



**Our Common Agenda**

Policy Brief 11

# UN 2.0

Forward-thinking **culture**  
and cutting-edge **skills**  
for better United Nations  
system **impact**

SEPTEMBER 2023



**United  
Nations**





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The challenges that we are facing can be **addressed only through stronger international cooperation**. The Summit of the Future in 2024 is an opportunity to agree on **multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow**, strengthening global governance for both present and future generations (General Assembly resolution [76/307](#)). In my capacity as Secretary-General, I have been invited to provide inputs to the preparations for the Summit in the form of action-oriented recommendations, building on the proposals contained in my report entitled "Our Common Agenda" ([A/75/982](#)), which was itself a response to the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution [75/1](#)). To this end, **I have released 10 policy briefs to date**. The workstream for UN 2.0 falls within my authority, and implementation in the wider United Nations system is under way within existing regulatory frameworks and in support of existing mandates. The purpose of the present policy brief **is to keep Member States informed of our United Nations system-wide efforts**.



# Introduction

## ADAPTING FOR IMPACT: SKILLS AND CULTURE FOR TOMORROW

Halfway through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Up to 4 billion people – mainly women and girls – are still excluded from progress.<sup>1</sup> If we all rethink, refocus and recharge, we can still alter our course. The present policy brief outlines internal transformations in United Nations entities, changes that we are pioneering to better support Member States in their own transformation efforts.

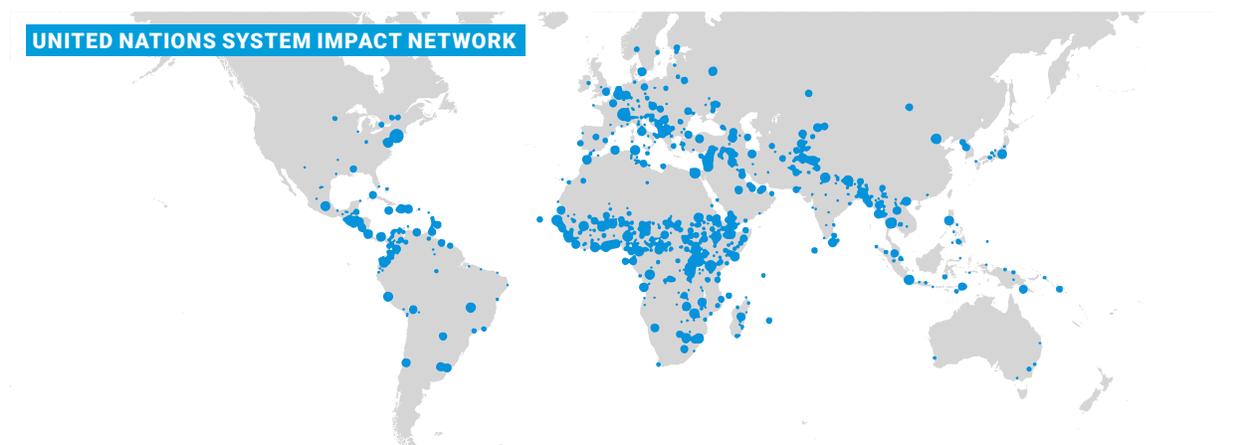
### OUR VISION

Building on major structural reforms since 2017, UN 2.0 encapsulates the Secretary-General's vision of **a modern United Nations system, rejuvenated by a forward-thinking culture, and empowered by cutting-edge skills** fit for the twenty-first century. Leveraging our diversity, we are striving towards this vision with a powerful fusion of **data, innovation, digital, foresight and behavioural science expertise** – a dynamic combination that we call the “quintet of change”. Grounded in a stronger **organizational culture**, UN 2.0 signifies our transformation towards more agile, diverse, responsive and impactful United Nations entities – to accelerate systemic shifts that deliver for all, including women and girls.

### POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT

The potential impact of stronger United Nations system expertise is massive. United Nations system entities – including the United Nations Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes – are **present in nearly 4,000 locations across the world**, with more than 100,000 civilian colleagues<sup>2</sup> working with **162 partner countries** and territories – affecting the lives and livelihoods of over **160 million people**.<sup>3</sup> As we pivot into the second half of the quest for the Sustainable Development Goals, we are committed to amplifying our impact as a global network that can **support Member States in advancing new skills, strategies and solutions everywhere** – and help to put the world on a path to resilience and sustainability.

#### UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM IMPACT NETWORK



**4,000**

United Nations system locations<sup>4</sup>

**> 100,000**

United Nations system colleagues<sup>4</sup>

**160,000,000**

lives impacted per year<sup>5</sup>

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## OUR APPROACH

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### Upgrading skills

Central to achieving the vision of UN 2.0 is a **quintet of modern skills** that have tremendous potential to enhance the work of United Nations entities in support of Member States:

- Building modern **data expertise** is about improving how we collect, handle, govern and use data from more diverse sources for better insights and action.
- Cultivating our **innovation capacity** is about learning to quickly generate, test and scale up novel ideas that create sustainable benefits for people and planet.
- Developing **digital expertise** means shifting to digitally enabled solutions that improve connectivity, service delivery, collaboration and decision-making.
- Instilling **strategic foresight** means learning structured methods to navigate change, imagine better futures and make better decisions today.
- Nurturing **behavioural science** is about fostering our knowledge of how people act and make decisions – to create better choices that work with, not against, the grain of human nature.

### Adapting cultures

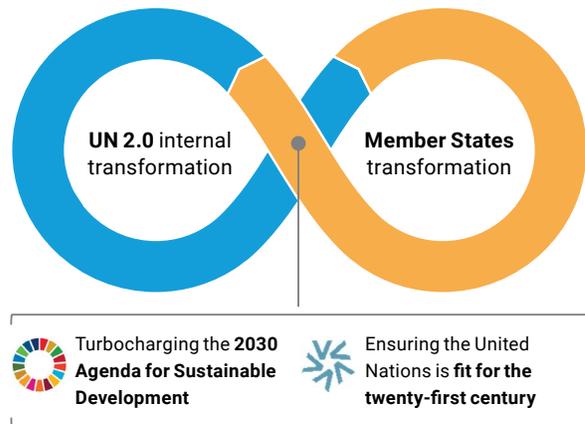
Stronger technical solutions alone will not deliver the change envisioned for UN 2.0. We see the faster **adaptation of our culture as the critical step to bring the quintet elements to life** – coupled with a greater ambition for gender equality, inclusion and geographical diversity. We will match these goals with stronger collective action within and across all entities, informed by deeper expertise, backed by leadership and accountability, and incentivized by financing to deliver tangible results – including for women and girls.

### Shifting, not adding

On the journey towards stronger expertise, our goal is **not to add but to shift internal capacities**. We carefully recalibrate, retrain and realign expertise to better respond to the needs – and leverage the opportunities – of the twenty-first century. This adaptive approach reinforces our commitment to financial stewardship, **leveraging existing resources** to become future-ready entities.

### Internal change, greater external impact

The UN 2.0 vision is firmly focused on **driving internal change** because, stronger internal United Nations system capabilities **will result in better programmatic and operational support to Member States**, bolstering their capacity to thrive in the twenty-first century, and faster collective progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.



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## POLICY BRIEF, UN 2.0 ACCELERATOR AND ONLINE PORTFOLIO

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The present policy brief **charts the journey ahead**. It describes the cultural levers that form the foundation of our organizational transformation, along with the “quintet of change” that builds on it. While introduced separately, **all UN 2.0 areas are interconnected and mutually reinforcing**. In each chapter, we illustrate the potential for impact, explain why we shift approaches, highlight where we are now, outline our goals and describe how we are changing.

With this policy brief, we provide a **broad framework for change** and offer direction for more detailed strategies, plans and initiatives. Each United Nations entity will pursue its **own journey towards the UN 2.0 vision**, progressing along its own path. Every element of the “quintet of change” will have a unique footprint in every entity – tailored to mandate and context.

To accelerate shared and individual progress, the brief also outlines a **UN 2.0 Accelerator programme** that United Nations system leaders will advance together as well as **opportunities for Member States to engage**.

Critically, the brief also **encapsulates the ambitious commitment in Our Common Agenda to place diversity, women and girls at the centre of renewed multilateralism** – recognizing that global goals will never be achieved without the full equality of half of the world’s population. To this end, the United Nations system is committed to leading, modelling and supporting the necessary shifts.

To learn about the **impact of UN 2.0 in practice**, we encourage readers to consult the **online portfolio with over 500 tangible examples** from over 50 United Nations entities and more than 160 United Nations country teams<sup>3</sup> at the following link: <http://un-two-zero.network>.

