



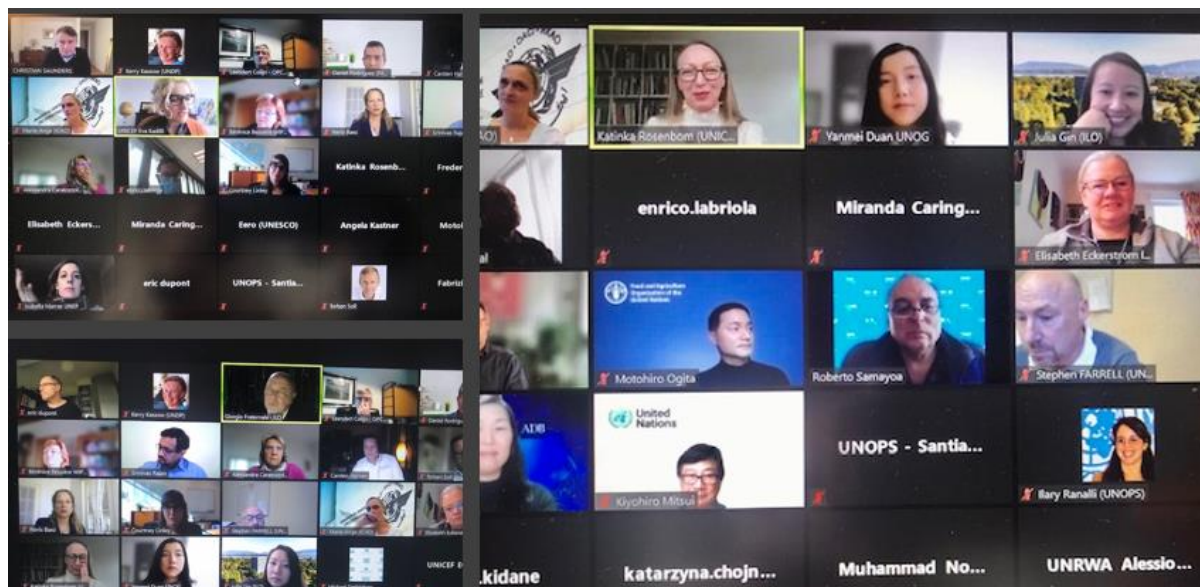
SUMMARY OF 29TH HLCM PROCUREMENT NETWORK VIRTUAL SESSIONS PARTS 1 & 2 - 29TH APRIL & 6TH MAY 2021

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 1 - THURSDAY 29TH APRIL
 THE SESSION WAS ATTENDED BY 57 PARTICIPANTS, REPRESENTING 30 ORGANIZATIONS [LIST OF PARTICIPANTS](#)

1. HLCM/CEB UPDATE
 MR. REMO LALLI (UNOG), HLCM/CEB SECRETARIAT

As previously mentioned at the PN sessions in October 2020, Resolution [A/RES/75/1](#) was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2020 requesting the Secretary-General “to report back before the end of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly with recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.” This is a major strategic undertaking and will frame the work of the UN for the next many years. Therefore, discussions at the recent HLCM (virtual) sessions on the 25th & 26th March were centred around this common agenda, the approach for which is structured around the following five drivers of transformation, also referred to as the ‘quintet of transformation’ by the SG:

- 1. Innovation and Digital Transformation**
- 2. Work Culture**
- 3. Data, Analysis and Communications**
- 4. Performance and Results Orientation**
- 5. Strategic Foresight**

All documents related to the meeting are available on the HLCM-PN Workspace on www.ungm.org or by contacting the PN Secretariat on kerry.kassow@undp.org



Multiple streams of work have been taking place under each area involving the various networks of the HLCM. Among those highlighted by the HLCM Secretary were the following:

UN System Model Policy on Flexible Working Arrangements - accelerated by the COVID19 pandemic and the UN workforce having to work from home, this policy has now been developed and provides the structure and modalities for UN staff working arrangements.

UN Digital ID - to address data fragmentation and duplicative processes within the UN system, introduce inter-operability, scalability, and verifiability to enable exchange of data. This is an area with a very wide scope and is currently in the design phase - the HLCM Secretary emphasized the importance of it as it is likely to have a high impact across the entire UN system, not least on the Procurement function.

Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the UN system - work is progressing on several deliverables. The most recent key output is a manual, developed to facilitate the investigation and handling of sexual harassment cases.

Common data-related job descriptions - as part of the Secretary General's Data Strategy, 24 common job descriptions relating to data and technology have been developed and are available for common use across the UN system.

Embedding risk management across all organizational processes - through the Risk Management Forum, risk management is being given a high level of prominence by the HLCM. HLCM networks are in turn urged to do the same.

The HLCM PN Secretary recommended referring to the Vision Statement that the Secretary-General has submitted to the President of the General Assembly as part of his candidature for the Secretary-General position 2022-2026. This is a useful document for the PN to refer to to give weight to messaging and communication activities.

Finally, and on a separate note, the HLCM Secretary flagged that there was a tasking from the SG's Senior Management Group in the pipeline calling for the HLCM to examine and produce recommendations to improve circular economy in Supply Chains and Procurement. The PN will be kept informed on this initiative.

For full information on this session see the [presentation](#) and the [Secretary-General's Vision Statement](#).

The PN welcomed the timely update from the HLCM Secretary and was fully supportive of all initiatives mentioned. Although there is already a good match between the Common Agenda and various PN areas of work, the PN Chair encouraged all Working Group Chairs to study the Secretary-General's vision statement and the five drivers of transformation to determine how current and upcoming activities can further support the agenda.

2. HARMONIZATION WORKING GROUP

MR. ERIC DUPONT (UNFPA), WG CHAIR

An update was provided on the below initiatives:

(i) Translation of Common Procurement Templates

Common Procurement Templates were developed under the Harmonization Project Phase 3 and endorsed by the PN in October 2019. Since then, the WG agreed that interested agencies should join forces and split the costs to have the templates translated into French and Spanish. The task, coordinated by UNFPA and undertaken by an existing LTA holder, has now been completed and the Common Procurement Templates are available in English,

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French & Spanish from the [UNGM Knowledge Centre](#). The WG Chair thanked FAO, IOM, ITU, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNIDO & WHO for joining UNFPA in financing this initiative.

(ii) Common definition of 'Outsourcing'

Paragraph 62 in the JIU report states: *"To this end, the Inspector recognizes that a definition exists in the UN Procurement Practitioner's Handbook and proposes that deliberations be undertaken through relevant inter-agency platforms, such as the Procurement Network of the High-level Committee on Management, to arrive at a certain level of common systemwide conceptualization of outsourcing"*.

The PN agreed that the understanding of Outsourcing is ambiguous across the UN System and a common definition is needed to enable consistent reporting. Therefore, it was agreed that the Harmonization WG would take this work forward. A sub-group has been created under the leadership of UNICEF and **a first draft definition is currently being worked on by the group. A final definition is expected to be ready for submission and endorsement by the PN at its Autumn session 2021.**

(iii) Common definition of 'Major UN Supplier'

UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2388 (2017), Article 31: *"calls upon United Nations system organizations to enhance transparency in their procurement and supply chains and step up their efforts to strengthen protections against trafficking in persons in all United Nations procurement and to that effect request major suppliers to establish and implement anti-human trafficking policies and disclose information on measures taken to counter trafficking in persons in their operations and supply chains."*

Given the above, the Human Trafficking and Forced Labour Task Force (TF) asked for the support of the Harmonization WG in defining the term "major UN supplier" which will enable the TF to focus its attention on a clearly defined group of UN vendors. The PN agreed that the WG should include this item in its workplan. A sub-group has been created with the support of the UNOPS/ASR team and ILO to carry this work forward. Following analysis and discussion, the sub-group agreed that it would be best to focus on the individual agency approach of a cumulative procurement value threshold for each UN organization rather than the across-all-UN-agencies approach. Agencies can then at their own discretion determine whether some of their vendors should be included for reasons other than volume i.e. if the vendor is considered critical/high-risk by the agency. **UNOPS is currently running a few scenarios using ASR data and the sub-group will then continue working on a proposed definition with a view to submitting it to the PN for decision at its Autumn session 2021.**

For more information see the [summary sheet](#) and [presentation](#) from this session.

