



## Summary of 28<sup>th</sup> HLCM Procurement Network Virtual Sessions, Parts 3 & 4 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Chair** Ms. Katinka Rosenbom (Chief Contracting, UNICEF)

**Vice-Chair** Ms. Elisabeth Eckerstrom (Head, Procurement Division, ITU)

**Advisory Chairperson** Ms. Bérénice Bessière (Director, Procurement and Travel, WIPO)

**Secretariat** Ms. Kerry Kassow (UNDP)



### Part 3 - Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October

The session was attended by 49 participants, representing 34 Organizations: [List of Participants](#)

#### (i) HLCM/CEB Update – for information

Mr. Remo Lalli (UNOG), HLCM/CEB Secretariat

The HLCM/CEB Secretariat provided the PN with an update on the below key items that are currently on the HLCM agenda. (In lieu of its physical meeting, the HLCM had one virtual session on the 29<sup>th</sup> September and will have another on the 13<sup>th</sup> October).

#### 1. The Future of the UN Workforce

A HLCM Task Force (TF) on the Future of the UN Workforce was established one year ago under the leadership of the UN Secretariat and ILO. The Task Force is organized around three workstreams: (1) Contractual Modalities, aimed at developing a proposal to pilot new sustainable contract modality(ies) to enable a more agile and diverse UN workforce while considering the needs of a future workforce; (2) New Ways of Working, to propose elements that foster an enabling culture and positive employee experience from multiple perspectives, including leadership, people management, flexible work arrangements, transparency and dialogue, and (3) Leveraging Technology, aimed at launching pilot projects on new technologies applied to human resources management.

In light of the experiences captured during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the priority deliverable for the Task Force is a framework policy on Flexible Working Arrangements, including remote working, which is expected by the end of 2020. Longer-term strategic objectives will involve stakeholders such as the Staff Federations, International Civil Service Commission and the UN Pension Fund, particularly with respect to elements for possible new contractual modalities for UN personnel.

#### 2. Aligning and Coordinating Return to Office

At the Committee's session on the 13<sup>th</sup> October, HLCM members will continue their exchange



on principles, measures and approaches informing their Return to Office strategies, taking stock of broad lessons and progress so far, with a view to maximum collaboration and alignment in managing this process throughout the next 18-24 months. The discussion will be informed by the results of the 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. This session will include 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 for returning to Office.

### 3. Sexual Harassment in the UN System

The HLCM will review for endorsement the new workplan of the CEB Task Force Against Sexual Harassment in the UN System. Several deliverables of the TF have already been endorsed, such as a model policy against sexual harassment, including tools such as the ClearCheck database on sexual harassment offenders. A Code of Conduct Against Sexual Harassment at UN System Events has also been developed and adopted for mainstreaming at all UN events, including those of the CEB, HLCM and its Networks.

### 4. Final Report on the Business Innovation Group (BIG)

The HLCM/CEB Secretariat encouraged the PN to continue its engagement, alignment and coordination with the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) which serves as the secretariat for the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). Now that BIG operations have been completed, implementation at field level is taking place under the management of the UNSDG/DCO. The complementary roles of the PN and the UNSDG/DCO should be kept in mind and efforts should be made to ensure there is no duplication of efforts and that communication both at HQ and field level takes place in a consistent manner.

### 5. The Future UN

At the close of the UN's recent 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the GA requested the Secretary-General "to report back by the end of the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges". Subsequently, the SG has decided to dedicate the coming CEB session on the 6<sup>th</sup> November to collective thinking on this mandate. The CEB will exchange ideas and begin shaping a vision on shared priorities for the UN in a post-Covid19 world. This will likely relate to topics and deliverables that have already been, or still are, on the PN agenda, such as innovation in procurement and improving efficiency in our business practices. The PN was urged to continue its energetic engagement in these lines of thinking and at the same time ensure that ambitions are realistic.

Finally, the HLCM/CEB Secretariat commended the PN for the pace and intensity of sessions held over the past few weeks, which demonstrates the commitment members have to the inter-agency agenda. He strongly supported the level of engagement the PN is demonstrating in high-level focus areas such as the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy, the UN Sustainability Strategy and Human Trafficking & Forced Labour in Supply Chains.

### Summary of comments

- While the HLCM has not had discussions specifically related to humanitarian response operations and how to ensure agility in on-boarding staff and experts in situations such as those we are experiencing with Covid19, the work that is being undertaken on the new contractual modalities and ensuring sustainable infrastructure for remote working should be enablers for facilitating new ways of working, including in the humanitarian sphere.
- The PN recognizes the importance of improving how we do business; ensuring we are agile, reduce duplication, better serve our clients and achieve best value for money particularly



due to increasing economic constraints.

