



**CEB**  
**Chief Executives Board**  
**for Coordination**

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**High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM)**

**Conclusions of the High-Level Committee on Management**  
**at its Fortieth Session**

29 September and 13 October 2020

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## I Introduction

1. The High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its fortieth session virtually on 29 September and 13 October. The two meetings were chaired by the HLCM Chair, Ms. Grete Faremo, Executive Director, UNOPS and by the HLCM Vice-Chair, Ms. Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees.
2. At both sessions, the HLCM Chair welcomed new HLCM members as well as guests, including representatives from the ICSC, the staff unions and Young UN.
3. On 13 October, the HLCM Chair opened the session with a virtual applause to the World Food Programme for the Nobel Peace Prize that 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 of the two sessions as adopted by the Committee is reflected in the table of contents. The lists of participants are provided in Annexes I and II. The consolidated agenda included the following themes:
  - a. Future of the UN System Workforce;
  - b. Aligning and Coordinating UN System’s Return to Office;
  - c. Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organisations of the UN System;
  - d. Final Report of the UNSDG Business Innovations Strategic Results Group (BIG); and,
  - e. HLCM Task Force on Risk Management (*for consideration via correspondence after the session, not for discussion*)

## II Future of the UN System Workforce



### Documentation:

- ✓ CEB/2020/HLCM/13 – Interim Report of the CEB Task Force on Future of the UN System Workforce
- ✓ CEB/2020/HLCM/16 – Discussion Paper: Interim Report of the CEB Task Force on Future of the UN System Workforce

5. Established in 2019 by HLCM, the CEB Task Force on the Future of the UN System Workforce (Task Force) had progressed 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.
6. Following the Committee’s decision at its executive session of 15 June 2020, the Task Force had re-oriented its work to focus on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the UN system’s ways of working and on the repercussions for the future. The Task Force had concentrated its efforts on areas with the most potential effects in the immediate future, namely elements of an expanded approach to remote working, supported by modern and sustainable contractual arrangements and enabling technologies.

7. The Task Force submitted its work to the Committee in an interim report, which aims to reflect the aspirations of the UN system organisations to become more agile, effective and inclusive in the fulfilment of their mandates, with particular focus on the management, the equipment and well-being of their most valued asset: their personnel.
8. The Chair of the Committee welcomed representatives from the Staff Federations, the International Civil Service Commission and the Young UN network to the session. She reiterated that the Covid-19 pandemic had brought disruptions to all parts of the UN system and that while the UN had adapted well in its first response, it needed to make sure it can live up to these 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.
9. 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 the social aspects, including areas that foster an enabling culture and positive employee experience, and might include elements such as a modernized definition of family care, part-time employment, performance management and learning, reflecting the advocacy of the current social justice movements towards more inclusion and diversity, and other topics.
10. It was noted that the Task Force would follow an inclusive and human-centred approach in all its undertakings, and that its aim remained to propose common principles and guidelines for UN entities, while deliberately refraining from applying one approach to all entities in recognition of the heterogeneity of the common system.
11. Laying out the Task Force's timeline for its next deliverables, the Chair and Deputy Chair were expecting delivery of common elements of a framework for flexible working by the end of 2020, while tangible proposals on the people-centred and cultural aspects would be provided to HLCM for its meeting in spring 2021, as will an update on the progress for exploring new contractual modalities, which may represent a longer-term endeavour.
12. 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 UN needed to harness the unique lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic and to keep an open mind for 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 towards remote working was supported.
13. Several participants noted that the work on the future of the UN 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 UN work environment with an enabling culture required the Task Force to take issues of diversity and inclusion into account in all its work.