Summary of comments

- It was agreed that reaching a decision on a common definition of Outsourcing in Autumn 2021 is timely and important because the JIU is following up with UN organizations on implementation of its recommendation.
- Organizations that have concerns about the impact of revising their current definition of Outsourcing were encouraged to join and contribute to the work of the sub-group.



3. STRATEGIC VENDOR MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

MR. WALTER GRANDPRÉ (ILO), WG CHAIR

MS. FRANCIS BURGA (ILO), MPF REVISION TASK FORCE COORDINATOR

MR. SANTIAGO MILLAN (UNOPS), SPE SUB-GROUP COORDINATOR

MS. KERRY KASSOW (UNDP), IPS SUB-GROUP COORDINATOR

The PN was provided with an update on the work being undertaken by the following sub-groups:

(i) Revision of the Model Policy Framework (MPF) for Vendor Sanctions

Under the leadership of ILO, a Task Force (TF) on the revision of the MPF was created to review, modernize and amend the MPF, which was originally developed in 2010. To date, the TF has reviewed the scope of the MPF, basic definitions (proscribed practices), nature of proceedings and the mandate of the sanctions board. The next task will be to work on the start of sanction proceedings.

(ii) Supplier Performance Evaluation (SPE)

Led by UNOPS, this sub-working group has been created to share knowledge, assess the possibility of harmonising approaches on supplier performance rating and related actions (e.g. potential suspensions due to performance issues) and to discuss the potential further use of the UNGM functionality for supplier performance flagging and rating functionality. The group's workplan for 2021 encompasses the following:

- Create a Guidelines document for UN organizations on usage of the UNGM vendor rating functionality and the performance issues flag with a view to submitting for PN endorsement in Autumn 2021.
- Share knowledge and best practices in the domain of supplier performance management and evaluation.
- Identify work items to be implemented in 2022.

(iii) International Procurement Seminars (IPS)

Due to the global pandemic situation physical IPS that had been planned for 2020 were unable to take place. Instead, the IPS sub-group encouraged host countries to consider pursuing a virtual model. Two consortia of countries expressed interest and succeeded in piloting the virtual IPS concept in January 2021. Both events were deemed successful by all stakeholders and a summary of feedback and lessons learned was shared with the PN. The sub-group requested PN input on whether IPS events should continue to be offered on a physical basis (when possible again) or if the virtual IPS should be the default model, or whether host entities should be free to choose either approach or even a hybrid model. In addition, the group highlighted the need to explore how the virtual IPS model can be communicated more widely to allow more vendors, particularly in Developing Countries, to learn about and access UN business opportunities.

(iv) Vendor Risk Management and Assessment Tools

Coordinated by Ms. Natalia Nedel (UN Secretariat) - the TOR for this group is currently being drafted and an update will be provided once work is underway.

(v) Innovative Contracting and Supplier Relationship

Coordinated by Ms. Bérénice Bessière (WIPO) - likewise an update will be provided on this topic once work is underway.

For full information see the [summary sheet](#) and [presentation](#) from this session.



