



**Executive Board of the
United Nations Development
Programme, the United Nations
Population Fund and the
United Nations Office for
Project Services**

Distr.: General
22 December 2025

Original: English

First regular session 2026

2 to 5 February 2026, New York
Item 7 of the provisional agenda

UNOPS report on addressing racism and racial discrimination

Summary

In its decision 2025/12, the Executive Board decided to include an agenda item on addressing racism and racial discrimination, for consideration as a decision, at the first regular session 2026, and requested UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to submit a separate report detailing all their actions taken in this regard, to ensure the issue receives sufficient visibility, including on metrics to measure progress. The Executive Board also requested UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to inform the Executive Board of the measures taken to ensure that actions to address racism and racial discrimination are duly considered in their respective approaches when implementing the JIU recommendations, in particular UNOPS.

In line with this decision, the UNOPS report highlights actions taken to address racism and racial discrimination, including in implementing the respective JIU recommendations. The report outlines UNOPS' organisation-wide approach to eliminating racism and racial discrimination, embedding anti-racism across policies, culture and leadership.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board might wish to:

- (a) Take note of the separate reports provided by UNDP, UNFPA, and UNOPS in accordance with decision 2025/12, detailing the actions taken to address racism and racial discrimination within their respective organizations;
- (b) Recall its decision 2024/10 and note the continued efforts of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to implement the entity-specific and system-wide recommendations outlined in the Joint Inspection Unit note JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1;
- (c) Urge UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to continue taking concrete, results-oriented measures to combat racism and racial discrimination throughout their respective organizations, and to foster respectful, inclusive and safe workplace environments for all personnel;
- (d) Request that UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS provide regular updates on their efforts to address racism and racial discrimination.



Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Organizational Commitment and Strategic Direction	3
II. Institutional Frameworks and Policy Integration	4
III. Organizational Culture and Accountability for Inclusion	6
IV. Workforce Diversity, Representation, and Equal Opportunity	8
V. Learning, Knowledge, and Capacity Development	11
VI. System-Wide and Inter-Agency Engagement	13
VII. Future Directions and Path to Transformation	14

I. Organizational Commitment and Strategic Direction

1. UNOPS remains steadfast in its commitment to eliminating racism and racial discrimination in all forms, in alignment with the principles of the *United Nations Charter*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)*. These instruments collectively affirm the obligation of all entities of the United Nations system to uphold equality, dignity, and justice for every individual. For UNOPS, this means ensuring that its institutional culture, policies, and practices embody fairness, inclusivity, and respect for diversity, consistent with *Article 101(3) of the UN Charter*, which underscores the importance of recruiting personnel on as wide a geographical basis as possible.
2. In accordance with Executive Board Decision 2025/12 (DP/2026/2), which requests UNOPS to continue taking “concrete efforts, including at country level”, to address racism and racial discrimination, UNOPS has strengthened its institutional commitment to this agenda, aligning internal reforms with broader UN system coherence on anti-racism. Guided by these mandates, UNOPS has ensured that anti-racism forms a central pillar within the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy 2022–2025, the UNOPS Anti-Racism Accountability Plan (2025), and the DEI Strategy 2026–2029. Together, these frameworks establish the foundation for an inclusive, equitable and representative workforce, while ensuring that anti-racism is both a stand-alone institutional priority and a cross-cutting enabler of organizational excellence.
3. The Anti-Racism Accountability Plan translates this commitment into action. The plan serves as a framework for building an equitable workplace by addressing both individual and systemic forms of racism. It has fostered awareness, promoted the review of internal policies and practices to remove bias, and supported expanded safe, confidential reporting channels to ensure that all personnel feel supported and protected. These efforts have yielded tangible progress. Anti-racism principles continue to be embedded across UNOPS’s institutional practices, shaping how the organization manages its people, builds capacity, and communicates its values. Awareness campaigns such as the Open Door Dialogues series have deepened collective understanding of identity, race, and belonging, while embedding anti-racist values into daily interactions and leadership expectations.
4. Recognizing that sustained progress requires continuous learning and reflection, UNOPS undertook a comprehensive institutional assessment on diversity, equity and inclusion in 2025. The assessment engaged personnel across various personnel levels, operational units and locations (headquarters, regional hubs and country offices), exploring how personnel experience inclusion, respect and equity within the organization (with clear research objectives on race/ethnicity). The findings revealed that UNOPS is broadly perceived as a values-driven and respectful workplace, with strong commitment to fairness and representation. At the same time, the assessment identified areas for improvement, including the need for greater equity in leadership representation and deeper structural mechanisms to ensure consistency in applying inclusive practices across all contexts.
5. Building on these insights, UNOPS developed a dedicated anti-racism action plan within the new DEI Strategy (2026–2029). This outlines clear accountabilities at global, regional and country levels, with defined key performance indicators to measure and track progress. The strategy aims to institutionalize anti-racism as both an organizational value and a behavioural norm - an integral part of how UNOPS defines leadership, manages talent, and delivers results.
6. Through these combined efforts, UNOPS continues to demonstrate that advancing anti-racism is essential not only to fairness and human dignity but also to organizational effectiveness, trust and legitimacy

II. Institutional Frameworks and Policy Integration

7. Building on its strategic commitment to an equitable and inclusive workplace, UNOPS has continued to strengthen the institutional frameworks that translate principles into practice. These efforts are grounded in the recognition that sustainable progress on anti-racism requires clear policies, robust systems, and dedicated resourcing that make inclusion measurable and enforceable across all areas of people management.
8. In accordance with Executive Board Decision 2025/12 (DP/2026/2), which “calls on UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to ensure the provision of dedicated resources to address racism and racial discrimination” and to “take measures to prevent all forms of racial discrimination in recruitment, retention and leadership development”, UNOPS has embedded discrimination provisions within its regulatory and human resources frameworks. This work aligns with JIU Recommendations 3 and 5, which emphasize resource adequacy and accountability mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination.