### UN 2.0: TWO COMPLEMENTARY PRODUCTS



#### Policy brief

overall playbook for action in the United Nations system



#### Online portfolio

tangible examples that illustrate the impact of UN 2.0



Learn more about  
ongoing UN 2.0 initiatives

[un-two-zero.network](http://un-two-zero.network)

# Quintet of change summary: shifting United Nations system skills and culture to turbocharge support for the Sustainable Development Goals

## SHIFTING, NOT ADDING

Recalibrate, retrain and realign expertise – along each organization’s own path

### 50+

United Nations system organizations<sup>6</sup>

### 100,000

United Nations system colleagues<sup>7</sup>

### 162

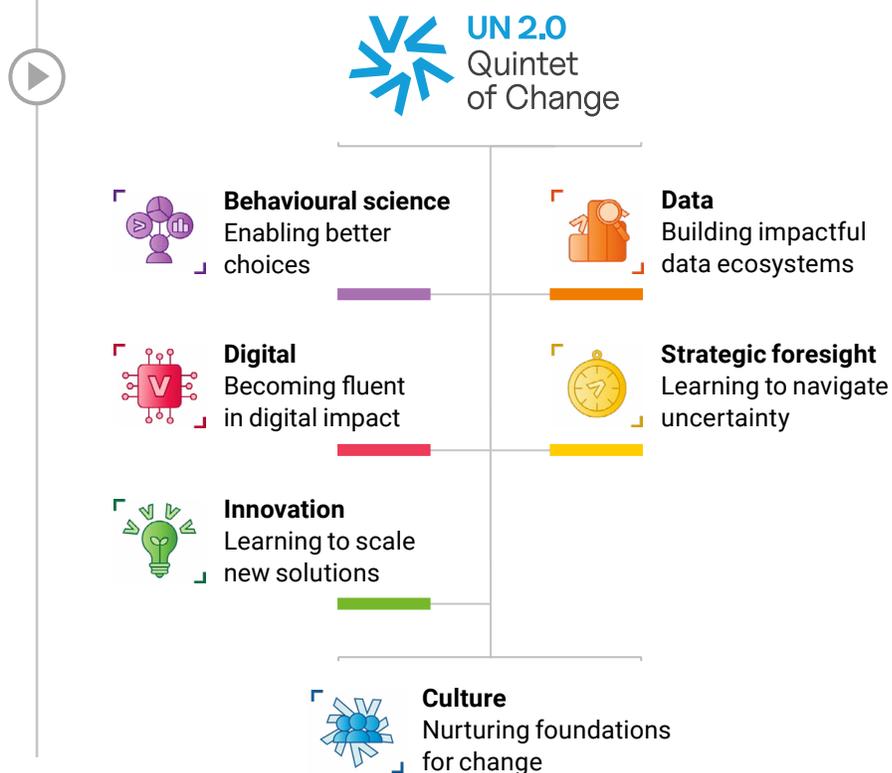
countries and territories with United Nations country teams<sup>8</sup>

### 4,000

United Nations system locations<sup>9</sup>

## UPGRADING SKILLS, ADAPTING CULTURES

Become proficient in twenty-first century skills, enabled by a forward-thinking culture



## RESULTING IN



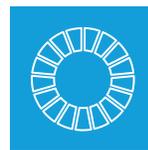
### A MODERN UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

United Nations entities fit for the future and able to respond to the complex challenges of the twenty-first century



### ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR MEMBER STATES

United Nations entities can support Member States in advancing new skills, strategies and solutions, everywhere

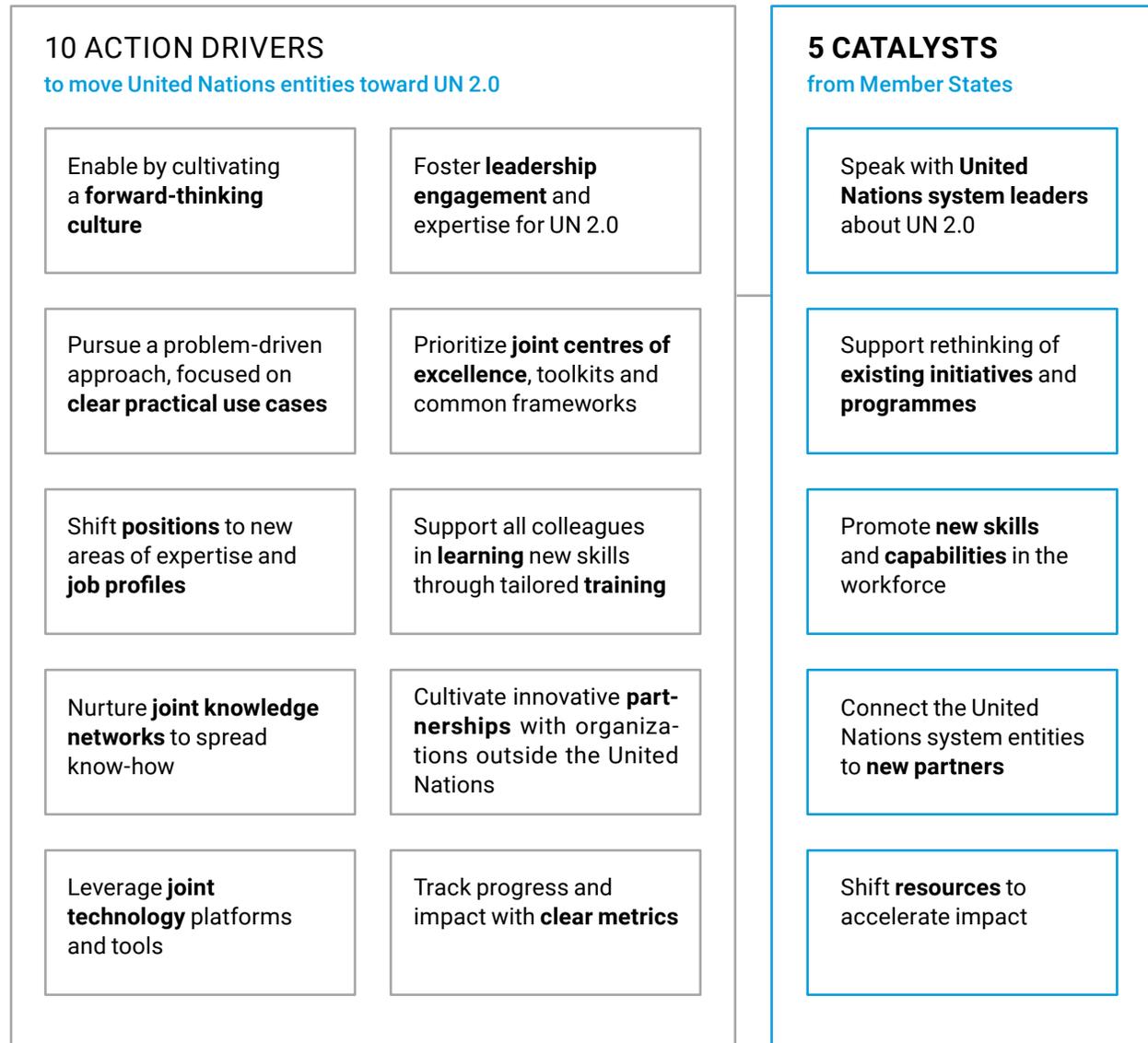


### TURBOCHARGED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS PROGRESS

United Nations entities and Member States are equipped to put the world on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda



## PATH TO IMPLEMENTATION



## JOINT UN 2.0 ACCELERATOR

To support the shifts in **internal management** and reinvigorate our **programmatic offer**, under the leadership of the Secretary-General and continually monitored against shared metrics, with overall guidance from the High-Level Committees of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.



# Forward-thinking culture



## WHY WE NEED TO SHIFT

### CULTURE IS THE LINCHPIN OF SUCCESS

By fostering a forward-thinking culture, we create an **environment in which the cutting-edge skills of the “quintet of change” can flourish** and amplify impact. In a rapidly evolving world, culture is the linchpin of every successful organizational adaptation. Accelerating change in our culture is a critical step to position the United Nations system at the forefront of global efforts to promote peace, development and human rights – to support transformative shifts and harness the capacities of all to deliver for all.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS

Shifting organizational culture is a **long-term journey**. Since 2017, **we have implemented major reforms to strengthen our culture and better deliver on our mandates**. All United Nations entities are committed to achieving **gender parity** at all staff levels by 2028. We have advanced strategies for **geographical diversity, disability inclusion and youth empowerment**. We have enhanced synergies between human rights and all pillars of our work with the Secretary-General’s call to action for human rights. New tools and initiatives have improved **transparency** in our work and accountability for results. Our **environmental footprint** continues to decrease. We have implemented robust frameworks to support **leadership, whistle-blowers, the prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and the fight against racism**. We have enhanced **agility**, given decision makers in the field **more authority** alongside increased **accountability** for decisions, improved information-sharing and made planning and budgeting more dynamic.



## OUR GOAL

### BECOMING MORE FORWARD-THINKING

Placing **gender equality, women’s rights and equitable geographical representation front and centre**, we strive to create a **forward-thinking culture that values agility, learning and curiosity**. We aim to nurture a United Nations ecosystem that champions global diversity, inclusion, human rights, young people and environmental sustainability – firmly rooted in our commitments to integrity, humility and humanity.

Our staff surveys show how these changes are yielding results. Colleagues **not only take great pride in their work but also perceive tangible cultural shifts**. They see greater clarity of direction, alignment, openness to ideas, inclusion, feedback and care. However, more remains to be done on all fronts.

