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HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT (HLCM)

**Conclusions of the Eleventh Session of the  
High Level Committee on Management**  
(Villiers-le-Mahieu, France, 27-28 February 2006)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1 – 3
<b>I. Adoption of the agenda</b> .....	4 – 5
<b>II. Dialogue with representatives of FICSA and CCISUA</b> .....	6
<b>III. Preparations for joint session of HLCM and HLCP</b> .....	7 – 9
<b>IV. Management reform:</b>	
A. UN system collaboration on accountability and transparency .....	10 – 15
B. Update on management reform in the United Nations Secretariat and other organizations of the UN system .....	16 – 19
<b>V. Information and communication technology issues:</b>	
A. Progress report on development of the UN system ICT strategic framework .....	20 – 25
B. Clarifying inter-agency ICT collaboration.....	26 – 28
<b>VI. Security and safety of staff</b> .....	29 – 34
<b>VII. Finance and budget issues:</b>	
A. Accounting standards: terms of reference and budget for the continuation of project resources to ensure support and coordination for IPSAS adoption by the United Nations System.....	35 – 38

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

### Paragraphs

#### **VIII. Human resources issues:**

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| A. Update on the United Nations System contingency plan for an influenza pandemic ..... | 39– 41 |
|---|--------|

#### **IX. Other matters:**

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| A. United Nations System Staff College .....                 | 42 – 46 |
| B. Gender mainstreaming, and women, peace and security ..... | 47 – 51 |
| C. Date and location of next session of HLCM.....            | 52 – 53 |
| D. Working methods of HLCM.....                              | 54      |

#### **Attachments**

- Attachment 1 – List of Participants
- Attachment 2 – Agenda
- Attachment 3 – Statement of FICSA
- Attachment 4 – Statement of CCISUA

## Introduction

1. The High Level Committee on Management held its eleventh regular session in Villiers-le-Mahieu (France) on 27 and 28 February 2006. This was the first meeting of the Committee under the chairmanship of UNFPA Executive Director Thoraya Obaid, with Denis Aitken, WHO Assistant Director-General, Director of the Office of the Director-General as vice chairman. A joint session with the High Level Committee on Programme was held on the afternoon of 28 February.
2. In opening the session, the Chairperson paid tribute to Catherine Bertini, past Chairperson, David Waller, past *ad interim* Chairperson as well as Vice Chairperson for their stewardship of the Committee.
3. The list of participants is provided in attachment 1.

### I. Adoption of the agenda and work programme <sup>1</sup>

4. The agenda as adopted by the Committee (attachment 2) focused on the following:
  - Preparations for the joint session with HLCP;
  - Security and safety of staff;
  - Management reform;
  - Financial and budgetary issues;
  - Information communication and technology issues;
  - Progress on implementation of the United Nations contingency plan for an influenza pandemic
  - United Nations System Staff College;
  - Gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security.
5. All documents related to the session can be viewed on the CEB website: <http://hlc.unsystemceb.org/>.

### II. Dialogue with FICSA and CCISUA

6. In accordance with established practice, the Committee conducted an exchange of views with the representatives of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) and the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA). FICSA was represented by its President, Robert Weisell and CCISUA by Rick Cottam, Bureau Member of CCISUA.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (CEB/2006/HLCM/R.1/Rev.1 and CRP.1  
(CEB/2006/HLCM/R.8)

<sup>2</sup> The statements of the representatives of FICSA and CCISUA are provided in attachments 3 and 4, respectively.