Embedding Anti-Racism within People Policies and Systems

9. UNOPS is progressively mainstreaming anti-racism across its human resources policies to ensure fairness, transparency, and equity at every stage of the personnel lifecycle.
10. The draft Talent Acquisition Policy (2025) represents a major milestone in this effort, introducing a unified framework for how talent is identified, assessed, and selected across all personnel categories. Anchored in the policy’s guiding principles of non-discrimination, diversity and inclusion, transparency, fairness, and accountability, UNOPS reaffirms its commitment to evaluating candidates solely on merit and competence while addressing barriers to equitable participation in recruitment processes and explicitly prohibiting any form of bias or discrimination. The policy recognizes diversity (including race and ethnicity) as intrinsic to organizational excellence and underscores that geographical representation is not only a matter of fairness, but also a key driver of performance and legitimacy, in alignment with *Article 101(3) of the UN Charter*. The policy strengthens inclusive hiring practices by establishing structured recruitment standards, such as standardized vacancy announcements, assessment panels trained in equitable evaluation, and independent compliance reviews, to ensure that decisions are transparent and free from undue influence or bias. In addition, the Accountability Principle embedded within the policy clearly articulates the shared responsibility of senior leaders, hiring managers, HR practitioners, and assessment panels in upholding fairness and diversity commitments. Importantly, the *Diversity and Inclusion Principle* of the policy explicitly commit UNOPS to “fostering a diverse workforce and encouraging candidacies from all backgrounds, genders, and nationalities,” while recognizing the intrinsic aspects of individual identity, including race/ethnicity. This institutional articulation provides a clear normative foundation for anti-racist practice within talent acquisition and serves as a reference point for embedding racial equity across all people processes.
11. In 2025, UNOPS also introduced its first People Planning and Performance (PPP) philosophy to foster a more intentional and value-driven approach to performance management. The new framework promotes fairness, transparency, and equity by ensuring that both *what* is achieved and *how* it is achieved carry equal weight in assessing performance. Central to this approach is the assessment of behaviours through UNOPS’ Integrity and Inclusion competency, which explicitly encompasses respect for diversity, equity and inclusion, reinforcing zero tolerance for any form of bias or discrimination. The PPP philosophy also embeds a culture of mutual feedback and accountability, including mandatory 360-degree feedback for eligible leaders and Management Team members. These feedback mechanisms, grounded in UNOPS competencies, culture behaviours and leadership priorities, enable peers and teams to identify and challenge biased or exclusionary practices while recognizing inclusive leadership. By linking inclusion competencies directly to performance evaluation and leadership accountability, the PPP philosophy helps prevent discriminatory behaviours from going unchecked and ensures that equitable treatment, representation and respect are integral to career development. In doing so, it strengthens leadership responsibility for building diverse talent pipelines and supports fair opportunities for progression and retention across all levels of the organization.

12. In addition, UNOPS conducted a comprehensive review of its human resources policies and processes in 2024, with the support of an external expert organization, to assess alignment with principles of equity, and inclusion (including anti-racism). The assessment confirmed that UNOPS' policy framework provides a considerable foundation for equitable workforce management but recommended further strengthening of accountability mechanisms to address bias and discrimination, as well as greater integration of inclusive language and safeguards across all policy instruments. These recommendations are currently being integrated into relevant policy updates conducted by the People and Culture Group.

Protection, Integrity, and Accountability

13. To support personnel who raise concerns regarding misconduct, UNOPS applies its Whistleblower Protection Policy and associated procedures in a manner that is attentive to both conscious and unconscious bias. Reports of retaliation connected to allegations of racial or other forms of discrimination are handled with the same seriousness, confidentiality and procedural rigor as all protected activities. Raising concerns or allegations of racism, discrimination or exclusionary behavior with the Workplace Conduct Team is considered a protected disclosure and is therefore covered under UNOPS' anti-retaliation framework. The Workplace Conduct Team reviews such reports to determine whether a referral to the Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG) for formal investigation is warranted, or whether managerial or preventive interventions are more appropriate, in consultation with the reporting individual. Relevant support pathways and information are shared with the personnel member throughout the process. This approach reinforces a safe and accountable reporting environment and advances a culture in which personnel can speak up, speak out and seek support without fear of reprisal.
14. Complementing these protections, the UNOPS Code of Ethics "*Ethics Starts With Me: A Reference Code*", and the Integrity Portal, both launched in January 2025 in three languages (English, French and Spanish), provide a clear framework for ethics, integrity, and accountability. The Code offers practical guidance for navigating ethical dilemmas and understanding the internal justice system, while the Integrity Portal enables direct reporting of misconduct and signposts available support services. Together, these tools operationalize UNOPS' standards and make accountability mechanisms accessible and actionable.