**93%**

of staff fully understand the objectives of the organization and are proud of their work<sup>10</sup>

**75%**

of staff feel encouraged to share new ideas at work, up from 62% in 2019<sup>10</sup>

**29**

United Nations system organizations have a workforce that is at least 50% female<sup>11</sup>

**51%**

of resident coordinators are women<sup>12</sup>

**30%**

of United Nations system organizations met or exceeded their 2021 disability inclusion targets<sup>13</sup>

**22%**

of the electricity consumed in the United Nations system came from renewable sources<sup>14</sup>



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## HOW WE WILL AMPLIFY CHANGE

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### CRITICAL LEVERS

#### CURIOSITY AND LEARNING



Guided by our vision for a UN 2.0, we will foster a safe culture for **continuous learning and creative thinking**. Recognizing the critical role of innovation, skills development and growth mindsets, we will encourage initiatives that promote continuous learning, stimulate fresh global perspectives and create an environment of dynamism. Mindful that cultural change is not a quick fix, our approach is focused on **enhancing leaders' skills, supporting critical thinking, addressing new educational needs and nurturing positive attitudes** towards collaboration, openness, knowledge exchange and experimentation to sustain our collective curiosity in the long term.

#### AGILITY



By harnessing the Secretary-General's existing reforms across development, peace and security, and management, we will further **amplify our ability to adapt**. Empowering managers with enhanced – and more accountable – decision-making authority, in particular in the field, will **improve our responsiveness and reduce bureaucracy**. Greater access to information will empower collaboration. We will continue to increase the **focus on results** with more agile planning and budgeting and consistently strive to meet targets for equitable geographical representation and gender equality. We will place greater emphasis on **staff feedback and engagement**. We are committed to simplifying our **business processes**, leveraging system-wide collaboration in the field and enabling everyone to focus more on impact.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY

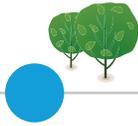


Rooting our approach in Article 101.3 of the Charter of the United Nations, we will **bolster geographical diversity**, hand in hand with gender parity, throughout the United Nations system. Recognizing the rich perspectives that diversity brings, we will **advance practices that strengthen equitable representation** from all parts of the world and greater regional group diversity and achieve parity between men and women in our workforce. Our approach includes scaling outreach, reinforcing recruitment strategies, removing bias and obstacles in selection, strengthening accountability, fostering an inclusive environment and upholding the value of global diversity to amplify our collective impact and be truly representative of the world that we serve.

#### GENDER EQUALITY



We will **accelerate the pace of change** across the United Nations system, leading the world towards gender equality. In our vision for a UN 2.0, achieving gender equality – and consistently delivering for women and girls – will be a **strategic priority**, indivisible from our goals and mandates. On the basis of a shared understanding of gender inequalities and injustice, we will strengthen our focus on **delivering measurable results for women and girls in every country** – well-planned, operationalized, adequately financed, and informed by valued technical expertise and more staff with gender equality expertise, responsibilities and budgets. We will take decisive action to ensure that these efforts are driven by consistent leadership, accountability and aligned incentives and policies. We will amplify our work through **strong networks, coordination and division of labour** – in partnership with women's civil society and feminist leaders. Moving beyond technical fixes, we will **effectively address deep structural issues** to enable an organizational culture that “walks the talk” – with Member State support.



## YOUNG PEOPLE



Empowering young people, in particular young women, within the United Nations system is our priority. Fully aware that new solutions must be developed side by side with young people, we will work with Member States to **rejuvenate our workforce, amplify young voices and nurture their leadership potential**. We commit to setting a global benchmark for youth engagement.



## INCLUSION

We will fast-track our shift towards inclusive practices within United Nations entities. Recognizing the transformative impact of inclusion, we will enhance **accessibility, representation, participation and equality for those left behind and those who experience discrimination**, including Indigenous Peoples, minority groups and persons with disabilities. By leveraging clear strategies, we will boost collective efforts to create places where everyone belongs and can contribute – irrespective of circumstance.



## RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING

Recognizing the profound importance of leadership, values and behaviours, and mental health, we will promote workplace cultures that **build resilience, stimulate engagement and foster supportive environments**. Our approach involves bolstering leadership competencies, understanding colleagues' needs and fostering positive behaviour and well-being.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



We will infuse environmental sustainability into every facet of our operations. Acknowledging the urgency of climate action, we will **reduce our ecological footprint, promote sustainable practices and collaborate with partners** to embed sustainability in our organizational fabric. We are committed to measures that set the pace for global environmental responsibility and contribute to the health of our planet.



## INTEGRITY

We prioritize a **workplace culture founded on the highest ethical standards**. Our resolute stance against misconduct, including sexual exploitation, abuse, racism, harassment, discrimination, fraud, corruption and abuse of power, drives us to implement robust accountability measures. Through fostering respect, transparency and stringent action, we **cultivate a workplace that can serve as a global example**.

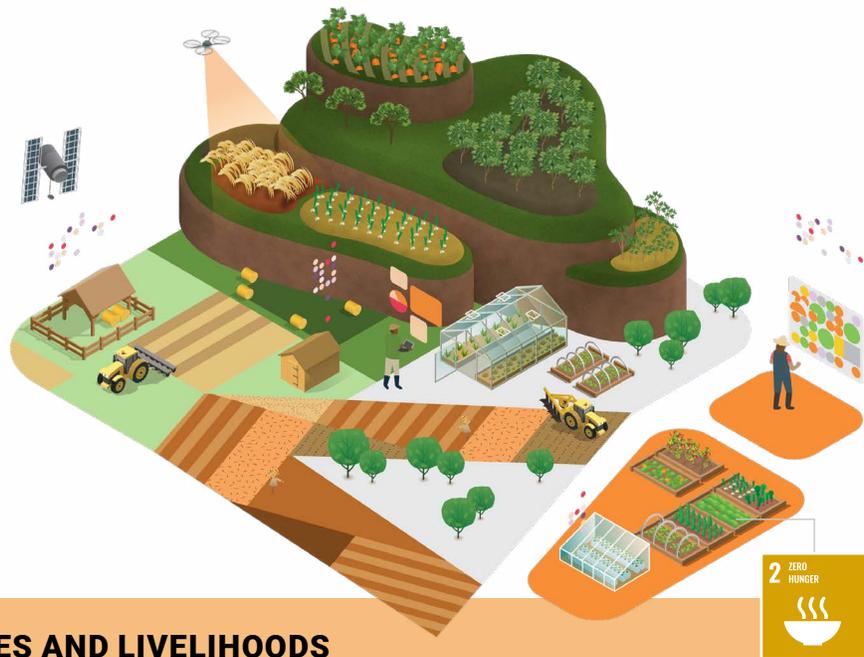


Learn more about  
ongoing UN 2.0 initiatives  
[un-two-zero.network](https://un-two-zero.network)



# Data

Building impactful data ecosystems



## DATA CAN CHANGE LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

For example, farmers in the global South face low crop yields, and up to **900 million people suffer from severe food insecurity**<sup>15</sup> – especially women and girls. With modern data expertise, United Nations entities can support Member States in **combining satellite imagery and data on weather and soil conditions to help subsistence farmers** – most of whom are women – to **select better crops**. As yields rise, communities stand a chance of **thriving and adapting to climate change**.

## WHAT BUILDING DATA CAPACITY MEANS

Nurturing modern data capacities is about making **shifts in expertise, processes and technology so that entities improve how they collect, handle, govern and use data** from more diverse sources to **generate deeper insights for better decisions** – powered by advanced analytics, machine learning and visualization techniques.

## WAYS IN WHICH DATA EXPERTISE CAN IMPROVE THE UNITED NATIONS...

- Enhancing the **safety** and security of United Nations peacekeepers through **data-driven risk models**.
- Improving **supply chain visibility** for the \$16 billion in annual United Nations system goods procurement<sup>16</sup> through **real-time tracking**.
- Powering anticipatory **humanitarian action** for the 360 million people in need<sup>17</sup> with **predictive analytics**.

## AND SUPPORT MEMBER STATES IN...

- Transforming **agriculture** with **data-driven crop selection** to better support the 900 million people facing severe food insecurity.<sup>18</sup>
- **Improving support** for the 670 million people in extreme poverty<sup>19</sup> with **nowcasting of statistics**.
- Addressing **gender inequality**, discrimination and bias in artificial intelligence **data models**.



Learn more about United Nations system data initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/data](https://un-two-zero.network/data)



## WHY WE NEED TO SHIFT

### THE DATA REVOLUTION

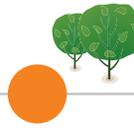
In the past, data capabilities in United Nations entities were often an isolated concern – confined to statistics or information technology departments. Today, **data permeate every aspect of our work**. By 2025, the world is expected to generate an astounding 180 trillion gigabytes of data each year.<sup>20</sup> Modern methods in statistics, analytics and machine learning **help us to understand not just what happened but also why it happened, what may happen next and how to respond**. Having more gender-disaggregated data helps to uncover patterns and biases, spotlight discrimination and formulate more inclusive policies. If we learn to harness data responsibly, including by prioritizing safety, privacy and human rights, we can accelerate every agenda that we serve.



## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### READY TO CHANGE GEARS

Despite accelerating progress, we are **only in the middle of making the necessary changes**. **Around 67 per cent of United Nations entities have formulated a data strategy**. Basic capabilities are in place. However, advanced expertise, for example in machine learning, is scarce. **Less than 5 per cent of staff work in modern data roles**. At the global level, only 45 per cent of Sustainable Development Goal data are complete. At the current pace, it will take another 22 years to close gender data gaps. Although each dollar invested in data generates a \$32 impact,<sup>21</sup> **only 0.3 per cent of \$350 billion in development assistance<sup>22</sup> goes to data projects** – and financing for gender statistics is at a new low. In most aid sectors, data still do not have a formally recognized purpose code. Now, halfway into the 2030 Agenda, it is imperative that we change gears.



