.

B. Maintenance of international peace and security

Context

45. Global peace and security faced significant challenges in 2023. Conflicts raged in Gaza, the Sudan and Ukraine, among many other locations, destroying lives and livelihoods, displacing millions and straining our and our partners' peacemaking and humanitarian capacities. Other global challenges persist, from protracted civil wars, the deepening climate crisis, soaring inequalities and a rising threat of terrorism, to global pushback against human rights and gender equality, as well as the underregulated development of technologies.

Our goals

46. At the heart of our work lies diplomacy for peace, guided by the Charter of the United Nations and the mandates of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Through our political affairs, peacebuilding and peacekeeping endeavours, we assist Governments in conflict prevention, management and resolution, with a focus on advancing the participation of women and young people in political processes. Central to our work is the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence, of grave violations against children in armed conflict situations and of atrocity crimes. In all our activities, we are committed to the full implementation of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

Our achievements*Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts*

47. In response to escalating challenges, the Secretary-General proposed his New Agenda for Peace, outlining concrete proposals to move from the current logic of global competition towards multilateral action for peace in a world in transition. It calls on Member States to recommit to the Charter and the principles of trust, solidarity and universality to address the interlocking threats to our shared future.

48. For the first time in 34 years, the Secretary-General invoked Article 99 of the Charter to bring the hostilities in Gaza and Israel to the attention of the Security Council, because of the appalling human suffering, physical destruction and broader threats to international peace and security generated by those hostilities. He remained steadfast in advocating an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the release of all hostages. We continued to engage countries in the region to prevent regional escalation, including across the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel. Through the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, we continued to advance peace efforts aimed at ending the occupation and achieving a two-State solution in line with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, so as to establish a fully independent, sovereign Palestinian State, with Gaza as an integral part thereof.

49. The Secretary-General and senior leaders also continued to advocate for affected people in the context of other major conflicts. In the Sudan, we contributed to peacebuilding initiatives amid ongoing violence and are supporting mediation efforts between all relevant stakeholders to help to restore peace. The Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports, which continued throughout most of 2023, helped to stabilize global food prices, despite the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

50. In total, the United Nations engaged with members of the Security Council to support over 400 Council meetings, more than 50 resolutions and statements by the President, over 100 meetings of sanctions committees and other groups and two field missions to fragile and crisis settings.

51. Under strenuous circumstances, we also intensified our conflict prevention, management and resolution and peacebuilding efforts across all special political missions, offices and peacekeeping operations. Over 76,000 peacekeepers helped to protect civilians every day, including in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon and South Sudan and Abyei. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, peacekeepers intervened to thwart growing attacks against civilians. In Mali, we managed the orderly withdrawal of over 13,000 personnel from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and handed over its bases under rapidly deteriorating security conditions. Through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, we continued to invest in improving peacekeeping

performance, capabilities and safety amid new challenges, such as targeted mis- and disinformation campaigns.

52. Our special political missions worked with parties to conflict to facilitate ceasefires and foster inclusive peace and political processes. For example, our diplomatic engagement in Yemen contributed to a nationwide ceasefire and a renewed commitment to an inclusive political process. In Colombia, the Security Council expanded our mandate to monitor the ceasefire agreement between the Government and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional. We also supported State-building and reconciliation in Somalia by encouraging dialogue and broad-based consensus on key national priorities.

53. Our partnerships with regional organizations are becoming more essential for conflict prevention and peace. We worked with the Economic Community of West African States to ease tensions after the unconstitutional change of Government in the Niger. We also supported the Economic Community of Central African States in its efforts to tackle hate speech and promote political engagement among young people and women. Marking a major milestone, the unanimously adopted Security Council resolution [2719 \(2023\)](#) will help to provide African Union-led peace support operations with access to United Nations assessed contributions, strengthening our partnership with the African Union.

54. We also support Member States in non-mission settings. For example, we assisted the Government of Chile in designing the Presidential Commission for Peace and Understanding, which is mandated to address long-standing land disputes with Indigenous communities through dialogue.