Targeted Investments and Measures

15. Recognizing that racism and racial inequity manifest differently across social and cultural contexts (including in forms linked to ethnicity, caste, descent, and national origin), UNOPS has adopted a targeted, context-sensitive approach to promoting equitable access to opportunities. In 2024, the organization piloted measures in the Latin America and the Caribbean (LCR) region to address barriers faced by underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in accessing employment opportunities. The pilot improved outreach and engagement strategies, and increased transparency in selection processes. Building on its success, in 2025 UNOPS developed a global guidance on such measures, providing a standardized but flexible framework for context-tailored diversity outreach across regional and country offices. This initiative represents one of the concrete steps toward operationalizing the Board's call for "*partnerships with regional institutions, internship, fellowship and young professionals programmes*" as mechanisms to broaden representation and inclusion. Furthermore, in 2024, UNOPS signed a MoU with Tsinghua University to provide cost-free internships for young professionals, with initial placements in the China Office and expansion across the Asia-Pacific region. This is aimed at removing financial barriers, widening regional pathways into UNOPS, and advancing racial and geographical inclusion.
16. Dedicated Resources and Structural Support

In line with JIU Recommendation 3 and the Executive Board's request for dedicated investment, UNOPS has institutionalized anti-racism resourcing within its core budget. The organization ensures a dedicated budget allocation, forming part of the regular corporate allocation under the People and Culture portfolio, to ensure sustainability and independence from extrabudgetary contributions. This budget supports training, awareness campaigns, Employee Resource Groups, and advisory support related to anti-racism and DEI more broadly.

17. To strengthen implementation, UNOPS maintains technical expertise and thematic task forces that ensure coordinated oversight and knowledge sharing across regions. Dedicated personnel with specialized competencies in DEI and anti-racism provide technical advice and facilitate cross-regional learning. The reactivation of the DEI Advisory Panel and establishment of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Working Group in 2024 have further strengthened strategic coordination, ensuring that anti-racism considerations are embedded in workforce and organizational culture initiatives. The organization also continues to leverage external expertise, including specialized consultants, to enhance learning delivery, policy review, and system-wide benchmarking.

Integrating DEI Metrics into Analytics and Reporting

18. UNOPS is strengthening its people data and analytics to monitor inclusion and workforce diversity. In line with the UN Charter’s emphasis on recruiting on a wide geographical basis, overall results by business units are trackable, enabling pattern analysis across recruitment, mobility, and appointments to leadership roles. In parallel, in 2025 UNOPS has introduced voluntary racial and ethnic self-identification in the Exit Survey, with a dedicated dashboard for trend analysis. This helps identify any disproportionate attrition by identity group, surface equity issues that may be driving exits, and inform targeted retention and workplace improvements. Together, these measures support evidence-based decisions and integrate DEI metrics into corporate reporting for transparent measurement, institutional accountability, and continuous improvement.

III. Organizational Culture and Accountability for Inclusion

19. UNOPS has maintained a strong institutional commitment to nurturing a workplace culture grounded in fairness, respect and inclusion. The organization views an anti-racist culture not only as a moral imperative but also as a prerequisite for organizational effectiveness, trust and legitimacy. As part of its ongoing culture transformation journey, UNOPS continues to advance tangible measures that reinforce behavioural accountability, strengthen personnel confidence in systems of integrity, and create spaces for dialogue and learning across the organization. These initiatives collectively aim to build a culture where inclusion is a lived experience, where personnel at all levels feel safe, heard and valued, irrespective of race, ethnicity or background.

Building an Inclusive and Accountable Culture

20. UNOPS’ approach to culture transformation is holistic, combining structured learning with participatory engagement to foster inclusion, accountability, and psychological safety across the organization.
21. The *Ethics Dialogues*, developed by the Ethics Office and launched by the Executive Director in January 2025, have been cascaded across teams, creating safe spaces for personnel to discuss ethical dilemmas and reflect on values in practice. These sessions are cultivating a “speak-with-each-other” culture, one that encourages openness, shared responsibility, and collective learning.
22. Complementing these efforts, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Unit, in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Employee Resource Group, convened *Open Dialogue* sessions across UNOPS regional operational hubs in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean - with further expansion planned for 2026. These dialogues have been instrumental in fostering reflection, dismantling stereotypes, and strengthening shared understanding among personnel. They have also enabled personnel to contextualize discussions on racial equity and inclusion within their specific cultural and operational realities, reinforcing a sense of belonging and respect.
23. Building on these dialogues, regional operational hubs further translated the corporate anti-racism ambition into contextually tailored engagements that reflect diversity while upholding common organizational standards. In this spirit, the Global Portfolios Office piloted a Racial Equity Learning Challenge, which catalysed reflection and peer exchange, helping teams

internalize key concepts, acknowledge lived experiences, and strengthen allyship. Together, these efforts are embedding anti-racism as a shared organizational responsibility and reinforcing a culture of inclusion and accountability at global, regional and country levels.

24. UNOPS has also strengthened its *Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)*, including the Anti-Racism ERG, which serve as safe-space networks for peer support, collective advocacy, and institutional learning. In 2024, these networks were further reinforced through the introduction of (members of UNOPS leadership who voluntarily serve as champions of the ERGs). This innovation ensures that the perspectives and recommendations emerging from these groups are elevated to the Management Team for consideration and follow-up, creating a direct bridge between personnel experiences and organizational decision-making. The result is enhanced transparency, accountability, and responsiveness across all levels of the organization.