## OUR GOAL

### MODERN DATA-ECOSYSTEMS

Our vision is a **whole-of-United Nations data ecosystem that unlocks our full data potential** – grounded in our essential role as stewards of global statistics. Modern data capacities will deliver better outcomes: better decisions, stronger thought leadership, reduced gender data gaps, improved data sharing, greater efficiency, more transparency and better support to Member State ecosystems for data and statistics.

At the heart of our strategy is a simple idea: to advance the data-driven transformation of our entities, **we will start not with bureaucracy but with data action that adds value**. By concentrating on use cases that address immediate needs, we “learn by doing”. We will master modern data management, analytics and machine learning approaches – so that we can deliver with impact and integrity across the data and statistics value chain. We intend to **accelerate this change** with shifts in training and hiring, women’s empowerment, data-savvy leadership and cultures, smarter data governance, new global partnerships and user-focused technology.

### State of play: United Nations system entities with...



# 0.3%

of \$350 billion in official development assistance is allocated to data and statistics annually<sup>23</sup>

# 51%

women in the data science community of practice<sup>24</sup>



## HOW WE AIM TO CHANGE

### ADAPTING CULTURES AND CAPABILITIES

#### IMPROVE OUR OFFER TO MEMBER STATES

- Design **data-driven programmes** and projects, with **gender equality as a core priority** and disaggregated data methods front and centre.
- Develop **advisory capacities to assist Member States** in building inclusive, sustainable and effective data strategies, governance and ecosystems for impact.
- Support **international data cooperation** in line with the policy brief on a Global Digital Compact.

#### NURTURE DATA CAPABILITIES

- Prioritize **data-driven approaches in all programmatic and operational areas**, taking a “whole-of-organization” approach to the data-driven transformation.
- Curate **use cases that create proven value for beneficiaries and entities** – starting with underserved regions and groups, including women and girls.
- Deepen **core strengths in primary data collection and descriptive and diagnostic analytics** to improve stewardship of high-quality gender-disaggregated statistics for global stakeholders.
- Invest in **predictive and prescriptive analytics**, enhanced with machine learning and artificial intelligence, to help users to better understand what may happen next and how to respond.
- Invest in **responsible data management and governance** to help colleagues to access and share the data that they need in ways that prioritize quality, security, privacy and human rights.
- Enhance **data visualization capabilities** to help all users to deepen their insights and achieve greater impact.
- Explore **responsible data-sharing** with non-United Nations partners to leverage a broader range of data.

#### SHIFT FOUNDATIONS AND CULTURES

- **Leadership.** Leaders to drive the data-driven transformation of their entities from the very top, including through dedicated leadership roles.
- **Training and culture.** Invest in data literacy, training, and knowledge communities to foster data-savvy cultures grounded in United Nations values, principles, human rights and gender equality.
- **Job profiles.** Integrate data expertise into all roles, and shift positions to new roles such as data engineers, analysts, scientists and chief data officers – committed to equitable geographical representation and gender parity.
- **Joint centres of excellence.** Scale up joint centres of data excellence to boost data sharing, collaboration, and change management support.
- **Partnerships.** Forge geographically diverse university, civil society and business partnerships to enhance data capabilities and expertise.
- **Governance.** Govern data with adaptive approaches so that everyone can use the data that they need in the most appropriate way.
- **Technology.** Empower users with scaled-up deployment of data analysis and visualization tools, tailored to user needs and skills.
- **Technology.** Shift to cloud-based platforms to enhance accessibility, collaboration and sharing.
- **Metrics.** Establish indicators to measure progress in data expertise.



Learn more about United Nations system data initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/data](https://un-two-zero.network/data)



# Innovation

Learning to scale up  
new solutions



## NEW SOLUTIONS TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

For example, imagine a world in which innovative solutions transform health-care access for **2 billion people in rural and remote areas**.<sup>25</sup> With stronger innovation capacity, United Nations entities can support Member States in **transporting medications and blood transfusions with delivery drones**, facilitating virtual consultations between midwives and pregnant women on digital apps and **extending point-of-care diagnostics to isolated communities**.

## WHAT BUILDING INNOVATION CAPACITY MEANS

Fostering innovation capacity is about **learning to generate, test and scale up novel ideas, processes, products or services that create value**. It requires supportive and inclusive environments, open minds and diverse skills. Innovation cultures embrace challenges as opportunities to design ground-breaking sustainable solutions.

## WAYS IN WHICH INNOVATION EXPERTISE CAN IMPROVE THE UNITED NATIONS...

- Enhancing advanced **security training** of United Nations personnel through immersive **virtual reality**.
- Reducing the 1.2 million tons in annual United Nations system **carbon emissions**<sup>26</sup> with alternative energy and **circular economy** solutions.
- Improving digital and physical **access to health care** for United Nations personnel and people in **remote areas**.

## AND SUPPORT MEMBER STATES IN...

- Facilitating **digital participation** in United Nations-supported **peace processes** in local languages and dialects.
- Opening **access to markets and credit** for female entrepreneurs with **peer-to-peer platforms**.
- Using **hydroponics** to grow food in order to improve **food security** where fertile soil is scarce.



Learn more about United Nations  
system innovation initiatives

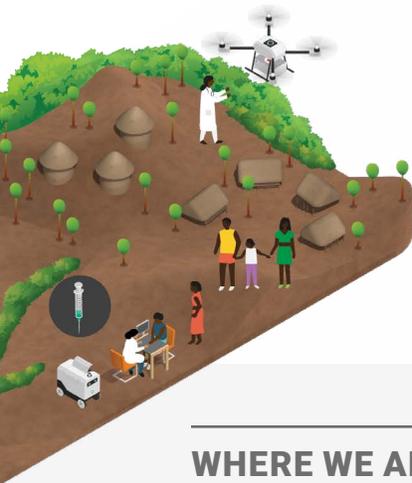
[un-two-zero.network/innovation](https://un-two-zero.network/innovation)



## WHY WE NEED TO SHIFT

### LIMITED REACH

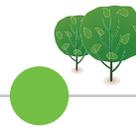
In the late twentieth century, innovation was sometimes erroneously seen as primarily business-orientated, with the role of the public sector understated. However, there is now a **profound understanding that public sector-led innovation is integral in driving societal advancement**, in particular for the most marginalized. In many countries, public investment in innovation and in research and development is on the rise – alongside **a better understanding of grass-roots, inclusive and low-cost forms of innovation**. The United Nations system network, spanning 4,000 locations worldwide, offers unique opportunities to extend the global reach of innovation.



## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS

Since 2018, the United Nations system has made substantial progress in building its innovation capacity. **Innovation teams are present in 90 per cent of United Nations entities, with 60 per cent implementing dedicated strategies**. Approximately **60 per cent of entities can support Member States** in building local innovation ecosystems, and 115 countries are already working with the United Nations system on new solutions. Globally, development assistance for innovation **has grown tenfold in the past decade** to almost \$3 billion but is still only 1 per cent of total flows in 2022.<sup>27</sup>



## OUR GOAL

### FAST AND SUSTAINABLE SCALE-UP

Our vision is an **agile United Nations innovation ecosystem capable of rapidly and sustainably scaling up novel solutions that benefit everyone, everywhere**. Stronger innovation abilities will yield **better outcomes**, including a sharper focus on users, greater access to novel solutions, more creative cultures, faster adaptation, leaner processes, stronger partnerships, better support for Member State innovation ecosystems.

Our approach **spans the full innovation value chain**, from the identification of challenges to the generation, experimentation, incubation, acceleration and scale-up of ideas – leveraging our ability to convene and connect globally. **This shift will be amplified by key enablers**, such as robust innovation leadership, diverse teams, cultural change, strategic partnerships, enhanced financing mechanisms and our global innovation network. By integrating these elements, we embed innovation in our DNA, turning ideas into real solutions, in particular for those who are historically overlooked and underserved by traditional approaches.

### State of play: United Nations system entities with...



# 0.7%

of \$350 billion in official development assistance is allocated to innovation annually<sup>28</sup>

# 55%

women in the innovation community of practice<sup>29</sup>



## HOW WE AIM TO CHANGE

### ADAPTING CULTURES AND CAPABILITIES

#### IMPROVE OUR OFFER TO MEMBER STATES

- Make **innovation approaches integral to United Nations programmes** and projects.
- Identify promising solutions on the ground and help to **scale up or adapt them to underserved regions**.
- Assist in **building national innovation ecosystems**, with a focus on women innovators.

#### NURTURE INNOVATION CAPABILITIES

- Develop a **diversified portfolio approach to innovation**, encompassing a range of use cases.
- Strengthen **innovation methods along the value chain**, from idea generation (e.g. in hackathons) to prototyping (e.g. pilot versions for early feedback) to the roll-out of basic product versions, with the goal of continuous improvement.
- Leverage **new technologies to support all steps in the innovation process**, including three-dimensional printing (e.g. to produce prototypes), augmented or virtual reality (e.g. to test new solutions and collect insights) and artificial intelligence (e.g. to help simulate performance in different environments).
- Prioritize **high-impact innovations that benefit marginalized regions and groups**, including women, girls and others left behind – in ways that responsibly manage risks and potential harms.
- Foster the **sustainable scale-up of proven solutions** via multi-stakeholder partnerships, knowledge-sharing, grass-roots investments, multi-partner funding instruments, capacity and policy support or other methods.

