



Chief Executives Board for Coordination

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Conclusions of the High-level Committee on Management at its fortieth session

(Virtual meetings, 29 September and 13 October 2020)

I. Introduction

1. The High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its fortieth session in a virtual format on 29 September and 13 October 2020. The two meetings were chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services and Chair of the Committee, Grete Faremo, and by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Kelly T. Clements.

2. At both meetings, the Chair welcomed new Committee members and guests, including representatives from the International Civil Service Commission, the staff unions and the Young United Nations network.

3. On 13 October, the Chair opened the session with a virtual round of applause to congratulate the World Food Programme on winning the Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded to it “for its efforts to combat hunger, for its contribution to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas and for acting as a driving force in efforts to prevent the use of hunger as a weapon of war and conflict”.

4. The consolidated agenda, as adopted by the Committee for the two meetings, included the following themes:

- (a) Future of the United Nations system workforce;
- (b) Aligning and coordinating the United Nations system’s return to office;
- (c) Addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system;
- (d) Final report of the Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group;
- (e) High-level Committee on Management Cross-functional Task Force on Risk Management (for consideration through correspondence after the session, not for discussion).

5. The lists of participants at the two meetings are provided in annexes I and II to the present document.



II. Future of the United Nations system workforce

6. Established by the Committee in 2019, the CEB Task Force on the Future of the United Nations System Workforce made progress on its mandate to develop proposals for new, sustainable contractual modalities, to consider new ways of working and recommend elements to foster an enabling culture and positive employee experience, and to examine pilot initiatives using technology.

7. Following the decision taken by the Committee at its executive session on 15 June 2020, the Task Force reoriented its work to focus on the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the ways of working in the United Nations system and on the associated repercussions for the future. The Task Force concentrated its efforts on areas with the greatest potential effects in the immediate future, namely, the elements of an expanded approach to remote working, supported by modern and sustainable contractual arrangements and enabling technologies.

8. The Task Force submitted the results of its work to the Committee in an interim report in which it aimed to reflect the aspirations of United Nations system organizations to become more agile, effective and inclusive in the fulfilment of their mandates, with a particular focus on the management, equipment and well-being of their most valued asset: their personnel.

9. The Chair of the Committee welcomed representatives from the staff federations, the International Civil Service Commission and the Young United Nations network to the session. She reiterated that the COVID-19 pandemic had brought disruptions to all parts of the United Nations system and that, while the United Nations had adapted well in its first response, it needed to make sure that it could live up to those and future challenges. She thanked the Task Force for contributing ambitious ideas and for proposing an initial package of work focused on the three areas of remote working, leadership and new contract modalities, all enabled by technology. The Chair noted that a comprehensive way forward required the consideration of many facets and consultations with various stakeholders and should be based on a people-centred approach.

10. The Chair and the Deputy Chair of the Task Force, Catherine Pollard and Greg Vines, underlined that the interim report before the Committee constituted only a first phase of the work of the Task Force. In the next phase, it would take a broader look at social aspects, including areas that foster an enabling culture and a positive employee experience, and it might also include other topics, such as a modernized definition of family care, part-time employment, performance management and learning, and reflecting the advocacy of current social justice movements towards more inclusion and diversity.

11. It was noted that the Task Force would follow an inclusive and human-centred approach in all of its undertakings, and that its aim remained to propose common principles and guidelines for United Nations entities, while deliberately refraining from applying a single approach to all entities, in recognition of the heterogeneity of the United Nations common system.

12. In laying out the Task Force's timeline for its next deliverables, the Chair and Deputy Chair noted that they expected the delivery of common elements of a framework for flexible working by the end of 2020, while tangible proposals on people-centred and cultural aspects would be provided to the Committee for its session in March 2021, as would an update on progress in exploring new contractual modalities, which might represent a longer-term endeavour.

13. In the ensuing discussion, participants overwhelmingly welcomed the interim report of the Task Force and the overall direction of its work. Many agreed that the

United Nations needed to harness the unique lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and to keep an open mind with regard to other, new ways of working in order to remain an employer of choice. The Task Force's phased approach of setting priorities for the immediate future while assessing other parts in more detail and over a longer period was commended. A balanced approach to remote working was supported.

14. Several participants noted that the work on the future of the United Nations system workforce needed to happen in a transparent manner based on partnership and communication, including with the workforce. It was observed that examining solutions for a future United Nations work environment with an enabling culture required the Task Force to take issues of diversity and inclusion into account in all its work.

15. It was highlighted that new contract modalities should account for flexibility, financial sustainability, social protection and questions relating to equality. The longer-term horizon and intention of the Task Force to elaborate the details of a contractual modality were welcomed by most participants. It was observed that many of the elements in the interim paper could be achieved within existing rules and regulations.