Leadership Accountability and Cultural Indicators

25. Leadership remains at the centre of culture change. UNOPS continues to strengthen leadership accountability for inclusion through learning, evidence and behavioral indicators. The organization's Culture and Engagement Survey (previously referred to as Pulse Survey) serves as a key instrument for measuring perceptions of fairness, inclusion and trust across the workforce. Since 2023, UNOPS has incorporated voluntary racial and ethnic self-identification into its Culture and Engagement survey, using the common categories recommended in *JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1*, to enable consistent analysis of experiences and outcomes across racial/ethnic groups. This disaggregation allows UNOPS to identify patterns, detect disparities and use evidence to guide strategic interventions and policy refinement.
26. The 2024 UNOPS Culture & Engagement Survey shows significant variation in how inclusion and organizational climate are experienced across racial and ethnic groups. While overall progress is evident, gaps persist pointing to ongoing challenges with psychological safety and trust. UNOPS is using these insights to target system-level actions and strengthen accountability across the organization.
27. To deepen engagement with survey results, UNOPS introduced the role of Culture Ambassadors, personnel who work with managers to interpret survey findings, facilitate team discussions, and co-design actions that strengthen inclusive behaviors within teams. This participatory approach has helped transform data into dialogue and accountability, ensuring that inclusion is not abstract but locally owned and action-oriented. As a result of the findings from the survey and the subsequent dialogues, tailored training was implemented in specific country offices on the prevention and response to racism and racial discrimination in 2025.
28. In parallel, anti-racism principles have been integrated into the organization's learning and leadership development framework, including tailored sessions on Inclusive Leadership with components on identity-based bias, discrimination, among others. In 2025, UNOPS conducted a specialized training for personnel involved in investigations and case management, responding to findings of the JIU report (paragraph 5.1) which emphasized the critical role of managers and investigators as first points of contact in addressing racism and discrimination. The training equipped investigators, case managers and ethics practitioners with the tools to identify and manage cases involving racial bias, ensuring objectivity, sensitivity and adherence to human rights principles in all inquiries.

Integrity, Safeguarding and People-Centred Support

29. Integrity, ethics and accountability remain central to maintaining a culture of trust. UNOPS operates a comprehensive integrity architecture designed to prevent, detect and respond to all forms of misconduct, including racism and racial discrimination. The Integrity Portal serves as a central platform for confidential reporting, as well as a hub for information about available support services. The Ethics Office, the Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG) and the Workplace Conduct Team work in close collaboration, with reporters' consent and with due respect of any confidentiality requirement, with an aim to ensure timely and consistent handling of concerns.

30. UNOPS seeks to apply a people-centred approach to all allegations of misconduct, recognizing the importance of identity-specific engagement and tailored support. The Navigation and Support Team provides confidential guidance to personnel as they navigate reporting options and accompaniment support once a report has been made. At the same time, this team's mandate includes referral services to tend to every person's specific needs, regardless of reporting.
31. The investigation process ensures that reported allegations involving discrimination or abuse are managed sensitively and expediently. Additionally, UNOPS provides confidential, professional well-being support to personnel, (combining external clinical services, the UN system counsellor network, and in-house counselling) to ensure timely psychological assistance across duty stations and uphold our duty-of-care commitments. In 2025, UNOPS further strengthened its preventive and response mechanisms by joining the UN system-wide Clear Check 2.0 database, expanding its scope beyond protection from sexual exploitation abuse, and sexual harassment to include other serious misconduct, such as racism and racial discrimination. This ensures that accountability extends beyond individual offices and contributes to system-wide integrity and due diligence.

Evidence-Based Culture Transformation

32. The 2025 institutional DEI assessment provided a critical evidence base for advancing cultural transformation. The assessment benchmarked UNOPS' anti-racism culture against UN system standards and international best practice, offering a detailed analysis of strengths and opportunities. It found that personnel broadly experience UNOPS as a respectful and purpose-driven organization, but identified areas requiring greater attention, particularly in strengthening dialogue across identity lines and ensuring equitable representation in leadership roles. These findings have directly informed the design of the Anti-Racism Action Plan within the DEI Strategy (2026–2029), which will include clear accountability metrics to ensure that racial equity remains a strategic priority embedded in the organization's culture transformation agenda.
33. By integrating data, dialogue and accountability, UNOPS is ensuring that anti-racism is not an isolated initiative but an enduring characteristic of its organizational identity. The deliberate linkage between cultural insights, integrity mechanisms and leadership accountability demonstrates UNOPS' approach towards evolving into an organizational culture that is both anti-racist and human-centred.