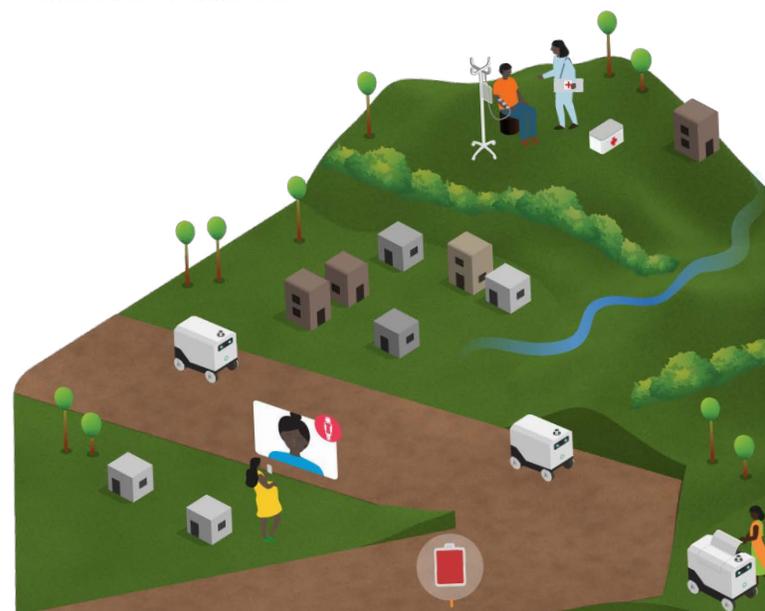


Learn more about United Nations system innovation initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/innovation](https://un-two-zero.network/innovation)

### SHIFT FOUNDATIONS AND CULTURES

- **Leadership.** Offer strong internal leadership to empower innovators.
- **Culture.** Foster open cultures that encourage experiments and accept setbacks as learning opportunities.
- **Training.** Enhance training in critical skills, such as creativity, problem-solving and collaboration.
- **Joint centres of excellence.** Establish geographically diverse and gender-balanced innovation teams to support change, prioritizing women leads.
- **Capacity.** Allocate staff time, internal resources and incentives, in particular to support women and other underrepresented innovators.
- **Networks.** Strengthen our global innovation network to facilitate learning from sister organizations.
- **Partnerships.** Build partnerships with non-United Nations innovation communities to diversify solutions.
- **Technology.** Integrate new technologies to facilitate the innovation process, from idea generation to scale-up.
- **Metrics.** Develop indicators to assess innovation readiness.





# Strategic foresight

Learning to navigate uncertainty



## FORESIGHT CAN HELP TO CHART PATHS TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE

For example, many **coastal communities** are facing the threat of rising sea levels in the years ahead. Supported by United Nations experts, Member States can model different **climate scenarios and anticipate areas prone to flooding and extreme weather events**. Equipped with foresight tools, national partners can plan **infrastructure adaptations**, such as raised housing and coastal defences – **proactively adapting to climate change while minimizing disaster risks**.

## WHAT BUILDING FORESIGHT CAPACITY MEANS

Fostering strategic foresight capacity means **cultivating structured methods that help to navigate uncertainty, imagine better futures and chart new paths forward already today**. It is about nurturing proactive mindsets and exploring possible futures, with tools such as horizon-scanning, trend analysis and scenario development, desired futures approaches to make better choices today – in the face of an uncertain tomorrow.

## WAYS IN WHICH FORESIGHT EXPERTISE CAN IMPROVE THE UNITED NATIONS...

- Planning for shifts in staff **expertise** in United Nations entities, informed by global skills **horizon scans**.
- Developing “next-generation” **cooperation frameworks**, informed by climate **scenario planning**.
- Gaining insights on **global demographics** with **cross-impact analysis** for stronger policy advice.

## AND SUPPORT MEMBER STATES IN...

- Helping vulnerable countries to **adapt to climate change with system dynamics modelling**.
- Anticipating demand for **safe water with trend analysis**, including to reach the 2.2 billion people worldwide who lack access.<sup>30</sup>
- Preparing for **natural disasters**, including droughts, floods or fires, through **predictive analytics**.
- Enable **early action** around **risks of social tensions** or conflicts with forward-looking situational analysis of systemic shifts.



Learn more about United Nations system foresight initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/foresight](https://un-two-zero.network/foresight)



## WHY WE NEED TO SHIFT

### NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY

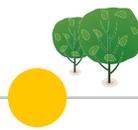
Recent crises demonstrate that the future will not necessarily mirror the past. With escalating climate extremes, rapid technological advances and uncertain societal dynamics – including inequalities, growing divisions and polarization – we **face a multitude of possible, probable and preferable futures that we need to anticipate, imagine and work towards**. If United Nations entities amplify their foresight abilities, we can help Member States to navigate rising uncertainty, seize emerging opportunities and enhance support for the Sustainable Development Goals and future generations.



## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### EMERGING EXPERTISE

Although the United Nations system is making progress, the integration of foresight approaches into our everyday work is **only beginning: 34 per cent of United Nations entities have designed a strategy for enhancing and using strategic foresight. Fewer than one third of United Nations entities believe that they have advanced foresight capabilities**. On a global scale, only a fraction of development assistance incorporate foresight methodologies to mitigate risks or seize new opportunities.



## OUR GOAL

### BECOMING MORE FUTURE-FOCUSED

Our vision is a United Nations system **adept at understanding, navigating and shaping futures**. We aim to foster sophisticated futures thinking to empower **improved planning and cultivate better decisions amid uncertainty**. Our ambition is not just to respond to change but to help Member States to envision and work towards better, greener and safer futures – aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations values and human rights.

Our approach revolves around **embedding foresight into everything we do** – by building an ecosystem of capacities across the United Nations system. Embracing a “learning-by-doing” ethos, we focus on real-life scenarios to cultivate foresight abilities. Through step-by-step learning, we make better sense of change, imagine possible futures and guide action. Recognizing the value of diversity, we harness broader perspectives for expanded input, thinking and approaches. With a **hub-and-spoke model**, a new network will connect the United Nations system to accelerate shifts in training, mindsets, partnerships and methods.

### State of play: United Nations system entities with...



~0%

of \$350 billion in official development assistance is allocated to foresight annually<sup>31</sup>

56%

women in foresight community of practice<sup>32</sup>



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## HOW WE AIM TO CHANGE

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### ADAPTING CULTURES AND CAPABILITIES

#### IMPROVE OUR OFFER TO MEMBER STATES

- Support **foresight-informed decision-making** on global priorities and agendas.
- Leverage **United Nations foresight laboratories and networks** to help Member States in using foresight for their strategies.
- Incorporate **foresight into** the **development** of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.
- Inform **global analysis of and debates on potential and desired futures** and paths forward.

### NURTURE FORESIGHT CAPABILITIES

- Curate **use cases that create value for beneficiaries**, Member States and United Nations entities.
- Master **foresight methods**, from helping stakeholders to scan the present for trends to developing future scenarios and linking them to necessary changes in policies and programmes today.
- Leverage **practical tools to support foresight**, including applications that support trend analysis, scenario development and the visualization of desired futures.
- Integrate **diverse perspectives into foresight methods** for stronger strategic planning, decision-making, policy development, programme design, resource allocation and risk management, including to understand and mitigate biases.



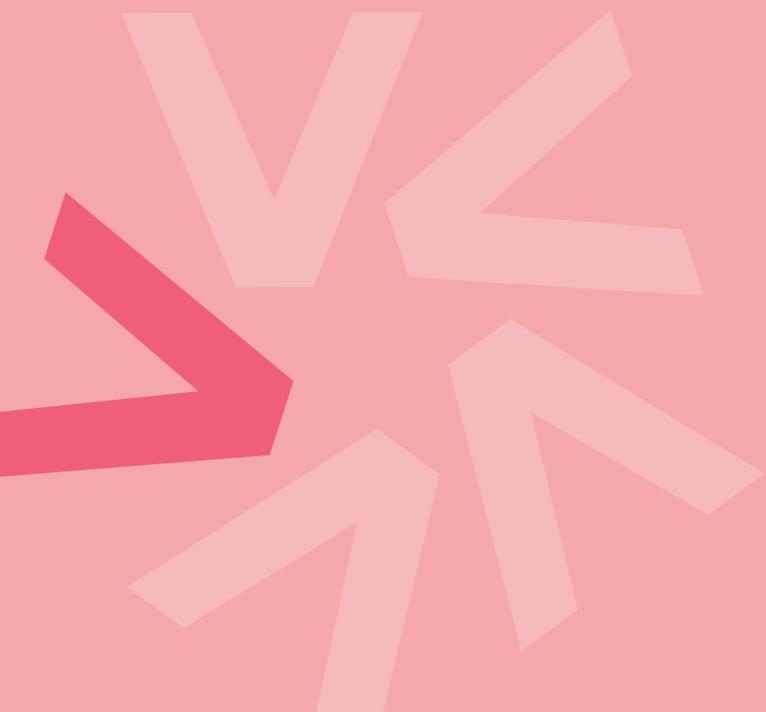
Learn more about United Nations system foresight initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/foresight](https://un-two-zero.network/foresight)

### SHIFT FOUNDATIONS AND CULTURES

- **Leadership.** Leaders to work to embed foresight into cultures, plans and strategies.
- **Training.** Foster strategic foresight literacy with learning initiatives and knowledge communities.
- **Job profiles.** Integrate foresight expertise into relevant job descriptions.
- **Processes.** Equip teams with user-friendly foresight tools, with access to help from shared expert teams.
- **Partnerships.** Build geographically diverse partnerships with foresight researchers and experts.
- **Networks.** Link United Nations foresight capacities in a system-wide network, using a hub-and-spoke model.
- **Technology.** Introduce software to enable the efficient processing and interpretation of trends and scenarios.
- **Culture.** Develop metrics to track foresight integration across entities.