- The General Assembly has not yet made a decision on the implementation of sustainable procurement practices at the UN Secretariat. The UN Secretariat intends to increase focus on this area and asked PN members to advocate for it at any given opportunity. A working group will be formed to address the matter and those interested in joining were invited to contact the UN Secretariat. (Further information on this will follow by email.)

## (ii) Amendment of the HLCM PN Statutes – for decision

Ms. Elisabeth Eckerstrom (ITU), PN Vice Chair

At the PN meeting held in Valencia in October 2019 agreement was reached on PN membership rights. With the support of the UN Secretariat, the Statutes were amended to reflect this and the PN was asked to endorse the revised document at its Virtual Session on 7th May. A few minor additional points were raised during that meeting. As agreed, the UN Secretariat addressed these points bilaterally with the members who raised them, and they were reflected in the document shared with the PN prior to this session. The agreed electronic circulation of these points and final endorsement of the document was then delayed due to the below.

### New point for decision

Although the PN agreed that amendment of the Statutes should be pro-longed no further and any new amendments will be strictly limited to the above points raised during the session in May, upon further reflection the PN Management Board felt it necessary to address one additional point.

Namely, paragraph 3.4 which states:

*"Applicants seeking Membership or Associated Membership of the HLCM PN shall make their commitment to actively participate in the HLCM PN meetings, be **required** to be represented in at least one Working Group and actively contribute to the work of the Working Group, and maintain Working Group representation at all times thereafter. The provisions of this article shall apply to current Members and Associated Members."*

The PN Management Board recommends amending paragraph 3.4 to read:

*"Applicants seeking Membership or Associated Membership of the HLCM PN shall make their commitment to actively participate in the HLCM PN meetings, be **expected** to be represented in at least one Working Group and actively contribute to the work of the Working Group, and maintain Working Group representation at all times thereafter. The provisions of this article shall apply to current Members and Associated Members."*

The Management Board made this extraordinary recommendation so that the language in the Statutes does not in any way exclude or disqualify any members from being part of the network as this would conflict with the overall spirit of the HLCM. However, at the same time, the PN Board recognizes the vital importance of adequate and active participation in the Working Groups and strongly encourages this.

For full information see the [Summary Sheet](#), [HLCM PN Statutes with amendments](#) and [Presentation](#).

### Summary of comments

- It was noted that while some (smaller) organisations highly appreciate being part of the Network, they simply do not have the capacity to be actively involved in the working groups.
- Requiring members to be in working groups would demand time-consuming "policing" and



at the same time it is difficult to assess what actually constitutes being “active”.

- In addition, occasionally sensitive issues need to be discussed during working group meetings, which may not be relevant/appropriate for non-UN related members to be involved in.
- It was requested that the various annexes in the Statutes be incorporated via hyperlinks in the finalized document.
- The PN Management Board thanked the UN Secretariat for its prior support in resolving the issues regarding PN membership rights and the subsequent revision of the Statutes.
- **The PN endorsed the revised Statutes, encompassing the final amendments made by the UN Secretariat and new decision item related to working group participation.**
- **The document will be finalised, circulated and made available from the PN Workspace on the UNGM in due course.**

### (iii) Update on Common Back Office (CBO) roll out – for information

Mr. Clement Gba, Global CBO Team Leader - United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO)

- At PN meetings in 2018 and 2019, members were provided with briefings on the roll out of the Common Back Office (CBO), as part of the Business Operations reform agenda. DCO has taken over the management and implementation of the CBO workstream from the Business Innovation Results Group (BIG) which has now been completed. The PN was provided with a detailed understanding of the CBO objectives, structure, operating model, etc.

For full information see the [Presentation](#).

### Summary of comments

- So far UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, FAO and UNFPA are signatories of the Costing and Pricing principles as well as the Client Satisfaction principles.
- While other agencies are supportive of the CBO, many are assessing the impact of implementation before signing up.
- At the country level, the CBO business case takes into consideration services that have an evident return on investment, and if an agency determines that a service is not cost effective, they can elect not to receive that particular service or the entire CBO arrangement if the whole business case is not cost effective.
- Only agencies involved in the CBO business would be represented in the country governance board, which is the highest authority of the CBO arrangement at the country level.
- The Rules & Regulations that apply in each country's CBO are those of the selected host entity for a given country. Similarly, it is the administrative platforms, legal framework, etc. of the host entity that are utilised.
- DCO is aware of the issue a small agency such as UN Women is experiencing where some tasks are being transferred from staff members to the CBO. A fee for this applies and yet the organisation still has the full cost of the staff member who typically performs many other duties. DCO suggests additional training and capacity development to staff to be repurposed towards other more strategic functions/tasks to compensate for the tasks that have been transferred to the CBO.
- Sustainability aspects are being considered across CBO activities; for example, both environmental considerations, disability inclusion and gender responsiveness are being advocated for within the procurement function.



