CEB
Chief Executives Board
for Coordination

High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM)

COVID-19: Aligning and Coordinating
UN System's Return to Office
Basic facts and figures
Update as of 31 July 2020

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Note: sources of data

The information presented in the document has been gathered through a short questionnaire (annex 1) submitted by the HLCM Secretariat in July 2020 (as a follow-up to the first round of May 2020) to all its members, as well as to Regional Commissions.

In the **first round** (May 2020) the HLCM Secretariat received responses from 22 of the HLCM members, as well as from all five Regional Commissions. In the **second round (July 2020 – current document)**, the HLCM Secretariat again received responses from 22 of the HLCM members, as well as from all five Regional Commissions. In this second round, the questionnaire included a set of additional questions (see Section 4), while data gathered was limited to **HQ locations.**

Note on methodology - July 2020 Update

In the second round of the survey, the analysis is presented with a chronological focus (month by month) rather than looking at "phases", since the latter are not consistently defined across the system.

1 Occupancy rates

Data on the evolution of occupancy rates across months is varied and strongly dependent on the local context. All Headquarter offices and Regional Commissions have started gradual return to premises (see table 1), generally through a phased approach. Occupancy rates applicable as of September are still largely *to be determined* as the situation is still rapidly evolving, requiring continuous re-assessments.
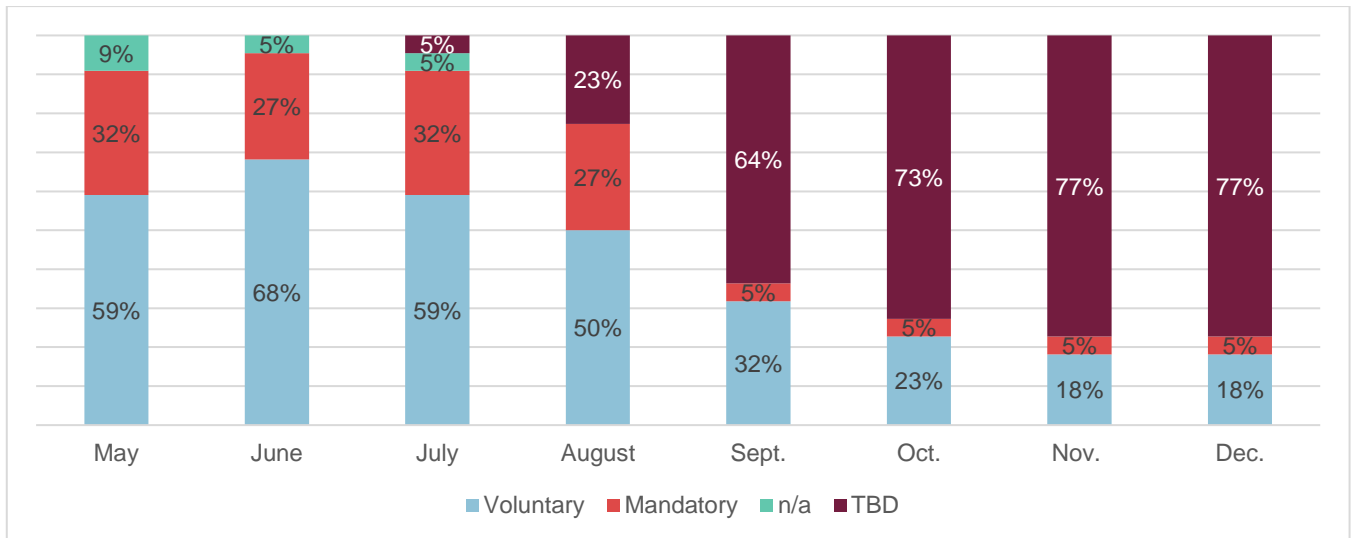
1.1 Occupancy data for HQ locations