# Digital

Becoming fluent in digital impact



## DIGITAL CAPACITY CAN TRANSFORM EDUCATION

For example, more than **244 million children and young people worldwide** – primarily girls – are out of school.<sup>33</sup> With stronger digital capacity, United Nations entities can support Member States in transforming education. Digital platforms – responsibly designed and tailored to context – can dramatically reduce access barriers for girls. With **interactive live classes powered by meaningful connectivity**, they can enable **affordable, inclusive, high-quality learning irrespective of circumstance**.

## WHAT BUILDING DIGITAL CAPACITY MEANS

Building modern digital capacities means **transforming an organization's technologies, skills and processes towards digitally enabled solutions** that improve connectivity, service delivery, stakeholder collaboration, engagement and decision-making – in ways that are secure, responsible and inclusive.

## WAYS IN WHICH DIGITAL EXPERTISE CAN IMPROVE THE UNITED NATIONS...

- Facilitating **intergovernmental dialogue** through better digital platforms and multilingual tools.
- Strengthening the **transparency and accountability** of United Nations entities via public dashboards.
- Employing **digital tools for simplified, automated drafting and formatting** of documentation.

## AND SUPPORT MEMBER STATES IN...

- Enabling **learning via online platforms** for the 244 million out-of-school children and young people.<sup>34</sup>
- Facilitating **financial inclusion** for the 800 million women without accounts via better **digital public infrastructure**.<sup>35</sup>
- Providing **better services** for refugees through mobile payments and digital registration.



Learn more about United Nations system digital initiatives  
[un-two-zero.network/digital](https://un-two-zero.network/digital)



## WHY WE NEED TO SHIFT

### TACKLING EXCLUSION

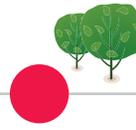
Twenty years ago, hardly any public organization offered digital services. Online platforms, including for email, were still at an early stage. Today, digital **technologies shape our lives, organizations, economies and societies**, creating opportunities that we must take and risks that we must tackle – including disproportionate risks of online abuse and exploitation of women and girls. **More than 5.3 billion people can now access online applications.**<sup>36</sup> Around 2.7 billion remain excluded, and over 250 million women and girls lack equal access.<sup>37</sup> Millions more face disproportionate risks of online abuse and exploitation. By strengthening their digital know-how and partnerships for inclusive and responsible digital services, United Nations entities can help to empower societies, close the digital divide and address risks of harm.



## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### EARLY STAGES

The United Nations system is in the **initial stages of its digital transformation**, and much potential is still untapped. As of 2022, **two thirds of United Nations entities reported having crafted digital strategies or action plans** to cultivate essential digital capabilities. **Only around 40 per cent of United Nations entities assess that they have the capacity to optimally assist Member States** in their digital journeys, and advanced expertise remains scarce. This is partly because global development assistance for digital transformations was **almost non-existent before 2019**, is still not a recognized “purpose code” in most aid sectors and makes up **less than 0.4 per cent of the \$350 billion in official flows.**<sup>38</sup> To accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, embracing digital approaches in our work is no longer a choice but an imperative – if we seek to leave no one behind.



## OUR GOAL

### DIGITAL FLUENCY

Our vision is a **digitally fluent United Nations system with the right talent, as well as human-centred digital systems, processes and tools to improve and reshape our work**: more efficient, agile, trusted, scalable, accessible, ethical, resilient and inclusive – and ready to assist Member States in building their own digital public infrastructure and ecosystems in ways that protect global values, human rights and gender equality.

The digital transformation of the United Nations system centres on a clear principle: **prioritizing action that delivers tangible value**. We adopt a hands-on “whole-of-organization” approach, addressing immediate opportunities with practical use cases. Taking agile approaches, we harness digital solutions to improve service delivery, stakeholder collaboration, user engagement and decision-making, thereby extending our reach and impact – starting with women and girls. We **support change with stronger organizational foundations**: improved training and recruitment, digital leadership and cultures, fit-for-purpose governance, new digital partnerships and user-centric technologies.

### State of play: United Nation system entities with...



# 0.4%

of \$350 billion in official development assistance is allocated to digital initiatives annually<sup>39</sup>

# 50%

women in the digital community of practice<sup>40</sup>



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## HOW WE AIM TO CHANGE

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### ADAPTING CULTURES AND CAPABILITIES

#### IMPROVE OUR OFFER TO MEMBER STATES

- Develop **scalable digitally enabled solutions** for all United Nations system programmes.
- Provide Member States with **blueprints** for a “whole-of-society” digital transformation approach.
- Support Member States in building **inclusive, sustainable and resilient digital ecosystems** that support underserved regions, close digital divides and protect human rights.
- Help to **bridge digital divides** and ensure that women and girls are not left behind on the journey.
- Support **international digital cooperation** in line with the policy brief on a Global Digital Compact.

#### NURTURE DIGITAL CAPABILITIES

- Prioritize **digital approaches in all programmatic and operational areas**, taking a “whole-of-organization” approach to the digital transformation of our work.
- Pursue a **use-case-driven approach to digital transformation** – focused on real-world scenarios – from needs discovery to prioritization, solution design, testing and scale-up.
- Design **human-centred digital solutions tailored to context and user needs**, prioritizing the needs of women, girls and persons with disabilities.
- Learn to **integrate different digital technologies and platforms** into cohesive cloud and mobile ecosystems that transform service delivery, collaboration, communication and decision-making.
- Identify and safeguard against the **risks associated with digital technologies**, including in areas such as privacy, misinformation and technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

- Leverage **automation and the Internet of things** (connected devices that exchange data) to make processes more efficient and free up staff time.

#### SHIFT FOUNDATIONS AND CULTURES

- **Leadership.** Leaders to pursue a “whole-of-organization” vision for a digital rethink of their entities, translated into clear strategies backed by direct leadership engagement.
- **Training and culture.** Cultivate digitally fluent cultures, including with support for digital literacy, skills training and knowledge communities.
- **Job profiles.** Integrate digital expertise into every job and introduce new roles such as app developers, user interface designers and chief digital officers, promoting equitable geographical representation and the participation of women in the roles.
- **Joint centres of excellence.** Establish joint digital labs to accelerate shared digital solutions, platforms and infrastructures across pillars, clusters and entities.
- **Partnerships.** Foster geographically diverse partnerships with universities, businesses and civil society.
- **Governance.** Adopt governance approaches to enable decentralized action while ensuring resilient and secure access to shared digital resources.
- **Technology.** Empower programme and operations teams with scalable digital platforms and tools (software and hardware), guided and supported by information technology teams.
- **Metrics.** Establish indicators to measure progress in digital expertise.



Learn more about United Nations system digital initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/digital](https://un-two-zero.network/digital)



# Behavioural science

Enabling better choices



## BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE CAN IMPROVE SOCIAL PROTECTION UPTAKE

For example, there are **millions of individuals** who fail to access social protections to which they are entitled. With stronger behavioural science expertise, United Nations entities can support Member States in **simplifying registration procedures, improving outreach**, facilitating automatic enrolment, improving the completion of tasks, **tailoring processes to local realities and building trust** – to achieve **shock-responsive and universal social protection**.

## WHAT BUILDING BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE CAPACITY MEANS

Nurturing behavioural science capacity is about building our **knowledge of how people act, make decisions and react to policies, processes and incentives, in order to create better choices and positive change** – in particular in the areas of inequality, exclusion and discrimination. As a multidisciplinary field, it combines methods from psychology, economics, communications, data science, sociology and other fields to craft strategies that work with – not against – the grain of human nature.



Learn more about United Nations system behavioural science initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/besci](https://un-two-zero.network/besci)

## WAYS IN WHICH BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE EXPERTISE CAN IMPROVE THE UNITED NATIONS...

- Reducing **administrative hurdles** with behavioural insight-informed **process simplification**.
- Reinforcing United Nations action on zero tolerance **for sexual harassment** with implicit **bias training**.
- Addressing **unconscious bias** in staff recruitment, management, and stakeholder engagement.

## AND SUPPORT MEMBER STATES IN...

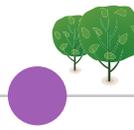
- Increasing uptake of **social security** with behavioural science-informed **outreach campaigns**.
- Reducing **stigma** for the 39 million people living with HIV/AIDS through better **community engagement**.<sup>41</sup>
- Changing **social norms** that lead to **gender-based violence** affecting up to 730 million women.<sup>42</sup>



## WHY WE NEED TO SHIFT

### UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Just a decade ago, behavioural science was in its infancy. Today, it is a **well-established discipline that many Governments and institutions are integrating into the policy and programme cycle.** In behavioural science, it is recognized that people do not always behave in predictable ways and that human behaviour is often shaped by a variety of factors, including biases and mental shortcuts. If United Nations entities strengthen their behavioural science capabilities, we can increase the impact of our strategies and tailor our initiatives better to contexts or gendered norms – and create potential for faster progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.