Women and peace and security

55. Across the globe, we helped to advance the full, equal and meaningful representation and engagement of women in peace and political processes. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we empowered women to participate in the December 2023 elections, through training on political campaigning and through voter registration, and we helped to establish a new women's electoral observers network. In Colombia, we led consultations and high-level advocacy to increase the inclusion of women leaders and former combatants in the peace process. In the Central African Republic, we established 12 circles of peace, comprising 300 women working to promote peace in their communities. In Afghanistan, we continued to advocate firmly and publicly with the de facto authorities for women and girls, whose basic rights and role and space in society must be respected.

Peacebuilding support

56. In 2023, we helped the Peacebuilding Commission to consider 14 countries and regions through its country-specific, regional and thematic engagements. We supported the Commission in 20 engagements with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Peacebuilding Fund allocated over \$200 million across 36 countries and territories to boost national prevention and peacebuilding plans. For the seventh consecutive year, the Fund surpassed its goal of allocating 30 per cent of funds to gender equality and women's empowerment. The Partnership Facility of the Peacebuilding Support Office also strengthened strategic and operational alignment with the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

57. We deployed over 130 peace and development advisors to assist national stakeholders in developing their own capacities for conflict prevention and sustaining peace. United Nations peace operations have also continued to assist host countries

in navigating the path from conflict to peace by providing peacebuilding support where they are deployed.

Electoral assistance

58. We supported Member States in conducting credible, inclusive elections with peacefully accepted outcomes. This included providing technical assistance, strengthening the capacities of national electoral authorities, strengthening political engagement and facilitating consensus on critical electoral issues and electoral codes of conduct.

59. Through joint capacity development initiatives, we strengthened partnerships with the Pacific Islands Forum, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. We collaborated with the League to establish the first Arab Women Leadership Academy and promoted youth participation in elections through the Arab Network for Youth in Elections.

Rule of law and security institutions

60. Our support for the rule of law, justice and security institutions remained central to peace efforts. Over 8,200 United Nations police officers across 15 missions strengthened national policing capacities for community-oriented engagement and gender equality. In the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Mali, for example, we supported disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, including through community violence-reduction programmes benefiting around 45,000 individuals, as well as through arms management initiatives.

61. Our Mine Action Service raised awareness of explosive ordnance risks for over 4.9 million people. In South Sudan, we cleared and verified roughly 5.7 million m² of land as free from explosive ordnance threats.

62. With our support, stronger national criminal accountability mechanisms in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and South Sudan have led to 4,600 prosecutions and over 3,400 convictions for serious crimes by the end of 2023. We also helped to improve security sector governance, prison security and supported the rehabilitation of high-risk detainees.

Violence against children, children in armed conflict, conflict-related sexual violence and the prevention of genocide

63. In 2023, violence against children continued expanding at levels never seen before, due to the effects of multifaceted and overlapping crises worldwide. To prevent and protect children effectively from violence, the continuum of violence before, after and during conflict must be addressed comprehensively. To better understand prevention actions, we facilitated intergenerational dialogues between displaced, refugee and migrant children and policymakers. These dialogues complemented the public advocacy campaign mobilized by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children on the urgency to protect children on the move in times of crisis, given the increasing numbers of displaced children across all regions. Of the 117.3 million people displaced globally, 40 per cent are estimated to be children.

64. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, alongside partners on the ground, helped to initiate new action plans to cease violations against children. These engagements have aided in the release of over 200,000 children from parties to conflict since 2000, with over 10,600 children receiving reintegration support in 2023. We monitored and reported over 33,000 grave violations against children in 26 country and regional conflict settings.

65. Sexual violence persists as a tactic of war, torture and terrorism, amid deepening political and security crises. Women and girls are especially targeted with rape and abduction by State and non-State actors, curtailing their own livelihoods and education while generating profits for armed groups. Despite the framework established by the Security Council in 2008, our annual report on conflict-related sexual violence ([S/2024/292](#)) revealed that compliance with international norms remains low. There are 11 State actors and 47 non-State actors that are credibly suspected to have committed systematic violations. Our work to address these issues included the provision of capacity-building and support to national law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities, enhancing accountability in over a dozen countries to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence. We also helped to enable hundreds of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, including in Mali and with regard to the artisanal mining sector in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to gain access to medical, psychosocial, legal and socioeconomic integration support.

