



---

**Chief Executives Board  
for Coordination**

CEB/2014/HLCM/17/Rev.1

---

**HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT (HLCM)**

---

# **Policy on the Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS)**

---

Approved by: Chief Executives Board  
Effective date: 18 January 2021  
Contact: United Nations Secretariat, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and  
Compliance, Sustainability and Resilience Management Unit  
Review date: 31 December 2024

---

## **POLICY ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ORMS)**

---

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. The UN Organizational Resilience Management System (UN ORMS) was approved by the General Assembly in June 2013 for the United Nations Secretariat by A/RES/67/254. Subsequently, in November 2014, the UN ORMS as set forth in CEB/2014/HLCM/17 was approved by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) as the emergency management framework<sup>1</sup> for the member organizations of the UN System represented in the CEB.
2. Resilient organizations continually adapt to changing environments in order to deliver on their objectives and to thrive. They “anticipate and respond to threats and opportunities arising from sudden or gradual changes in their internal and external context”<sup>2</sup>. Building a resilient organization is a cross-disciplinary and cross-functional endeavour, and it should be considered an integral and crucial component of the overall business management strategy of the organization.
3. The present Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) aims to assist the member organizations of the UN System represented in the CEB to strengthen their resilience in order to continuously deliver their respective mandates following a disruptive event or a crisis while minimising the exposure of their personnel and assets to unnecessary risk. At the same time, the ORMS also assists the member organizations of the UN System represented in the CEB to strengthen their collective resilience as acting as One UN at any given duty station, where relevant.

---

### **B. PURPOSE**

4. This policy describes the ORMS and prescribes its application within and among the individual organizations of the UN System, with the objective to strengthen the resilience of each of the UN System organizations as well as the UN System community at each duty station.

---

### **C. SCOPE**

5. This policy applies to all member organizations of the United Nations System represented at the CEB.
- 

---

<sup>1</sup> This reference to an emergency management framework should not be confused with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s emergency management framework, which refers to the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises.

<sup>2</sup> ISO 22316, 2017

## D. RATIONALE

6. This policy gives effect to the following resolutions and conclusions and reflects revisions and updates proposed by the Global Working Group on ORMS:
    - a. General Assembly resolution 67/254 of 7 June 2013;
    - b. Conclusions of the Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth Sessions of the High-Level Committee on Management, CEB/2014/3, and CEB/2014/5.
    - c. General Assembly resolution 68/247 B of 9 April 2014;
    - d. General Assembly resolution 70/248 B of 1 April 2016;
    - e. General Assembly resolution 73/279 B of 15 April 2019<sup>3</sup>.
- 

## E. Definition of the ORMS

7. The ORMS is a management system linking actors and activities within UN System organizations and across the UN System at the country and regional levels and, where applicable, at the global level to continuously improve the capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to threats and opportunities arising from sudden or gradual changes in internal and external contexts<sup>4</sup>. It requires a collaborative approach aimed at having the various stakeholders responsible for the core elements, as defined below, working together by providing a framework for coordination, joint action planning and decision-making, thereby ensuring a high level of organizational resilience.

## ORMS CORE ELEMENTS

8. The ORMS has seven core elements. These represent broad functional areas that should be implemented, integrated and harmonised for an effective application of the policy. Each organization of the UN System may organize these elements in a way that best meets their needs and may add elements to better reflect its unique characteristics and mandates, for example, facilities management, records management, etc. The core elements are:
  - a) Crisis management<sup>5</sup>;
  - b) Safety and security of personnel (including visiting individuals), premises and assets<sup>6</sup>;
  - c) Crisis communications;
  - d) Emergency medical support;
  - e) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resilience;
  - f) Business continuity; and
  - g) Support to UN personnel and eligible family members.

---

<sup>3</sup> The General Assembly, in its resolution 73/279B, inter alia, endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the ACABQ set out in its report A/73/775 which provides, in paragraph 23, as follows: "... The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, continue efforts to harmonize policies and strengthen coordination of the organizational resilience management system across the system."

<sup>4</sup> The internal environment of an organization comprises its capabilities and competencies, resources, organizational structure, systems and processes, leadership, culture, personnel, strengths and vulnerabilities. External environment factors can present threats or opportunities to the organization and comprise factors such as political, security, economic, sociocultural, technological, legal and other factors. Understanding the organization and its internal and external environments provides the foundation for the ORMS.

<sup>5</sup> The principles and procedures of crisis management are reflected in the United Nations Crisis Management Policy of 19 March 2018.

<sup>6</sup> This is in line with the principles of the UN Security Management System. Note that "visiting individuals" refers to individuals visiting premises of UN system organizations who have no contractual arrangement with the organization.

## PRIORITIES

9. The priority of the ORMS is to increase the adaptive capacity of an individual UN System organization, as well as the UN System at a given duty station, to implement mandates and programmes by coordinating the risk management efforts of relevant disciplines dedicated to ensuring the health, safety and security and well-being of personnel, their eligible family members and visiting individuals, the continuity of essential and time-critical services and operations and activities, and the protection of property and assets.