14. It was highlighted that new contract modalities should consider flexibility, financial sustainability, social protection as well as questions around 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.
15. 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 the Task Force could consider making the UN a more modern employer, including an updated family leave policy, more flexible working arrangements and greater mobility.
16. The necessity to use technology to transform how the UN system works was highlighted and it was stressed that for this transformation to be enabled by technology, it needed to be tackled through collaborative efforts between UN entities to ensure greatest impact and avoid negative consequences. While the project of a digital UN ID 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.
17. Summing up the discussion and noting the endorsement of many points laid out in the interim report, the HLCM Chair reiterated that the Task Force would continue to apply a holistic, sequenced and inclusive approach to its work. She thanked the Committee and guest representatives for a rich and engaging discussion.

➤ ***The High-Level Committee on Management:***

18. *Endorsed, encouraged and supported principles, initiatives and other elements as laid out in the Interim Report. Specifically:*
  - 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 report back to the Committee at its first regular session of 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 UN system framework for flexible working on the basis of the principles laid out in the interim paper.*
  - d. *Requested the advancement of the development of (a) new optional contract modality(ies) for international staff, including non-location-specific options.*
  - e. *Supported the piloting of the Digital UN ID project and the continuation of work on further pilots using enabling technology to support an effective UN system workplace.*

### III Aligning and Coordinating UN System's Return to Office



#### Documentation:

- ✓ *CEB/2020/HLCM/11/Rev.2 – COVID-19: Aligning and Coordinating UN System's Return to Office – Basic facts and figures (Updated as of 30 September 2020)*

19. At its special session on 5 June 2020, the Committee discussed the Back to Office approaches put in place by UN system organizations in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of the session was to discuss how best a coordinated approach could be achieved, ensuring the maximum collaboration and alignment in managing this 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 office and a number of priority issues of system-wide importance that would need particular attention going forward, as well as summary of basic facts and figures from the Back to Office plans across the system.
20. In a continuation of the June discussion, HLCM members continued their exchange on principles, measures and approaches informing 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 this process in the next 18-24 months. The discussion was informed by the results of the second and third round of the HLCM survey on Back to Office plans, which aimed to capture the key elements of organizations' return plans after the summer.
21. The objectives of the session were to:
  - a. Highlight lessons learned from the various approaches in the return to office of UN system organizations, also in light of context-specific considerations, and identify solutions and best practices that may be of system-wide applicability;
  - b. Share knowledge and experience with a focus on longer term considerations. Particular attention was placed on 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.
22. The session included a set of presentations on Back to Office plans from selected UN System duty stations, representing various typologies of UN offices and highlighting commonalities and specificities in their respective approaches to returning to Office, both from the Headquarters' perspective (UN-DSS on New York and UNOG on Geneva) and from field offices in countries or regions where freedom of movement is restricted or access to primary healthcare is limited (ECLAC on Latin America and UNFPA on Western and Central Africa) .
23. The Committee also heard from Ms. AnneMarie van den Berg, Director of the Logistics Division and Acting Assistant Secretary-General of the UN Department of Operational Support, on the work of the UN System-Wide Medevac Task Force.
24. Ms. van den Berg outlined the key components of the Medevac strategy. Overall, the work of the Task Force was guided by a “no regrets” approach, guided by worst-case scenario assumptions, as well as by the principles of solidarity, humanity and fairness. Medevac operations is managed through the “Medevac cell”, i.e. a medical “control tower” in Geneva plus the Brindisi (Italy) centre for the aviation implementation side. A key role is played by the COVID-19 country coordinators, who are responsible to liaising with Geneva to request evacuation. A [webpage](#) has

been created where guidance material, technical documents, and forms are available, as well as the recently issued Post-MEDEVAC Support Framework. Finally, a network of facilities has been put in place based on a hybrid system of independent facilities established by the UN or provided through collaboration with public and private institutions at regional level. The Medevac dashboard was also presented: the dashboard, updated thrice a day, provides a complete view of the status of Medevac operations, as well as all key metrics to evaluate its progress over time.