66. We advocated the prevention of genocide and related crimes – war crimes and crimes against humanity – and monitored the risk of such crimes. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide voiced concerns over potentially genocidal situations in the Middle East and other regions. We engaged directly with vulnerable groups and bolstered national prevention capacities, supporting five United Nations country teams in developing action plans on addressing and countering hate speech.

C. Development in Africa

Context

67. At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, Africa is advancing towards the achievement of 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but the current pace of progress is insufficient to achieve the Goals by 2030. To accelerate that pace, it is now essential to address debt distress and scale up national investment in sustainable development and public institutions.

Our goals

68. The United Nations supports sustainable development and peace in Africa through the 2030 Agenda and through Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, in partnership with the African Union. We focus on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development and their interlinkages with peace, security and human rights. We also support intraregional cooperation, including with a view to unlocking the potential of technology for the Sustainable Development Goals and furthering demands for a Goal stimulus to finance sustainable development.

Our achievements

69. This year we strengthened coordination with the African Union through our high-level meetings and dialogues, to help us to deliver as one. We supported African States in accelerating the six critical Sustainable Development Goal transitions, including through our advocacy of a \$500 billion stimulus package. We also supported innovative financing approaches, such as debt swaps for development, and promoted national resource mobilization as the cornerstone for sustainable financing. For example, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund is working with Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe to assess potential debt swaps for development.

70. Together with our partners, we identified key bottlenecks impeding the transition to stronger food systems, which are crucial for sustainable development. In global summits and coalitions, we championed the need for more homegrown African

solutions. For instance, the United Nations system collaborated with various stakeholders to transform school feeding programmes into exemplary public service models. Those homegrown initiatives now benefit over 66 million children in 54 African countries, with 84 per cent of funding sourced from national budgets.

71. In our advocacy, we highlighted the growing risk to peace and stability due to a lack of sufficient employment opportunities in Africa. Through the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, we supported African countries in designing job creation initiatives, especially in science and technology fields. Our joint focus is on unlocking the full potential of women and girls.

72. In response to urgent regional challenges in Africa, we brought the United Nations system together around stronger joint strategies to leverage the reformed, more cohesive United Nations country teams. For example, we launched the African Union-United Nations high-level strategic dialogue on sustainable development and the “college-to-college” structure to promote strategic alignment with the African Union. In country situations, we focused our engagement through the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, for better coherence, integration and coordination with partners in the region, such as in Chad, through the Regional Stabilization Facility for Lake Chad and the Lake Chad Basin Governors’ Forum for Regional Cooperation on Stabilization, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development.

Overview of the African Union-United Nations partnership

The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has been pivotal in addressing key challenges across Africa. This collaboration – across conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding – was re-enforced by an agreed strategic direction between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairperson of the African Union and guidance from their deputies. That alignment enhances United Nations actions to support African Union priorities, integrating feedback from field operations.

Coordination is promoted at the country level through the resident coordinator system, which implements programmes and reflects African Union priorities. The Regional Coordination Platform for Africa further integrates joint African Union-United Nations strategic priorities. Through this partnership, we have supported constitutional frameworks for national elections, promoted dialogues in conflict regions and responded to unconstitutional government changes. The United Nations has also backed African Union-led initiatives for peace in countries across the continent and supported regional disarmament campaigns. In addition, efforts to integrate human rights into early warning systems and capacity-building for peace operations have been strengthened.

73. We also created new platforms for civil society to contribute to African and global policy debates. Our first Academic Conference on Africa brought together policymakers and African academics to address State fragility. Our new youth network, Africa’s Youth Voices, provided a stage for young people to engage in global discussions, such as the Sustainable Development Goal Summit. The Global Africa Business Initiative continued to mobilize the private sector to support economic transformation in Africa.

74. To foster a prosperous and more integrated African economy, we brought policymakers, experts and key stakeholders together through the Africa Dialogue Series. Focused on the African Continental Free Trade Area initiative, we supported

progress on better trade regulations, increasing intra-African trade and harnessing the power of women entrepreneurs.

D. Promotion and protection of human rights

Context

75. In a world rife with conflict, poverty and environmental degradation, human rights regressed in 2023. In spite of the challenging times, the United Nations remains committed to promoting and protecting human rights. To revitalize a global commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights upon its seventy-fifth anniversary, more than 150 countries and 120 non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and other actors made nearly 800 pledges reaffirming their dedication to advancing human rights.