## OUR GOAL

### SEAMLESS INTEGRATION

Our vision is a United Nations system **that integrates behavioural science seamlessly into the fabric of our work:** evidence-based, science-based, responsible, inclusive, gender responsive, context-adapted and effective. We see a future in which the United Nations system helps Member States in harnessing the power of behavioural science to craft interventions that tangibly improve outcomes and fast-track sustainable development progress for all.

To fulfil our vision, we are pursuing a focused approach: **designing initiatives that consider a broader set of factors in human behaviour** to deliver more sustainable benefits – prioritizing gender equality interventions. We embrace pragmatism, finding compelling use cases that accelerate our learning. In an agile manner, we will harness behavioural science to improve programmes, administration, stakeholder engagement and decision-making to leave no one behind. We are **enabling this transformation with better organizational support:** refined training and hiring, as well as more inter-agency collaboration, leadership capacity and partnerships.

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

### EARLY HEADWAY

In many areas, our mandates relate to human behaviour. While we have made early headway, the United Nations system is **only beginning to fully embrace behavioural science.** Currently, **only one fifth of United Nations entities have pursued a strategic approach** to building behavioural science expertise. Fewer than **10 per cent rate their abilities as advanced.** On a global scale, behavioural science has yet to become a core element of international development initiatives. The deeper integration of behavioural science into our work can be an important catalyst to better serve people and planet.

### State of play: United Nations system entities with...

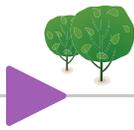


~0%

of \$350 billion in official development assistance **is allocated to behavioural science** annually<sup>43</sup>

58%

women in the behavioural science community of practice<sup>44</sup>



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## HOW WE AIM TO CHANGE

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### ADAPTING CULTURES AND CAPABILITIES

#### IMPROVE OUR OFFER TO MEMBER STATES

- Offer **programmes** informed by behavioural science and insights.
- Assist Member States in **integrating behavioural science** into public policy and administration.
- Broaden **outreach of United Nations behavioural science groups and networks** to diverse global partners.

#### NURTURE BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE CAPABILITIES

- Curate **use cases that create proven value for those we serve**, starting with women and girls.
- Cultivate a **broad set of behavioural science methods**, such as randomized controlled trials, field experiments, journey mapping and long-term studies to better understand real-life behavioural patterns, biases and factors.
- Employ **behavioural science methods responsibly**, such as gentle nudges, optimized default choices or more effective approaches to keeping commitments.
- Integrate **consideration of unconscious biases** into all areas of work, including evidence-based demonstrations on how they affect effectiveness, as well as context-informed measures to address them at every stage.
- Infuse **planning, decision-making and policy development with behavioural science** to optimize programme impact, improve resource allocation and reduce bias and administrative burdens.



Learn more about United Nations system behavioural science initiatives

[un-two-zero.network/besci](https://un-two-zero.network/besci)

#### SHIFT FOUNDATIONS AND CULTURES

- **Leadership.** Leaders will champion behavioural science in planning, policy design, budgeting, administration and programming.
- **Training.** Cultivate greater behavioural science understanding with basic training and capacity development.
- **Know-how.** Empower teams with access to behavioural science publications and tools, guided by experts and informed by the principles of human rights and gender equality.
- **Job profiles.** Design new job profiles and, where appropriate, recruit behavioural scientists or advisers.
- **Joint centres of excellence.** Form multidisciplinary teams that combine behavioural science, gender equality and subject expertise.
- **Networks.** Scale up global networks for system-wide sharing of best practices and use cases.
- **Partnerships.** Foster geographically diverse partnerships with academic, research and civil society organizations – including to support the United Nations system in achieving gender equality.
- **Governance.** Incorporate an ethical understanding into the application of behavioural science.
- **Technology.** Leverage the potential of technology to foster behavioural changes, for example for better information campaigns or faster feedback.
- **Metrics.** Establish indicators to track progress in shifting expertise.





# UN 2.0 Accelerator

## Shared foundations to support unique transformations

To better assist Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, we intend to pursue a robust change management effort. This will entail joint United Nations system action, combined with entity-level changes, to improve shared and individual capabilities.

### JOINT ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME

The UN 2.0 transformation needs to **engage all entities, leaders and colleagues**. Starting in 2024, a UN 2.0 Accelerator programme will drive coordinated efforts and initiatives to bring the “quintet of change” to life. This will be supported by a **time-bound cross-functional task team** coordinated by the Secretary-General’s Office – ready to accompany United Nations entities, leaders and colleagues as they **chart their own paths** over the next three years (see the UN 2.0 road map below). The High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, in cooperation with the High-level Committee on Programmes, will monitor progress and provide overall guidance for the UN 2.0 process. The UN 2.0 Accelerator will focus on the following core objectives:

- **Supporting United Nations system entities in designing strategies and plans**, on the basis of shared strategies, playbooks and blueprints. A pool of coaches from across the United Nations system will support leaders in initiating change, informed by frameworks such as the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action for Everyone, Everywhere, the Secretary-General’s Guidance Note on Behavioural Science, the forthcoming Strategic Foresight Guide and the United Nations innovation toolkit, as well as strategies for cultural change, including in learning, gender equality, geographical diversity, young people, disability, well-being, integrity, sustainability and other topics.
- **Empowering colleagues with training** to help everyone to unlock the potential of UN 2.0 skills. In a concerted effort, entities will be supported in adapting their learning strategies and plans

to cover new areas of expertise. Taking advantage of the digital transformation in learning worldwide, we will also scale up access to professional online learning platforms, tailored learning pathways for UN 2.0, collaboration with universities and other learning institutions on learning programmes and options for coaching support, as well as learning incentives.

- **Assisting in talent management**, we plan to support United Nations system entities in developing new job descriptions (e.g. for specialists in machine learning or behavioural science), advising on talent acquisition (including options for technical assessments in selection), encouraging staff exchanges and enhancing performance management by incorporating UN 2.0 goals into workplans and senior management compacts.
- **Scaling up United Nations system communities of practice**, where members exchange know-how, best practices and solutions in thematic events, online platforms and use case portfolios. A team of dedicated community managers is already connecting more than 15,000 colleagues across the United Nations Innovation Network, the data strategy community, the digital transformation community, the Behavioural Science Group and the strategic foresight community, together with countless colleagues in groups such as Young UN: Agents for Change, the NewWork network, the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge, and others.
- **Supporting high-impact initiatives** – high visibility programmes that demonstrate the benefits of UN 2.0 at the country level and generate tangible evidence for the impact of the cutting-edge expertise and forward-thinking culture that we envisage, creating momentum for wider change and Sustainable Development Goal impact.
- **Aligning for greater inclusion**, building on the geographical diversity strategy of the United Nations, outcomes of the United Nations system’s response to the review of the United Nations system’s capacity to deliver on gender

equality and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, ensuring that – at all levels – expertise, structures, accountability, leadership and incentives are aligned to deliver for all.

- **Advancing shared centres of excellence** where colleagues from different entities work together daily on joint projects, collaborate with external stakeholders, offer shared services or harmonize business practices. Ongoing initiatives such as the Futures Lab network, the Joint Facility for Digital Capacity Development, the Global Pulse innovation laboratory, the Humanitarian Data Exchange, the United Nations International Computing Centre, the OneHR Centre and many others exemplify the potential of such inter-agency collaboration.
- **Prioritizing shared financing instruments**, including pooled, thematic and joint funding mechanisms that amplify collective impact, minimize duplication, distribute innovation risks, integrate clear gender equality markers and foster shared governance. The digital transformation window of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund and the new Complex Risk Analytics Fund for smarter crisis action are pioneering ways of translating the UN 2.0 vision into impact.
- **Sustaining momentum in and tracking the progress** of the UN 2.0 transformation through frequent United Nations system-wide events (including an annual UN 2.0 Fair and United Nations Behavioural Science Week), challenges and excellence awards. To support senior leaders, we plan to introduce a set of metrics that can be tailored to entity goals to assess

progress. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, through its high-level committees, will periodically discuss the resulting scorecards prepared by the UN 2.0 Accelerator task team.

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## UNIQUE ENTITY JOURNEYS

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- **United Nations system-wide efforts will help to foster a shared foundation for individual United Nations entities to navigate their transformative journeys.** Each United Nations entity will chart its own path towards UN 2.0 and progress at its own speed – in line with mandates, priorities and needs. Some entities may prioritize digitalization, and some may scale up innovation, while others may take more time to fully integrate behavioural science. Designated focal points and champions will facilitate communication and exchange within and across entities. Collectively, we intend to shape an environment that encourages change with purpose while respecting each entity's mandate and context.
- **Ultimately, stronger collective and individual capacity will result in better programmatic and operational support to Member States** in line with the goals of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, and stronger Member State capabilities that will accelerate Sustainable Development Goal progress.