25. 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 members was how the rapid evolution of the pandemic may make planning ineffective. Telecommuting and closing of offices had been the mainstream approach during the first months. During the summer, several offices had started a gradual return to their premises, which was quickly reversed towards the end of the summer, due to a re-surge in cases. The complex process of continuous re-adjustment highlighted a set of key lessons learned, which, in the long-term, would all contribute towards an overall re-thinking of the UN way of working.
26. 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 towards ensuring staff well-being through counselling, and the development and distribution of material and overall guidance to raise awareness about workplace mental health issues and the promotion of well-being. Initiatives in this area included the UN Secretariat's Mental Health month, to mobilize efforts around the implementation of the United Nations System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy.
27. The Committee agreed that mental health would become more and more important and should be included in long-term planning by organizations. Strictly connected to mental health was communication and engagement of personnel: several members underlined the importance of creating the space for conversations by both senior leadership and individual supervisors, with personnel at large, to understand their concerns regarding their job, work conditions, as well as their personal lives and those of their families. It is essential that clear and correct information be provided to personnel to reduce uncertainty and stress, and ensure they are able to deliver effectively.
28. The issue of meetings was also extensively discussed. Depending on the requirements of organizations, member states and local authorities, organizations have put in place different arrangements to allow resumption of inter-governmental and other meetings, from allowing physical meetings with strict prevention measures in place, to various forms of hybrid arrangements – i.e. limits to the number of delegates physically allowed at the premises, with other participants joining virtually –, to fully virtual meetings. HLCM members reported the success of several high-level meetings, particularly those organized through the use of digital tools to enable virtual interpretation (in the majority of cases, Zoom or Interpretify). Acceptance among delegates had been growing, thanks to improved ease of use and increased familiarity with virtual meeting tools.

29. The discussion covered other implications of the pandemic, on: organizational processes, including growing cybersecurity threats; risk management, particular in the field, where the pandemic has made controls more difficult; the reduction or discontinuation of travel, which hindered both essential work-related activities that may require fast deployment of personnel, as well as personal needs such as family reunifications, etc.; and, solutions for the supply of medical and other material to field-based locations with fragile health systems, thanks to which the provision of kits for testing, isolation, and stabilization of patients while awaiting for Medevac has been made possible.
30. On the topic of COVID-19 vaccine, it was noted that a collaborative effort was ongoing to manage the procurement and supply chain for its distribution, including the development of a framework for the allocation and prioritization of vaccines. The importance of avoiding the perception of privileged access to vaccines by UN staff was stressed, while noting that personnel with high-risk profiles (including pregnant women and persons with underlying conditions), or those working on the frontline of medical emergencies (doctors, nurses, etc.), as well as humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel, should be given priority. It was recommended that UN personnel primarily source the vaccine from local health authorities. Nonetheless, plans would be made for the delivery of the vaccine in locations where it may not be available or where the available vaccine would not be in the list of the WHO-approved ones.
31. Some interventions focused on using the experience developed in response to the pandemic as an opportunity to embrace a whole re-imagining of working arrangements. There was broad agreement on the need for hybrid/blended approaches to enable personnel to move more freely across locations and between postings. That would mean establishing new approaches to mobility that could include, for example, surge and emergency teams to be deployed for a limited time according to operational needs, alongside hybrid/blended modalities to include both telecommuting and presence on-site. Key in this endeavour is to strike the right balance between business continuity and delivery needs and those of safety and well-being of personnel. New approaches would also need to support personnel in their career 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, particularly at management level.

***The High-Level Committee on Management:***

32. *Took note of the results of the latest round of the HLCM survey on Back to Office, as well as of 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 sharing of best practices on specific items, as relevant.*

## IV Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organisations of the UN System



### Documentation:

- ✓ *CEB/2020/HLCM/18 – 2020-2021 Workplan - CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN system*