Our goals

76. Our work for human rights is set on six pillars: supporting international mechanisms; mainstreaming human rights both within development and within peace operations; and advancing the core human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation and accountability. The Secretary-General's call to action for human rights and Our Common Agenda serve to reinforce human rights at the heart of the Organization.

Our achievements

77. To sustain the global commitment to human rights, we engaged with Member States in leading human rights forums, including the Human Rights Council. Our work helped to increase lawmakers' capacity to engage effectively with the Council's universal periodic review. With our assistance, 13 countries ratified or acceded to 16 international human rights treaties in 2023. We supported the establishment or strengthening of nearly 60 national mechanisms to improve human rights reporting and follow-up with treaty bodies. We also supported 60 human rights experts in conducting country visits and delivering communications to Governments concerning alleged human rights violations.

78. To drive human rights within development efforts, we worked with the United Nations country team and national counterparts to build national capacities and incorporate human rights-based approaches into development plans and policies for the 2030 Agenda. As a result of our support, over 60 least developed countries and small island developing States implemented recommendations on the basis of international human rights mechanisms. We helped to advance economic, social and cultural rights in the legislation and policies of more than 80 countries and supported the inclusion of human rights in climate negotiations, as, for example, in the outcome reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

79. In our peace and security work, we provided robust monitoring and reporting measures to help to decrease violence by security forces and introduced protection measures for individuals facing threats.

80. Our advocacy served to combat discriminatory practices, including against people of African descent, migrants, Indigenous Peoples, minorities, women, LGBTIQ+ persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, children and young people. Our fellowship programme helped 100 human rights defenders to deepen their understanding of international law. We collaborated with nearly 700 organizations globally to advance disability rights through the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. Our work also helped in integrating international

standards nationally to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in Timor-Leste and influenced significant legal victories for disability rights in Mexico.

81. The Grants Committee for human rights-related funding awarded over 50 grants to enhance civic engagement to civil society organizations. The grants served to promote, protect and strengthen the work of human rights defenders and civil society organizations worldwide. We engaged with nearly 5,500 youth-led and women's rights organizations to develop public policies that better reflect human rights concerns specific to those groups.

82. We advocated the use of transitional justice processes globally and promoted accountability in multiple countries, including for crimes against humanity. We secured the release of arbitrarily detained human rights defenders and helped to establish the Independent Institution on Missing Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic. We also conducted nearly 2,000 visits to detention centres globally, yielding improved conditions for persons in detention.

83. Our report on privacy rights influenced a landmark ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, ensuring that technology is grounded in human rights principles. We have also established a first-ever centre for core expertise in innovation, data and statistics, digital transformation and foresight in service of humanity and of embracing human rights as a driving force to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

E. Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance

Context

84. Humanitarian crises soared in 2023 and were devastating for the most vulnerable people. Those crises severely strained the global humanitarian system and disproportionately affected women and children. Conflict, disease and disasters were amplified by climate change, causing record levels of displacement and hunger and a risk of famine – even in areas that had never before been at risk. International humanitarian law and human rights violations continued with impunity, including attacks on civilians, hospitals, humanitarian aid and schools. More United Nations aid workers died in 2023 than ever in history.

Our goals

85. Alongside our partners, we coordinate neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian responses to the world's worst crises. We alleviate human suffering and provide timely and life-saving assistance. We promote adherence to humanitarian principles and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. We mobilize anticipatory, evidence-based approaches to early action and rapid response as part of effective coordination. We also convene Governments, partners and communities to reduce disaster risk and losses.

Our achievements

86. In 2023, we coordinated humanitarian assistance that reached over 128 million people in 74 countries, representing 62 per cent of total identified humanitarian needs. This work was enabled by donors, who provided nearly \$23 billion of the over \$56 billion needed in total. While substantial, that amount was still well below the \$30 billion provided in 2022. This record funding shortfall forced us to make difficult prioritization decisions to meet the most urgent needs.