16. It was underscored that cultural change and leadership were necessary elements to move towards a modern workplace. Committee members fully supported the senior leadership commitments set out in the interim report for further operationalization. Some participants noted elements that the Task Force could consider in order to make the United Nations a more modern employer, including an updated family leave policy, more flexible working arrangements and greater mobility.

17. The necessity of using technology to transform how the United Nations system works was highlighted, and it was stressed that in order for such a transformation to be enabled by technology, it would need to be tackled through collaborative efforts among United Nations entities to ensure the greatest impact and to avoid negative consequences. While the digital United Nations ID project was recognized as an idea that was particularly ripe for piloting, the general conception of technology as an enabler of business streams within and across agencies was also acknowledged.

18. Summing up the discussion and noting the endorsement of many points laid out in the interim report, the Chair of the Committee reiterated that the Task Force would continue to apply a holistic, sequenced and inclusive approach to its work. She thanked the Committee and the guest representatives for a rich and engaging discussion.

Decisions

19. The Committee endorsed, encouraged and supported principles, initiatives and other elements laid out in the interim report of the Task Force. Specifically, the Committee:

(a) **Requested the Task Force to continue to work on a holistic and visionary approach to the future of work, taking into account people-centred aspects, and to report back to the Committee at its first regular session in 2021;**

(b) **Endorsed the senior leadership commitments and requested the Task Force to work on guidance on how to further formalize and operationalize them;**

(c) **Requested the Task Force to develop, by December 2020, a model United Nations system framework for flexible working on the basis of the principles laid out in the interim paper;**

(d) **Requested the Task Force to advance the development of new, optional contract modalities for international staff, including non-location-specific options;**

(e) **Supported the piloting of the digital United Nations ID project and the continuation of work on further pilot projects using enabling technology to support an effective United Nations system workplace.**

III. Aligning and coordinating the United Nations system's return to office

20. At its special session on 5 June 2020, the Committee had discussed the back-to-office approaches put in place by United Nations system organizations in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of that session was to discuss how a coordinated approach could best be achieved, ensuring maximum collaboration and alignment in managing the process. The deliverables expected from the session were a document containing a set of common principles that illustrated how organizations had approached their return to offices and a number of priority issues of system-wide importance that would require particular attention in the future, and a summary of basic facts and figures from back-to-office plans across the system.

21. In continuation of the June discussion, Committee members exchanged views on the principles, measures and approaches underlying their return-to-office strategies, taking stock of lessons learned and progress so far, with a view to ensuring maximum collaboration and alignment in managing the process in the next 18 to 24 months. The discussion was informed by the results of the second and third rounds of the Committee survey on back-to-office plans, which was aimed at capturing the key elements of organizations' return plans in the latter half of 2020.

22. The objectives of the session were as follows:

(a) To highlight lessons learned from the various back-to-office approaches taken by United Nations system organizations, also in the light of context-specific considerations, and to identify solutions and best practices that may be of system-wide applicability;

(b) To share knowledge and experience with a focus on longer-term considerations. Particular attention was paid to the implications – strategic, organizational, operational and financial – of key issues, including telecommuting, meetings and business travel, prevention measures and inter-agency collaboration, and field specificities.

23. The session included a set of presentations on back-to-office plans from selected United Nations system duty stations, representing various types of United Nations offices and highlighting commonalities and specificities in their respective approaches to returning to offices, both from the perspective of headquarters duty stations (i.e., by the Department of Safety and Security regarding New York and by the United Nations Office at Geneva) and from that of field offices in countries or regions where freedom of movement is restricted or access to primary health care is limited (i.e., by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean regarding Latin America and by the United Nations Population Fund regarding West and Central Africa).

24. The Committee also heard from the Director of the Logistics Division and Acting Assistant Secretary-General in the Department of Operational Support, AnneMarie van den Berg, on the work of the United Nations System-Wide Task Force on Medical Evacuations.

25. Ms. van den Berg outlined the key components of the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) strategy. Overall, the work of the Task Force was guided by a “no regrets” approach, that is, by worst-case scenario assumptions, and by the principles of solidarity, humanity and fairness. Medical evacuation operations are managed through the “medical evacuation cell”, a medical “control tower” in Geneva plus the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, for the aviation implementation side. A key role is played by the COVID-19 country coordinators, who are responsible for liaising with Geneva to request evacuation. A web page has been created where guidance materials, technical documents and forms are available, as is the recently issued post-MEDEVAC support framework. In addition, a network of facilities has been put in place on the basis of a hybrid system of independent facilities established by the United Nations or provided through collaboration with public and private institutions at the regional level. The presentation also covered the medical evacuation dashboard, which is updated three times a day and provides a complete view of the status of medical evacuation operations, as well as all key metrics to evaluate their progress over time.

26. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee noted strong similarities in the challenges and remedial actions taken by organizations during the first months of the pandemic, despite the differences in contexts and mandates. The main concern of Committee members was how the rapid evolution of the pandemic might make planning ineffective. Telecommuting and the closing of offices had been the mainstream approach during those first months. In mid-2020, several offices had started a gradual return to their premises, which had been quickly reversed within just a few months owing to a resurgence in the number of cases. The complex process of continuous readjustment highlighted a set of key lessons learned, which, in the long-term, would all contribute to an overall rethinking of the United Nations way of working.

27. One of the key issues highlighted by many participants was mental health. Anxiety and uncertainty have increased widely since the inception of the pandemic and are still widespread. Efforts have been made to ensure staff well-being through counselling, and the development and distribution of material and overall guidance to raise awareness of workplace mental health issues and to promote well-being. Initiatives in this area included activities relating to World Mental Health Month in October to mobilize efforts around the implementation of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy.

28. The Committee agreed that mental health would become more and more important and should be included in long-term planning by organizations. Closely connected to mental health was communication with and engagement of personnel: several members underlined the importance of creating the space for conversations to be held by both senior leadership and individual supervisors with personnel at large in order to understand their concerns regarding their jobs, working conditions and their personal lives and those of their families. It is essential that clear and correct information be provided to personnel in order to reduce uncertainty and stress and to ensure that they are able to deliver effectively.

29. The issue of meetings was also discussed extensively. Depending on the requirements of organizations, Member States and local authorities, organizations have put in place different arrangements to allow the resumption of intergovernmental and other meetings, from allowing physical meetings with strict prevention measures in place, to various forms of hybrid arrangements (i.e., limits on the number of delegates allowed to be physically present at the premises, with other participants joining virtually) and fully virtual meetings. Committee members reported the success of several high-level meetings, in particular those organized through the use of digital tools to enable virtual interpretation. Acceptance among delegates had been

growing thanks to improved ease of use and increased familiarity with virtual meeting tools.

30. The discussion covered other implications of the pandemic, specifically: organizational processes, including growing cybersecurity threats; risk management, in particular in the field, where the pandemic has made control more difficult; the reduction or discontinuation of travel, which hindered essential work-related activities that may require rapid deployment of personnel, as well as personal needs such as family reunification; and solutions for the supply of medical and other material to field-based locations with fragile health systems, which has enabled the provision of kits for testing and the isolation and stabilization of patients awaiting medical evacuation.

31. On the topic of COVID-19 vaccines, it was noted that a collaborative effort was ongoing to manage the procurement and supply chain for their distribution, including the development of a framework for the allocation and prioritization of access to vaccines. The importance of avoiding the perception of privileged access to vaccines by United Nations staff was stressed, while it was noted that personnel with high-risk profiles, including pregnant women and persons with underlying conditions, or those working on the front lines of medical emergencies (e.g., doctors and nurses), as well as humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel, should be given priority. It was recommended that United Nations personnel primarily source vaccines from local health authorities. Nonetheless, plans would be made for the delivery of vaccines to locations where they might not be available or where the available vaccine might not be on the list of vaccines approved by the World Health Organization.

32. Some interventions focused on using the experience gained in the response to the pandemic as an opportunity to embrace a comprehensive reimagining of working arrangements. There was broad agreement about the need for hybrid/blended approaches to enable personnel to move more freely between locations and between postings. That would mean establishing new approaches to mobility that could include surge and emergency teams deployed for a limited time according to operational needs, along with hybrid/blended modalities to include both telecommuting and presence on site. In this endeavour, it is imperative to strike the right balance between business continuity and delivery needs and the need to ensure the safety and well-being of personnel. New approaches would also need to support personnel in their careers through effective talent management and strong incentive systems. It was suggested that the focus on the number of hours worked be abandoned in favour of a more modern, objective evaluation based on delivery. New approaches could also support the achievement of gender parity by providing better solutions to balance work and family/personal life, in particular at the management level.

Decision

33. The Committee took note of the results of the latest rounds of its survey on back-to-office plans, as well as of the lessons learned and long-term implications that emerged from the discussion, and agreed to continue to engage on these topics to ensure maximum coordination and alignment at the system-wide level, including through the sharing of best practices in specific areas, as relevant.

