



Future Focus Initiative

Informal Briefing to the Executive Board
August 21, 2026

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Context

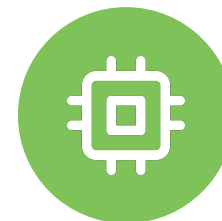
A fast-changing global landscape



Geopolitical
instability



Economic
pressures

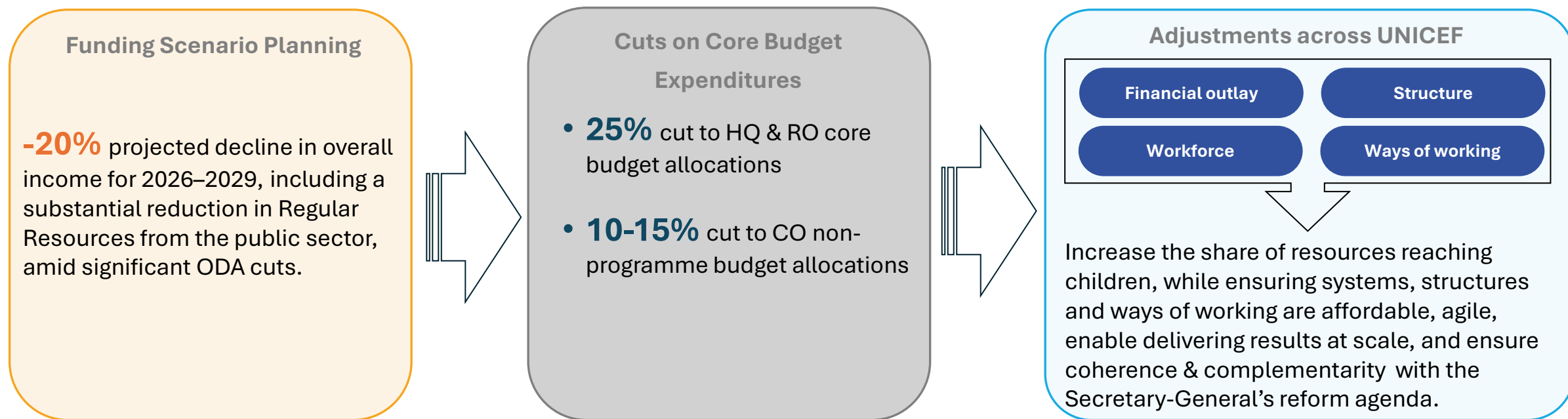


Rapid expansion of
new technologies



Sharp declines
in funding

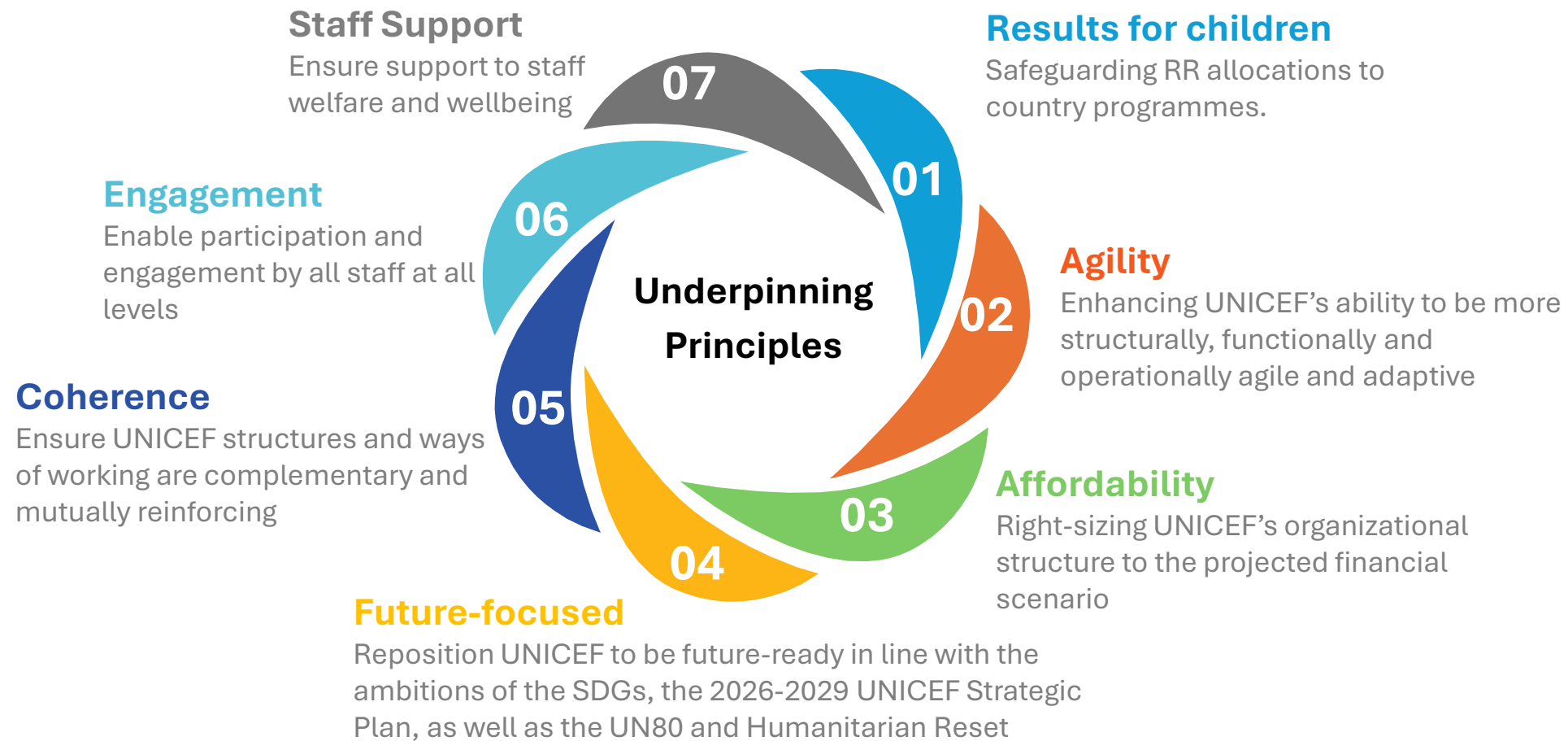
In response, UNICEF launched in March 2025 the Future Focus Initiative to identify the strategic, structural and operational adjustments needed to deliver on the 2026-2029 UNICEF SP (approved by the Executive Board in Sept. 2025).



Objective and Underpinning Principles of the FFI

Objective: to strategically reposition UNICEF to enable it to deliver on the ambitious targets of the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan in a constrained financial environment.

To this effect, the FFI was developed anchored in seven underpinning principles:



Establishing 4 global Centers of Excellence (CoEs)

- Four CoEs in Amman, Bangkok, Nairobi, and Panama providing high level technical assistance to Regional & Country Offices, and partners.
- They include a diverse network of expertise delivering evidence-based and context-specific solutions.

Relocating to lower-cost places closer to the field

- Around 70% of HQ staff will relocate from New York and Geneva.
- More cost-efficient locations closer to the field.

Digital Impact

- Digital capabilities will be unified under one framework.