33. The HLCM Chair recalled that the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment Within the Organizations of the UN System (Task Force), since its establishment at the end of 2017 by the CEB, had continually worked towards a United Nations workplace free of sexual harassment and pursued a common UN system approach to address the issue. In 2018 and 2019 the Task Force conducted substantive work in the areas of policy, accountability, support and outreach, reporting and strengthening investigation. In its almost three years of existence the Task Force had made progress in combating – together - sexual harassment inside the UN system.
34. Nevertheless, the HLCM Chair noted that the fight against sexual harassment in the UN system was not over. Rather, the current environment, including as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, was posing new challenges directly or indirectly connected to the work against sexual harassment. She reminded that the Task Force’s efforts were more needed today than ever.
35. The Task Force Chair, HLCM Vice-Chair, 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 have brought additional questions related to sexual harassment in the work environment, which require common approaches. She cited the Secretary-General’s recent address to the General Assembly in which he described 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 its prevention with strong commitment and the necessary resources.
36. Ms. Clements noted that the Task Force had considered how it can be most effective in its efforts to ensure a harassment-free workplace. To proceed in a structured manner, have the greatest impact, and make the best use of resources, the Workplan 2020-21 (see Annex III) was developed for the next phase of its work around five priority areas:
  - a. Implement: Support the roll-out of products endorsed by HLCM
  - b. Strengthen: Advance a victim-centred approach to tackling sexual harassment
  - c. Learning and Communication
  - d. Outreach and Knowledge Sharing
  - e. Leadership and Culture
37. The Task Force’s plan was designed to ensure the accomplishment and strengthening of ongoing initiatives; commonly move towards a consistent victim-centered approach; reach UN system internal audiences at all levels and in all locations; build on- and exchange on work in other fields; and initiate and sustain culture change.

38. In its discussion of the workplan, Committee members expressed strong support for the direction of planned efforts of the Task Force and the comprehensiveness of the Workplan 2020-21. The need for the Task Force to continue its work, also with a view to challenges presented by the Covid-19 and other elements, was emphasized across the board. The necessity for products and tools provided by the Task Force to be actionable by all UN system organizations was highlighted.
39. The value of a thorough examination and common effort on a victim-centered approach to sexual harassment was particularly underscored. Similarly, the importance of acting on leadership and culture aspects was stressed. The Task Force was further encouraged to invest in initiatives that address the root causes of sexual harassment, which are linked to abuse of power, gender issues, and other forms of discrimination.
40. The HLCM Chair thanked Ms. Clements and the Task Force for their work, observing that the new workplan represented a structured and effective way forward. She lent her support to the work of the Task Force and noted that, as a UN system, a coherent, aggressive common approach was necessary. She reiterated the criticality of HLCM members, as leaders in UN system organizations – as well as personally – remaining committed to providing the Task Force with the capacity and the resources that are necessary to achieve a United Nations system free of harassment.
41. In concluding the discussion, the HLCM Chair thanked the Committee for its observations and support for the work of the Task Force and for the workplan 2020/21 and the objectives and actions contained therein.

➤ ***The High-Level Committee on Management:***

42. *Noted with great appreciation progress in the implementation and alignment of policies and approaches to fight sexual harassment in the UN system, and confirmed its strong commitment to providing the Task Force with the capacity and the resources that are necessary to achieve a United Nations system free of harassment.*
43. *On behalf of CEB, endorsed the Task Force workplan for 2020-2021 and requested the Task Force to report periodically to HLCM on progress towards the achievement of the agreed goals.*

## V Any other business

### Business Innovations Strategic Results Group (BIG)



#### Documentation:

- ✓ *Final Report of the Business Innovations Strategic Results Group (BIG), June 2020*