87. Our largest operations supported humanitarian responses to protracted crises. We coordinated assistance for over 27 million people in Afghanistan and 11 million

people in Ukraine. We also supported responses to newly emerging or intensified crises, such as in the Sudan, where we coordinated support for 8 million people. Our coordination and response efforts were essential in alleviating human suffering for millions of people in Yemen and in the Horn of Africa. We also supported the global response to devastating earthquakes in Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye and cholera outbreaks and floods in Libya, Malawi and Mozambique.

88. Support provided to the Occupied Palestinian Territory required substantial and sustained humanitarian operations. The Secretary-General also appointed a Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator and presented options to monitor humanitarian pauses and corridors. Despite the death of over 200 colleagues, the United Nations continued to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in Gaza.

89. We delivered time-sensitive humanitarian assistance to address record levels of food insecurity and avert escalation to famine. Devastation and destruction, whether caused by humans or nature, invariably led to hunger and sickness. In response, we facilitated the delivery of food, cash and voucher assistance to 120 million people globally, as well as agriculture assistance to 30 million people. For instance, our crop seed programme in the Sudan yielded food that fed over 13 million people for seven months.

90. We coordinated health assistance that reached 46 million people in 2023. That included support for over 3,500 health facilities with sexual and reproductive health services, health protection for 12 million people and gender-based violence prevention and response services for 4.2 million people. We also facilitated the delivery of over 2 million mental-health consultations to people affected by humanitarian crises.

91. Our Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds disbursed nearly \$1.8 billion to enable timely and effective life-saving humanitarian responses, including in underfunded crises. Our newly launched climate action account, an innovative financing solution, helps the Fund to fill a critical niche in climate finance and rapidly scale up responses to climate-related shocks.

Central Emergency Response Fund climate action account

The Central Emergency Response Fund is the leading global humanitarian funding tool, allocating \$500 million to \$800 million per year for emergencies. The Fund has pioneered anticipatory action to save lives and help to mitigate humanitarian impacts. Launched at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Fund's climate action account provides an efficient avenue for climate finance to assist the world's most vulnerable communities who are facing the consequences of the climate crisis. The new account will allow the Fund to scale up climate-related humanitarian action, through anticipatory action and response, in line with its life-saving mandate.

92. The humanitarian community scaled up anticipatory approaches and early warning and early action systems in 2023, including for climate-related hazards in Bangladesh, Fiji, Nepal, the Philippines and Yemen. That enabled humanitarian organizations to act ahead of predicted natural hazards and disease outbreaks, thus mitigating humanitarian impacts while reducing response costs. The Central Emergency Response Fund provided over \$142 million to partners for anticipatory and early action to combat rising food insecurity and the effects of El Niño. The country-based pooled funds provided over \$16 million for anticipatory and early action funding for Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

93. Under the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, 72 Member States conducted national implementation reviews and submitted voluntary national reviews. Those reviews were completed alongside contributions from United Nations system entities, including 7 regional reports, 13 reports from non-State stakeholders, a global report on 25 non-State stakeholder constituencies and 14 thematic studies. Those reviews and reports informed negotiations on the political declaration of the midterm review, adopted by the General Assembly in May 2023. The reports encourage the adoption of a risk-informed and prevention-oriented approach in all decision-making, investment and behaviour on disaster risk management and development planning.

Complex Risk Analytics Fund

The Complex Risk Analytics Fund is an innovative financing instrument that mobilizes \$20 million each year to unlock the potential of data for smarter crisis support. As a multilateral partnership, the Fund invests in cutting-edge analytics to help the United Nations family and its partners to anticipate, prevent and address emergencies. With a growing ecosystem that now encompasses over 120 partners and 40,000 users worldwide, data supported by the Fund already enhances over \$12 billion in international assistance – ensuring that aid reaches people earlier, faster and in a more targeted and effective manner. The Fund is scaling up its investments to focus on critical data, risk analytics, local capacity and a stronger risk data ecosystem.

Early warnings save lives

Early warning systems are among the most cost-effective ways to save lives, but they cover less than half of the world's population. The Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All initiative is aimed at streamlining efforts, optimizing funding and ensuring inclusivity in early warning systems. Under the initiative, the United Nations collaborated with partners in Somalia on a flood forecast and anticipatory action plan. As a result, early warnings reached 440,000 people ahead of the October 2023 floods in southern Somalia, with \$2.7 million in cash transfers provided to 219,000 people. The initiative is currently active in over 30 countries.