**Connect with UN 2.0 communities and updates**  
[un-two-zero.network/join-us](https://un-two-zero.network/join-us)

## HOW MEMBER STATES CAN ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT UN 2.0

- **Talking** to United Nations leaders about opportunities in data, digital, innovation, behavioural science and foresight.
- **Supporting** training, fellowships, talent pipelines and staff development initiatives for UN 2.0.
- **Considering** proposals for rejuvenation and shifts in the United Nations system workforce towards UN 2.0 expertise.
- **Encouraging** the development of system-wide strategies to guide progress on UN 2.0 goals.
- **Advocating** the integration of UN 2.0 approaches into United Nations system programmes and processes.
- **Connecting** the United Nations system sustainably to new research, private and civil society partners.
- **Supporting** initiatives and prioritizing pooled, thematic and joint funding mechanisms.
- **Supporting** shared centres of excellence to catalyse UN 2.0 progress across the United Nations system.
- **Revising** global aid classifications to enable digital and data assistance across all sectors.
- **Dedicating** more development assistance to innovation, data, digital, foresight and behavioural science initiatives.

# UN 2.0 ROAD MAP: WHO, WHAT AND WHEN

2024 (first half) → 2024 (second half) → 2025 → 2026 →

## UN 2.0 Accelerator task team

- Support entities defining and implementing their strategies and action plans
- Scale up UN 2.0 communities of practice, platforms and use case portfolios
- Organize events and communicate progress to sustain the momentum
- Support metrics and scorecard development to track UN 2.0 progress

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support curation of learning paths and training offers</li> <li>• Begin identifying high-impact initiatives</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch talent management playbooks</li> <li>• Organize UN 2.0 learning days and weeks</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch UN 2.0 excellence awards</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize a UN 2.0 Fair</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|--|

## United Nations system entities

- Identify and engage UN 2.0 champions, in particular among leaders and managers
- Refocus programmatic offers to Member States to provide more UN 2.0 support
- Prioritize shared funding instruments, including pooled, thematic and joint mechanisms
- Foster harmonization and adoption of best practices, systems and initiatives
- Jointly organize thematic events

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define transformation plans and targets – in line with UN 2.0 recommendations</li> <li>• Designate a focal point as the UN 2.0's interface</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report progress to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)</li> <li>• Encourage colleagues to access training resources</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report progress to CEB</li> <li>• Refocus talent management processes</li> <li>• Advance joint centres of excellence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report progress to CEB periodically</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|---|

## Leaders and managers

- Become champions and lead teams through the transformation, including with coach support
- Engage with the UN 2.0 Accelerator taskforce to mobilize know-how and support
- Rethink workforce planning and learning strategies
- Reshape business practices and ways of working

## Colleagues

- Engage in the communities of practice and become a UN 2.0 champion
- Take a proactive stance towards training and self-development for new skills
- Participate in events, challenges and UN 2.0 excellence award initiatives
- Contribute use case, ideas and best practices to shared knowledge portfolios

# UN 2.0 and the Sustainable Development Goals



Some 670 million people live in extreme poverty.<sup>45</sup> Demographic and non-traditional data, combined with machine learning, can help to identify poverty risks and inform policy. Targeted nudges can promote financial inclusion in communities at risk, with particular benefits in lifting women out of poverty and into labour markets.



Approximately 2.2 billion people lack access to safe water.<sup>49</sup> Internet of things-based sensors can **enable quality and leakage monitoring** in water systems. Innovations such as solar-powered water pumps or desalination can help to **improve access** in fragile settings.



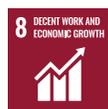
Around 900 million people are severely food-insecure.<sup>46</sup> Satellite data on soil and weather conditions can help with **picking better crops** and improving harvests. Gender-sensitive data ensure the consideration of the needs of women, the largest category of subsistence farmers. Digital tools improve market access.



Some 675 million people are not connected to the grid.<sup>50</sup> Artificial intelligence-powered data models can forecast energy needs. Behavioural science can help to **foster norms** around energy conservation. Smart grids, with sensors, can enable predictive maintenance to **reduce outages**.



Half of the world's population has no access to basic health care.<sup>47</sup> In remote communities, mobile apps can **connect doctors to patients**, and drones can **support the delivery** of blood transfusions and vaccines. Globally, artificial intelligence and genomic data can **boost the discovery of new drugs**.



Around 60 per cent of the global workforce is hidden in informal sectors, including care work provided by women.<sup>51</sup> Better data can help to **value their contributions** more accurately. Digital platforms can **unlock access** to formal markets and jobs and match suppliers with clients.



Some 244 million children and young people are out of school.<sup>48</sup> Digital platforms can offer accessible, inclusive and **affordable learning**. Insights into their job aspirations help to **tailor content**. Foresight of the future of work can help to **reshape curricula**.



Some 23 per cent of global emissions come from industry.<sup>52</sup> New technologies, such as carbon capture and storage and electrification, as well as measures to optimize designs, can reduce the carbon footprint of steel and cement producers.



Gender equality remains distant. UN 2.0 approaches can help to address the scarcity of **gender-disaggregated data**; inclusion gaps in **science, technology, engineering and mathematics education**; divides and risks in **digital spaces**; lack of diversity in foresight and analysis; and **social norms** or **behaviours** according to which women are perceived as unequal.



Sending remittances still costs more than **twice the Sustainable Development Goal target** of 3 per cent per \$200.<sup>53</sup> Better data can help users to **compare prices**. Better digital public infrastructure can lower costs. Behavioural science can help to optimize apps and **prevent fraud**.



**Approximately 1.1 billion people live in urban slums.**<sup>54</sup> Three-dimensional printing can **enable rapid and cost-effective construction** using sustainable materials. Foresight tools **help to better plan city layouts** to account for possible changes in climate – ensuring resilient housing infrastructure.



**Around 100 million hectares of forest have been lost in the past 20 years.**<sup>58</sup> Satellite imagery and analytics can **track changes** in forest cover, wildlife populations and fragmentation – which, coupled with scenario analysis, can help to **inform conservation** action plans.



**At least 1 billion tons of food are wasted every year.**<sup>55</sup> Internet-of-things sensors can **provide real-time data** on demand, reducing overproduction. Artificial intelligence predictions **guide harvest planning**. Gamification incentivizes waste reduction. Innovative packaging **increases shelf life**.



**One in four children are unregistered at birth.**<sup>59</sup> Mobile registration systems can increase access. Predictive modelling can be used to anticipate unregistered populations. Behavioural nudges **encourage registration**. Biometrics **assure identity**, reducing exploitation risks.



**At least 3.3 billion people live in contexts highly vulnerable to climate change.**<sup>56</sup> Foresight techniques can help with **supporting communities** threatened by rising sea levels, **anticipating areas** prone to flooding and **adjusting land management** and infrastructure accordingly.



**Only 45 per cent of Sustainable Development Goal data series at the global level are complete.**<sup>60</sup> Clear dashboards with gender-disaggregated data can **clarify Goal data gaps** – informing priorities and resource mobilization. Digital platforms **enable best-practice sharing** and foster collaboration. Behavioural science helps with **designing effective campaigns**.



**The ocean is 30 per cent more acidic today than in pre-industrial times.**<sup>57</sup> Remote sensing can **monitor marine ecosystems** and changes in temperature, acidity and biodiversity in real time. Innovative solutions, such as the large-scale cultivation of seaweeds, can help to **mitigate acidification**.



**Learn more about over 500 initiatives that show how UN 2.0 expertise supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

[un-two-zero.network/all-projects](http://un-two-zero.network/all-projects)

# Endnotes

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# How UN 2.0 interlinks for stronger impact

## A SIMPLE EXAMPLE: THE CITY

Imagine a city infused with UN 2.0 expertise, for example, digital systems help manage infrastructure, data inform decisions, behavioural insights enhance livability, innovation reshapes mobility and foresight guides climate adaptation. Individually powerful, **each area of expertise helps multiply opportunities** for a more thriving, sustainable and people-centric urban ecosystem.

### DIGITAL

**Connected digital infrastructure** provides seamless support in our thriving city. For example, traffic lights respond to congestion or intelligent waste-sorting systems optimize recycling.

Every digital system relies on the **high-quality data** that power it.

### DATA

Data is the **fuel** for digital systems and **decision-making** in our city. It uncovers underserved communities, adjusts public transport routes, or optimizes the placement of new clinics.

**Behavioural** approaches and **foresight** increase the robustness of our data and inform actions from data.

### BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

**Human-centric planning** makes our city more liveable. For example, designing public spaces that foster social connections or neighborhoods that encourage eco-friendly habits.

Well-designed initiatives need a **culture of innovation** for adoption and implementation at scale.



### INNOVATION

Challenging norms and **testing** change is our city's **renewal** engine. Imagine the transformation of aging structures into vibrant community hubs, or the replacement of congested streets with shared mobility systems and public transport.

Every innovation is only as impactful as the **insights** motivating it and the availability of **digital** tools for solutions.

### FORESIGHT

**Long-term planning and futures** thinking make our city sustainable for generations to come. We can model climate impacts and prepare today for the potential floods or temperature changes of tomorrow.

Foresight needs quality **data** and broad perspectives, and a vivid **innovation** ecosystem to utilize its outputs.

All illustrations in this Policy Brief are by Jing Zhang, [www.mazakii.com](http://www.mazakii.com)

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