

**Joint Swiss-UNITAR Briefing on United Nations Budgetary Matters**

**Closing remarks for Ms. Catherine Pollard, USG DMSPC**

**7 September 2023**

Good afternoon and good evening, dear colleagues, and a very warm welcome to all newly minted delegates in both Geneva and New York.

Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to be with you on this last day of what I trust has been a very engaging and fruitful three days of knowledge sharing.

A huge thank you to UNITAR for organizing such an insightful programme. I also want to convey a special appreciation to the Swiss Government for their continuous support which makes this programme possible.

The importance of this training, especially the insights shared with Member States into the mechanics, key processes of the United Nations Budgetary matters cannot be overemphasized. Budget matters are the engine on which we run. What you have just benefitted from is an excellent introduction to the legislative and intergovernmental process as well as key issues that you will be dealing with as delegates.

I also take the opportunity to thank all the expert stakeholders who have shared their knowledge and experience in individual sessions over these past days.

I am aware that you covered a wide array of subjects – both technical and overarching – over the course of the programme. I would therefore just highlight a few bigger picture issues with respect to our reform, and how this continues to inform our work.

As Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and also Chair of the High-Level Committee on Management for the UN System, I support a process of continuous improvements from the management reform implemented in 2019, as many of the structural aspects are now well consolidated.

Cumulatively, significant progress continues to be made. The creation of DMSPC and DOS promoted a whole-of-Secretariat approach to many processes, reducing silos and barriers that had previously been visible in the segregation of HQ/field and non-PK/PK, and led to clearer delineation of roles.

The improved delegation of authority policy framework has strengthened managerial authority of heads of entities and programme managers, allowing for decisions to be taken closer to the point of mandate delivery and for timelier implementation of decisions.

It has provided a strong internal control environment that supports stronger compliance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, which in turn supports better programme performance management and will continue to enhance the position of the Organization to respond to external shocks.

Our programme planning and budget processes have been streamlined. With the approval of the annual budget process by the General Assembly, accompanied by changes to the duration and schedule of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), we now have a better assessment of the link between performance and plans, and between resources and results. I can say we now have a more effective mandate delivery and results-oriented **culture** in the Secretariat; as

well as a more agile approach to programme planning, based on changing demands and conditions.

I do note that in the context of the 2024 proposed programme budget the ACABQ has made many requests for additional information at an increasingly granular level; the Secretariat will continue to leverage technology and expand the content provided through online tools such as the Budget Information Pilot, results.un.org, and the enhanced costing matrix in order to address these requests.

The Secretary-General is deeply committed to fiscal discipline, identifying efficiencies to avoid proposing increases that do not emanate from new or expanded mandates.

Policy simplification and other key initiatives remain essential as we move forward. As in any transformation of organizational culture in a complex management system, as we enhance one aspect, we inevitably encounter new opportunities to improve.

It is therefore instructive that the Secretary-General has called for us to keep “...the foot on the pedal to achieve the cultural change we need...”.

This call to keep up the momentum also aligns with the comprehensive vision to transform into a UN 2.0, a modern United Nations system, rejuvenated by a forward-thinking culture, and empowered by skills fit for the twenty-first century as embodied by Our Common Agenda. It is a vision for the UN system to be able to meet emerging challenges over the next few decades: worsening climate

emergencies, escalating conflicts to the global cost-of-living crisis, soaring inequalities and dramatic technological disruptions.

How we meet these challenges may determine whether we are able to achieve the 2030 Agenda and meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

I am delighted to share with you that this transformative work is already ongoing across all UN organizations. Recognizing that we start our transformation journeys from different points and move at different speeds we aim to enable every UN organization to chart their own path towards the vision.

It however requires greater coherence at the country and regional levels to tackle multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary challenges; pooling resources such as staffing, funding, technology, and services to work on issues such as data and digital cooperation that no single Organisation or nation can or should address alone but most importantly it also requires developing simplified business practices to attract the necessary expertise and develop strong partnerships outside the UN.

Distinguished delegates, colleagues, I will stop here, and I do hope I managed to provide you with a bigger picture of our reform and the current trajectory we are on.

Once again, I am grateful to UNITAR and the Swiss government for providing such an excellent opportunity for participants to benefit from the knowledge and collective experiences of all the speakers who have engaged with you in this programme.

*Check against delivery*

I look forward to a fruitful main session of the GA and remain at your disposal should you need any information to support your deliberations.

I would be happy to take some questions and hear from you.

Thank you.