F. Promotion of justice and international law

Context

94. The principles of justice and international law, as well as of the peaceful settlement of disputes, are enshrined in the first two Articles of the Charter of the United Nations. Those principles therefore constitute the very foundation upon which the international community cooperates.

Our goals

95. The United Nations promotes justice and international law through its actions and mandates, such as those related to international trade, oceans and the law of the sea, treaties and international agreements, peace operations, international tribunals and other international accountability mechanisms, and sanctions. In addition, the

International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, settles legal disputes submitted by States and provides advisory opinions on legal questions.

Our achievements

96. The International Court of Justice considered high-profile cases and delivered judgments on the merits in the proceedings concerning the following: *Question of the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf between Nicaragua and Colombia beyond 200 Nautical Miles from the Nicaraguan Coast (Nicaragua v. Colombia)*; *Certain Iranian Assets (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America)*; and *Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Ukraine v. Russian Federation)*. The Court was also seized of five new contentious cases, including the proceedings concerning the following: *Application of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Canada and the Netherlands v. Syrian Arab Republic)* and *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, in both of which the Court indicated provisional measures.

97. The Secretariat transmitted to the Court documentation likely to assist with the questions posed by the General Assembly in its requests for advisory opinions on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and on the obligations of States in respect of climate change.

98. With the indefinite stay of proceedings in the case of *Prosecutor v. Félicien Kabuga* in September 2023, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals concluded its core crimes proceedings and continued to implement its other residual functions. Following the completion of its non-judicial residual functions, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon closed on 31 December 2023.

99. In a major display of support for the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, 80 countries and the European Union signed the Agreement upon its opening for signature during the annual treaty event, organized during the high-level week of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.

100. In addition, the United Nations Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships opened for signature at a ceremony in Beijing on 5 September 2023. The Convention establishes a harmonized regime for giving international effect to judicial sales, while preserving national law governing the procedure of judicial sales and the circumstances in which judicial sales confer clean title.

G. Disarmament

Context

101. Civilians are bearing the brunt of armed conflict amid escalating global tensions. The threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction persists, while military spending rises and conventional arms, especially illicit small arms and light weapons, increasingly proliferate. Emerging technologies pose additional challenges to security.

Our goals

102. Our work enables high-level international negotiations and practical disarmament efforts on the ground. Our priorities are: eliminating nuclear weapons;

upholding the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction; regulating conventional weapons; responding to the challenges of emerging weapons technologies; and promoting regional disarmament and public awareness. Those actions are essential to promoting a holistic approach to security through vigorous diplomacy, disarmament and sustained peace efforts.

Our achievements

103. At a time of heightened global uncertainty, we supported the implementation of the two major treaties on the prohibition and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We facilitated international dialogue on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons among 191 Governments, aimed at strengthening their commitments to a world free of nuclear weapons. In addition, we worked with the 24 Member States and observer States from the Middle East to make progress towards a new treaty aimed at freeing the region of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

104. To uphold the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction, we facilitated the creation of a new international working group to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and support its global implementation. We also enhanced the Secretary-General's Mechanism for Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons by providing a more geographically diverse and better-trained roster of potential investigators.

105. To strengthen the international response to risks from cyberspace, we helped to launch a global directory of points of contacts to facilitate communication between national authorities during cybersecurity incidents. The tool will contribute to a safer, more secure and peaceful online domain. We also supported multilateral discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems and the prevention of an arms race in outer space and supported new initiatives on the military use of artificial intelligence.

106. To limit the impact of ammunitions on humans, we supported the creation of a new global framework to reduce their illicit trafficking, diversion and accidental explosion. We also linked weapons and ammunition management with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction programmes in Cameroon and Somalia. Through our Saving Lives Entity fund, we promoted better control of small arms and light weapons for more sustainable security and development, with new projects in Ghana, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, Panama and Papua New Guinea.

107. We convened 16 Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to tackle illicit firearms and ammunition trafficking and launched a similar process for Central America. In addition, we engaged with national authorities in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America on small arms control and gender-based violence prevention.

108. In 2023, we launched the new Youth Leader Fund for A World without Nuclear Weapons, which, to date, has supported the education of 100 young people from over 60 countries as disarmament advocates. Through other youth education tools, such as our Disarmament Education Dashboard, we empower women, young people and other partners to participate in global policymaking and disarmament processes.