Summary of comments

- **The PN Chair encouraged the MPF sub-group to continue the good work as the need for reliance on each other's procedures and the scrutiny agencies are under has never been greater.**
- **She also underlined the importance of examining the degree to which sanctions are punitive versus allowing for restoration - a common understanding of how this will be applied will be important for perceptions of fairness.**
- **Since it is in the interest of all agencies to access performance information on vendors and the functionality to provide this information in the UNGM already exists (and has been endorsed by the PN membership), the UNGM Steering Committee Chair urged agencies to start using it.** The information made available in the UNGM is for internal use only and does not mean that a vendor is necessarily going to be disqualified/sanctioned. Meanwhile, discussions on to what extent performance information should be shared publicly can continue among the agencies.
- The UN Secretariat offered to provide a presentation at the PN meeting in Autumn 2021 on the new Instant Feedback System it has launched for instant performance comments/ratings.
- There was widespread strong support for continuing to provide IPS in a meaningful, effective and sustainable way and that the focus going forward should be on Developing Countries; particularly since a shift in supply base to be closer to these countries/regions is expected in accordance with the SDGs etc.
- The UN Secretariat has taken part in a number of virtual business seminars for Developing Countries during the pandemic and offered to support IPS outreach activities to the developing markets.
- To continue to meet the repeat demand from the Industrialized Countries (who are our Donors/Member States), it was suggested that a hybrid model be explored, e.g. where one person represents the UN physically at the IPS and other agency representatives are linked in on a virtual basis.
- Time differences with, for example, Asia and Latin American, would have to be factored in when determining to what extent an IPS should take place on a virtual basis.
- It was also suggested once again that business seminars could take place in conjunction with PN meetings as was the case with IAPWG meetings (predecessor to PN) in the past but, as previously discussed, this is resource-intensive to arrange in parallel with PN meetings and does not align with the IPS concept whereby Member States officially express interest in hosting.
- **The PN Chair recognised the work and positive outcomes to date from the virtual IPS pilots and recommended that the IPS sub-group continues to build on these.**
- **She also supported the suggestion to professionalize the pre-recorded agency presentations to make for more engaging content at virtual seminars.**

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

MR. TORBEN SOLL (UNDP), WG CHAIR

The PN was given a brief update on the below topics:

(i) UN Procurement Awards

Due to the COVID-19 situation, and as previously communicated, it was decided in Spring 2020 to postpone the UN Procurement Awards to 2021. The entire structure is already in place

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to move forward with the process and the plan is to celebrate the awards at the PN session in Autumn 2021.

(ii) Knowledge sharing sessions – lessons learned during the pandemic

The pandemic situation has brought about changes in the way training is carried out – many have gone from providing face-to-face training to virtual/online/mixed training. The plan is now to set up a series of sessions among the Working Group to share knowledge, experiences, best practices, etc. from these new training modalities.

(iii) Spanish translation of Procurement Practitioners Handbook (PPH)

The PPH is a valuable resource for procurement practitioner's but is currently only available in English and French. The WG Chair enquired as to whether any agencies would be interested in sharing the costs of having the PPH translated into Spanish, similar to the cost-sharing for the translation of the common procurement templates under the Harmonization WG. The proposal is to have the work undertaken by an existing LTA holder and the cost is expected to be around \$20,000.

For more information see the [presentation](#) from this session.

Summary of comments

- Both PAHO and the UN Secretariat offered to share information on LTA holders that have done similar work for them and who could perhaps offer a lower price.
- **The PN Chair welcomed the idea of the knowledge-sharing sessions and suggested that the WG Chair follows up with an email to encourage everyone interested, in particular newcomers, to join.**
- **She was also confident that a solution could be found for funding the translation of the PPH into Spanish and suggested that this is explored further¹.**

5. IT COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT PROJECT

MR. VICTOR MARGALL (UNDP), PROCUREMENT LEAD

Based on the Collaborative Procurement Prioritization Exercise undertaken by the HLCM PN in 2018 a joint procurement project was launched between UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA to address needs within the area of IT Systems, Equipment and Services. The result of which was the launch of a tender and the subsequent establishment of an LTA with four IT consolidators. The Project Lead presented the LTA set-up and resources that have been developed and shared as part of the set-up. The LTA will work on a secondary bidding basis given the extremely broad scope of the goods/services being provided. Agencies can also establish their own sub-LTA with the consolidators that will allow them to place orders for certain items on a direct basis.

The LTAs include the following Lots:

- Lot 1: Networking and datacenter equipment, including accessories and replacement parts
- Lot 2: Desktop/laptop/tablet computers, Smartphones (without subscriptions) monitors and accessories
- Lot 3: TV/LCD panels, cameras, conference and translation equipment
- Lot 4: Printers, scanners and accessories
- Lot 5: Off-the-shelf (COTS) software

¹ Post-meeting confirmation: UNDP, UNICEF & UN Secretariat will jointly fund this initiative.