Table 1. Occupancy rates by duty-station/organization

Location	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Amman (UNRWA)	0%	10%	30%	100%	TBD					
Bonn	2%	10%	40%	60%	TBD					
Copenhagen (UN City)	On-site req.	10%	30%	65%	85%	TBD				
Geneva										
ILO	On-site required personnel				25%	30%	TBD			
UNOG	On-site req.			30%	60%	60%	TBD			
UNHCR	On-site req.	20%	20%	50%	TBD					
UNAIDS	On-site req.	20%	40%	65%	80%	TBD				
WIPO	On-site req.	200 ppl.		50%			60%	TBD		
WHO	On-site req.	13%			30%		TBD			
London (IMO)	On-site req.			10%	25%	25%	TBD			
Montreal (ICAO)	On-site required personnel							25%		
Nairobi (UNON-UNEP-UN Habitat)	1%									
New York										
UNHQ	On-site required personnel				*10%*	*40%*	TBD			
UNDP	On-site required personnel						TBD			
UNFPA	On-site required personnel				6%	10%	40%	TBD		
UNWOMEN	On-site required personnel						40%	TBD		
UNICEF	On-site req.			5%	5%	10%	20%	40%	TBD	
Paris (UNESCO)	On-site req.	10%	20%	30%	TBD					
Rome										
IFAD	On site req.	30 people max		50 max	130 max	TBD				
WFP	On-site req.		3%	10%		TBD				
FAO	On-site req.		2%	10%		20%	TBD			
Vienna (VIC)	On-site req.		20%	50%	100%					
World Bank	On-site required personnel						TBD			
IMF	On-site req.		1%				5%	15%	25%	60%

Until April (table 1), most respondents had reported no presence of personnel at the premises, apart from a limited number of on-site required staff. However (figure 1), in several locations the epidemiological situation improved before and during the summer months, allowing for a gradual return to premises, initially on a voluntary basis (May/June). As of July, data indicates that an increasing number of organizations started to request mandatory return to office; however, information related to August and beyond is still largely *to be determined*. More clarity on return to office approaches as of September can be expected in the next round of this survey.

Figure 1. Percentage of entities that opt for voluntary vs mandatory return of staff to office, per month

1.2   Occupancy data for Regional Commissions

In the second round of the questionnaire, the request for information was limited to HQ locations. Data for field offices other than Regional Commissions is therefore not included in the tables below.

Table 2. Occupancy rates by Regional Commission

| Location	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Bangkok (ESCAP)	On-site required personnel		20%		50%		TBD			
Beirut (ESCWA)	On-site required personnel		50%		85%		TBD			
Santiago (ECLAC)	On-site required personnel			2%			TBD			
Addis Ababa (ECA)	On-site required personnel		18%		20%		25%	50%	75%	100%
Geneva (ECE)	On-site required personnel		30%		60%		TBD			

Table 3. Voluntary vs. mandatory return to office (within the limits of occupancy applicable to each phase as illustrated in table 2), by Regional Commission

Location	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Bangkok (ESCAP)	Voluntary						TBD			
Beirut (ESCWA)	Mandatory						TBD			
Santiago (ECLAC)	Mandatory						TBD			
Addis Ababa (ECA)	Voluntary						Mandatory			
Geneva (ECE)	Mandatory			Voluntary			TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

1.3   Triggers and indicators

In the second round of the survey, the vast majority of respondents continued to report the use of a set of triggers/indicators to assess when to modify occupancy rates (figure 2). Entities rely on local authorities' provisions, as well as on health data and trends, and on the availability of local health services. Availability of testing and tracing is also widely reported. On the other hand, the availability of public services is reported as one of the triggers by only 50% of respondents. Data for Regional Commissions largely mirrors that of HQs.

*Figure 2. Triggers/indicators - average across months (HQs)*

Availability of public services (schools, daycare)	50%
Availability of local health services	93%
Availability of testing/tracing	83%
Health data and trends	95%
Local Authorities' Provisions	95%
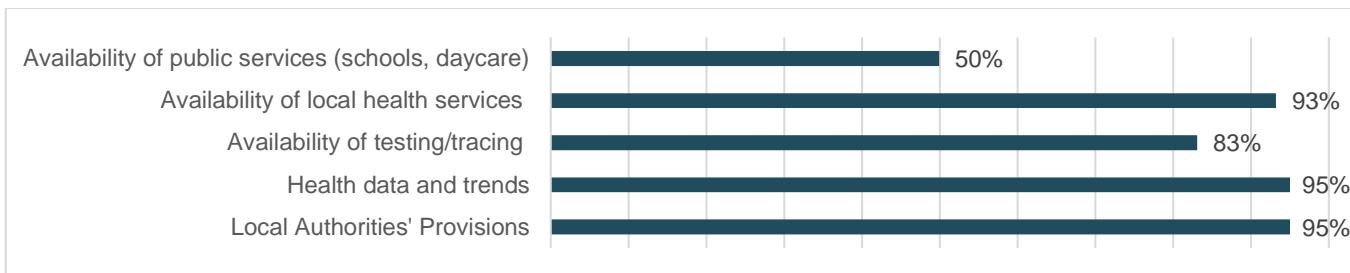
2 Hosting of meetings