IV. Workforce Diversity, Representation, and Equal Opportunity

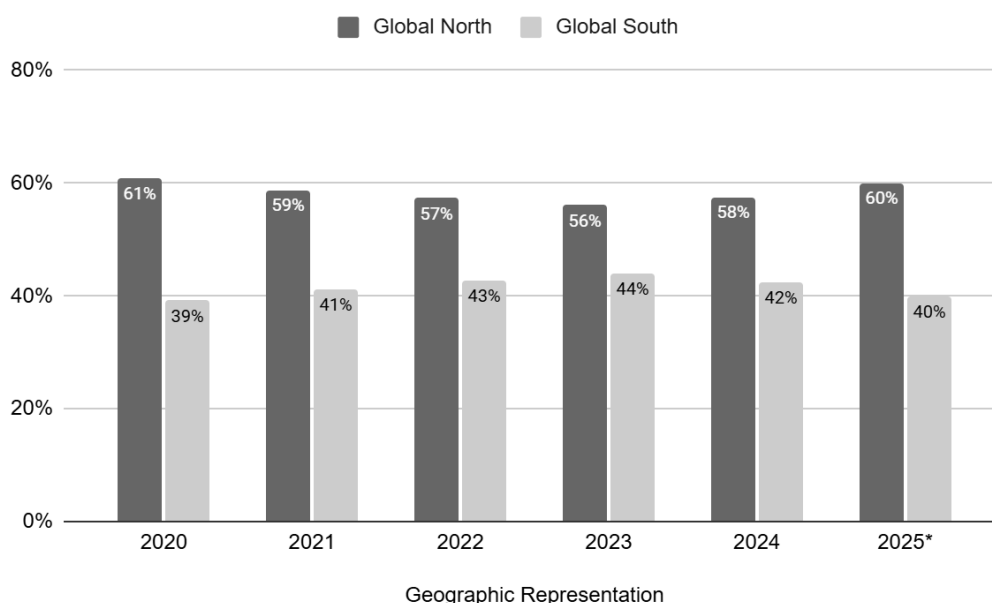
34. UNOPS continues to strengthen systems and policies that advance fair representation, equality of opportunity, and inclusion across all levels of the organization. These priorities are further embedded in the new UNOPS Organizational Strategy (2026–2029), where geographical diversity has been designated as a core key performance indicator for achieving the organization's mandate in the next strategy cycle.

Diversity Snapshot and Disaggregated Data

35. UNOPS regularly reviews and reports on the composition of its workforce, analysing diversity across gender, nationality, region, contract modality, and functional level. Current data show steady progress in representation, with personnel drawn from over 175 nationalities across 160 duty stations. Continued attention is being given to senior leadership levels and to the equitable inclusion of personnel from the Global South, particularly in international senior leadership roles.

Geographic Representation of Senior Personnel in International Positions (2020 - 2025*)

**All figures displayed are as of 31 Dec. Apart from 2025, where the data was run as of 30 Sept.*



This systematic approach to workforce analytics ensures that diversity trends are visible, measurable, and actionable, an important condition for sustaining trust and fairness in employment practices.

Inclusive Recruitment, Mobility, and Advancement

36. UNOPS has updated its Talent Acquisition Policy to operationalize anti-racism in recruitment by applying a single, rules-based framework that embeds non-discrimination and diversity and inclusion (including recognition of race/ethnicity) throughout the process. Amongst others, standard recruitment requires an independent compliance review, with all recruitment now managed in the new recruitment system (Talent+ launched in November 2025) for consistent treatment and traceability. Data collection, analysis and reporting will be leveraged to support accountability for decision-making by all recruitment process stakeholders. Assessment panels are directed to consider organizational needs, including diversity, equity, inclusion and culture priorities, when making recommendations. Safeguards include reasonable accommodation on request; structured shortlisting rules; conflict-of-interest disclosures; and mandatory candidate checks (including, sanctions screening, UN ClearCheck, and the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme) with informed consent and confidentiality. Post-selection feedback obligations further strengthen transparency. Collectively, these provisions reduce bias risk, reinforce equal treatment, and support fair access and progression over time.
37. The organization’s Mobility Framework (currently under development) aims to similarly ensure equitable access to developmental and rotational opportunities, allowing personnel from different backgrounds to build experience across duty stations and functions. Together, these recruitment, development, and mobility measures form a coherent system for diversifying leadership pathways and ensuring fairness throughout the employee lifecycle. The implementation of a revamped Job Architecture (project in progress) further supports these measures by establishing a transparent, skills-based foundation that groups related functions into job families and broader job networks based on shared characteristics such as core functions, required knowledge, and transferable skills. This improves consistency, transparency, and comparability across roles and career paths, reducing the influence of implicit biases related to race, origin, or background. Anchoring recruitment, career development, and mobility in objective transferable skills ensures that personnel have fair and equal access to opportunities. This minimizes subjectivity in decision-making, strengthens accountability

through data-informed monitoring, and further advances the operationalization of anti-racism, equity, and inclusion across the full employee life cycle within UNOPS.

Embedding Fairness and Accountability in Performance Management

38. The People Planning and Performance (PPP) philosophy anchors personnel management in fairness and inclusivity, with DEI objectives formally integrated into managerial performance indicators to reinforce accountability for nurturing diverse talent pipelines and equitable development opportunities. Complementing this preventive focus, UNOPS' performance rebuttal mechanism (introduced in 2022) provides a structured avenue for procedural fairness and bias mitigation, including in cases where racial or other identity-based bias may influence assessments. The mechanism enables personnel to challenge performance evaluations through a transparent review process, ensuring decisions are evidence-based, consistently applied, and aligned with UNOPS' non-discrimination standards. Building on lessons from rebuttals, UNOPS is evolving its approach with a proactive, anti-discrimination-informed model, whereby the organization initiates early personnel engagement for emerging under-performance cases. This promotes early dialogue before issues escalate, with corrective actions identified and promptly implemented. Consequently, the process strengthens trust in people management, reduces overreliance on formal disputes, and reinforces a culture where feedback, accountability, and inclusion go hand in hand. In practice, this dual approach -preventive (PPP's emphasis on behaviour and inclusive leadership) and protective (rebuttal's due process safeguard)- helps deter discriminatory practices and supports equitable treatment across teams and duty stations.

