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

(United Nations System Staff College, Turin, Italy, 15 and 16 October 2019)

I. Introduction

1.   The High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its thirty-eighth session at the United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy, on 15 and 16 October 2019. The meeting was chaired by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and Chair of the Committee, Grete Faremo, and by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees and Vice-Chair of the Committee, Kelly Clements.

2.   The agenda adopted by the Committee was organized around the following main themes:

(a)   Future of the United Nations system workforce;

(b)   Risk management;

(c)   Occupational safety and health for United Nations system personnel;

(d)   Supporting the transformation of United Nations system operations to a repositioned United Nations development system;

(e)   International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal judgment on post adjustment in Geneva.

3.   A complete list of participants is provided in annex I, while a checklist of documents can be found in annex II. All documents related to the session are available on the CEB website.[1]

4.   Following welcoming remarks by the Director of the United Nations System Staff College, Jafar Javan, the Vice-Chair of the Committee welcomed new Committee members, as well as guests, including representatives of the staff unions and of Young UN: Agents for Change.

_____

[1] www.unsceb.org/content/october-2019.

Please recycle

II. Future of the United Nations system workforce

5.   The Vice-Chair opened the retreat session on the theme "Future of the United Nations system workforce", noting that the current environment was volatile and uncertain, and encouraging the Committee to examine what United Nations system organizations need to do differently to maximize the impact of the system's most important asset, its people. She underlined that current employment models, whether they concern contract modalities, pensions or insurance, need to be reconsidered to motivate a globally mobile and connected workforce for better results and delivery.

6.   Highlighting risks and opportunities of technological advancement for the United Nations system, the Vice-Chair stressed the importance of harnessing new technologies to redefine how the system works and delivers, while keeping humans and their specific capacities, such as empathy, curiosity, creativity, strategic thinking and problem-solving, at the centre. She also underscored the requirement for leadership to fulfil the expectations of a young generation, being more people-focused, embracing uncertainty and creating conditions for technology and humanity to coexist.

7.   The Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Deputy Director General for Management and Reform of the International Labour Organization (ILO) presented the discussion paper entitled "Future of work and its implications for the United Nations system workforce and people management practices", which formed the basis of the Committee's retreat session. They reminded the Committee that the discussions were a timely continuation of the Human Resources Network deliberations on the future of the United Nations workforce in 2016 and that the Committee could build on the various reform initiatives in different organizations that had since been launched, as well as on the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, entitled "Work for a brighter future".

8.   The Under-Secretary-General and the Deputy Director General stressed that, while the United Nations and its workforce were confronted with external factors, including social issues, emerging technologies and changing political and resource situations, the United Nations system needed to be ready and able to take advantage of opportunities. They identified some crucial issues that necessitated open and creative discussion by the Committee, such as mobility within and out of the system and the capacity for skills development, as well as management and leadership practices.

9.   The Committee then heard the perspectives of experts from academic institutions and the public and private sectors.

10.   The Committee heard from Professor Francesco Mancini of the National University of Singapore on how agile working methods may best be applied to an organization such as the United Nations. Lessons shared included the need to engage with donors and other stakeholder communities and the need to break silos to shift mindsets and overcome organizational cultures that remain risk-adverse.

11.   A public sector perspective was provided by Pieter Jan Kleiweg de Zwaan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The Committee learned that the civil service of that country shares many of the same obstacles as the United Nations within the field of human resources management, including cultural change and the role of technology. Mr. Kleiweg de Zwaan summarized the approach of the Government of the Netherlands to the future of work as "bricks, bytes and behaviour".

12.   Bricks refer to structural changes and include introducing flexible working arrangements and rethinking office design, in particular enabling employees to work from home. In addition to being considered an effective cost-cutting measure, positive effects were also noted on lowering hierarchies and improving employee availability, although age and office culture were cited as important considerations for successful

implementation. Bytes pertain to how technology is applied to virtual teamwork and remote working arrangements. Behavioural change was explained as an outcome of a better work-life balance and of measures directed to overcome risk avoidance, in order to foster innovation and ensure diversity of the workforce in the broadest sense. For example, emphasis is given to understanding the personal pressures placed on employees, in particular for dual income households, and the need to provide the option of working from home. In order to address psychological security, the Committee learned that the Ministry undertook "failure days" twice a year, as an opportunity to set examples and reinforce a culture in which mistakes, rather than being feared, were considered a way of learning.

13.   Tina Marron-Partridge of IBM emphasized the supporting role of technology in the transformation of an organization. The path towards a human-centric workplace was explained by examples covering four main areas: personalized and digitized work to completely change how human resources management works; instilling a culture of feedback and transparency, allowing the outside to look in and evaluate the organization as an employer; continuous learning to address and avoid skills obsolescence; and introducing agile ways of working and leading, transforming speed into value.

14.   Ms. Marron-Partridge provided an illustration of how the private sector pursues the optimization of skills, organization agility, collaboration, talent acquisition, employee experience and change management. She explained how, within IBM, traditional performance management processes had been replaced with real-time, continuous feedback cycles. The approach was seen to increase employee appreciation and had a positive impact on coaching and evaluations. It was also observed that employees had the tendency to speak up more within a culture that valued feedback.

15.   Within the context of a global skills shortage, Ms. Marron-Partridge stressed that skills were increasingly being valued as a competitive currency. A skills-based people strategy was one that considered both skills and performance in order to determine an employee's overall proficiency rating. Continuous and personalized learning were achieved by nurturing a culture of exponential learning within the organization. The chosen learning platform provided a modern interface to access training programmes from the outside, encouraging employees to assist by imparting their specialist knowledge. Agile ways of working and learning were seen to improve the company's responsiveness, transparency and authenticity. While it was underlined that one size did not fit all, a successful human resources transformation was seen to include positive leadership, a growth mindset, resilience, engagement and inclusion, transparency and trust.