IV. Addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system

34. The Chair of the Committee recalled that the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System, since its establishment by CEB at the end of 2017, had continuously worked towards a United

Nations workplace free of sexual harassment and pursued a common United Nations system approach to addressing the issue. In 2018 and 2019, the Task Force had conducted substantive work in the areas of policy, accountability, support and outreach, reporting, and strengthening investigations. In its almost three years of existence, the Task Force had made progress in combating sexual harassment – through close cooperation – within the United Nations system.

35. Nevertheless, the Chair noted that the fight against sexual harassment in the United Nations system was not over. Rather, the current environment, including as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, was posing new challenges that were directly or indirectly connected to the work against sexual harassment. She recalled that the Task Force’s efforts were needed now more than ever.

36. The Chair of the Task Force and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Kelly T. Clements, recalled that the Task Force, in its meetings in July and September 2020, had acknowledged that factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and questions of race, diversity and inclusion had raised additional questions related to sexual harassment in the work environment that required common approaches. She cited the Secretary-General’s recent address to the General Assembly in which he described harmful conduct against women and girls, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse and online harassment, as a hidden war on women and urged all stakeholders to support the prevention of such conduct with strong commitment and the necessary resources.

37. Ms. Clements noted that the Task Force had considered how it could be most effective in its efforts to ensure a harassment-free workplace. In order to proceed in a structured manner, have the greatest impact and make the best use of resources, the workplan 2020–2021 (see annex III) for the next phase of the Task Force’s work was developed around five priority areas:

- (a) Implement: support the roll-out of products endorsed by the Committee;
- (b) Strengthen: advance a victim-centred approach to tackling sexual harassment;
- (c) Learning and communication;
- (d) Outreach and knowledge-sharing;
- (e) Leadership and culture.

38. The workplan was designed to ensure the accomplishment and strengthening of ongoing initiatives, to move jointly towards a consistent, victim-centred approach, to reach internal audiences in the United Nations system at all levels and in all locations, to build on and exchange experiences and ideas on work in other fields, and to initiate and sustain culture change.

39. During the discussion of the workplan, Committee members expressed strong support for the direction of the planned efforts of the Task Force and the comprehensiveness of the workplan 2020–2021. The need for the Task Force to continue its work, also with a view to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and other factors, was emphasized across the board. The need for products and tools provided by the Task Force to be actionable by all United Nations system organizations was also highlighted.

40. The value of a thorough examination of and common efforts towards a victim-centred approach to addressing sexual harassment was underscored in particular. Similarly, the importance of acting on aspects of leadership and culture was stressed. The Task Force was further encouraged to invest in initiatives that address the root causes of sexual harassment, which are linked to the abuse of power, gender issues and other forms of discrimination.

41. The Chair of the Committee thanked Ms. Clements and the Task Force for their work, observing that the new workplan represented a structured and effective way forward. The Chair expressed her support for the work of the Task Force and noted that a coherent, aggressive common approach was necessary in the United Nations system. She reiterated the critical importance of Committee members, as leaders in United Nations system organizations, as well as personally, remaining committed to providing the Task Force with the capacity and the resources necessary to achieve a United Nations system free of harassment.

42. In concluding the discussion, the Chair thanked the Committee for its observations and support for the work of the Task Force and for the workplan 2020–2021 and the objectives and actions contained therein.

Decisions

43. The Committee noted with great appreciation progress in the implementation and alignment of policies and approaches to fight sexual harassment in the United Nations system and confirmed its strong commitment to providing the Task Force with the capacity and the resources necessary to achieve a United Nations system free of harassment.

44. On behalf of CEB, the Committee endorsed the Task Force’s workplan for 2020–2021 and requested the Task Force to report periodically to the Committee on progress towards the achievement of the agreed goals.

V. Other business

A. Business Innovations Group

45. The Chair recalled that, in December 2017, the Secretary-General had set out a number of ambitious targets to reform the United Nations development system. The Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group was tasked with delivering on the proposals for more efficient and effective management of the United Nations development system.

46. The Chair noted that the Business Innovations Group and the Committee had been close partners in the effort to concretize those objectives and had made important progress towards achieving them, in particular with regard to enabling principles such as the mutual recognition statement, the further mainstreaming and operationalization of which had been taken over by the Committee as one of its priorities.

47. Manoj Juneja of the World Food Programme, which co-chaired the Business Innovations Group with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, summarized some highlights from the work completed by the Group, outlined follow-up steps and recalled the key lessons that had been learned in the course of the Group’s work.

48. At the end of June 2020, the Business Innovations Group concluded its work and issued its final report to the Deputy Secretary-General and thereafter to the principals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. The five main areas in which the Business Innovations Group delivered are outlined below.

49. First, the revised business operations strategy (BOS 2.0) is a framework to enable collaboration in business operations at the country level. It is focused on enabling service lines with the highest potential of efficiency gains and is now supported through a new online decision support tool. More than 100 United Nations country teams have already begun to roll out the strategy.