- This integration will bring together technology, innovation, and AI to increase efficiency, resulting in a single, agile, and scalable digital network.

CSCs, Shared Services & Remote Support

- Common Service Centres (CSCs) will continue to be used/established where UNICEF has or will have co-locating offices or divisions, with other agencies.
- Streamlined support functions.
- Support to offices through a catalogue of services

Consolidating HQ & Regional Offices

- ECARO and MENARO merge into one regional office in Amman.
- ROSA and EAPRO merged into one regional office in Bangkok.
- DAPM and GoRAF merged to form the Office of Strategy and Evidence (OSE) in Florence.

CO Typologies & MCOs

- Country Office capacities will be reviewed according to updated typologies and shared services will be expanded to increase efficiency.
- Multi-Country Offices to be established where appropriate.
- Shared services will be expanded to increase reach and efficiency.

Progress Across The Six Workstreams

Establishing 4 global Centers of Excellence (CoEs)

- All 4 CoEs went live early January 2026.
- All CoEs are fully functional, with more than **4400** Technical Assistance requests from **135** country & regional offices to date.

Relocating to lower-cost places closer to the field

- Assessments and support to confirm receiving offices' readiness and operational capacity are complete.
- Tracking and monitoring systems are in place, covering about 950 planned relocations in total.
- The phased relocation of staff continues as planned: 85% by end September 2026, and over 90% by end March 2027.