Early-Career Investment And Youth Voice

39. UNOPS has further invested in early-career diversity through the Junior Talent Programme (launched in 2019), creating entry points for emerging professionals (particularly youth and underrepresented groups) and building national capacity in hardship duty stations. The programme enabled specific vacancies in locations such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Guinea (Conakry), Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Ethiopia to be filled by former interns with relevant degrees, while outreach partnerships with universities and institutions in historically under-represented regions supported equitable access to UNOPS employment. The programme was active until 2023 and had 45+ participants, with a 29 age average. In 2020, UN Women recognized the JTP as a UN system best practice under the "Reflect, Realize and Respond" category for outstanding outreach and recruitment. In 2021 and 2022 UNWomen recognized it again as a great initiative to retain female talent. Complementing these entry pathways, the UNOPS Youth Engagement Platform (YEP) convenes diverse young leaders as an advisory body to UNOPS leadership, ensuring youth perspectives (across racial and geographical backgrounds) inform inclusive policies and engagement.

Career Development Initiatives

40. In 2025, career development efforts prioritized equitable access to growth opportunities and the reduction of structural barriers that can perpetuate identity-based disparities. Aligned with the Integrated People Strategy People goal, "*Build Tomorrow's Workforce*", UNOPS is advancing career awareness and continuous learning as enablers of fair progression. These initiatives aim to further advance the *JIU Recommendation 6*, underscoring the need to strengthen the equal distribution of opportunities across human resources management.
41. A new e-learning module on the fundamentals of career development was also launched to help personnel actively plan and navigate their growth, with shared accountability between individuals, supervisors, and the organization. To date, 338 personnel have completed the course. Complementing this, a series of regional webinars (delivered with regional focal points) expanded engagement, contextualized practices to local realities, and encouraged peer learning to drive consistent, bias-aware approaches across regions. 1,142 personnel participated in these sessions.
42. To reinforce implementation, UNOPS has invested in regional HR capacity-building, providing training and guidance to strengthen teams' capability to support transparent, merit-based development pathways. The organization is also designing initiatives to build supervisors'

capabilities to provide equitable, evidence-based feedback and development support. Mentoring and coaching programmes continue (including targeted engagements for senior-level personnel) to enhance leadership effectiveness and keep growth opportunities accessible and inclusive across duty stations and contract types, in line with UNOPS' anti-racism and non-discrimination commitments.

Voluntary Self-Identification and Data Safeguards

43. In line with JIU Recommendation 1, UNOPS is strengthening the quality and depth of its demographic data. Guided by the UN Secretariat's framework, the organization is exploring, through its new recruitment system (Talent+), the inclusion of voluntary self-identification fields for race and ethnicity using categories consistent with JIU-endorsed standards. In parallel, UNOPS shall continue engaging with the HLCM to align with system-wide frameworks and advance unified self-ID standards across UN entities. Together, these steps would lay the groundwork for evidence-based decisions and a clearer view of how different groups experience recruitment, progression, and the workplace, enabling more targeted and effective equity interventions.

Equity in Organizational Transitions and Structural Processes

44. A critical milestone in 2025 was the integration of equity considerations into the *UNOPS Guidelines for Strategic Workforce Planning*. The guidance directs business units to weigh inclusion considerations alongside operational and fiscal imperatives when identifying cost-saving measures and workforce configurations. It encourages consultation with the People and Culture Group where specialized equity guidance is required and emphasizes transparent engagement with impacted personnel.
45. Building on this foundation, UNOPS also integrated DEI principles into the Draft Guidance on Restructuring. This effort recognized that organizational change processes can inadvertently perpetuate or exacerbate inequalities across identity groups if not guided by equity safeguards. The revised draft guidance therefore incorporates a “**need–risk–dignity**” lens to assess the potential impact of workforce adjustments on different demographic groups, including those distinguished by gender, nationality, duty station context and other intersecting identities. This includes careful consideration of how restructuring may affect the diversity and geographical balance of the workforce, across duty stations and roles. By embedding DEI analysis into restructuring protocols, UNOPS supports decision-making on workforce realignment, contract transitions and post abolishments that is transparent, consistent and attentive to representation and inclusion, helping to maintain a workforce composition that reflects the international character and values of the organization.

V. Learning, Knowledge, and Capacity Development

46. UNOPS views continuous learning as fundamental to advancing its anti-racism and inclusion agenda. Consistent with JIU Recommendation 2 calling for strengthened awareness and capacity development, UNOPS has prioritized learning as a lever for behavioural change, accountability, and long-term culture transformation.