## PRINCIPLES

10. Founded on an iterative process of continuous learning and improvement, led by management and with an aim to empower UN personnel to influence and effect a structured, efficient application, the ORMS principles are:
  - a) **Risk Management-Based Planning and Practice:** UN System organization-wide, duty station-wide and country- and territory-wide, when necessary, resiliency-related plans are based on early detection of threats and effective assessment of risk;
  - b) **Flexible Standardization:** the fundamental roles, responsibilities and practices are tailored to reflect the UN System organizations' unique mandates and context and leverage existing resources and processes;
  - c) **Harmonized and integrated application:** the planning, structures and behavioural change are applied in a harmonized fashion among UN System organizations and through coordination and collaboration with Member States, host country authorities and, where feasible, other key stakeholders; and
  - d) **Maximized organizational learning:** lessons learned during the application of the ORMS are identified, assessed, recorded, applied to continuous improvement or policies and procedures and shared with other UN System organizations and relevant stakeholders.

## APPLICATION

11. The ORMS is applied throughout the UN System, at both field and non-field duty stations.
12. Effective application of the ORMS requires:
  - a) The development of UN System organization-specific guidance and management frameworks that are aligned with this policy; and
  - b) An understanding that accountability for the implementation of the policy lies with Executive Heads of UN System organizations who, in coordination with senior management, ensure commitment, support and resource allocation for personnel mandated<sup>7</sup> to apply the ORMS core elements and principles in their respective organizations. Those responsible for the core elements are in turn accountable for engaging in a holistic and harmonized approach, with integrated decision-making and coordination of activities.
13. The application of the ORMS policy includes the following responsibilities of the individual UN System organizations:
  - a) Ensuring a cooperation mechanism among the ORMS core elements within a UN System organization, including at the regional, country and local level;
  - b) Ensuring coordination of the overall risk management framework of the organization, to include the risk assessments that are conducted in the functional areas of security, safety, medical, human resources, and ICT and infrastructure, which holistically identify risks and operational vulnerabilities and propose measures to prevent and/or mitigate them;
  - c) Identifying and developing essential capabilities linked to the core elements; and
  - d) Adapting to the organization's needs and implementing the ORMS maintenance, exercise and review programme by providing opportunities to practice and review the organization's application of the ORMS framework.

---

<sup>7</sup> Key personnel responsible for applying the ORMS in an organization should be fully informed of their tasks and responsibilities.

14. UN System organizations have the responsibility to build their own resilience, at both field and non-field duty stations. However, to avoid duplication and maximise the use of resources, UN System organizations are encouraged to collaborate and share resources where effective at the duty station level and/or country level.
15. The policy requires the head of each UN System organization in the field to invest in resilience-building in their own organization at the regional and local levels, while the coordination of the application of the policy for the entire UN System at country level occurs through the UN Country Team (where it is present), or through any other UN System-wide coordination forum at the managerial level. Involvement of elected staff representatives is encouraged at all levels.
16. Key Performance Indicators (see Addendum 1) include an indication of how to measure the added value of this coordinated approach of the ORMS. The KPIs are an effective tool for monitoring progress toward organizational resilience and for reporting on progress.

## **GOVERNANCE**

17. The Chief Executives Board is the policy owner and can delegate the administration of the policy to any CEB member organization it sees fit. The Executive Heads of the CEB member organizations are responsible for incorporating this policy into their organization's respective regulatory framework, as applicable, tailoring it as may be needed and implementing it. At headquarters duty stations, they may delegate the responsibility for the implementation of this policy to any department/office they see fit, while at the regional and country levels, the application should be the responsibility of the Head of each UN System organization represented regionally and/or locally.
-

## F. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS<sup>8</sup>

**Business Continuity:** The capability of the organization to continue delivery of essential and time-critical services at acceptable predefined levels during and/or following a disruptive incident.

**Crisis:** An incident or situation, that, due to its magnitude, complexity or gravity of potential consequence: a) presents an exceptional risk to the safety and security of UN personnel, premises and/or assets, b) presents an exceptional threat to the effective functioning of a UN system organization, and/or c) presents an exceptional threat to the effective implementation of a mandate of a UN system organization.<sup>9</sup>

**Crisis communications:** Internal communications (to UN personnel and other UN offices/ duty stations) and external communications (to Member States, donors, cooperating partners, the media, other stakeholders and the public at large) during a crisis.<sup>10</sup>

**Crisis management:** Decision making in support of the identification, prioritization, coordination and execution of crisis response activities.