2.1 Type of meetings

The hosting of meetings and conferences in HQ locations (figure 3) was completely discontinued or heavily reduced as a mitigating measure against the spread of COVID-19. This was particularly true for earlier months, whereas later months saw a relaxing of restrictions, primarily for UN personnel and, to a lesser extent, for delegates and external participants. Organizational mandates play an important role in these decisions: entities where the hosting of inter-governmental meetings and conferences is one of the core functions are expecting to ease restrictions sooner than others. As figures 3 shows, the vast majority of organizations are yet to make decisions on whether/how they will resume hosting of meetings as of September.

With regard to the Regional Commissions, meetings for UN personnel were in general allowed across all months, although with strict occupancy and distancing measures.

Figure 3. Number of organizations allowing meetings, per month (only HQ)
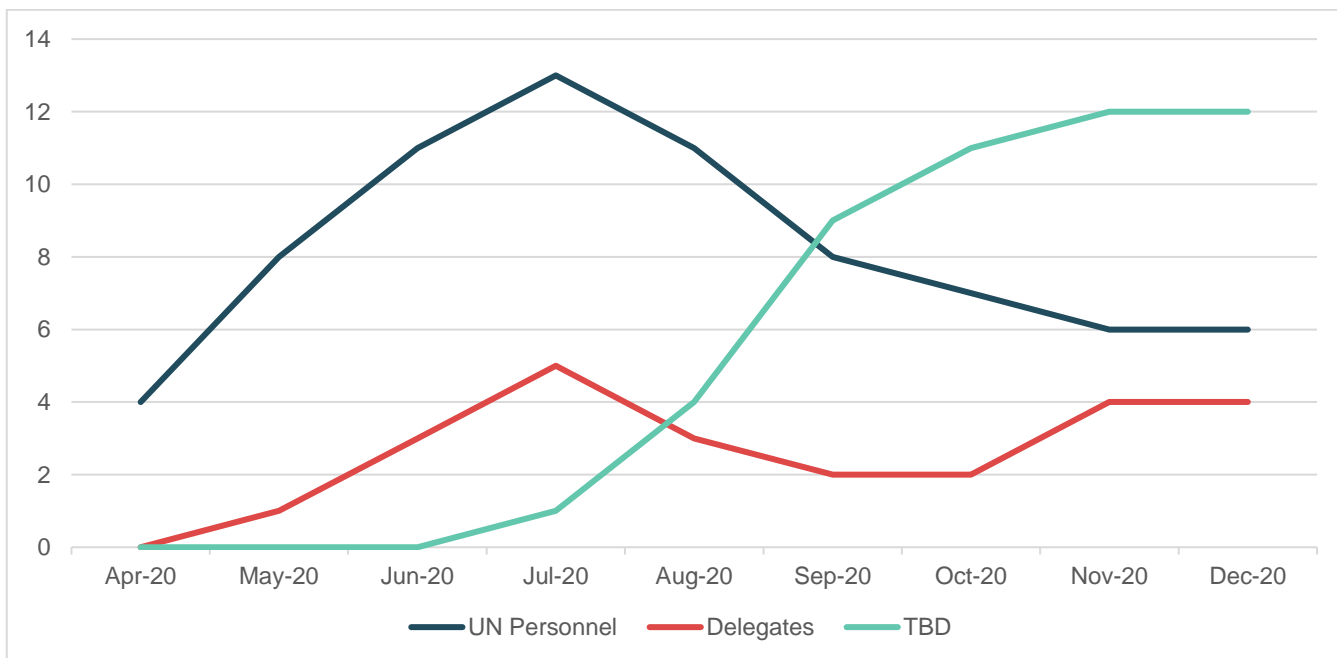
2.2 Remote conferencing

Entities have been utilizing various remote conferencing services, including with interpretation, to allow for the continuation of meetings even in the presence of restrictions for in-person meetings. As illustrated in figure 4, more than two thirds of respondents from both HQs and Regional Commissions have been offering this service. However, provision of interpretation presents a challenge for some organizations due to strict information security protocols. As phases progress and more in-person meetings resume, the amount of remote conferencing has been and will continue to decrease, but will remain an important resource.