H. Drug control, crime prevention and combating terrorism

Context

109. In today's complex global landscape, terrorism and transnational organized crime destabilize regions, communities and lives, especially in conflict areas. Climate

change, political instability and displacement amplify existing vulnerabilities and can be linked to escalating illicit trade and diverse forms of trafficking.

Our goals

110. The United Nations is committed to making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism. Our work supports Governments in combating these threats through prevention, criminal justice responses and international cooperation. We assist in setting and implementing international standards and norms, as well as in ensuring compliance with obligations in international instruments on drugs, corruption, transnational organized crime and terrorism.

Our achievements

111. The world confronted increasingly complex challenges related to drugs and crime in 2023, including the alarming growth of synthetic drug markets, escalating cybercrime and rising environmental crimes. We leveraged our expansive field network across 150 countries and territories to support Governments in advancing more dynamic response strategies.

112. In Afghanistan, we provided over 80,000 people with opium-alternative sustainable livelihood opportunities. We also provided psychosocial support, testing for HIV and Hepatitis B and C and drug use prevention activities to nearly 40,000 people.

113. To contain illicit trafficking and related crimes, we increased our border management support, which contributed to the seizure of 250 tons of cocaine, over 200 tons of precursor chemicals and nearly half a million weapons and explosives. We provided quality assurance to forensic drug testing and toxicology laboratories worldwide, leading to the safe disposal of 350 tons of cocaine. We also supported 83 countries in combating maritime crime, emphasizing regional cooperation and knowledge-sharing. To assist in tackling maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea, we supported eight countries in assessing and amending their legal frameworks to address piracy and maritime crimes. To support evidence-based policies in the Sahel, we released threat assessments of transnational organized crime, offering comprehensive insights into illicit trade and its socioeconomic impact in the region.

114. To assist the most vulnerable people with addictions, we reached over 67,000 individuals in 43 countries with drug treatment and care services, such as quality assurance, treatment referrals and family therapy, including in humanitarian settings. We also trained over 2,000 local service providers in evidence-based, gender-responsive and human rights-based HIV prevention, treatment and care for people who use drugs and people in prisons.

115. To help to combat trafficking in persons and in firearms, we worked to deepen international commitments for action. In 2023, the number of countries that ratified or acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, both supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, increased to 182 and 123, respectively. On the ground, we provided technical assistance to over 3,300 crime prevention and criminal justice practitioners, fostering expertise worldwide. To help to protect those most vulnerable, we aligned our system-wide efforts behind a new strategy focused on ending violence against children.

116. In order to further accountability in the fight against corruption, we organized the tenth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, underlining the need to safeguard the rule of law and restore trust in institutions. This was the most inclusive Conference yet, with over

2,000 people in attendance, representing Governments, civil society, academia, business and youth.

117. On the ground, we trained over 3,000 officials in 75 countries on criminal justice responses to terrorism and supported Mozambique in developing a national counter-terrorism strategy.

118. Supporting the fight against terrorism remained a top priority. In alignment with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, our targeted efforts prioritized human rights and gender equality. To help to confront terrorism in Africa, we convened the second high-level meeting of the Marrakesh Platform in Morocco, enhancing coordination among African counter-terrorism agencies. Nearly 70 Member States have joined the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme. Over 130 Member States participated in the Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism.

Third United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week

In 2023, we held the third Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations in New York. We brought together over 1,000 people from 160 countries, international and regional organizations, United Nations entities, civil society organizations, think tanks, academic and research institutions and private sector companies to participate in the third United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, convened on the theme of addressing terrorism through reinvigorated multilateralism and institutional cooperation. The multi-stakeholder event provided a platform for knowledge-sharing, collaboration and in-depth discussions on the practical implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

119. Our new Gender and Identity Factors Platform, launched during Counter-Terrorism Week, is facilitating knowledge exchange between Governments, civil society and academia worldwide. The Week culminated in the adoption of the eighth review resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by the General Assembly, preserving the consensus behind the Strategy since 2006. In addition, in 2023, the International Monetary Fund became the forty-sixth member of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact, the largest coordination framework within the United Nations system.