- DCO asked PN members to raise awareness of the CBO vertically within their organisations to ensure that staff know that it is being rolled out.
- Similarly, DCO offered to support the PN in general with sharing any communication on relevant guidelines, policies etc. to UN Country Teams.
- The PN Chair recommended that the PN maintains its engagement with DCO and, if need be, relevant agencies can perhaps have a more in-depth session with DCO on CBO implementation.

**(iv) AOB & Close of Session**

- The PN Chair thanked the HLCM/CEB Secretariat and DCO for the extremely valuable and comprehensive updates as well as PN members for the active engagement.
- She strongly supported expectations for the PN to continue leveraging its strengths to optimize business practices both at HQ and country level as well as address the various aspects of sustainability.
- Directly related to the latter, the PN will continue its agenda on Thursday with decision items on the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and Human Trafficking & Forced Labour.
- Following this week's sessions, separate "Show & Tell" sessions will be scheduled to allow PN members to continue to showcase experiences, best practices, etc.

**Part 4 - Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October**

The session was attended by 45 participants, representing 32 Organizations: [List of Participants](#)

**(i) Project Document for Policy Framework on Human Trafficking and Forced Labour** – for decision Sustainable Procurement Working Group - Human Trafficking and Forced Labour Task Force Mr. Vanja Ostojic (ILO), Task Force Co-Chair

This Task Force (TF) has been created under the HLCM PN's Sustainable Procurement Working Group in response to the UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2388. The overall aim of the TF is to prioritize the development of harmonized UN policies and guidelines to reduce the exposure to and consequences of human trafficking and forced labour within UN supply chains. Further to feedback from the 25 organizations who responded to the Baseline Survey, which was undertaken earlier in the year, the TF has developed a Project Document for the development of a Policy Framework on Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in UN Supply Chains. The document was endorsed by the Sustainable Procurement Working Group and subsequently shared with the wider PN for review. During this session the PN was asked to endorse the Project Document. Following endorsement, the plan is to undertake fundraising activities for the recruitment of a legal consultant who, in collaboration with the TF, will develop the Policy Framework for PN endorsement in March 2021.

For full information on all of the above see the [Summary Sheet](#), [Project Document](#) and [Presentation](#).

**Summary of comments**

- The TF has already identified some potential sources of funding and will progress quickly with this activity following endorsement of the Project Document. Should any agencies wish to contribute or provide information on possible funding sources, this would be welcomed by the TF. The UNGM Steering Committee is willing to provide its support with any hosting and relevant modifications that need to be made to the UNGM system.



- The TF is already, and will continue to, work closely with the other PN Working Groups; for example, with the Strategic Vendor Management WG on the revision of the Model Policy Framework (MPF) for Vendor Sanctions, the Harmonisation WG on the development of a definition for the term 'major vendor', and the Professional Development WG on capacity building activities.
- Furthermore, the TF will likely collaborate with the Harmonization WG in the development of common language for the UN General Terms & Conditions of Contract. This endeavour could actually lead to long sought-after further harmonization of the GT&C.
- Consultations with the Legal Network on various aspects will also be vital throughout the project.
- The Strategic Vendor Management WG Chair noted that this initiative could be very useful for the activities of the WG's new sub-group on Due Diligence & Risk Management being led by the UN Secretariat.
- There was agreement that final products being produced by the Task Forces of the Sustainable Procurement WG should be practical, realistic and user-friendly for procurement practitioners and be provided in an easily communicable format for all stakeholders.
- The PN Chair congratulated the TF on the excellent work undertaken to date. She also underlined the importance of good collaboration and communication, including immediate linkage with the Legal Network, in order to ensure high impact and good traction. Training and sensitization activities will be important so that procurement practitioners are well versed on the subject-matter and equipped to communicate on it with the business community. She also fully supported the TF's Coordinator's statement that sustainability should naturally be an integral part of all our business decisions and this thinking is highly aligned with the Decade of Action to accelerate delivery on the SDGs. On that note, she recommended that the TF liaises with other organizations, such as the Global Compact.
- **The PN unanimously endorsed the proposed Project on Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in UN Supply Chains and the subsequent development of a Policy Framework.**
- **The TF Co-Chair invited other agencies, including relevant colleagues outside of the PN membership, to join this very interesting and important area of work.**