Figure 4. Use of remote conferencing with interpretation (HQs and Regional Commissions)
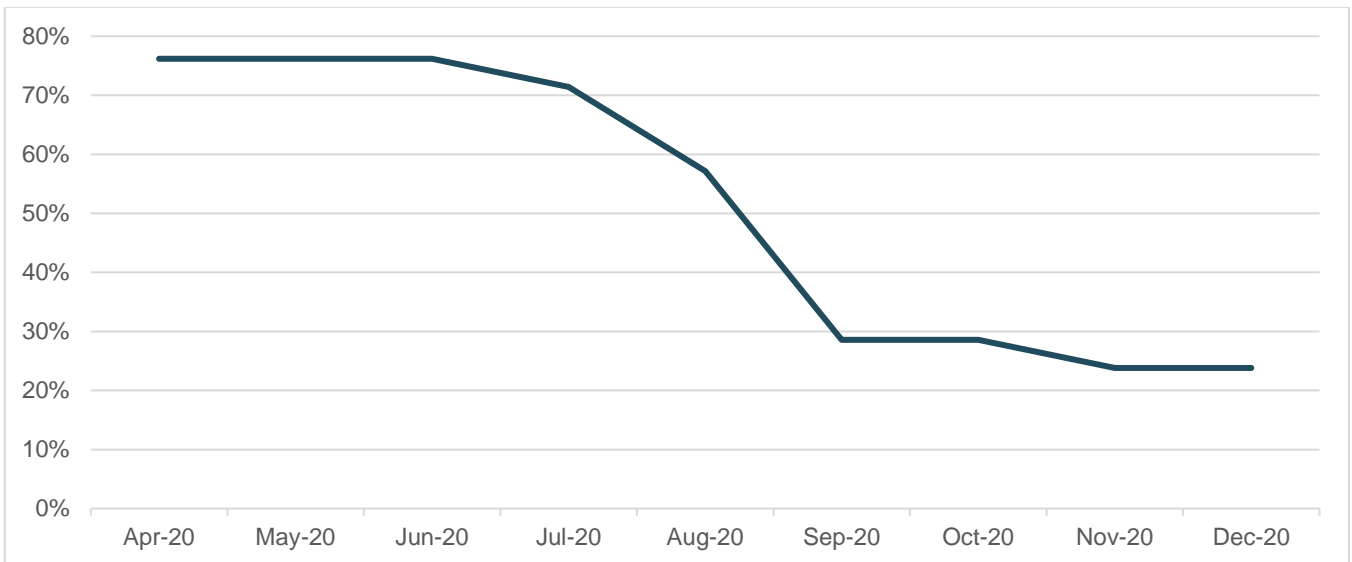

3 Safety measures

Respondents were asked to identify which types of measures they intended to utilize to ensure the safety of personnel returning to the office. As figure 5 shows, most entities have implemented or will implement changes in air circulation, signage (such as signs to explain correct personal hygiene or regulate the flow of people in buildings), increased cleaning and disinfection and limits to elevator occupation.

Less widespread measures include staggered working hours – which heavily depend on the overall plan developed by the entity – limited catering and temperature screening.

Figure 5. Safety measures (avg. across phases, HQs)
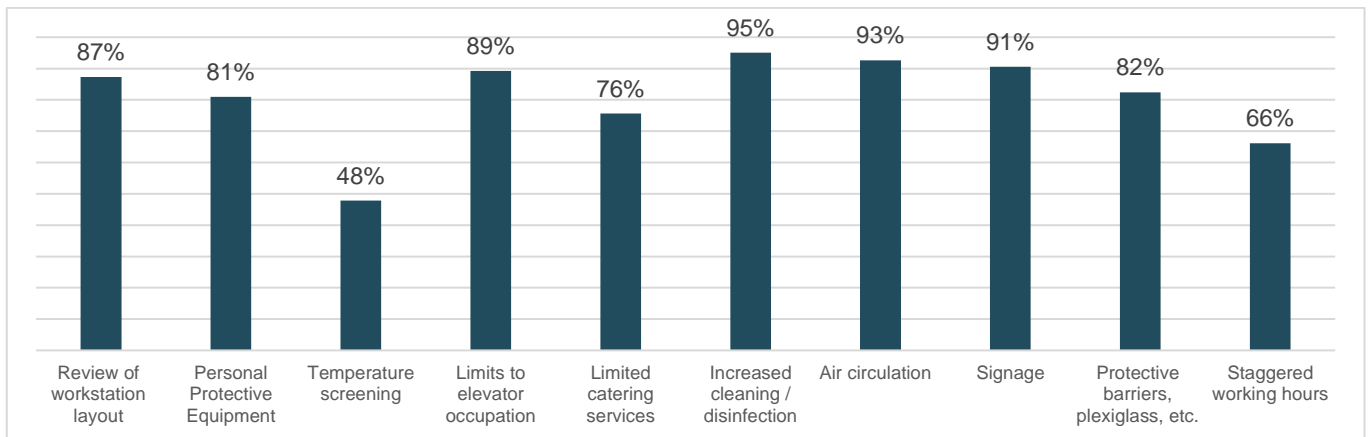
Measures in Regional Commissions (figure 6) are quite consistent with those taken at Headquarters, with the exception of temperature screening and staggered working hours, which are much more widely used in Regional Commissions, and protective barriers, which are less used than in HQ locations.