16.   Panellists were invited to give their opinions on a variety of topics, proposed by all participants in an interactive panel discussion. In the deliberations that ensued, they stressed the need for a renewed human-centric approach to human resources, to effect organizational and cultural change. The definition of a career, which was increasingly reliant on skills, was seen to be changing. Nowadays, career paths were increasingly defined around talents, as opposed to long-term experience within a particular organization or firm. Consequently, a focus on skills placed more emphasis on training. Panellists were aligned in their emphasis on the employee experience and the need for the organization to be perceived as the employer of choice.

17.   The ongoing complete rethinking of approaches to training within the private sector was further discussed. Training at IBM, for example, had been overhauled in recent years and was no longer vendor-based or performed within classroom settings. Instead, it had become the responsibility of employees and was supported by a modern and agile space that effectively supports collaboration, innovation and knowledge-sharing. Some organizations actively encouraged staff to embrace social media

channels to share professional information and to reach every employee in the search for answers or feedback. This approach was also seen to provide an opportunity for story-telling and help to direct external perceptions of the organization and its values.

18.   Given the increasing emphasis on skills, the need to validate them also assumed priority. Within the private sector, employees served clients and therefore received client feedback, but peer feedback was also encouraged for personal development. In addition to helping managers to adapt with dexterity and apply agile principles, an inclusive culture facilitated an understanding of what people were learning and manifesting at work. Constant feedback from different channels, therefore, provided the basis for employee assessment and helped with the selection of appropriate training. It was demonstrated that, within a culture of sharing and learning, cost savings might be pursued since content was produced by employees. Investment in the IBM training platform resulted in savings of 50 per cent in the learning portfolio in three years, allowing a tenfold increase in the delivery of content.

19.   Many panellists noted that cultural change came from the top and that it was up to leaders to lead by example and empower employees to become champions of change, in turn helping them to advance within their own field. It was also recognized that the working culture was developed on the ground and that effective leaders were those who facilitated a collaborative culture within the business. There was broad agreement on the need to be specific and tangible when discussing cultural change.

20.   Bias was recognized as an omnipresent barrier to achieving a more diverse workforce and to enabling cultural change. Since all humans were subject to bias based on what makes them unique and individual, the objective was to raise awareness of bias as opposed to the expectation of eliminating it. This was illustrated by the application of artificial intelligence techniques to address bias in human resources processes, including recruitment, development, retention and the provision of career advice. Since it was considered critical that there was no unconscious bias within such processes, ethical standards and values needed to be considered during the development of artificial intelligence solutions.

21.   Several speakers appreciated the need for and difficulty of reconciling employee job security with the increasing necessity for organizations to be agile and flexible. Different professions required different employment paths and, consequently, varying contract types. In frontier areas such as quantum computing, scientists could work on the same project for years and needed policies and contracts adapted to the profession. A positive work environment was described as one that allowed people to speak truth to power and provided an opportunity for the organization to retain institutional memory.

22.   Within the context of the work-life balance, more holistic approaches were being pursued in the public and private sectors, including to consider work and workload in the context of the employee's life, taking into consideration personal commitments, such as mortgages, family situations and related responsibilities. As both the personal and professional well-being of an employee were highly dependent on work, the working environment must be seen to facilitate life choices and in turn allow the organization to be perceived as an employer of choice.

23.   At the beginning of the afternoon, the Chair introduced herself to the Committee and offered remarks on the state of the world and the United Nations system. Noting the universal nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, she observed that multilateralism was under threat and that the economic situation was particularly challenging for the United Nations system. In this environment, official development aid made up only a fraction of what was needed to implement the 2030 Agenda, and most of the funding would have to be provided by the private sector. The Chair shared her conviction that, in those circumstances, leadership was particularly important to drive cultural change. Managers needed to rethink how the United Nations system

operates and could remain relevant and effective in delivering its global commitments. Attaining that goal was possible only by cooperating across sectors and in partnership with Member States, civil society and the private sector, as well as by engaging with young people.

24. In the area of management, making the best use of funds required continuous process improvements for the United Nations system to become more efficient in the way in which it undertook human resources, finance, procurement, information technology and other core business processes. Agility and flexibility of the system organizations, including their workforces, needed to improve, and instilling a culture of innovation was necessary. The Chair cited interoperability, harmonization and integration as key areas for increasing the joint impact of the system, referring to the harmonization of data as a prime example. Noting the promises and perils of rapid technological change, the Chair encouraged Committee members to advance the understanding of its implications and to make sure that principles related to privacy, security and human rights remained the foundation of the United Nations system's work with new technology.

25. Acknowledging that much good work was being done across the United Nations system, the Chair saw a crucial role for the Committee in discussing what change was necessary for the system to have a meaningful impact. She encouraged the Committee to make a difference, not in a revolutionary way, but incrementally through its focus on deliverables and hard work.

26. The Committee then engaged in an exchange of ideas in subgroups working on the three main themes of the future of work for the United Nations system identified in the draft discussion paper.

27. Under the theme "Future workforce, composition and management", two subgroups discussed how contractual arrangements and social protections could be aligned for the future, pondered the question of a good balance between external and internal recruitment and examined the sourcing of pertinent skills.

28. Group participants acknowledged the interconnectedness of contractual arrangements with many other issues with which United Nations system organizations were grappling, such as identifying comparative advantages of the United Nations and tackling resource constraints or the expectations of current and future employees. Understanding and mapping the functions and skills currently present in organizations, compared with the skills necessary in a future United Nations system workforce, was identified as a key starting point for underpinning work on contractual modalities.