44. The HLCM Chair recalled that, in December 2017, the Secretary-General set out a number of ambitious targets to reform the UN Development System. The UNSDG Strategic Results Group on Business Innovations (BIG) was tasked with delivering on the proposals for more efficient and effective “management” of the UN Development System.
45. The Chair noted that UNSDG-BIG and HLCM had been close partners in the effort to concretize these objectives and had made important progress towards their achievement, 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.
46. Mr. Manoj Juneja of WFP, which co-chaired the UNSDG -BIG with UNHCR, summarized some highlights from the work completed by BIG, outlined follow-up steps, and recalled the key lessons that were learned in the course of the Group’s work.
47. 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 UNSDG Principals. The five main areas which BIG delivered on are outlined below.
48. First, a revised Business Operation Strategy (BOS 2.0). This is a framework to enable collaboration in business operations at 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. Its rollout is ongoing with more than 100 UN Country Teams (UNCTs) having already started.
49. Second, a model for a Common Back Office. This builds on the collaborative model of BOS 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 compiled through the UN Country Team. A key difference with the BOS, however, is that only those agencies that commit to consolidation of services in country are part of its CBO governance and management, whereas the Business Operation Strategies include all UNCT members at all times.
50. Third, an initial assessment of the potential for a network of Global Shared Service Centres (GSSCs) that was proposed in the Secretary-General’s December 2017 report. The potential for significant efficiency savings in this area was noted, as substantiated with data and experience that was gained both from the BIG Project Team and the analysis of individual agencies. The progress by the Business Innovations Group on this subject was limited to undertaking two marketplace surveys, which identified over 1,000 service offerings and over 1,000 service requests, among the 21 agencies that participated in the surveys, while concluding that the marketplace and its service offerings need time to mature.

51. Fourth, an end-to-end consolidation package for Common Premises was developed to equip UN Country Teams to better utilize existing premises and promote co-location and whole-country approaches for assessing co-location opportunities. While this will not achieve the Secretary-General's target of 50% common services by 2021, it does provide Country Teams with the tools to incrementally consolidate. The BIG estimated that achieving 50% common premises would cost more than 200 million US dollars.
52. And finally, three Enabling Principles were developed: costing and pricing, client satisfaction, and mutual recognition.
53. Turning to the follow-up steps, Mr. Juneja advocated for HLCM's continued engagement in the area of business transformation, in line with the Committee's crucial role as a platform for coordinated policy making at UN system-wide level.
54. He encouraged agencies to continue operationalizing the mutual recognition statement with the support of HLCM, and, for those that have not yet signed it, to do so. He indicated that the newly established UNSDG Business Operations Task Team (BOTT) would oversee the rollout of both the Business Operations Strategy and the Common Back Office.
55. On the broader lessons from the Business Innovations Group, several success factors were identified. They include the value of having an independent and resourced project team; and, work being based on learnings from past efforts and informed by extensive data gathering and analysis, so that the models developed by the project teams could be based on a clear business case. The challenge in collecting data and evidence was highlighted, as was the difficulty in comparing datasets from different entities.
56. 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 to capture real efficiency gains will undoubtedly require upfront investment and, mid-project, it would be too late to seek seed funding. Also, he indicated that in the long term, a large scope for efficiency gains and transformation would be 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 deep dive on "fleet". UNHCR and WFP are developing an innovative partnership in this area, to see how they might have a single fleet moving forward.
57. 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 the approach to make best use of them. While noting the proven potential for large efficiencies that vertically integrated service centers have clearly demonstrated, the feasibility of horizontal, shared service centers was also suggested as a potential area of 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, particularly in the area of supply chain, was highlighted. This approach would allow considerable efficiencies based on service agreements, without major disruptions to the organizational structure of entities.

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

➤ ***The High-Level Committee on Management:***

59. *Looked forward to an active collaboration with the UNSDG Business Operations Task Team (BOTT).*
60. *Noted that the HLCM Chair will soon meet with the Co-Chairs of the newly established UNSDG Business Operations Task Team, Ib Petersen (UNFPA) and Hannan Sulieman (UNICEF), to discuss and agree on how to best continue and strengthen the very constructive collaboration we already had with the Business Innovations Group (BIG).*

## **Risk Management**



### **Documentation:**

- ✓ *CEB/2020/HLCM/19 – Guidance Notes - Cover note (includes proposal to develop ToRs for Risk Management Forum for next session)*
- ✓ *CEB/2020/HLCM/20 – Managing Fraud Risk (includes Annex)*
- ✓ *CEB/2020/HLCM/21 – Managing Risks in the Field and Decentralized Organizations (includes Annex)*

61. In the course of 2020, the HLCM Cross-Functional Task Force on Risk Management focused on two distinct workstreams: (1) Managing Fraud Risk and (2) Managing Risks in the Field and for Decentralized Organizations. Building on the information and experience collected through several surveys addressed to key stakeholders, guidance notes were developed on these two subjects. Consistently with the established approach of the Task Force, these notes are intended as high-level guidance on risk management processes, outlining common practices and challenges, as well as relevant case studies.