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**Further and related to the above, the LTAs also include:**

- Transportation/freight services to deliver to destinations
- Export compliance licensing services
- Installation at destination and technical support services
- Warranty support services

In relation to contract management of the LTA, and as mentioned in recent email communication to the PN, focal points in each participating agency should be appointed. It is envisaged that each agency will manage vendors at project level, and at the same time ensure the adequate use of the LTA amongst their own offices. In addition, the LTA management setup includes the continuation of the Working Group established for the development of the LTA and which will communicate with the agency focal points. The Working Group will meet regularly to address contractual matters at LTA level, consolidate reported information from agencies and manage overall LTA holders' performance.

To use the LTA, copies of the Agreements, guidelines (SOPs), and other relevant documents can be found in the [LTA Repository on the UNGM](#) (ref. GP500454). For more information, see the [presentation](#) from this session and the [email communication sent to the PN](#) with full details.

Summary of comments

- The Procurement Lead clarified that it will be up to the agency focal points to monitor the agency's own spend. The data can also be retrieved from the LTA holders for comparison purposes.
- The UNGM LTA functionality features a feedback tab that provides data on the usage of the LTA by agencies piggy-backing on it. Data collected includes spend, contractual period, as well as general feedback. However, it does require the input to be entered manually.
- As part of the tender process vendors had to demonstrate that they had adequate capacity to meet UN demand as well as ensure that systems are in place to handle sustainability aspects such as proper disposal/re-use of obsolete components.
- Price fluctuations can be seen depending on the procurement project but do not appear to be limited to any one vendor.
- There were concerns that having only four LTA holders may be limiting competition given the high UN spend in this area - the Procurement Lead informed that the situation would be monitored on an ongoing basis, but these vendors had been selected because they clearly understood the needs of the UN best out of all the bidders.
- Although the four vendors are international companies, they have been encouraged to collaborate with local, qualified suppliers to provide technical and warranty support services, training, etc.
- **The PN Chair congratulated the Procurement Lead and the Working Group on this important work and encouraged the group to continue to monitor and report on this important collaborative project.**



PART 2 - THURSDAY 6TH MAY

THE SESSION WAS ATTENDED BY 65 PARTICIPANTS, REPRESENTING 30 ORGANIZATIONS [LIST OF PARTICIPANTS](#)

1. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT WORKING GROUP

MS. ISABELLA MARRAS (UNEP) & MR. NIELS RAMM (UNOPS), WG CO-CHAIRS
 MR. CARSTEN HANSEN (UNDP), MR. FARID YAKER (UNEP) & MR. LUKAS VON SCHUCKMANN (UNEP) - ESG-WEIGHTED PROCUREMENT PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT TOOL
 MR. VANJA OSTOJIC (ILO) - HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND FORCED LABOUR TASK FORCE COORDINATOR

(i) Reporting on SP in the UN system

To fulfil the requirements of the UN Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030 – which demands that the UN reports on 1) the number of UN agencies with an SP policy; and 2) the percentage of tenders that have incorporated sustainability considerations – the SP WG has identified the Annual Statistical Report on UN Procurement (ASR) as well as the Greening the Blue report as appropriate publications for this purpose. Data on the first item is already being gathered through an ASR questionnaire and published in the ASR and will, pending final discussions with the responsible team, be included in the Greening the Blue report as well. The plan is to report on the second item in 2022 using the SP Indicators on UNGM.

On a separate note, **PN members were invited to submit short sustainable procurement stories (or best practices) from 2020 for the next Greening the Blue report.**

(ii) ESG²-weighted Procurement Portfolio Management (PPM) tool

UNDP and UNEP presented this new tool which they have developed collaboratively to support procurement practitioners in identifying procurement category specific sustainability risks and map them against an organization's procurement spend portfolio. Based on the identified sustainability risks, appropriate mitigation methods are proposed. The new tool is designed to be practical and straightforward, open source and freely accessible.

(iii) Human Trafficking and Forced Labour Task Force

The aim of this Task Force (TF), created in response to the UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/2388, 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. At the PN session in October 2020, the PN endorsed a Project Document from the TF for the development of a Policy Framework on Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in UN Supply Chains. Following endorsement, the TF undertook fundraising activities in order to engage consultancy services to assist with the development of the Policy Framework. Adequate funds have now been raised (thanks to contributions from ILO, IOM, OSCE, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the UN Secretariat) and an agreement signed with the [Danish Institute for Human Rights](#), who is about to commence work on the project. The Framework is expected to be finalized by mid- December 2021, after which it will be submitted to the PN for endorsement.