50. Second, the model for a common back office builds on the collaborative model of the business operations strategy to take it to the next level of consolidation of business operations. The approach is for agencies to identify opportunities for a country-based service catalogue to be compiled through the United Nations country team. A key difference to the revised business operations strategy, however, is that only those agencies that commit to consolidating services in the country are part of governance and management under the model, whereas the business operations strategies include all members of United Nations country teams at all times.

51. Third, the Group performed an initial assessment of the potential for a network of Global Shared Service Centres, as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General of December 2017 ([A/72/684-E/2018/7](#)). The potential for significant efficiency savings in this area was noted, as substantiated with data and experience gained from the Business Innovations Group project team and the analysis of individual agencies. The progress made by the Group on this subject was limited to undertaking two marketplace surveys, in which it identified over 1,000 service offerings and over 1,000 service requests among the 21 participating agencies and concluded that the marketplace and its service offerings needed time to mature.

52. Fourth, an end-to-end consolidation package for common premises was developed to equip United Nations country teams to better utilize existing premises and to promote co-location and whole-of-country approaches for assessing co-location opportunities. While that will not achieve the Secretary-General's target of 50 per cent common services by 2021, it does provide country teams with the tools to consolidate incrementally. The Business Innovations Group estimated that achieving 50 per cent common premises would cost more than \$200 million.

53. Lastly, three enabling principles were developed: costing and pricing, client satisfaction and mutual recognition.

54. Turning to the follow-up steps, Mr. Juneja advocated the Committee's continued engagement in the area of business transformation, in line with its crucial role as a platform for coordinated policymaking at the system-wide level.

55. He encouraged agencies to continue to operationalize the mutual recognition statement with the support of the Committee and encouraged those agencies that have not yet signed the statement to do so. He indicated that the newly established Business Operations Task Team would oversee the roll-out of both the business operations strategy and the common back office.

56. As for the broader lessons learned from the Business Innovations Group, several success factors were identified. They included the value of having an independent and adequately resourced project team and of ensuring that work was based on learning from past efforts and informed by extensive data collection and analysis so that the models developed by the project teams could be based on clear business cases. The challenge in collecting data and evidence was highlighted, as was the difficulty of comparing data sets from different entities.

57. Mr. Juneja also highlighted the importance of considering the level of ambition and investment of resources at the outset of projects of this type, because capturing real efficiency gains would undoubtedly require upfront investment and it would be too late to seek seed funding in the middle of a project. He also indicated that, in the long term, a large scope for efficiency gains and transformation would lie in leveraging economies of scale for location-independent services, especially through innovative partnerships that can more efficiently and effectively deliver support services at the global level. This was evident in the project team's extensive study on fleet management. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

and the World Food Programme are developing an innovative partnership in this area to see how they might share a single fleet in the future.

58. Interventions highlighted the importance of effective communication, especially to country teams, on tools and policies such as mutual recognition, to clearly explain their value and how to make the best use of them. While noting the potential for large efficiencies that vertically integrated service centres have clearly demonstrated, the feasibility of horizontally integrated, shared service centres was also suggested as a potential area for exploration. It was noted, however, that any global shared service would depend on the development of appropriate governance and legal frameworks. The importance of considering existing opportunities to exploit the specialization and corresponding comparative advantage that some agencies have in the provision of specific services, in particular with regard to the supply chain, was highlighted. Such an approach would allow considerable efficiencies based on service agreements, without major disruptions to the organizational structure of entities.

59. In concluding the discussion, in connection with responsibilities related to the former portfolio of the Business Innovations Group, the Chair of the Committee stated that the policy role of the Committee would not lend itself to serving in any operational capacity, and that decisions related to selling or buying services were – and needed to be – market-driven. She noted that inter-agency mechanisms were not well suited to guide such decisions, as their involvement would add unnecessary bureaucratic layers that would compromise rather than facilitate further progress in the discussion on Global Shared Service Centres, for example. Also, the governing bodies of agencies that already have Global Service Centres would need to determine the most suitable use of those Centres, including with respect to the possible expansion of service provision to other agencies.

Decisions

60. The Committee looked forward to active collaboration with the Business Operations Task Team of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

61. The Committee noted that its Chair would soon meet with the Co-Chairs of the newly established Business Operations Task Team, Ib Petersen (United Nations Population Fund) and Hannan Sulieman (United Nations Children’s Fund), to discuss and agree on how best to continue and strengthen the very constructive collaboration previously observed in the Committee’s engagement with the Business Innovations Group.