Integrated Learning Framework and Digital Learning Products

47. In 2025, UNOPS launched its first Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) e-Learning course, a landmark achievement that integrates a comprehensive anti-racism learning pathway. The course introduces personnel to foundational concepts of bias, privilege, allyship, and systemic discrimination, with modules designed to connect learning to day-to-day managerial and operational realities. Since its release, it has become one of the most widely accessed courses on the UNOPS Learning Zone, reflecting strong demand for practical and reflective learning opportunities.
48. To ensure institutional accountability, a global completion dashboard was introduced, enabling real-time monitoring of participation across regions, contract types, and functions. Built-in evaluation mechanisms capture user feedback and assess learning outcomes. Building on this success, UNOPS plans to designate the DEI e-Learning (together with its anti-racism pathway)

as mandatory for all personnel from 2026 onwards, ensuring global reach and sustained behavioural reinforcement across the workforce.

49. Complementing the e-Learning, UNOPS has curated a dedicated anti-racism learning repository within the Learning Zone. This resource library aggregates diverse external and UN system materials expanding access to multiple perspectives on racial equity and inclusion. The repository enables self-paced exploration and fosters cross-context understanding of racism's varied manifestations across regions and identities.
50. UNOPS also sustains year-long "learning bursts", short thematic engagements offering reflective spaces on emerging racial and identity-based issues. These virtual dialogues and micro-learning modules keep the conversation dynamic throughout the year, translating awareness into consistent behavioural practice and reinforcing key messages of empathy, allyship, and accountability.

Leadership and Applied Learning Resources

51. Beyond foundational training, UNOPS has embedded practical inclusion tools into leadership and performance learning (including bias-aware feedback resources and supervisor toolkits) while integrating dedicated DEI workshops and mandatory modules across our *Aspiring People Leaders and Supervisor Essentials* pathways. These enhancements equip managers to model equitable feedback, interrupt bias, and build inclusive, high-performing teams. These tools reinforce the behavioural expectations articulated in the organization's People Planning and Performance (PPP) philosophy, strengthening accountability for inclusive management across all levels.

Regional Resource Labs: Decentralizing Learning and Practice

52. In 2025, UNOPS established Resource Labs, regional hubs for organizational learning across five identity themes, including Race/Ethnicity. These hubs function as innovation spaces that localize learning, capture regional experiences, and foster peer exchange on inclusion practices. The Latin America and Caribbean (LCR) Resource Lab serves as the organizational hub for anti-racism learning and practice, enabling contextual analysis of racial dynamics and piloting the measures highlighted previously in this report.
53. By decentralizing learning, the Resource Labs leverage regional expertise and lived experience, ensuring that inclusion strategies are informed by local realities rather than imposed centrally. This model also offers a cost-effective pathway to scale learning while strengthening regional ownership; insights from the Labs feed directly into global policy reviews and the iterative adaptation of learning content.
54. This decentralized approach is also reflected in the 2025 UNOPS regional learning plans. For example, the Global Portfolio Office has embedded anti-racism through activities such as "*GPO Awareness on Anti-Racism*" and "*Beyond the 21-Day Challenge: Practicing Anti-Racism Every Day*," positioning anti-racism within a broader inclusion framework and demonstrating how regional initiatives inform, and reinforce, organization-wide learning priorities.

Partnerships and Inter-Agency Collaboration

55. In recognition that anti-racism and inclusion learning must be coherent across the UN system, UNOPS collaborates with the UN System Staff College on learning initiatives and participates actively in the UN Learning Managers Forum, sharing methodologies and participating in inter-agency communities of practice. These collaborations support harmonization of training standards, and enable cross-fertilization of tools and practices.

Behavioural Insights and Learning Impact

56. Initial evaluation results from the new UNOPS DEI e-learning modules indicate encouraging progress, with completion rates continuing to increase. Participant feedback reflects a strong positive impact on awareness and capability-building, with more than 95 per cent of respondents rating the course as excellent or good, and nearly all indicating that they would recommend it to colleagues. Learners highlighted the clarity of the content, the relevance of practical

examples, and the direct applicability of the concepts to everyday workplace interactions. UN Women has also adopted the UNOPS DEI e-learning course for internal capacity-building, reflecting its alignment with system-wide priorities and its value as a shared resource for strengthening inclusive organizational culture.

VI. System-Wide and Inter-Agency Engagement

57. UNOPS recognizes that the fight against racism and racial discrimination within the United Nations system cannot be achieved in isolation. Consistent with Executive Board Decision 2025/12, which calls on UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to “*enhance cooperation through formal inter-agency coordination*” and to “*collaborate with the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)*”, UNOPS continues to play a constructive role in system-wide efforts to advance equality, accountability and cultural transformation. These commitments directly support JIU Recommendation 4, which emphasizes strengthened collaboration and coherence across UN entities to address racism and racial discrimination.

Collaboration within the CEB and HLCM Frameworks

58. UNOPS remains committed to inter-agency collaboration through the CEB/HLCM and its sub-working groups on gender equality and disability inclusion. Drawing on its global workforce model, UNOPS contributes practical, operational insights to ensure that proposed indicators and performance measures reflect the realities of personnel. In parallel, it shall continue to support collective efforts to establish harmonized UN-system data standards and reporting mechanisms for racial and ethnic identities. This engagement underscores UNOPS’s alignment with the Secretary-General’s call for a *One UN approach* to equality and inclusion, grounded in shared standards, mutual learning, and transparent accountability.