(iv) Recent UN reports and developments

Finally, the following were briefly presented as they affect all agencies:

² Environmental, Social and Governance

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- **The UN Common Approach on Biodiversity**, endorsed by the CEB on 4 May 2021 Integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the UN policy and programme planning and delivery.

- **Recommendation 4 in the JIU Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system**, which calls for:

"The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, task procurement offices with incorporating specific provisions for integrating environmental sustainability considerations into procurement policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, as necessary."

- **The December 2020 QCPR³** which calls upon the entities of the United Nations Development System to:

- o advance the development of a system-wide approach, implement measures, and report regularly to their respective governing bodies, through existing reporting and mandates, on their efforts to reduce their climate and environmental footprint.
- o ensure consistency of their operations and programmes with low emissions and climate-resilient development pathways; stressing the urgency of climate action and contribute to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

- **A proposed UN SP capacity programme** - development of a collaborative inter-agency SP online resource platform to identify synergies, improve efficiency and consistency and to help every organization irrespective of size and capacity to undertake SP.

For more information on all of the above see the following:

[Summary sheet](#)

[SP WG Update presentation](#)

[ESG-weighted PPM tool presentation](#) and the paper [A Sustainability-Weighted Procurement Portfolio Approach 2020](#)

[Human Trafficking & Forced Labour TF presentation](#) and [TF space](#) in the UNGM

Summary of comments

- The PPM tool, which is for internal use only at this stage, allows agencies to identify categories and then develop guidelines for these so that sustainability aspects can be integrated into the tendering process, a part that has been lacking until now.
- UNEP added that a tool such as this can be very helpful in addressing pressures the UN system faces to demonstrate that it is "walking the talk" in terms of sustainability.
- UNDP underlined that going forward it will be necessary to collaborate with other agencies of the PN and leverage all the competencies that exist across the organizations in order to address all the indicators etc.
- **The PN was therefore urged to come together, to help further design and collectively "own" the tool, which has the potential to be an important inter-agency outcome.**
- **The WG will continue its work on the tool and is considering forming a Task Force to take the work forward – those interested in engaging were invited to do so.**
- **The PN Chair encouraged the Human Trafficking & Forced Labour TF to seek the support of the SP Working Group and the PN Management Board in reaching its**

³ Quadriennial Comprehensive Policy Review

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decision points and reminded that final decision-making should be aligned with PN biannual sessions.

- **The HLCM Secretary commended the TF on its successful fund-raising efforts and developments so far in this strategic area of work.**
- **The PN Chair expressed appreciation to the Working Group in general for the impressive deliverables as well as the strong leadership and high level of energy across the group.**

2. AI & PROCUREMENT

MR. PREETAM MALOOR (ITU) & MS. CLARE STARK (UNESCO), CO-CHAIRS OF THE HLCP INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (IAWG-AI)

The co-Chairs gave a presentation of their work and provided background information supporting the need for collaboration with the PN on the development of guidelines for procurement of AI products. The following next steps were proposed:

- Create a joint Working Group of IAWG-AI and the HLCM PN's Cognitive Procurement Working Group
- Clearly define the ToR and deliverables (governance framework/guidelines, templates for sample use cases, check lists etc.)
- Engage with different internal and external stakeholders and partners (e.g. WEF) to leverage community of experts etc.
- 2021-mid 2022: development of above deliverables

For more information on the above see the [presentation](#) from the session.