Digital Impact

- Technical assistance platform (REACH) launched in June 2026.
- It is now in use across the Centres of Excellence, Regional and Country Offices.
- Additional components which will strengthen the functionality of this platform will continue to be developed.

CSCs, Shared Services & Remote Support

- Finance, Contracting and HR services are now live in the Nairobi, Amman, Panama and Bangkok CSCs. Rome office is using WFP's CSC.
- UNICEF also supplies payroll, payments, HR admin & learning services to UN-Women and ITU through GSSC.
- UNICEF co-leads four HLCM efficiency streams and participates in Common Back Offices in several countries.

Consolidating HQ & Regional Offices

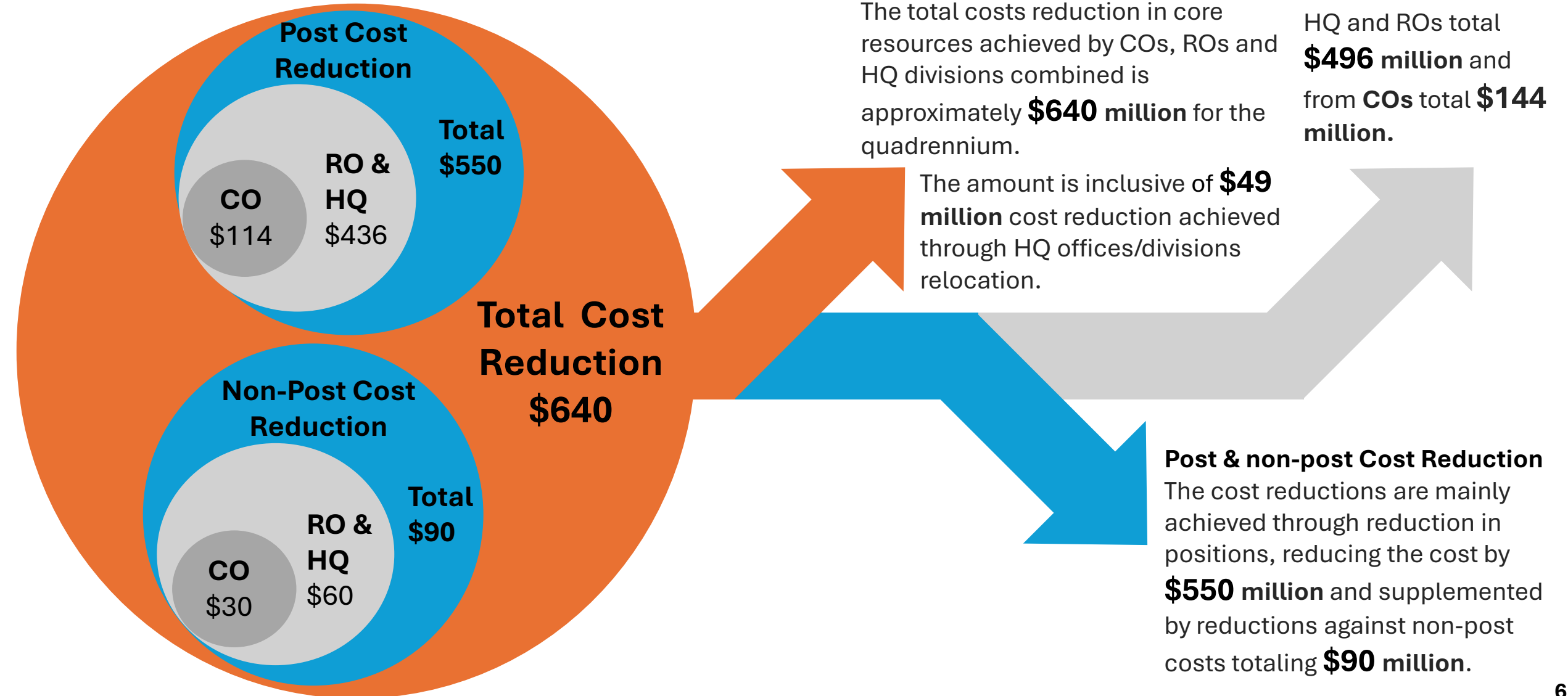
- DAPM and GoRAF divisions have consolidated into the Office of Strategy & Evidence (OSE)–Innocenti in Florence since January 2026.
- The Asia Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok was activated in July 2026.
- The consolidation of regional offices ECA and MENA, in Amman, will be completed by 31 December 2026.