29. Group members also established that, for a pertinent and appropriately sourced workforce, exchanges and partnerships with different branches, such as civil society and the private sector, were indispensable. Managing the vast amount of knowledge of long-term United Nations system employees also played an important role. There was agreement among group members that, for a successful transformation of the workforce, human resources functions needed to act more strategically and collaborate with substantive offices of the organizations. On an inter-agency level, contributions of all networks of the Committee were required.

30. Under the theme "Agility, efficiency and innovation", another two subgroups considered how organizational agility could be enhanced and how digital tools could drive impact and efficiency gains.

31. Participants established that current benefits and pension schemes were a major hurdle to more agility, as staff under the current system are prone to losing benefits and entitlements when moving in and out, or through, the United Nations system. Budgetary constraints, outdated rules, the classification of staff into general services and professional and higher categories and narrow job families were identified as other

factors hampering the transformation towards a more agile workforce. Scrutinizing and updating current rules and making skills and expertise transferable across the United Nations system were determined as priority areas for inter-agency action. Developing incentives for mobility, portable benefits, a skills database and better dialogue with academic institutions and the private sector were found to be appropriate starting points. Addressing workforce issues through cross-cutting, inter-agency action between the Committee's networks was another point highlighted by the working groups.

32.   The use of digital tools was found to be a priority in the areas of recruitment, talent management, transactional processes and occupational safety and health. The working groups found that, if digital tools could help with candidate screening, reference checking and job classification, time could be freed up for human resources services to invest in talent management and dialogue with the programmatic side of organizations. Parts of talent management, such as learning, would also lend themselves to the application of digital tools. Inter-agency action could help with taking stock of applications of digital tools in programmatic and operational areas, and cost might be reduced by the collective procurement of digital solutions.

33.   Two further subgroups deliberated the future of employee experience. They reflected on how to build an enabling work environment to support employee experience and how leadership performance, engagement and organizational culture could be enhanced.

34.   Discussing cultural change and employee experience within the United Nation system organizations, group participants offered multiple angles and touched on subject matters as diverse as sexual harassment, bullying, abuse, trust between staff and managers, performance management and flexible work arrangements. The groups agreed that, as a prerequisite for more advanced cultural change, workplace civility needed to be enhanced. Recent work on sexual harassment was highlighted as a positive illustration of inter-agency action. The soft skills of managers, which played a crucial role in creating a conducive workplace culture, and a focus on the prevention of workplace conflict were examples of possible points to address.

35.   Group participants recognized that leadership could reside at all levels of an organization and that people management should be a leadership priority, reinforced by action in areas such as talent management, learning and training, induction, the development of soft skills, improved recruitment and accountability. Views diverged, however, on whether the United Nations system would benefit from common surveys or common standards. Current performance management was deemed as often being unsuitable and in need of an overhaul.

36.   Following the group working sessions, participants reconvened and rapporteurs presented the outcomes of the working groups to the plenary meeting of the Committee. The Chair stressed the need for the Committee to increase its impact and underscored leadership as a key factor. Top executives, as leaders, should avoid the dilution of responsibilities and accountabilities. The Chair asked the Committee to stay focused on key inter-agency priorities and to distil outcomes, all with a long-term view to developing a framework human resources strategy for a future United Nations workforce, for consideration by CEB.

37.   In the ensuing plenary discussion, Committee members acknowledged the richness of ideas expressed in the group discussions. It was emphasized that leadership, cultural change, a human-centred approach and the use of new technology were critical and should be at the heart of a shared vision. Some Committee members stressed the necessity for all organizations of the United Nations system to take action in order to honour the trust of donors and programme countries. It was recognized that the future of the United Nations workforce was not merely a matter for human resources but needed the involvement of other functions and executive management.

38.   The need for the regulatory system to be reviewed with the aim of increasing flexibility, in particular with regard to contractual modalities, pension schemes and performance management, was noted by many. The notion that a shift of focus was needed so that human resources functions could provide strategic advice rather than just offering transactional services, was affirmed by multiple Committee members. Some called for a collective effort by the United Nations system to collaborate with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) in its upcoming review of the implementation of the new compensation package.

39.   Staff federations acknowledged that, while it was a transformational era for the United Nations, there were agencies that were thriving, and experiences should be shared through the Committee and other platforms. They highlighted the importance of leadership setting the right tone and taking matters forward with the necessary commitment. They also underscored the importance of a closer link between performance and promotion.

40.   Several speakers offered examples of ongoing initiatives in their entities, such as the pooling of administrative staff, using artificial intelligence in recruitment or in the mapping of skills. Support for the idea of analysing the skills gap and mapping skills across the United Nations system was echoed by several participants. Strengthening unified learning, including on leadership and ethics, was also seen by some as a priority area for action.

41.   Overall, Committee members shared a sense of urgency in tackling the future of the United Nations system workforce. Many advocated transformational change and starting without delay to turn the many ideas into ambitious and real action. It was proposed that, under the guidance of a small group, building blocks for a framework human resources strategy for the United Nations system could evolve. In this fashion, a pathway of incremental change with a vision of greater transformation in the longer term could be developed and progress could be made by the Committee at its next session. It was envisaged that initiatives could take the form of inter-agency actions or pilots by individual agencies.

42.   The Chair proposed the establishment of a cross-functional task force to develop a framework human resources strategy with building blocks on contractual modalities, new ways of working and a digitized work environment. Several Committee members volunteered to drive initiatives forward under the three building blocks. The task force would operate under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, as its Chair, and the Deputy Director General of ILO, as its Vice-Chair. The Committee agreed upon this and decided to review the work of the task force at its next session, to be held in March 2020.

43.   The Chair thanked the Committee for attaching the necessary importance and urgency to the future of the United Nations system workforce.