Figure 6. Safety measures (avg. across phases, Regional Commissions)
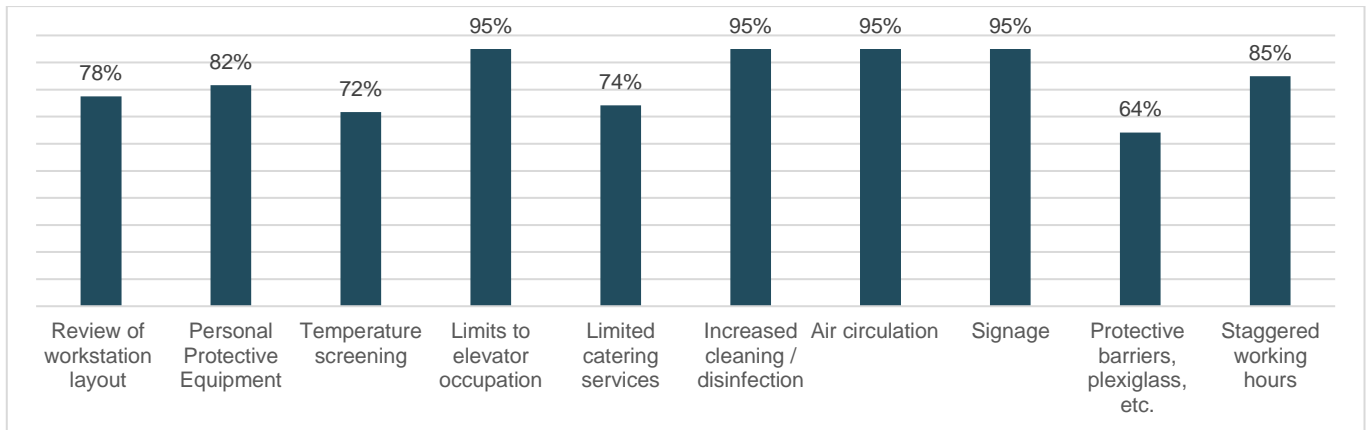
4 Additional questions from the survey as of July 2020

The second round of the questionnaire included a set of additional questions aimed at clarifying a few aspects not captured by the original survey.

4.1 Mandatory masks and social distancing at the premises

The survey highlights a widespread use of masks at the premises (73 per cent of respondents), although in 41 per cent of cases this is limited to the common areas, i.e. excluding individual offices, meeting rooms, etc.

Social distancing is always applied (100 per cent of respondents) and is most commonly set at 2-meter distance (77 per cent). In fewer cases the distance is limited to 1.5 meters (14 per cent) or 1 meter only (9 per cent).

4.2 Measures for office de-densification

This question was meant to explore the different measures put in place by organizations to reduce the density of personnel at the premises (figure 7).

The most common measure, consistently with the previous question, is based on distance, i.e. setting a minimum of meters or squared meters around and between members of personnel. Other measures include limiting the overall occupancy rates of the offices through telecommuting and rotations, setting a limit of persons per office (usually "one person per office"), and redesigning the overall layout of offices to comply with safety requirements.