CO Typologies & MCOs

- Five new Multi-Country Offices are being formed by merging 16 offices: the Caribbean MCO (Eastern Caribbean Area, Guyana-Suriname, Belize, Jamaica), the Sri Lanka–Maldives MCO, the BNLE MCO (Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini), the Madagascar–Comoros MCO, and the Europe MCO (Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece).

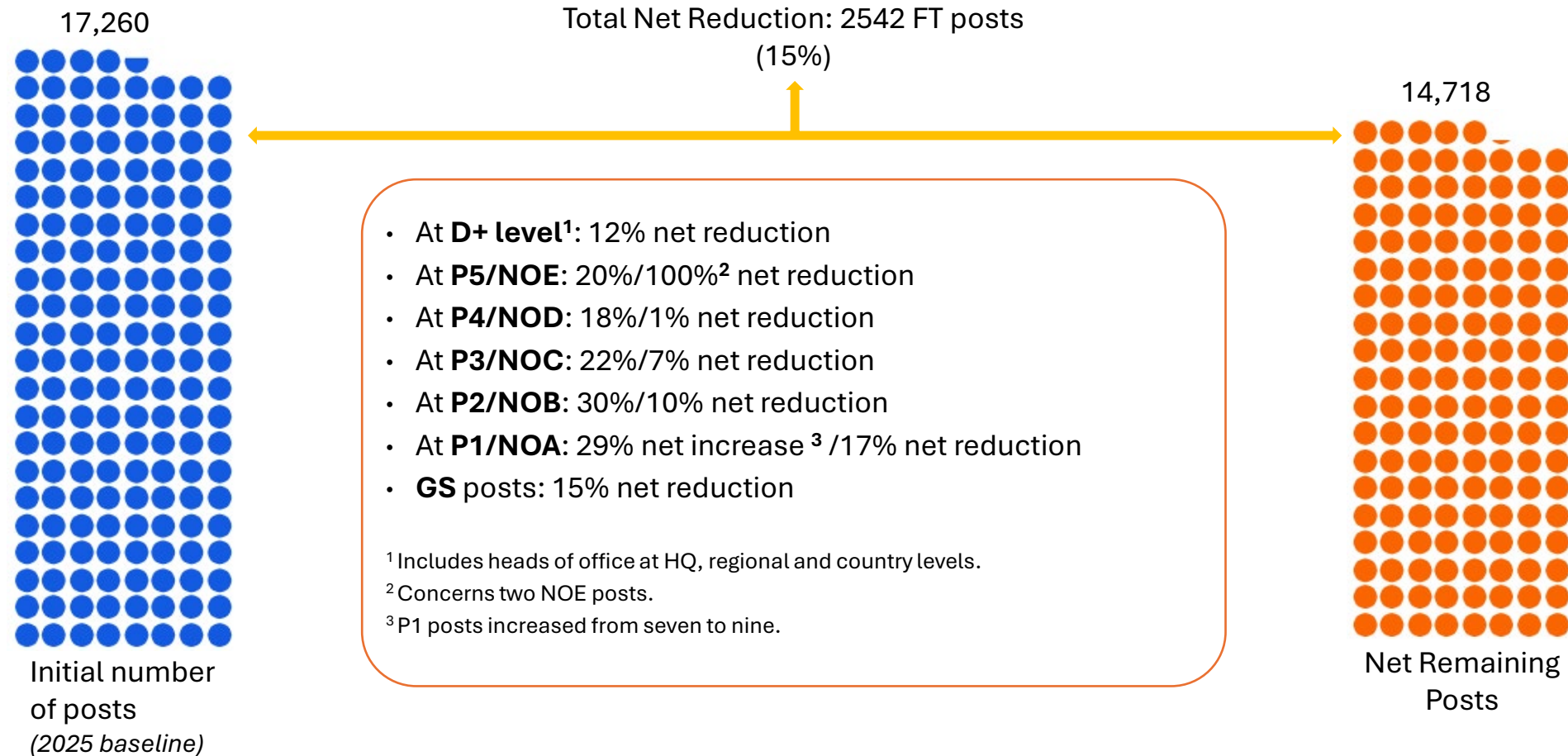
The Impact of Change – Core Resources Cost Reductions over the 2026-2029 Quadrennium