Partnership and Informal Learning with Peer Entities

59. Building on a tradition of close cooperation with its sister agencies, UNOPS maintains ongoing engagement with UNDP, UNFPA, amongst others. Beyond formal coordination, the three organizations have pursued informal peer-learning initiatives, such as the Joint Staff Council Learning Series implemented in 2024, which provided personnel from all three entities with shared learning opportunities on equity, inclusion and allyship. These exchanges fostered a common understanding of the systemic barriers faced by diverse groups (including underrepresented racial and ethnic groups) and encouraged collaborative organizational responses, where necessary.

Contribution to System-Wide Integrity and Accountability

60. In 2025, UNOPS strengthened its contribution to inter-agency integrity frameworks by joining the UN System-Wide Clear Check 2.0 Database, an expanded version of the previous inter-agency tool for due diligence and safeguarding. While earlier iterations focused primarily on Protection from Sexual Exploitation Abuse, Sexual Harassment, the new platform now encompasses additional forms of serious misconduct, including racism and racial discrimination. UNOPS’ participation in Clear Check 2.0 reinforces its zero-tolerance stance on racism, enhances accountability across entity boundaries, and supports a unified UN approach to preventing re-employment of individuals found responsible for serious violations. This measure complements UNOPS’ internal integrity systems and signals its continued commitment to the broader UN vision of “*one standard of ethical conduct, one framework of accountability.*” It also reflects the organization’s understanding that eliminating racism requires both prevention and structural safeguards within recruitment and reassignment processes across the system.

VII. Future Directions and Path to Transformation

61. As UNOPS concludes this phase of its institutional journey toward eliminating racism and racial discrimination, the organization remains firmly committed to building on the progress achieved under the first Anti-Racism Accountability Plan and to deepening this work under the new UNOPS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy 2026–2029. The next strategic cycle represents a critical opportunity to consolidate gains, embed measurable accountability across all levels of the organization, and advance a model of inclusion that is systemic, transparent, and sustainable.
62. In accordance with Executive Board Decision 2025/12 (DP/2026/2), UNOPS will continue to implement the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendations, with a focus on institutionalizing measurable outcomes and harmonized system-wide reporting mechanisms.

Advancing System-Wide Accountability

63. In light of the Secretariat framework, with the ambition of adopting measures articulated in JIU recommendations, UNOPS remains willing to contribute to the finalization of the UN system-wide harmonized framework for data categorization on race/ethnicity as well as a system-wide accountability framework on racism and racial discrimination. UNOPS will continue to advocate for indicators that reflect both structural and behavioural dimensions of progress, linking organizational culture to workforce outcomes.

Integration of Anti-Racism within the DEI Strategy 2026–2029

64. The UNOPS DEI Strategy 2026–2029 embeds anti-racism as a strategic pillar of organizational transformation. A dedicated Anti-Racism Action Plan within the strategy articulates objectives, activities, and milestones across various domains (including, leadership accountability, policy and systems, workforce representation, learning, culture, etc). Each domain is accompanied by key performance indicators to track both institutional progress and personnel experiences. The Strategy further reinforces accountability through a multi-level results framework, cascading global targets to regional and country offices. This approach will ensure that every office has a measurable role in fostering racial equity and that progress is continuously monitored.

Expanding Inclusive Opportunities and Partnerships

65. Building on the success of the measures piloted in Latin America and the Caribbean (LCR), UNOPS will expand such measures and fellowship programmes across additional regions to address context-specific barriers to representation. The organization will also strengthen partnerships with regional institutions, universities, and professional networks, as encouraged by the Executive Board, to create equitable access pathways for racially and ethnically diverse professionals to enter and thrive within the UNOPS workforce. These initiatives will not only diversify talent pipelines but also strengthen regional ownership of inclusion outcomes.
66. To complement recruitment reforms, UNOPS will further enhance its Post-Recruitment Survey to capture disaggregated insights on personnel experiences during onboarding and integration. The expanded survey will include voluntary racial and ethnic self-identification fields, enabling the organization to identify potential barriers early in the employee lifecycle and to refine its induction and retention strategies accordingly. This data-driven approach will strengthen accountability for equitable treatment from entry to advancement.

People Planning, Performance and Development

67. Following the introduction of the UNOPS first People Planning and Performance philosophy, UNOPS is piloting the Peer Calibration process in a number of offices across all regions for 2025 performance appraisals. This process is aimed at strengthening fairness, equity and accuracy of the performance assessments by promoting alignment and consistency of standards. It helps identify and address potential biases or other irregularities in the assessment process, contributing to strengthening accountability for results and fair, inclusive and equitable leadership practices.

Strengthening Learning and Behavioural Change

68. The new strategy cycle (2026-2029) will also prioritize the expansion of learning and knowledge-sharing initiatives introduced in 2025. Planned developments include continued scaling of Resource Labs as learning incubators for inclusive workplaces, fostering localized experimentation, peer learning, and innovation on inclusion themes while informing global policy design. Through these initiatives, UNOPS aims to embed learning as a continuous process - integrating behavioural expectations into performance process, leadership development, and culture-building efforts.

Embedding Transformation and Measuring Impact

69. As UNOPS transitions into this next phase, its focus will remain on institutionalizing accountability and demonstrating tangible outcomes. Ultimately, UNOPS's commitment to anti-racism extends beyond compliance; it is a defining element of the organization's credibility, leadership, and performance. By embedding racial equity into its strategy, operations, and culture, UNOPS seeks to exemplify the UN values of fairness, dignity, and justice, ensuring that its workforce, partnerships, and practices reflect the diversity of the world it serves.