Summary of comments

- **In the spirit of good collaboration, the Chair of the Cognitive Procurement Working Group confirmed that the WG would be willing to engage with the IAWG-AI to discuss the TOR and expectations for this task.**
- **The PN Chair urged PN members to reach out to IAWG-AI counterparts within their organizations to further support collaborative efforts.**

3. COVAX UPDATE

MS. KATINKA ROSENBOM (UNICEF) & MR. DANIEL RODRIGUEZ (PAHO)

Vaccinating the world against COVID19 is set to be the largest vaccine procurement and supply operation in history. An overview and progress report were provided on the activities of the global scheme, COVAX, which has been established to ensure fair and equitable access to COVID19 vaccines for all participants. COVAX is a multi-partner collaboration between CEPI, Gavi, WHO, UNICEF, PAHO & Multilateral Development Banks. UNICEF and PAHO play a vital role in providing procurement and logistics support to the scheme. So far, approximately 54 million doses of COVID19 vaccines have been shipped to 121 countries and territories under the operation.

For more information see the [presentation](#) from the session.

Summary of comments

- One of the main challenges COVAX has faced is ensuring enough supply for the numerous countries in need.
- To try and bridge the gap between the availability and administration of vaccines in High/Upper Middle-Income Countries versus Lower-Income Countries, COVAX has



been encouraging its partner countries to share their supplies (many have secured volumes beyond their needs).

- Overall, there is expected to be a greater availability of vaccines in the 2nd half of the year, and WHO is working to qualify more suppliers for its Emergency-Use Listing.

4. CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

MR. CHRISTIAN SAUNDERS (UN SECRETARIAT), MS. NERIS M BAEZ GARCIA DE MAZZORA (UN SECRETARIAT), MR. SRINIVAS RAJAN (UN SECRETARIAT) & MS. ETLVA KADILLI (UNICEF)

Category Management is an integrated approach to organizing the supply chain with a focus on specific supply markets as well as the evolving requirements of our internal customers. Through identifying key areas of spend and developing specific category strategies, it helps ensure supply chain agility and long-term value for money for the UN.

UN Category Management is aimed at leveraging best practices from within the system while incorporating latest trends from the various industry portfolios that are applicable to the UN system. Both the UN Secretariat and UNICEF have a strong focus on Category Management and believe that the UN could benefit enormously from greater collaboration in this area. The need, and later the benefits, of this became quite apparent during the pandemic and there are many lessons learned from that experience – collaboration on PPE being one of the success stories. There is a high level of specialized expertise across the UN agencies and great potential to leverage this knowledge and other strengths in line with mandates. This can also be very powerful in influencing markets, ensuring better prices and that the countries we serve get access to key commodities.

Overall, the benefits are many and include:

- Improved standardization and simplification – creates various savings, but also helps focus on being more productive and effective.
- Innovation – finding ways to proactively evaluate the supply and demand across categories and implement innovative concepts to stay relevant and bring value to the UN system.
- Value for Money – clear articulation of needs and a well-defined strategy are key ingredients for creating better leverage in the markets resulting in increased value for money.
- Client Orientation – with simplified processes for agile, responsive and reliable operations.
- Improved customer service – and with greater transparency.
- Sustainability – incorporation of sustainability considerations into category strategies.
- Furthering the vision of a One-UN approach through deeper inter-agency/cross-entity cooperation.

Call to action

It was with this message that the UN Secretariat and UNICEF called upon the PN to revive its collective commitment for a collaborative approach to supply chain management. To move this forward in a timely manner and in concrete terms, it was recommended that a group of interested individuals and organizations come together under the Harmonization Working Group to develop a roadmap for presentation and agreement at the next PN session.

For more information see the [presentation](#) from the session.

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Summary of comments

- The task of the Harmonization Working Group would be to host the task team and support the creation of a roadmap for implementation, identify suitable categories, and decide which agency should be the leader or co-leader of each.
- UN agencies should not be getting involved in areas others already specialize in, be concerned about job loss or protecting “turf”, but rather focus on becoming better and more efficient.
- The PN has demonstrated in the past that it has a strong ability to collaborate and be proactive – this is another opportunity to deliver on this.
- Several PN member organizations are already focusing efforts on category management, and **members were in general supportive of the call to action and the recommendation that the Harmonization Working Group takes the work forward.**
- **The Harmonization Working Group Chair was also in agreement, however, highlighted that successful implementation would be dependent on full support and endorsement by the Heads of Agencies.**

5. UNGM STEERING COMMITTEE BRIEFING

MR. GIORGIO FRATERNALE (ILO), UNGM STEERING COMMITTEE (SC) CHAIR

The UNGM SC Chair provided the PN on an update from the UNGM membership session which took place the previous day.