(in US\$ Million)



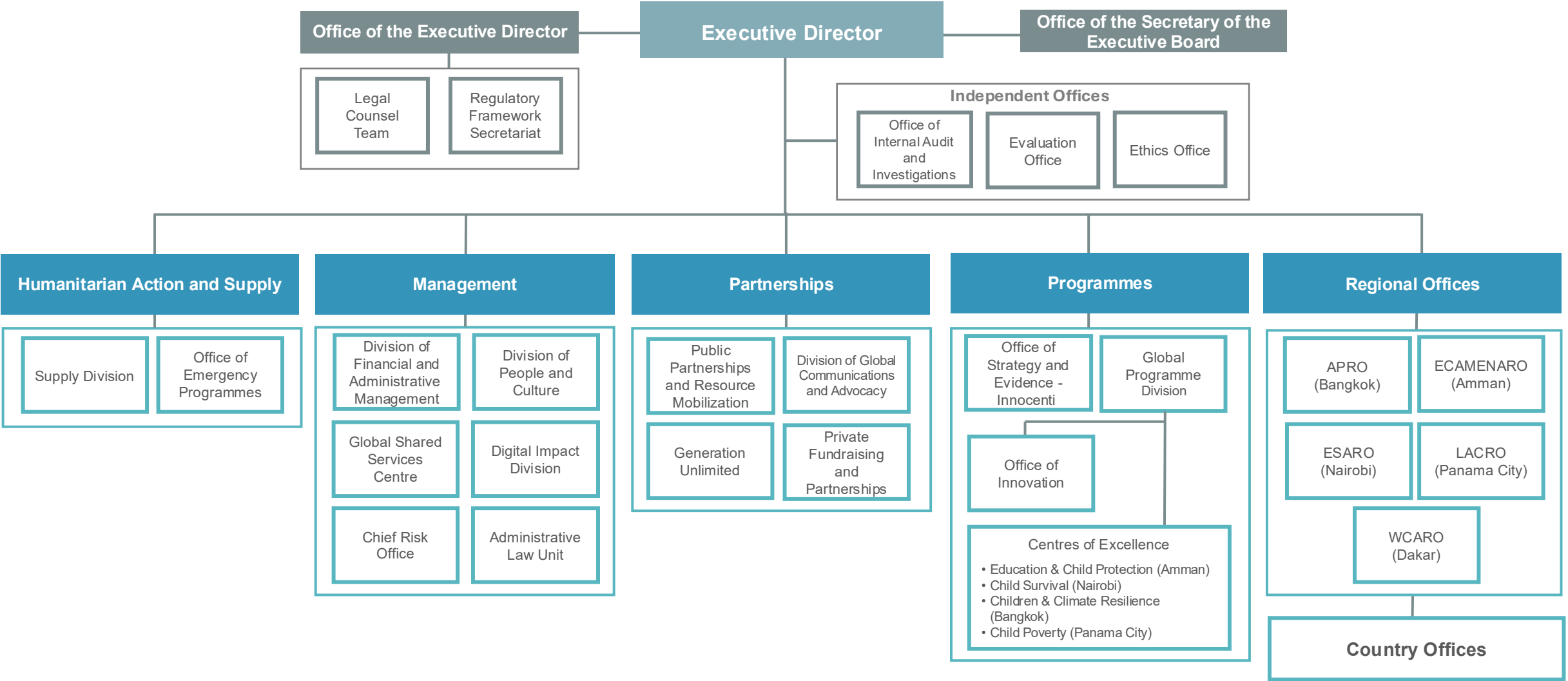
The Impact of Change – Reductions in staffing structure

Summary of total FT post changes, impact across IP, NO and GS posts



UNICEF is developing a strategy to promote the hiring of young professionals - including a Young Talent Programme to attract and develop early-career staff.