Figure 7. De-densification measures
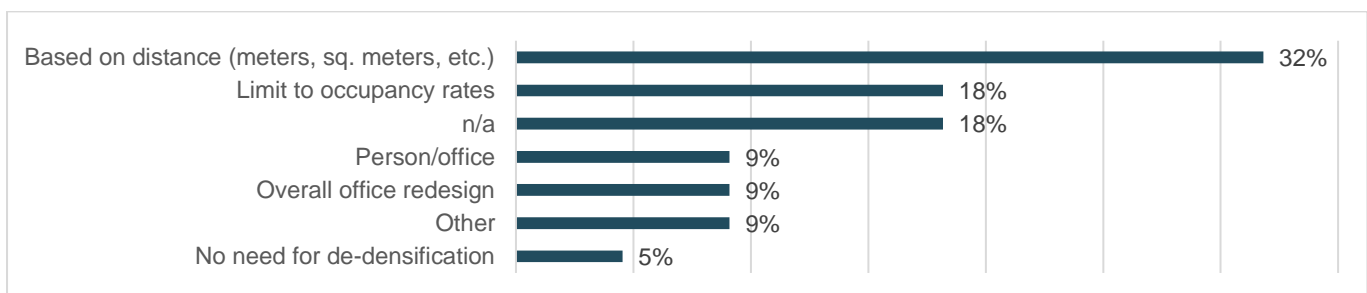
4.3   Approaches for open spaces

The last question aimed to understand common approaches towards ensuring safety in open space settings (figure 8). In most cases, this is done through <u>distancing between workstations</u>. In some limited cases, safety is also ensured by putting in place <u>barriers</u> – e.g. plexiglass between workstations – and by <u>making masks mandatory</u> when working in this type of office.

Figure 8. Approach for open spaces
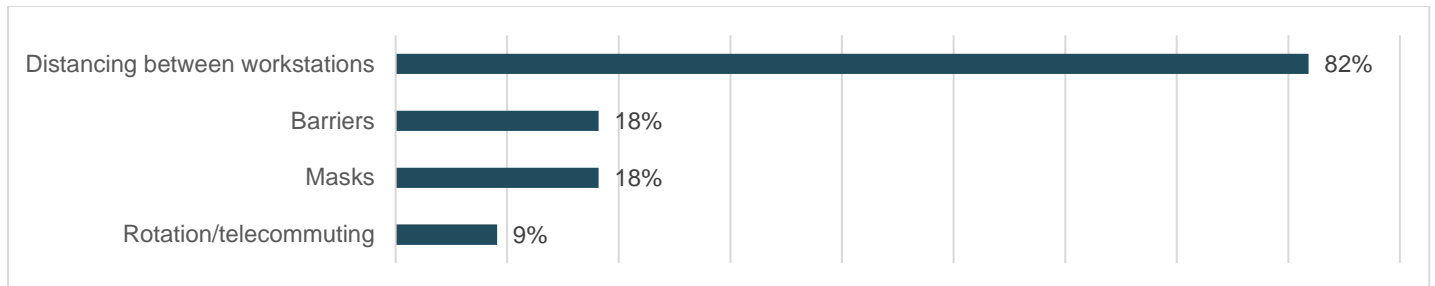
5   Conclusions

At the time when this questionnaire was administered, many entities were still considering the dates and parameters applicable to their Back to Office plans. The HLCM secretariat plans to repeat this exercise periodically throughout the period during which entities will return to office, and will update the information presented in this note accordingly. The next round will take place in early September 2020.

6 Annex 1: Questionnaire template

*If available, please identify the back to office phase corresponding to that month.

** If the precise % is not available, please provide an estimate / range.

Month		Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20
Max daily occupancy rate at the premises (%)**										
Mandatory vs voluntary basis										
Meetings allowed?	UN Personnel									
	Max number of participants									
	Delegates									
	Max number of participants									
Provision for remote conferencing with interpretation										

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

2. Indicators / triggers

PHASE:	1	2	3	4
Requirements provided by local authorities				
Health data and trends				
Availability of testing/tracing				
Availability of local health services				
Availability of public services (schools, daycare)				
Other				

4. Other questions:

Is wearing a mask mandatory when at the premises?	
If yes, can you provide any additional provision (e.g. mask mandatory only in common spaces vs always mandatory)	

Is there a defined physical distance to respect?		If yes, what is it?	

Can you provide details on any measures for office de-densification (e.g. sqm applied per person)?	
Please briefly outline applied approach for open spaces?	

3. Protection measures:

PHASE:	1	2	3	4
Review of workstation layout				
Personal Protective Equipment				
Temperature screening				
Limits to elevator occupation				
Limited catering services				
Increased cleaning / disinfection				
Air circulation				
Signage				
Protective barriers, plexiglass, etc.				
Staggered working hours				
Other				