B. Risk management

62. In the course of 2020, the High-level Committee on Management Cross-functional Task Force on Risk Management of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination focused on two distinct work streams: (a) managing fraud risk; and (b) managing risks in the field and for decentralized organizations. Building on the information and experience gathered through several surveys addressed to key stakeholders, guidance notes were developed on those two subjects. In line with the established approach of the Task Force, those notes are intended as high-level guidance on risk management processes, outlining common practices and challenges and relevant case studies.

63. The Chair of the Committee congratulated the Task Force and its Co-Chairs, Chitra Narayanaswamy of the World Intellectual Property Organization and Jonathan Howitt of the World Food Programme, for delivering a set of extremely useful products, the results of which could be considered an example of truly successful and effective inter-agency collaboration.

64. With the conclusion of the most recent phase of its work, the Committee Chair noted that the objectives of the Task Force, as described in its terms of reference, had been achieved. As the interest of organizations in the subject remained high and the members of the Task Force had confirmed their commitment to the continued advancement of that agenda, the Task Force proposed that it should evolve into a forum for exchanging knowledge, networking and developing additional material.

65. If the Committee agreed, the Task Force would produce terms of reference for such a forum in the coming months and submit them for the consideration of the Committee by the next session. The Task Force also asked Committee members to review – offline, after the session – the latest guidance notes produced and to provide any comments or feedback to the Committee secretariat.

Decision

66. The Committee decided that it would review, through correspondence after the session, the guidance notes on fraud risk and managing risks in the field and for decentralized organizations for endorsement. In addition, the Task Force would seek the Committee’s approval to proceed with the development of terms of reference for the new forum.

VI. Conclusion

67. The Chair of the Committee thanked all of the presenters to the back-to-office session and congratulated the members of the Committee on a very rich discussion. She also expressed particular thanks to the Vice-Chair and the Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment. In doing so, she reiterated the Committee’s commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive working environment across the United Nations system, and its continued support for the important activities of the workplan that was approved.

Annex I

List of participants, 29 September 2020

Chair: Grete Faremo (United Nations Office for Project Services)

Vice-Chair: Kelly T. Clements (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Secretary: Remo Lalli (Geneva Office of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB))

CEB Secretary: Simona Petrova (CEB secretariat)

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Participants</i>
United Nations	
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance	Catherine Pollard
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Jens Wandel
	Arnab Roy
Department of Safety and Security	Gilles Michaud
Office of Human Resources	Martha Helena Lopez
Department of Operational Support	Lisa Buttenheim
Office of Legal Affairs	Jay Pozenel
International Labour Organization	Greg Vines
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Mario Lubetkin
	Greet De Leeuw
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Nick Jeffreys
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Tim Martineau
	Alison Holmes
International Civil Aviation Organization	Henry Gourджи
World Health Organization	Raul Thomas
	Roberto Balsamo
Universal Postal Union	Pascal Clivaz
International Organization for Migration	Laura Thompson
	Michael Emery
	David Knight
International Telecommunication Union	Malcolm Johnson
	Yushi Torigoe
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	Ulrika Martinius
	Stephen Bereaux
World Meteorological Organization	Wenjian Zhang
	Maja Drazenovic-Carrieri
	Daniel Trup
International Maritime Organization	Arsenio Dominguez
	Richard Greenwood
World Intellectual Property Organization	Ambi Sundaram
	Chitra Narayanaswamy
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Guoqi Wu
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United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Cecilia Ugaz Estrada
	Okusitina Bulavakarua
International Atomic Energy Agency	Mary Alice Hayward
	Sten Engström
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Adnan Issa
United Nations Development Programme	Angelique M. Crumbly
	Darshak Shah
	David Bearfield
United Nations Environment Programme	Sonja Leighton-Kone
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Kelly T. Clements
	Catty Bennet Sattler
	Hans Baritt
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Leni Stenseth
	Antonino Brusa
United Nations Children's Fund	Hannan Sulieman
	Geetanjali Narayan
	Katinka Rosenbom
United Nations Population Fund	Ib Petersen
	Andrew Saberton

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	Jan Weidmann
	Esteban Olhagaray
	Maria Hadzic
World Food Programme	Manoj Juneja
	Joyce Luma
	Mirjana Kavelj
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/United Nations Office at Vienna	Dennis Thatchaichawalit
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	Anita Bhatia
	Prasun Chakraborty
United Nations Office for Project Services	Grete Faremo
	Victoria Campbell
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Ovais Sarmad
	Zephorah Weru
	Daniele Violetti
	Angela Wagner
International Monetary Fund	Jennifer Lester
	Brian Christensen
World Bank	Ferran Perez Ribo
Other representatives:	
United Nations System Staff College	Jafar Javan
	Miguel Panadero
	Chiara Piatti
United Nations Volunteers	Olivier Adam
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Patrick Grenard
International Criminal Court	Ivan Alippi
Young United Nations network	Kamila Karimova
	Simon Bettighofer
Development Coordination Office	Kamran Baig
	Bakhodir Burkhanov
International Civil Service Commission	Aldo Mantovani