Decisions

44.   **The Committee tasked the CEB secretariat with refining the draft discussion paper on the basis of the Committee's discussion, sharpening it and distilling its key messages, and submitting it to Committee members for virtual review and endorsement.**

45.   **The Committee agreed to submit the endorsed paper to CEB as an addendum to the report on the thirty-eighth session of the Committee (CEB/2019/5/Add.1), together with the paper entitled "Navigating to the next United Nations: a journey full of potential", issued by Young UN: Agents for Change (CEB/2019/5/Add.2).**

46. **The Committee decided to establish a cross-functional task force, chaired by the Secretariat, with ILO serving as Vice-Chair, to lead the development of the building blocks for a framework human resources strategy for the United Nations system workforce, to be considered by the Committee at its session to be held in the second quarter of 2020, and finalized before the session to be held in the fourth quarter of 2020.**

47. **The Committee agreed to sequence and prioritize such building blocks and to include both blocks that merit system-wide, joint action and blocks that can be taken forward as pilot initiatives by individual agencies, which could then be used as references and benchmarks by other agencies and scaled up at the system level, as relevant.**

48. **The Committee will seek to give priority to:**

    (a) **Developing new sustainable contractual modalities for a more agile workforce, with a harmonized approach to social protection and career development, facilitating mobility and workforce planning (block for system-wide engagement, led jointly by the Office of Human Resources of the Secretariat, by UNOPS and by the International Organization for Migration);**

    (b) **New ways of working, enabling culture and employee experience from multiple perspectives, leadership, people management, flexible work arrangements, transparency and dialogue (block for system-wide engagement, led jointly by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Department of Operational Support of the Secretariat);**

    (c) **A digitized work environment enabled by technology to support the above ambitions, with an initial focus on piloting digital solutions for a positive employee experience, including artificial intelligence, and identifying viable options for interconnected human resources information technology platforms in the United Nations system (block for individual agency pilots, led jointly by the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme and UNHCR).**

III. Risk management

49. At its thirty-sixth session, held in October 2018, the Committee approved the terms of reference for a cross-functional task force on risk management. The task force was established to improve the overall harmony of risk management processes and practices in the United Nations system. Under the first phase of its work, it developed a reference risk management maturity model. At its session held in April 2019, the Committee endorsed the model for use as a management and communication tool to help United Nations organizations to identify their current maturity stage and their target maturity stage and to provide a basis for continual improvement. The task force subsequently conducted several pilot self-assessments to test and validate the model, and the results of the pilot assessments were presented to the Committee, together with a refined final version of the model. The Co-Chair of the task force noted that, based on feedback received on the model, it was considered a very useful tool that could be used to assess the stage of risk management maturity of an entity, and define a road map for reaching an entity's target stage of maturity. It was emphasized that the model was not intended to be prescriptive or mandatory, and that each organization could adapt the model and its results to its specific situation.

50. The Committee also received an update on the second phase of the work of the task force, which had commenced in May 2019 under three distinct workstreams:

(a) practical guidelines for establishing a risk appetite statement; (b) development of pragmatic guidance for the embedding of risk management in strategy formulation, planning and implementation; and (c) exploration of a platform or platforms, or a repository or repositories, to enable the sharing of best practices and risk information. As part of the update, the Committee was presented with the final guidelines on risk appetite statements for endorsement, as well as the draft guidance on embedding risk management, and a status update on the work in progress on the sharing of risk information. The Committee noted the value of an organization being able to establish risk thresholds and communicate internally and externally the amount of risk that it was willing to take, while at the same time recognizing that not all organizations might wish to adopt a risk appetite statement, and that the guidance on such statements was optional and not prescriptive.

51. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the task force for the considerable progress that it had made, noting the importance placed by the Secretary-General on risk management in the context of his reform agenda and in building trust with Member States through transparency and accountability. The Committee recognized the value of collaborative engagement to move from an approach that was focused on compliance to one in which there was real leadership and management with respect to risks. It was agreed that the deliverables of the task force were extremely useful tools for senior leadership to better understand the risks with which they were dealing, enabling leadership to advance in a proactive manner that not only mitigated risks, but also sought to seize opportunities.

52. During her update, the Co-Chair of the task force noted that all organizations participating in it had collaborated in a very engaged and effective manner, with all work being completed electronically. It was emphasized that the spirit of the task force had been to make risk management more present and tangible, bringing it into the centre of the work of United Nations organizations.

53. With respect to the next steps, the Co-Chair of the task force noted that its members had been consulted on the areas in which it should continue or start to engage. Some priority areas that had emerged included the sharing of risk information, data in risk management, fraud risk best practices and the measurement of risk management success or failure.

Decisions

54. **The Committee endorsed the final reference maturity model for risk management.**

55. **The Committee endorsed the guidelines for risk appetite statements.**

56. **The Committee took note of the work in progress on operational guidance for embedding risk management into planning processes and sharing risk information.**

57. **The Committee expressed support for the task force to continue its work in 2020 in areas deemed priorities by the Co-Chairs of the task force.**

IV. Occupational safety and health for United Nations system personnel

58. The Chair of the Committee's cross-functional task force on duty of care presented the final report of the task force, underlining that the institutional commitment that underpinned its work was the United Nations imperative to stay and deliver, and providing some recent examples of the occupational safety and health risks

that organizations had to manage on a daily basis in order to deliver critical aid to people in need. She noted how essential collaboration between agencies was to manage those risks, since agencies might be individually responsible and accountable for their people, but all were navigating the same operational environment, often sharing the same offices and living conditions and relying upon the same services and facilities.

59.   The Chair recalled the history of the task force, which built upon the considerable efforts of many, including in the work led by the Department of Safety and Security that preceded the establishment of the task force, and identified priorities for subsequent engagement in the areas of psychosocial issues, health, human resources and administration, and safety and security.