120. On the sixth commemoration of the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, we launched the Legacy Project to showcase the testimonies of victims and the resources critical to their recovery and healing, aimed at inspiring and educating younger generations. We also honoured the voices and experiences of victims and survivors through the “Memories” campaign, with exhibitions across Spain emphasizing the importance of remembering and paying tribute to victims worldwide.

Using behavioural science to counter violent extremism

In the Middle East, we launched the Behavioural Insights Academy in Qatar with Hamad Bin Khalifa University to integrate behavioural science into global strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

Chapter III

Effective functioning of the Organization

Our work and our people

121. Over 35,000 United Nations Secretariat staff members work at 467 duty stations across the globe. The Secretariat strives to uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct, efficient management of resources and effective delivery on mandates.

Our achievements

122. Shifting from a biennial to an annual budget has enabled a more results-oriented culture. Programme plans and resource requirements are adjusted more often, on the basis of more recent performance information, making our planning more responsive. Annual spending reviews support the optimization of resources for more effective mandate implementation. We also strengthened a culture of efficiency in field operations by adopting a data-driven approach to budget formulation and by achieving cost efficiencies and cost avoidance in a range of areas.

123. Dedicated portals improved transparency by providing more information to Member States on our workforce and on our financial and programme performance. The Member States Portal for Uniformed Capabilities Support provides information to troop- and police contributing countries on the status of their claims and payments. Empowering staff to make data-driven decisions using Umoja self-service analytics and management enterprise dashboards enabled more effective decision-making by managers.

124. Attaining equitable geographical distribution and wide geographical representation, as well as attaining gender parity among staff in the Secretariat, remained key priorities for the Organization as a whole. The Secretariat is on track to achieving gender parity at the organizational level by 2028, but more work remains to be done to achieve parity at every level of every entity. The General Assembly decision to widen the system of desirable ranges increased the number of geographical posts, leading to a reduction in the number of Member States that were un-, under- or overrepresented. In early 2024, 123 Member States were within range, compared with 103 in December 2023.

125. The Anti-Racism Office led efforts to implement the strategic action plan for addressing racism and promoting dignity for all in the United Nations Secretariat. The Ethics Office of the Secretariat reinforced the protection of staff against retaliation for reporting misconduct or cooperating with audits and investigations. We also advanced the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy across system organizations.

126. Committed leadership, adequate resources and constant vigilance are crucial to effectively combating sexual exploitation and abuse. To strengthen the victim-centred approach in our prevention and response efforts, we issued a statement on victims' rights in all official and some local languages.

Mental health and well-being in the workplace

We recently launched the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy for 2024 and beyond. The Strategy was unanimously endorsed by the High-Level Committee on Management and represented a significant step forward in our commitment to promoting mental health and well-being for our workforce.

127. The Department of Safety and Security, alongside other members of the United Nations security management system, continued to enable the delivery of programmes globally. The safety and security of United Nations personnel, especially those who are locally recruited, remains a concern amid complex crises.

128. We strengthened our situational awareness, procedures and surge modalities to ensure the effective operational closure of MINUSMA and the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan in complex and rapidly evolving environments. We promoted environmentally responsible operations to benefit host countries and communities. Through the triangular partnership project, we reinforced institutional and operational cooperation with regional organizations.

129. Our communications teams responded quickly to major crises and covered the Organization's activities around the world by disseminating timely and fact-based information and campaigns. They initiated the development of the Global Principles for Information Integrity, to address misinformation, disinformation and hate speech in the public sphere.

130. In support of Member States, the Secretariat expanded the accessibility and functionality of the multilingual e-deleGATE platform, including by adding a new module on candidatures and elections. We also further automated data capture to expedite the production of procedural documentation.

131. Pioneering the use of generative artificial intelligence, we established a dedicated laboratory to undertake pilot projects, including data-driven storytelling. We integrated strategic foresight into our work, leveraging artificial intelligence for workforce planning.

132. Ultimately, the continued effectiveness of our work depends on the availability of cash. In 2023, the regular budget cash situation steadily worsened. Lower collections and the return of credits to Member States depleted reserves. In early 2024, the Organization had to implement stringent spending restrictions to avert payment defaults due to cash shortages.