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	Evelyn Kortum
Coordinating Committee for International Staff Associations and Unions of the United Nations System	Stefan Brezina
	Patricia Nemeth
United Nations International Civil Servants Federation	Stephen Towler
	Mark Polane
	Vesna Markovic Dasovic

Annex II

List of participants, 13 October 2020

Chair: Grete Faremo (United Nations Office for Project Services)

Vice-Chair: Kelly T. Clements (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

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Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Jens Wandel
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Department of Safety and Security	Gilles Michaud
Office of Human Resources	Martha Helena Lopez
Department of Operational Support	Lisa Buttenheim
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Office of Information and Communications Technology	Patrick Carey
Office of Legal Affairs	Jay Pozenel
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Andrea Cristina Marquez
International Labour Organization	Greg Vines
	André Bogui
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Mario Lubetkin
	Dario Gilmozzi
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Nick Jeffreys
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Tim Martineau
International Civil Aviation Organization	Henry Gourджи
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	Martin Roberts
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	Eric Dalhen
World Meteorological Organization	Wenjian Zhang
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International Maritime Organization	Arsenio Dominguez
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International Fund for Agricultural Development	Guoqi Wu
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Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Patrick Grenard
International Criminal Court	Ivan Alippi
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International Civil Service Commission	Yuri Orlov
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Annex III***Workplan 2020–2021 of the Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System****Contents**

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* The present annex is being issued without formal editing.

Introduction

The Secretary-General and United Nations system leaders have committed to instilling a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, to strengthening victim-centred prevention and response, and to fostering a safe, equal and inclusive working environment across the United Nations system.¹ The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within United Nations System Organizations was established in 2017 by the Secretary-General to develop a common United Nations system approach towards sexual harassment through reviewing organizations' policies for addressing sexual harassment, and their capacities for the investigation of allegations and support to victims.

In the first three years of its existence, the Task Force has focused on establishing relevant policies, ensuring accountability, enhancing personnel awareness and increasing trust in the Organization, and fostering constructive dialogue. This includes pursuing closer coordination between investigatory bodies to harmonize standards, aligning methods, ensuring consistency, strengthening capacities throughout the aid sector and integrating a victim-centred approach. The Task Force has made substantial progress in the areas of policy, accountability, support and outreach and strengthening investigations² and has developed relevant products such as the United Nations System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, the screening database "Clear Check", a guide for managers to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the workplace and the Code of Conduct to Prevent Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment, at United Nations System Events.

It is, however, clear that more effort is still needed to ensure the United Nations is a workplace where sexual harassment is never tolerated, abusers are held accountable, personnel feels safe to report incidents, and victims receive the support and assistance they need. The latter is especially important given the greater understanding, three years into this effort, of a victim-centred approach. Survey data has shown that the number of complaints has increased in recent years and that women overwhelmingly remain the target of sexual harassment and men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators within United Nations system organizations.

The need to do more on driving cultural change within individual United Nations organizations, and the United Nations system as a whole, has become even more clear in recent months, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. With that context in mind, priorities in the next phase of the Task Force will therefore include implementation and monitoring of the above deliverables by members of the High-level Committee on Management, the development and piloting of training and learning materials, external engagement with key stakeholders and partners, the strengthening of a victim-centred approach and the broader promotion of culture change throughout the organization.

The latter is important given a couple of key dynamics which have emerged in the three years since the establishment of the Task Force. The first is the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought additional questions related to abuse of authority and harassment in the context of wide-scale teleworking, remote working and blended office arrangements. This raises a variety of questions, including the boundaries of workplace misconduct and potential difficulties for victims to access assistance and support through their employer. The second is race, diversity and inclusion, which has been subject to considerable discussion in recent months.

¹ CEB Statement on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System.

² CEB Task Force on Sexual Harassment Fact Sheet, July 2020.

Although not within scope of the Task Force, the membership of the Task Force has recognized that it has an important role to play in addressing these rising challenges and that some of the Task Force's approaches need to be adapted accordingly. This is especially true when looking at long-term culture change and root causes, such as abuse of authority and power imbalances.

The present document sets out a workplan³ for the Task Force to address these challenges and to move forward on efforts to eradicate sexual harassment and create safe, inclusive and equal working environments across the United Nations system. The Task Force will work towards objectives through the actions identified below and invites the High-Level Committee on Management to adopt the current workplan at its second regular session of 2020.