60.   Under the leadership of UNICEF and UNHCR, more than 30 United Nations system organizations had joined the task force – both highly operational, field-based and more normative, headquarters-based entities. Among the task force's most significant outcomes, the Chair noted the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy, an essential element in promoting the well-being of United Nations staff and non-staff personnel worldwide; a standardized and validated tool and methodology to assess health risks in a given duty station; a comprehensive predeployment management package for staff and their families, including a system-wide resilience briefing; the endorsement of United Nations living and working standards; and the joining by several United Nations organizations of the humanitarian booking hub led by WPF, a one-stop shop for a number of services that also allowed organizations to monitor the conditions in guesthouse accommodations.

61.   The scope of the task force was subsequently expanded beyond high-risk environments, to develop measures to support non-staff and other categories of personnel and to elaborate a risk management framework, in consideration of the health risk assessment methodology and the occupational safety and health framework.

62.   In its expanded scope, the task force placed an emphasis on fostering an organizational culture that was conducive to promoting the health, safety and well-being of its workforce. A global vision statement was developed, which articulated the high-level goals to which the United Nations system aspired. Along with the vision statement, the task force determined that a foundation of core principles for a healthier, safer and more respectful United Nations workplace was needed to provide a working guide for United Nations organizations to articulate their approach in this complex domain.

63.   It was explained that each of the core principles was accompanied by a set of objectives for organizations to implement. The principles were overarching and value-based. They communicated a system-wide coherent and holistic approach. They provided a foundation for the review of new or existing policies to ensure that promoting a healthy, safe and respectful working environment for United Nations staff and non-staff personnel is taken into account. They could also be used as a communications tool both internally and externally to illustrate the engagement of the United Nations system. The approach was similar to that taken by a number of non-governmental organizations and international organizations that were not part of the United Nations system.

64.   The task force further analysed organizational roles and responsibilities related to employees' health and safety and recognized that the risk universe associated with that domain consisted primarily of occupational safety and health, as well as security risks. This laid the groundwork for a natural progression in the task force's strategic direction towards occupational safety and health, which was a defined discipline with internationally recognized standards and tools.

65.   After a long consultation with relevant networks, including the Human Resources Network, the Legal Network and the Procurement Network, the task force also developed a draft framework for affiliate personnel. The term "affiliate workforce" was explained to comprise: (a) affiliate personnel. who included consultants, individual contractors, holders of a service contract, interns, United Nations Volunteers and UNOPS contractors, all of which related to instances in which the contract was issued by a United Nations agency in some form; (b) standby personnel, who were defined around the standby partnership network, which included 14 United Nations organizations and 45 governmental, non-governmental or private sector companies or foundations, a classic example being a person seconded from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to UNHCR; and (c) non-United Nations personnel, who were typically personnel implementing United Nations projects on the ground, through either an implementing partner or a third-party contractor, namely personnel without a contract or direct employment relationship with a United Nations agency.

66.   The corresponding measures associated with each of the core principles, as well as the relative importance of each measure, would vary depending on the type of personnel. Voluntary guidelines or best practices for implementation for each category were also developed and are provided in an annex to the final report of the task force. It would be the responsibility of United Nations system organizations to determine what they considered appropriate to implement and how to do so.

67.   Finally, the task force developed additional guidance and tools to assist in the integration of occupational safety and health into enterprise risk management processes. This was an important foundation for expanding the task force's work from mainly high-risk to all environments, as different occupational safety and health risks existed and should be identified in all locations where organizations operated. Integrating occupational safety and health into a risk management approach was an iterative process of adapting to changing contexts that should lead to greater workforce confidence and organizational effectiveness.

68.   It was explained that the task force stated that it believed that an inter-agency forum was needed for coordination, inspiration, direction, tools, common standards and solutions, in particular looking for common, efficient and joint solutions in the field. This was the basis for the proposal for a multidisciplinary, inter-agency, technical forum with a strong link to the Committee, but with a lighter approach intended to support agencies in taking up and maintaining their responsibilities and accountabilities to their personnel. The World Health Organization (WHO) agreed to lead the forum and committed itself to bringing issues to the Committee's attention and to report to it periodically.

69.   The Chair again underlined that the cross-functional nature of the task force had enabled a wider and inclusive vision, towards the establishment of system-wide minimum standards with a common purpose, while at the same time giving space to individual agencies to drive particular initiatives that were then developed through consensus-building and were ultimately adopted by others.

70.   The implementation was now dependent on the needs, priorities and resources available in each organization, and the risk management approach was intended to tie these pieces together, as a means for identifying and treating risks that threatened to affect the health, well-being and safety of United Nations staff and non-staff personnel, wherever they were working.

71.   Continuing work would include: (a) mainstreaming the tools that had been developed already; (b) coordinating, revising and updating the norms and standards that had emerged from that work; (c) further developing occupational safety and health risk management methodologies, especially as agencies were at very different stages of maturity in terms of their own approaches to risk management throughout

the system; and (d) promoting the integration of occupational safety and health risk management into the work of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. The objective remained to make the United Nations a healthier, safer and more respectful place to work.

72.   In opening the floor for discussion, the Chair of the Committee expressed deep appreciation to its Vice-Chair and to the task force for their impressive work. She stressed that, ultimately, accountability for staff safety and well-being lay with heads of agency. The new forum would therefore be intended to support agency heads in discharging that function in a manner that evolved in parallel with the risks and contexts in which their organizations worked.

73.   Committee members noted that the new forum would in future offer an opportunity to better understand where the links between various roles and responsibilities were, ensure coherence in order that nothing was overlooked and mitigate and manage any safety risks through the implementation policies.

74.   Many participants noted that occupational safety and health was one of the aspects critical to the future of work. At the International Labour Conference held in 2019, a decision was made, as part of the ILO centenary declaration, to elevate occupational safety and health to the level of a fundamental principle on rights at work. Together with the adoption of a new international labour convention on violence and harassment in the workplace, several elements were coming together at a critical time.