The UNGM membership endorsed the following decision items:

(i) The request for UNGM membership made by UNICC – making UNICC the 30th UNGM member agency.

(ii) The relocation of UNGM ICT infrastructure from UNOPS’ CPH data center to the Google Cloud Platform (GCP) under UNOPS’ enterprise agreement with Google – this

recommendation is based upon extensive comparative analysis between the option of moving the UNGM IT structure GCP or migrating it to the UNICC. The migration is foreseen to take place during the third quarter of 2021. This will allow UNGM to continue developing tools such as the suite of UNGM dashboards and other functionality using cutting edge technology. It was also determined to be the most cost-effective solution.

In addition, the following were presented and discussed by the UNGM Membership:

UNGM Post Factum Financial Review 2020 - the positive balance of 110,303 USD has been set aside in the UNGM Reserve Fund, which now amounts to approx. 515,000 USD. This was possible due to a record year of TAS revenues (764'010 USD) and savings achieved in the Help Desk services with the implementation of a Customer Service Solution application.

The UNGM 2020 Operational Report - highlights being that the number of suppliers on the UNGM by the end of 2020 reached 291,889; 75% of which are located in developing countries/economies in transition/least developed countries, 84% are SMEs, and 6% are self-declared women-owned business. In addition, 13 UN agencies have now integrated their e-procurement system with UNGM.

Election of a new UNGM SC Member - since the UNGM SC Chair will retire shortly, the SC has announced a call for expression of interest in joining the SC. This nomination period has a deadline at the end of June 2021, with the election taking place in July 2021. As of 1st July, Mr. Kiyohiro Mitsui (current Vice Chair) will take over the position of UNGM SC Chair. The renewed UNGM SC shall remain in place until the fall of 2023, at which time its mandate expires will have to be fully renewed.

All documents related to the meeting are available on the HLCM-PN Workspace on www.ungm.org or by contacting the PN Secretariat on kerry.kassow@undp.org



Donor Country Sanction List look-up functionality - due to its potential political implications the UNGM membership proposed that this topic is discussed further within the Strategic Vendor Management Working Group with a view to presenting it for decision in the Autumn 2021.

Disability Inclusion - the UNGM registration process has been updated to feature a self-selection tick-box enabling vendors to indicate that they are disability-inclusive as per the definition endorsed by the PN in the 'Guidelines for the implementation of Indicator 8' relating to the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. The UN sustainability indicators have been updated to reflect indicators pertaining to disability inclusion.

Single Sign-On (SSO) functionality - the UNGM has launched industry-standard SSO functionality that facilitates the secure exchange of user credentials between interfaced applications. This functionality has been implemented with WIPO's recent e-procurement system integration. It can be used for all future integrations, including the integration between UNGM and other systems such as UN Web Buy Plus.

For full information see the package of UNGM documentation for the May 2021 session available [here](#).

6. NEW PN MEMBER

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) submitted [an application](#) to join the PN as an Associate Member.

Following a review of the application, the PN had no objection to ICMPD joining the Network. The PN Secretariat will inform ICMPD of the outcome and they will be invited to participate in PN activities going forward.

7. AOB

Ms. Bérénice Bessière (WIPO) was thanked for her work on the PN Management Board, in particular for transitioning the PN to the virtual format, and Ms. Elisabeth Eckerstrom (ITU⁴) was welcomed into the Chair position for the next period, as Ms. Katinka Rosenbom (UNICEF) moves to the Advisory Chair role.

Ms. Daniela Leinen (IAEA) was welcomed as the new PN Vice Chair (2021-22) and Mr. Roberto Samayoa (PAHO) as 2nd PN Advisory Chair (2021-2024) following the electronic election that took place in April.

The PN thanked Mr. Giorgio Fraternali (ILO) for 20+ years of unwavering dedication to UN inter-agency procurement activities and wished him all the best for his retirement.

⁴ Elisabeth has since taken up the position of Director of Procurement at UNDP

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