1. Implement: support the roll-out of products endorsed by the High-level Committee on Management

Objective

Roll out common tools and establish baselines for implementation within the United Nations system

Actions

1.1 Develop a light monitoring framework to track the roll-out of the United Nations System Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, usage of the Clear Check database and of the guide for managers and Code of Conduct, to feed updates on progress with roll-out into the Task Force and the Committee.

1.2 Establish a simplified online platform (e.g., using a corporate tool such as Microsoft Teams or SharePoint) to provide centralized access to Task Force focal points for relevant documents and materials, and serve as a platform for sharing of lessons learned as roll-out continues. In addition to Task Force members, this platform might also be accessible to other partners.

1.3 Strengthen the Task Force's capacity in data collection, analysis and presentation through an assessment of available data and current analytical capacity within the different work streams, and subsequently propose improvements.

2. Strengthen: advance a victim-centred approach to tackling sexual harassment

Objective

Ensure a strengthened, consistent and victim-centred United Nations system approach to addressing sexual harassment

Actions

2.1 Finalize the Manual for the Investigation of Sexual Harassment and plan its guided dissemination to investigators and other audiences across the United Nations system through appropriate and effective channels.

2.2 Reassess the purpose of the annual survey on reporting of sexual harassment and how its results can provide consistent information across all agencies and lead to action by the system and individual agencies, and implement further refinements to the questionnaire based on that reassessment.

³ This workplan is not exhaustive and does not preclude taking forward other activities that arise.

2.3 Explore Task Force initiatives required to support a coherent and victim-centred approach to sexual harassment, taking into account the current work environment, including increased remote and online working arrangements.

2.3.1 Develop a survey which takes into account victims' experiences. Victims would be invited to complete a survey at the end of the resolution process, which could then be shared, with all personal and organizational data removed, to the Task Force, which could then be used to inform future activities and action.

2.3.2 Develop an agreed common understanding of a victim-centred approach in cases of sexual harassment, with general principles that could help agencies in applying a victim-centred approach in their own policies and procedures, including those relating to retaliation.

3. Learning and communication

Objective

Raise awareness of the United Nations system approach to addressing sexual harassment and promote instruments to combat discrimination and harassment among internal audiences

Actions

3.1 Develop an effective and proactive communications strategy to advance the Task Force's commitment to a harassment-free United Nations, targeting a broad internal audience, including senior managers, subject-matter experts and field personnel.

3.1.1 Identify the most effective channels of communication adapted to United Nations system internal audiences, including different media and joint communications (e.g. system-wide campaigns).

3.1.2. Determine which instruments developed by the Task Force are less well known among United Nations system organizations, personnel and partners and ensure greater awareness of available Task Force resources, in particular in field locations, through intensified communication.

3.2 Develop training and awareness-raising material on prevention and response to sexual harassment, including material suitable for the current work environment with an increased focus on online training and communication materials.

4. Outreach and knowledge-sharing

Objective

Engage actors from within and outside of the United Nations system on issues of sexual harassment to better understand and strengthen approaches and actions to address sexual harassment

Actions

4.1 Initiate and/or continue cooperation and coordination with actors and mechanisms inside and outside of the United Nations system (e.g. the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Network of Gender Focal Points in the United Nations system, the Development Cooperation Office, intergovernmental mechanisms) to harness synergies, cross-fertilize and share knowledge and material to end sexual harassment.

4.2 Assess the current usage of the Clear Check database and, based on the analysis, strongly encourage the usage of the database by all United Nations system entities, target the further integration with organizational talent management systems and consider the possibility and practicability of expanding the database to organizations outside of the United Nations system.

4.3 Enhance targeted communication to select external audiences to disseminate information about the United Nations system's efforts to eradicate sexual harassment, including but not limited to periodical briefings to Member States.

5. Leadership and culture

Objective

Understand the workings, levers and entry points for organizational culture change to achieve a safe and inclusive work environment free of discrimination, including racial discrimination, and harassment

Actions

5.1 Engage with and collect material from the Secretary-General's Senior Management Group, the CEB Task Force on the Future of the United Nations System Workforce, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and other relevant intra- and inter-agency groups and mechanisms to better understand ongoing work on the broader issues of harassment and discrimination, including racial discrimination, and on organizational culture change.

5.2 Identify actions and instruments – either new or existing – to advance an organizational culture that does not tolerate discrimination and harassment, with a focus on sexual harassment.

5.3 Hold a dedicated session of the Task Force on values, culture and attitudes, to provide the opportunity for individual reflection and actions that can be taken in the area of culture change and create safe, respectful and inclusive working environments.