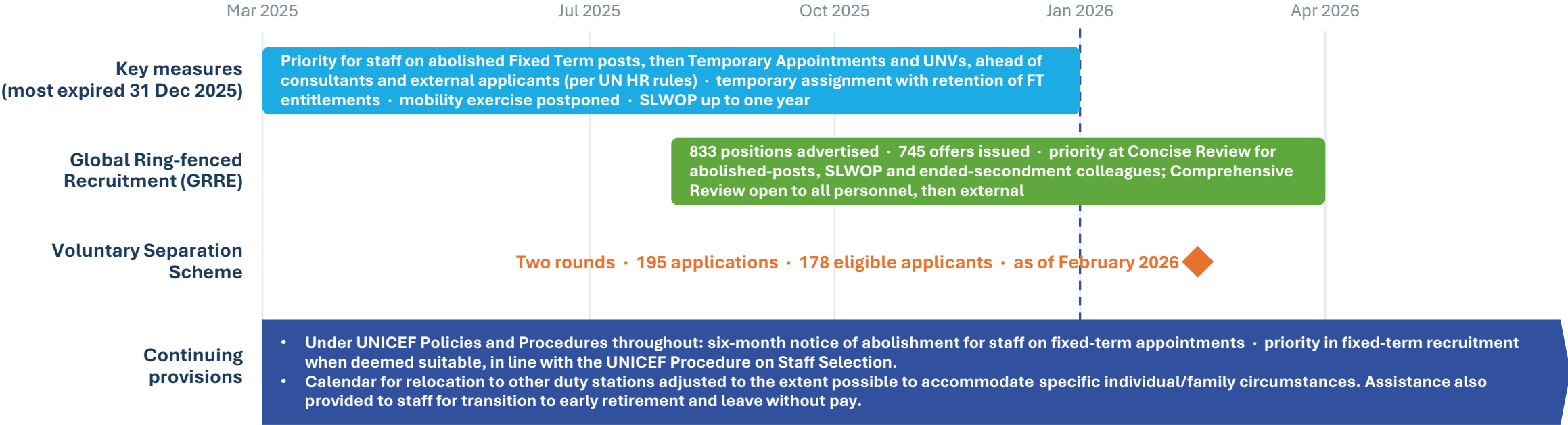
High-level UNICEF Organizational Structure



Staff Support Measures

An integrated package from March 2025

Time-bound measures:



Support provided so far:

Career transition & learning 7,000+ staff engaged in clinics and workshops 2,500+ hours of multilingual coaching 500+ participants in peer coaching and global mentoring, alongside self-directed reskilling	Staff Support Unit & P&C 2,800+ inquiries managed with Staff Associations and wellbeing partners P&C Business Partners implemented FFI decisions and provided Senior Leadership Support A dedicated SharePoint hub served all staff, with restricted pages for applicants and panels	Wellbeing, managers & culture 24% of staff reached by the “Managing Change with Purpose” initiative. 9,000+ staff given tailored culture support; Culture Pathway for a Future-Focused UNICEF being developed. Wellbeing & psychosocial support were also strengthened through Conversations of Care, Listening Hours, and Mental Health First Aid training.
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Coherence and Complementarity with UN80 & UNDS Reform



The Future Focus Initiative is UNICEF's internal transformation agenda. It is aligned with, but distinct from, the UN80 Initiative and the repositioning of the United Nations Development System. UNICEF's engagement in those agendas is reported separately to the Executive Board.

For more information, please refer to:

- the information note on the Repositioning of the United Nations Development System (Annual Session June 2026)
- the information note on the UN80 Initiative (Second Regular Session September 2026).

After-Action Review

FFI After Action Review: To support organizational learning from the design & implementation of the FFI.

Review period: March 2025 through June 2026.

Implementation: Conducted by independent external experts, managed by the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC).

Completion date: October 2026.

What the review examines:

01

Implementation coherence across the six workstreams

Sequencing, interdependencies and recalibrations across the six FFI workstreams.

02

Alignment of timelines, pace and scope

Whether timelines, pace and scope aligned with human capacity and delivery realities.

03

How FFI unfolds and is experienced

How the design, communication and early implementation unfolded and were experienced across different teams and offices.

04

Key lessons, good practices, friction points and trade-offs

Related to governance, sequencing, communication and implementation.



The FFI AAR will also be informed by the:

The human resources review conducted by the Division of People & Culture

Results of the Pulse Check of March-April 2026

Thank You