62. The HLCM Chair congratulated the Task Force and its co-chairs, Ms. Chitra Narayanaswamy of WIPO and Mr. Jonathan Howitt of WFP, for delivering a set of extremely useful products – the results of what can be considered an example of a truly successful and effective inter-agency collaboration.

63. With the conclusion of this most recent phase of its work, the HLCM Chair noted that the objectives of the Task Force as described in its Terms of Reference were completed. As the interest of organizations in this subject remained high, and Task Force members have confirmed their commitment to the continued advancement of this agenda, the Task Force was proposing to evolve into a Forum for exchanging knowledge, networking and developing additional material.

64. If the Committee agreed, the Task Force would produce Terms of Reference for the Forum in the next months and would submit it for the Committee's consideration by the next session. The Task Force was also asking HLCM members to review - offline after the session - the latest guidance notes produced, and to provide any comments or feedback to the HLCM Secretariat.

➤ ***The High-Level Committee on Management:***

65. *Would review (via correspondence, after the session) the Guidance notes on Fraud Risk and Managing Field and for Decentralized Organisations for endorsement. In addition, the Task Force would seek the Committee's approval to proceed with the development of the ToRs for the new Forum.*

## **VI Conclusions**

66. The HLCM Chair thanked all the presenters to the Back to Office session, and congratulated HLCM members for a very rich discussion. She also and especially thanked the Vice-Chair and the Task Force against Sexual Harassment. In doing so, she reiterated the commitment of HLCM towards fostering a safe and inclusive working environment across the UN system and its continued support to the important activities of the workplan that was approved.

## Annex I – 29 September 2020: List of Participants

**Chair: Ms. Grete Faremo**, Executive Director, UNOPS  
**Vice-Chair: Ms. Kelly T. Clements**, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR  
**Secretary: Mr. Remo Lalli**, CEB Secretariat  
**CEB Secretary: Ms. Simona Petrova**

Organizations	Name – Title – Division
United Nations	Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
	Mr. Jens Wandel, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Reforms
	Mr. Gilles Michaud, Under Secretary-General for Safety and Security
	Ms. Martha Helena Lopez, Assistant Secretary-General, Human Resources Management
	Ms. Lisa Buttenheim, Assistant Secretary-General for Support Operations
	Mr. Jay Pozenel, Director, Legal Affairs
	Mr. Arnab Roy, Director of Office/Management Reform, EOSG
	Ms. Karen Lock, Special Assistant to the Chef de Cabinet
ILO	Mr. Greg Vines, Deputy Director General
FAO	Mr. Mario Lubetkin, Assistant Director-General
	Ms. Greet De Leeuw, Director of Human Resources Division
UNESCO	Mr. Nick Jeffreys, Assistant Director-General, Administration and Management
UNAIDS	Mr. Tim Martineau, Deputy Executive Director a.i., Management & Governance
	Ms. Alison Holmes, Director, Human Resources
ICAO	Mr. Henry Gourdji, Acting Director, Bureau of Administration and Services
WHO	Mr. Raul Thomas, Assistant Director General, Business Operations
	Mr. Roberto Balsamo, Management Officer, Business Operations
UPU	Mr. Pascal Clivaz, Deputy Director General
IOM	Ms. Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General
	Mr. Michael Emery, Director, Human Resources Management Division
	Mr. David Knight, Special Advisor to the Deputy Director General
ITU	Mr. Malcolm Johnson, Deputy Secretary General
	Mr. Yushi Torigoe, Chief, Strategic Planning and Membership Department
	Mr. Anders Norsker, Chief, Information Services Department
	Mr. Eric Dalhen, Chief, Human Resources Management Department
	Ms. Ulrika Martinius, Deputy Chief, Human Resources Management Department
	Mr. Stephen Bereaux, Deputy to the Director and Chief of Department, Telecommunication Development Bureau
WMO	Mr. Wenjian Zhang, Assistant Secretary-General