75.   Organizations would have to make a commitment to allocate the necessary resources to pursue occupational safety and health properly. A discussion on appropriate methodologies to fund it could be taken up as one of the actions of the new forum. Communication strategies for staff would be critical in that effort, as one of the biggest concerns in occupational safety and health was the lack of awareness of risk.

76.   Committee members agreed that this was a journey: organizations had not reached a destination, but had reached an important milestone. In embedding occupational safety and health into enterprise risk management processes, one member noted that his organization had come to the conclusion that occupational safety and health should be considered a fiduciary risk as opposed to an operational risk, therefore involving higher standards and greater risk awareness. This spoke about the importance of Chief Executives being aware.

77.   Finally, the Development Coordination Office noted that occupational health and safety would in future have to be integrated into the accountability framework for resident coordinators.

Decisions

78.   **The Committee endorsed the vision statement and the set of core principles for a healthier, safer and more respectful United Nations workplace.**

79.   **The Committee adopted the draft framework for affiliate, standby and non-United Nations personnel, outlining voluntary measures, based on the core principles, for reference by United Nations organizations when contracting those categories of personnel.**

80.   **The Committee adopted, for reference by Committee member organizations, practical guidance for integrating occupational safety and health into enterprise risk management processes.**

81.   **The Committee agreed to establish an occupational safety and health forum, led by WHO, to serve as a multidisciplinary inter-agency technical body to mainstream occupational safety and health and the tools developed by the task**

force into the United Nations system; to coordinate, revise and update relevant norms and standards; to further develop occupational safety and health risk management methodologies; and to promote the integration of such risk management into the work of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams.

V. Supporting the transformation of United Nations system operations to a repositioned United Nations development system

82.   The Secretary-General, in his reports on repositioning the United Nations development system (A/72/124-E/2018/3 and A/72/684-E/2018/7), set a number of ambitious objectives for a radical transformation of United Nations system operations, which were subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/279. In recent years, the Committee has been strongly supporting the work of the Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in the achievement of these objectives. The Committee heard a briefing on the overall status of the activities of the Group, in particular with respect to the application of mutual recognition in the field.

83.   In the context of the discussion, the Committee received an update from the Business Innovations Group on the status of its activities. As part of the Global Shared Service Centre workstream, the results of the marketplace survey were presented. The survey was intended to explore the possibility of establishing an inter-agency marketplace for services: its potential was confirmed by the 21 organizations that had responded, most of which reported their interest and readiness to offer and/or receive services. The Committee also received a briefing on the completion of country-level pilots in the areas of common back offices and common premises, and on progress with the business operations strategy, the testing of which had been completed in seven countries, with expected roll-out by the end of 2019.

84.   The Committee was presented with cases of success in the application of mutual recognition, namely with respect to simplifying the process of outsourcing services between signatory organizations, permitting the adoption of policies and processes and benefiting from the higher delegation of authority allowed to other entities.

85.   A set of questions for discussion was posed to the Committee to develop a common understanding of mutual recognition, learn from shared experience and contribute to the further development of this approach.

86.   The Chair expressed appreciation for the valuable work conducted by the Business Innovations Group and emphasized the need for a shared set of agreed standards and indicators, especially with regard to the quality of services, the lack of which would hamper the creation of the bond of trust required for a successful exchange and consolidation of services. Several organizations echoed this view in the subsequent discussion. It was also recommended that communication be improved, both internally, to ensure that field offices were properly informed of how to apply mutual recognition, and externally, to ensure that stakeholders appreciated the collective benefits of consolidation and the sharing of support services. In presenting their own cases of the application of mutual recognition, organizations also asked for common, top-down guidance.

Decisions

87.   **The Committee took note of the update of the Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and invited the Group to**

provide it with a further update on its work at the next sessions. The Committee reconfirmed its commitment to working with the Group to achieve its objectives.

88.   The Committee encouraged organizations that had not yet done so to sign the mutual recognition statement and to develop internal guidelines on the practical application of its principles.

VI.   International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal judgment on post adjustment in Geneva

89.   In July 2019, the ILO Administrative Tribunal upheld the application by staff who had challenged the decision to apply to their salaries the post adjustment multiplier determined by ICSC on the basis of its 2016 cost-of-living survey. In the judgment, the Tribunal called for the contested ICSC decisions on post adjustment multipliers to be set aside. It also called for a retroactive adjustment of remuneration for affected staff and the payment of interest fees. The decision applies to agencies under the jurisprudence of the ILO Administrative Tribunal, while entities under the jurisprudence of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal or the United Nations Administrative Tribunal are awaiting the respective judgments in those tribunals.

90.   The Vice-Chair of ICSC stated that he shared the strong concern of members of ICSC that the United Nations common system was currently de facto split into two parts, while at the same time emphasizing the respect of ICSC for the independence of jurisdiction and its intention to cooperate with organizations for the unity of the common system. He shared his view that the current post adjustment methodology was sound, while leaving room for further improvement, and expressed the hope that the General Assembly would help to clarify the legal foundation of the ICSC mandate in determining the post adjustment multipliers. The Vice-Chair informed the audience of the ongoing review of the post adjustment methodology, conducted by a task force of statisticians and a working group on operational rules, aimed at ensuring the stability and predictability of take-home pay, in which both the organizations and the staff federations were represented. He noted that, in any case, the outstanding judgment of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal would have to be awaited. After the judgment, the Commission would engage itself to work out a new, improved mechanism to ensure a unified common system.