**Crisis response:** The spectrum of activities undertaken to respond to a crisis situation.

**Emergency Medical Support:** A range of emergency medical arrangements that deal with preparedness and response, e.g., emergency communications, immediate lifesaving actions (First Aid), casualty evacuation, timely provision of medical resuscitation and provision or organization of provision of lifesaving surgery, medical evacuation and mass casualty incident response.<sup>11</sup>

**ICT resilience:** The capability of an organization to support its business operations by preventing, detecting and responding to disruptions, maintaining connectivity and recovering Information and Communications Technology services. ICT Disaster Recovery is a component of ICT resilience and consists of the policies, tools and procedures that enable the continuation or recovery of services provided by technology infrastructure and systems during and/or following a disruptive event.

**Maintenance, Exercise & Review (ME&R) regime:** A systemic approach to ensuring that the requisite capabilities (skills, structures, procedures and resources) are reviewed and developed within UN System organizations and/or across the UN System at the country level, particularly where UN System organizations are reliant on each other or on Host Government capabilities.

**Organizational Resilience:** At the most basic level, organizational resilience is a UN System organization's ability to anticipate, prepare for, prevent, mitigate, respond to and recover from an interruptive incident. The ultimate aim, however, is for an organization to "anticipate and respond to threats and opportunities arising from sudden or gradual changes in their internal and external environment."<sup>12</sup>

**Risk:** The effect of uncertainty on objectives. The effect is a negative or positive deviation from what is expected.

**Security:** The condition of being protected against hazards, threats, risks, or loss.

---

<sup>8</sup> Where applicable the definitions of the terms are aligned with other UN policies, such as the UN System policy for crisis management and the Standard Operating Procedures for crisis communications.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Crisis Management Policy, 19 March 2018

<sup>10</sup> See United Nations Communications Group: How to communicate in a crisis, 21 June 2017

<sup>11</sup> Medical support manual for United Nations field missions, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support, 2015

<sup>12</sup> ISO 22316, 2017

Support to UN personnel and eligible family members: The provision of essential human resources support for personnel<sup>13</sup> and eligible family members, comprising a multitude of services for those affected by malicious acts, natural disasters or other crises.

## **G. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE**

Adherence to this CEB policy is mandatory. The High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) will monitor adherence to this policy on behalf of the Chief Executives Board. All member organizations of the United Nations System represented in the CEB should report on the application of the ORMS to the HLCM.

Such United Nations System organizations shall adjust relevant internal policies and procedures to ensure the continued adherence to this policy and report thereon to their respective governing bodies according to each organization's reporting mechanisms.

## **H. CONTACT**

The point of contact for this policy is the United Nations Secretariat Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

## **I. HISTORY**

This policy is effective as of 18 January 2021 superseding the policy contained in CEB/2014/HLCM/17 approved on 20 November 2014. It shall be reviewed no later than 31 December 2024 or sooner should circumstances warrant doing so.

## **J. REFERENCES**

### **Relevant General Assembly resolutions, Secretary-General's reports and ACABQ reports**

#### General Assembly resolutions

- 73/279 B of 15 April 2019: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019
- 70/248 B of 1 April 2016: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017
- 68/247B of 9 April 2019: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2014–2015
- 67/254 (7 June 2013): Organizational resilience management system: emergency management framework
- 66/247 of 24 December 2011: Special subjects relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013
- 64/260 of 5 May 2010: Special subjects relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

#### Secretary-General's reports

A/73/666 of 21 December 2018: Report of the Secretary-General: Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

A/70/660 (13 January 2016): Report of the Secretary-General: Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

---

<sup>13</sup> Personnel includes the following: Staff (International Staff, Local Staff, Conference Language Staff, When Actually Employed Staff); Non-staff (Consultants, Individual Contractors, Experts, Experts on Reimbursable/Non-reimbursable Loan, Interns, Volunteers, and UN Volunteers).

A/68/715 of 23 January 2014: Report of the Secretary-General - Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

A/67/266 (7 August 2012): Report of the Secretary-General - Organizational resilience management system: emergency management framework;

A/66/516 (14 Oct 2011): Report of the Secretary-General - Revised estimates relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, and section 30, Office of Information and Communications Technology, related to the organizational resilience management system: emergency management framework

A/64/662: Report of the Secretary-General - Revised estimates relating to the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 under sections 28C, 28D and 36 related to the Emergency Preparedness and Support Unit

#### Reports of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)

A/73/775 of 28 February 2019: Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions – Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

A/70/7/Add.41 (23 February 2016): Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions – Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

A/68/780 of 4 March 2014: Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions - Progress on the implementation of the organizational resilience management system and on the implementation of the recommendations from the after-action review of storm Sandy

A/67/608 (3 December 2012): Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions – Organizational resilience management system: emergency management framework

A/66/7/Add.10 of 9 November 2011: Revised estimates relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 under section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, and section 30, Office of Information and Communications Technology, related to the organizational resilience management system: emergency management framework – Eleventh report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013

#### **Related Frameworks/Systems**

United Nations System Programme Criticality Framework

United Nations Security Management System

United Nations Crisis Management Policy

United Nations Common System Occupational Safety and Health Framework

United Nations System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy



**Approved by the Chief Executives Board**

**APPROVAL SIGNATURE:**

**On behalf of the Chief Executives Board**