	<b>Ms. Maja Drazenovic-Carrieri</b> , Director, Department of Governance Services
	<b>Mr. Daniel Trup</b> , Legal Officer
<b>IMO</b>	<b>Mr. Arsenio Dominguez</b> , Chief of Staff, Acting Director, Administrative Division
	<b>Mr. Richard Greenwood</b> , Business Coordinator, Office of the Director, Administrative Division
<b>WIPO</b>	<b>Mr. Ambi Sundaram</b> , Assistant Director General, Administration and Management
	<b>Ms. Chitra Narayanaswamy</b> , Director, Program Planning and Finance (Controller)
<b>IFAD</b>	<b>Mr. Guoqi Wu</b> , Associate Vice-President, Corporate Services Department
	<b>Ms. Rima Alcadi</b> , Special Advisor to the AVP, CSD
<b>UNIDO</b>	<b>Ms. Cecilia Ugaz Estrada</b> , Chief Advisor, Office of the Managing Director
	<b>Ms. Okusitina Bulavakarua</b> , Chief, General Services and Logistics Division
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## **Annex III – Workplan 2020-2021: CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN system**

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## Introduction

The Secretary-General and UN 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 UN system<sup>1</sup>. The CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within United Nations System Organizations (Task Force) 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 harmonise 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 investigations<sup>2</sup> and has developed relevant products such as the [UN 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 UN 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 UN system organizations.

The need to do more on driving cultural change within individual UN organizations, and the UN 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 HLCM members, 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 widescale 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [CEB Statement on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System](#)

<sup>2</sup> [CEB Task Force on Sexual Harassment Factsheet 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 workplan<sup>3</sup> 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 UN system. The Task Force will work towards objectives through 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 HLCM

### Objective:

#### **Rollout common tools and establish baselines for implementation within the UN system**

#### Actions:

- 1.1. Develop a light monitoring framework to track the rollout of the UN 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 rollout into the Task Force and to HLCM.
- 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 rollout 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 workstreams and subsequently propose improvements.

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

### Objective:

#### **Ensure a strengthened, consistent and victim-centred UN system approach to addressing sexual harassment**

#### Actions:

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

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

- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.
  - 1.6.1. 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
  - 1.6.2. 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 UN system approach to addressing sexual harassment and promote instruments to combat discrimination and harassment among internal audiences.**

#### Actions:

- 1.7. 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.
  - 1.7.1. Identify the most effective channels of communication adapted to UN system internal audiences, including different media and joint communications (e.g. systemwide campaigns).
  - 1.7.2. Determine which instruments developed by the Task Force are less well-known among UN system organizations, personnel and partners and ensure greater awareness of available Task Force resources, in particular in field locations, through intensified communication.
- 1.8. 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 UN system on issues of sexual harassment to better understand and strengthen approaches and actions to address sexual harassment.**

### Actions:

- 1.9. Initiate and/or continue cooperation and coordination with actors and mechanisms inside- and outside of the UN system (e.g. the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Network of Gender Focal Points in the UN system, the Development Cooperation Office (DCO), intergovernmental mechanisms) to harness synergies, cross-fertilize and share knowledge and material to end sexual harassment.
- 1.10. Assess the current usage of the Clear Check database and based on the analysis strongly encourage the usage of the database by all UN 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 UN system.
- 1.11. Enhance targeted communication to select external audiences to disseminate information about the UN 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:

- 1.12. Engage with and collect material from the Secretary-General's Senior Management Group (SMG), the CEB Task Force on the Future of the UN System Workforce, the IASC, 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.
- 1.13. 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.
- 1.14. 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.