91.   The representative of one organization bound to implement the ILO Administrative Tribunal ruling provided some additional clarification, noting that as an independent judicial body the Tribunal was not subject to direction from ILO or the General Assembly. With regard to the threshold question on the legality of the ICSC decision, he pointed out that, given the aforementioned independence, a simple affirmation or delegation of power from the Assembly to ICSC on the matters addressed in the recent rulings would not be sufficient to address the risk of future ICSC decisions on post adjustment being challenged at the Tribunal on the same grounds. The Tribunal did not accept the position defended by the organizations that the 30-year practice of ICSC post adjustment determinations was sufficient to establish decision-making power for ICSC in the absence of a formal amendment to its statute. He suggested that the only way to avoid future litigation on ICSC post adjustment decisions was for it to apply the provisions of its statute and make recommendations on post adjustments to the Assembly for decision, or for the Assembly to amend the ICSC statute to provide the decision-making power to ICSC. He reminded the Committee that the executive heads of specialized agencies had an obligation to verify, among other aspects, the lawfulness of common system decisions prior to their administrative application in their organizations.

92.   The representative also pointed to the fact that the judgments of the ILO Administrative Tribunal contained serious and direct comments pointing to perceived shortcomings beyond the threshold question on the legality, namely in the amendment of the 5 per cent gap closure measure and the entire post adjustment determination process, which it confirmed must ensure "foreseeability, transparency and stability". He explained that those issues could only be addressed by ICSC itself and urged the Commission to complete the revision of the methodology with the aim of devising a new methodology that would comply with core principles and thus would stand the legal scrutiny of the Tribunal. He ensured the active support of his organization and other affected agencies in that effort. He stressed that rulings of the Tribunal were final, binding, non-appealable and not subject to any review or scrutiny by United Nations tribunals or governing bodies. The only solution for the current situation was therefore the speedy finalization of a revised, sound methodology that could be applied in a next round of surveys. He also indicated that his organization was firmly committed to the common system and called upon all parties to work together to resolve these outstanding issues.

93.   One organization bound to implement the judgments of the ILO Administrative Tribunal also stressed the particular governance structure of the specialized agencies, independent of the General Assembly. It further aimed to correct any alleged notion that such organizations would not respect the common system or Assembly resolutions. The primary consideration was the legality of any administrative action as determined by the Tribunal, a standard that had to be adopted in all decisions and solutions relating to the common system in order to avoid the repetition of such a situation. It also suggested that it should be stressed in all communications on the matter that the United Nations tribunals had no primacy whatsoever over the ILO Administrative Tribunal and that the post adjustment multipliers currently provided to affected organizations by ICSC were no less official than the published ones, as they were the only ones that complied with the ruling of the ILO Administrative Tribunal.

94.   The representatives of staff federations pointed to the pay inequality and the related questioning of the basis on which purchasing power is determined. They indicated that the mere fact that some survey results had been positive was no evidence at all that the underpinning methodology was correct or adequate, and stressed the urgency of addressing the situation in order to avoid the challenges of post adjustment or other entitlements determined by ICSC in the administrative tribunals of other duty stations. They also stressed that the reintroduction of the 5 per cent gap closure measure was seen as imperative. Representatives further shared that at the last ICSC session a number of commissioners not only expressed disagreement with many considerations of the judgment but also questioned whether ICSC should be supporting the implementation of the binding judgment at all by providing them with legally satisfying calculations. This was observed with concern as it could be interpreted as an attempt to impede organizations under the jurisdiction of the ILO Administrative Tribunal from fulfilling their legal obligations. Upholding meticulously the independence of administration of justice and fully and swiftly respecting the rule of law was seen as essential to avoid situations in which staff members had no other choice but to address their cases to national courts instead of the current judicial bodies, should those be perceived as lacking independence or respect for their rulings.

95.   The Vice-Chair of ICSC, in response to some of the interventions, submitted his interpretation of the statutory powers based on the recollection of two General Assembly resolutions (44/198 and 45/259) embodying the reform of post adjustment of 1989/90, and emphasized that the Commission, since its creation, had constantly established the post adjustment multipliers. He further expanded on the historical background, pointing to the fact that the level of the gap closure measure was raised

from 0 per cent to 3 per cent in August 2017, while the reduction from 5 per cent to 0 per cent had been decided two years before the Geneva post adjustment multiplier was reduced.

Decisions

96.   **The Committee took note of the update by the Vice-Chair of ICSC and of the view held by representatives of the various organizations and staff federations, and looked forward to the deliberations of the General Assembly and to the ruling of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal.**

VII. Any other business

97.   The Committee heard a briefing by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Reform, Jens Wandel, on the use of data and artificial intelligence to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. He underlined that the language of the Goals was a global one, in both form and substance. This allowed for the creation of a broad information ecosystem to unlock the capabilities of artificial intelligence and algorithms, map conceptual relationships between the Goals and other tools and policy instruments, improve reporting and much more.

98.   The Special Adviser commended the progress made with the adoption and implementation of the data cube and called for an ever-increasing effort in this area. He noted that, as the number of artificial intelligence tools and of organizations involved in their development increased, the lead time for the development of new tools decreases, and it became much faster to unlock information contained in complex databases, which otherwise would remain virtually inaccessible to humans.

Decisions

99.   **The Committee took note with interest of the update on the Sustainable Development Goals human rights data explorer, a recent data innovation initiative by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, which uses artificial intelligence to explore the connections between the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms and the Goals.**

100.   **The Chair informed the Committee that the next session would be hosted by UNOPS in Copenhagen on 30 and 31 March 2020.**

Annex I

List of participants

Chair: Grete Faremo, Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services

Vice-Chair: Kelly Clements, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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

Simona Petrova, Director, secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination

Organization	Participants
United Nations	Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
	Jens Wandel, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Reform
	Noirin O'Sullivan, Assistant Secretary-General for Safety and Security
	Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management
	Lisa Buttenheim, Assistant Secretary-General for Support Operations
	Karen Lock, Special Assistant to the Chef de Cabinet
International Labour Organization	Greg Vines, Deputy Director General
	André Bogui, Director, Human Resources Development Department
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Dilek Macit, Assistant Director General, Corporate Services Department
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Gunilla Carlsson, Deputy Executive Director, Management and Governance
International Civil Aviation Organization	Erwin Lassooij, Chief, Strategic Planning and Regional Affairs
World Health Organization	Isabelle Nuttall, Senior Adviser, Human Resources Department
International Organization for Migration	Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General
	David Knight, Special Adviser to the Deputy Director General
International Telecommunication Union	Anders Norsker, Chief, Information Services
	Yushi Torigoe, Chief, Strategic Planning and Membership Department
World Intellectual Property Organization	Ambi Sundaram, Assistant Director General, Administration and Management Sector
	Chitra Narayanaswamy, Director, Programme Planning and Finance (Controller)
	Cornelia Moussa, Director, Human Resources Management Department

Organization	Participants
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Guoqi Wu, Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Fatou Haidara, Managing Director, Directorate of Corporate Management and Operations
World Trade Organization	Zoritsa Urosevic, Chief, Institutional Relations and Partnerships Department and Special Representative to the United Nations in Geneva
International Atomic Energy Agency	Mary Alice Hayward, Deputy Director General and Head, Department of Management
	Anne Starz, Adviser to the Deputy Director General for Management
United Nations Development Programme	Teresa Panuccio, Special Adviser to the Administrator
	Darshak Shah, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Management Services, and Chief Finance Officer
	David Bearfield, Director, Office of Human Resources
United Nations Environment Programme	Isabel Martinez, Senior Legal Officer, Corporate Services Division
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Catty Bennet Sattler, Director, Division of Human Resources
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Christian Saunders, Acting Commissioner-General
United Nations Children's Fund	David Matern, Senior Adviser, Multilateral and Intergovernmental Partners
United Nations Population Fund	Laura Londén, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for Management
	Andrew Saberton, Director, Division for Management Services
World Food Programme	Manoj Juneja, Assistant Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Dennis Thatchaichawalit, Director, Division for Management
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	Lene Jespersen, Deputy Director, Division of Management and Administration
United Nations Officer for Project Services	Victoria Campbell, Deputy Director, People and Change Group
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Ovais Sarmad, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Secretary
International Monetary Fund	Chris Hemus, Director, Corporate Services and Facilities Department
World Bank	Ferran Perez Ribo, International Affairs Officer

Organization	Participants
Other representatives:	
United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute	Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Director a.i.
	Leif Villadsen, Deputy Director
United Nations System Staff College	Jafar Javan, Director
United Nations Volunteers	Olivier Adam, Executive Coordinator
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Patrick Grenard, Director, Division of Administration
International Trade Centre	Gerry Lynch, Director, Division of Programme Support
Young UN: Agents for Change	Ruth Blackshaw, Young UN: Agents for Change network enabler, United Nations Office at Geneva
	Martin Ostermeier, Technical Officer in Economic, Social and Employment Policies, International Labour Organization
Development Coordination Office	Giovanie Biha, Deputy Director
	Bakhodir Burkhanov, Chief, Business Management Branch
Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group	Robert Turner, Project Team Leader, Business Innovations Group
International Civil Service Commission	Aldo Mantovani, Vice-Chair
	Regina Pawlik, Executive Secretary
Federation of International Civil Servants Associations	Evelyn Kortum, General Secretary
Coordinating Committee for International Staff Associations and Unions of the United Nations System	Ian Richards, President
	Stefan Brezina, Vice-President for Communication and Outreach, (United Nations Officer at Vienna/United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)

Annex II

Checklist of documents

Title/description	Summary sheet	Document symbol
Revised agenda	Not available	CEB/2019/HLCM/22/Rev.3
Programme of work		CEB/2019/HLCM/22/Add.1/Rev.1
Draft discussion paper on the future of the United Nations system workforce	Not available	CEB/2019/HLCM/23
Draft concept note on the future of the United Nations system workforce		CEB/2019/HLCM/24
Agenda: High-level Committee on Management retreat on the future of the United Nations system workforce		CEB/2019/HLCM/29
Young UN: Agents for Change: Navigating to the next United Nations: a journey full of potential		Not available
For reference:		
United Nations system strategy on the future of work		CEB/2019/1/Add.2
United Nations system-wide strategic approach and road map for supporting capacity development on artificial intelligence		CEB/2019/1/Add.3
Towards a United Nations system-wide strategic approach for achieving inclusive, equitable and innovative education and learning for all		CEB/2019/1/Add.4
Secretary-General's strategy on new technologies (September 2018)		Not available
The age of digital interdependence: report of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation (June 2019)		Not available
Work for a brighter future: report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work (January 2019)		Not available
International Labour Organization centenary declaration for the future of work (June 2019)		Not available
Reference maturity model for risk management (final)	Yes	CEB/2019/HLCM/25
Guidelines on risk appetite statements (final)		CEB/2019/HLCM/26
Cross-functional task force on risk management: status update		CEB/2019/HLCM/28
Cross-functional task force on duty of care: final report, revised (October 2019)	Yes	CEB/2019/HLCM/27/Rev.1
Annexes to the final report of the task force on duty of care		CEB/2019/HLCM/27/Add.1
Business Innovations Group, update of 26 September 2019: United Nations reform, advancing common business operations (revised)	Yes (revised)	Not available

Title/description	Summary sheet	Document symbol
Business Innovations Group: briefing note on challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the mutual recognition statement		Not available
ILO Administrative Tribunal, 128th session, judgment No. 4134	Not available	Not available
Briefing note by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Reform: "Artificial intelligence and human rights/Sustainable Development Goals data and the wider perspective for application"	Not available	Not available
The contribution of United Nations data to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and United Nations reform, innovating now for better information in the future	Not available	CEB/2019/HLCP38/CRP.3
Final report of the thirtieth session of the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (June 2019)	Yes	Not available

————————