### **(ii) UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) - Guidance on Indicator 8 – for decision**

Sustainable Procurement Working Group - Task Force on Development of Guidelines for Disability-Inclusive Procurement

Mr. Alexander Blecken (UNICEF), UNDIS Task Force Coordinator

(with support from Ms. Katinka Rosenbom (UNICEF), Chief Contracting and Mr. Gopal Mitra, Senior Social Affairs Officer - Disability Team, Executive Office of the Secretary-General)

The PN's Sustainable Procurement Working Group has established a time-limited Task Force (TF) to develop guidance on the implementation of the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy \(UNDIS\)](#), progress on which will be reported on annually to the General Assembly. Indicator 8 in the UNDIS is specifically on procurement and it was found that guidance on this indicator would be helpful to all PN member organizations in making progress against the strategy.

The TF has developed draft guidelines which were endorsed by the Sustainable Procurement Working Group and subsequently shared with the wider PN for review and feedback. During this session the PN was asked to endorse the guidelines on the implementation of UNDIS Indicator 8.

For full information on all of the above see the [Summary Sheet](#), [Guidance on UNDIS Indicator 8](#)



and [Presentation](#).

All relevant information on the UNDIS and the TF can be found [here](#).

### Summary of comments

- The TF Coordinator reiterated that the UNDIS and its indicators have already been adapted at the highest level, and the purpose of the guidance is to support PN member organizations in complying with them.
- The guidelines can be applied and incorporated into Procurement Frameworks or Procurement Manuals as an organization sees fit.
- The guidelines also serve to achieve a common understanding of the various elements of Indicator 8 as well as how they relate to the vendor community.
- The UNDIS and its indicators will be reviewed in 2024, where it is foreseen that there will be opportunity to make any adjustments that have been identified in the first 5 years of implementation.
- As part of UNDIS implementation activities, PN members were strongly encouraged to engage with colleagues working on disability policies as well as the other relevant internal functions guided by separate UNDIS indicators.
- The PN's implementation of the guidelines will be included in the Secretary-General's upcoming annual report on UNDIS implementation to the General Assembly.
- The PN Chair thanked the TF for the active engagement and Mr. Mitra for the very helpful support throughout the process of developing the guidelines.
- **The PN unanimously endorsed the developed guidelines to support the implementation of UNDIS Indicator 8.**

### (iii) Status of nomination and selection of new WG Chairs – for information

Katinka Rosenbom (UNICEF), PN Chair

During the virtual PN session held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September, PN Members were invited to nominate candidates for the Chair positions of the Strategic Vendor Management Working Group and the Cognitive Procurement Working Group due to the upcoming retirement of both current Chairs. The PN Chair provided the following update:

- **The Strategic Vendor Management WG has elected Mr. Walter Grandpré, Head of Contracting Unit (ILO) and Coordinator of the MPF Revision Task Force, as the new Chair of the WG.**
- Mr. Grandpré has wide experience and expertise in the most important areas of vendor management such as vendor sanctions, vendor performance management, vendor data protection, and vendor management through UNGM.
- **The Cognitive Procurement WG has yet to identify a new Chair. In the meantime, Ms. Miranda Carrington (World Bank) will act as interim chair with Mr. Kenny Cheung (World Bank) as backup.**
- The PN Chair thanked Mr. Peter Easley for serving as Chair of the Cognitive Procurement WG and for transforming the group into a strong knowledge-sharing forum.
- Tribute was also paid to Mr. Sandro Luzzietti (IFAD) who has been an active PN member since the inauguration of the Network in 2007 and has strongly led the Strategic Vendor Management WG since it was formed in 2014. Colleagues congratulated Sandro on his upcoming retirement and expressed their great appreciation for his invaluable contributions to the work of the Network over the years.



**(iv) AOB**

- The PN Chair thanked the Task Force Coordinators for their contributions and the PN for the active engagement during the session.
- Likewise, the PN expressed appreciation to the PN Management Board & Secretariat for the smooth-running of the series of virtual PN sessions.
- **The PN Chair confirmed that as well as scheduling knowledge-sharing (Show & Tell) sessions over the coming period, a session will also be scheduled to discuss lessons learned from Covid19 response and opportunities for supply chain optimization and collaboration.**