### III. Preparations for the joint session of HLCCM and HLCP

7. In response to the mandate of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Secretary General set up a High Level Panel “to develop concrete and comprehensive analysis and recommendations” on how the UN system can maximize its contribution toward achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, as well as proposals for “more tightly managed entities” in the field of the environment, humanitarian assistance and development”. The outcome of the Panel discussions could have a significant effect on the administrative and programmatic operations of organizations across the system. To ensure coherent input into the work of the Panel, the two High Level Committees planned a joint meeting to exchange views on key areas of interest that the panel would likely address.
8. To prepare for the joint meeting, the Committee considered a Note<sup>3</sup> from the Chairs of the High Level Committees, which was intended to serve as the basis for the discussions. The Committee also had the benefit of a briefing by the Executive Director of the High Level Panel Secretariat. The Executive Director conveyed that, while an important outcome of the Summit was the reaffirmation of multi-lateralism, several major themes had emerged: (a) UN system funding issues and the international aid architecture, in particular the nature of the funding of the multilateral system and the availability of adequate resources to match existing mandates both in terms of volume and quality; (b) country-level coherence and coordination arrangements, including the Resident Coordinator system and the linking of humanitarian, development and environmental activities so as to achieve a more unified system presence; (c) reforming support services globally in underpinning development both at the country level and at various headquarters locations; (d) strengthening linkages and building greater coherence between normative, analytical and policy work and operational activities; and (e) developing a new United Nations system management culture(s) and ensuring that all parts of the system learn from and support each other.
9. The Committee:
  - (a) Expressed appreciation for being given the opportunity to discuss these issues together with HLCP and hoped that there would be another opportunity for a future discussion once the CEB had met;
  - (b) In light of its discussion on gender mainstreaming, regretted that such a small proportion of those individuals named to the High Level Panel were women.

### IV. Management reform

#### (a) UN system collaboration on accountability and transparency

10. At its ninth session, the Committee considered follow-up to the General Assembly Resolution A57/278, which had, *inter alia*, requested “the Secretary General and the Executive Heads of the Funds and Programmes of the UN examine governance structures,

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<sup>3</sup> (CEB/2006/HLCCM/R.1/Rev.1 and CRP.1)

principles and accountability throughout the UN system”. It decided to create a multi-disciplinary working group to examine current accountability mechanisms in organizations, raise awareness of such tools and identify best practices.

11. At its tenth session, during its consideration of a draft terms of reference for this working group of HLCM, the Committee’s attention was drawn to the draft terms of reference prepared by the United Nations in response to a request by the World Summit Outcome document for “the Secretary-General to submit an independent external evaluation of the United Nations, including the specialized agencies’, auditing and oversight system, including the roles and responsibilities of management ... This evaluation [should] take place within the context of the comprehensive review of the governance arrangements”.
12. In follow-up feedbacks on the draft terms of reference prepared by the UN, some organizations expressed concerns about combining the examination of governance structures with an external evaluation of auditing and oversight, as it was believed that a review of governance should be an internal review, especially with respect to the specialized agencies. Also, organizations requested clarifications on the mechanisms through which they – within HLCM – could exercise some guiding role in framing the objectives and monitoring the development of such an independent evaluation.
13. On 28 November 2005 the Secretary General submitted a report to the GA (A/60/568), which included the proposed terms of reference for a comprehensive review of governance arrangements, including an independent external evaluation of the auditing and oversight system.
14. At its eleventh session the Committee, introducing the discussion on this item, considered it necessary to carry out separate consultations within an ad-hoc working group to review the Terms of Reference submitted by the Secretary-General. The ad-hoc group met and produced a statement, as follows:

The General Assembly, in Resolutions A/57/278 A and A/59/264 A, requested an examination of governance structures, principles and accountability of the UN Secretariat and its Funds and Programmes.

Resolution A/60/1, paragraph 164(b), provided the mandate for "... *an evaluation of the auditing and oversight system of the United Nations, including the specialized agencies, including the roles and responsibilities of management, with due regard to the nature of the auditing and oversight bodies in question. This evaluation will take place within the context of the comprehensive review of the governance arrangements*".

Draft terms of reference for a study covering both the governance review and the auditing, investigatory and other related oversight functions were proposed by the Secretary General in his Report A/60/568. The General Assembly at its sixtieth session approved funding for the study as well as the proposed terms of reference.

The Committee, having considered the proposals contained in Annex II of A/60/568, agreed that the study should separate its outputs into two reports, one focusing on governance, and the other on auditing, investigatory and other related oversight functions.

Bearing in mind the original mandates included in Resolutions A/57/278 and A/59/264, the scope of the governance review would cover the operations of the UN Secretariat and its Funds and Programmes. The Specialized Agencies and other inter-governmental bodies may participate in this process to ensure that the best practices in the various organizations are taken into account.

In light of the above, HLCM agreed that the draft terms of reference for the study contained in Annex II of A/60/568 should be modified to reflect the following:

The evaluation of auditing, investigatory and other related oversight functions would include the UN Secretariat, its Funds and Programmes, and the Specialized Agencies;

The governance review would cover the UN Secretariat and its Funds and Programmes.

Each organization will nominate a focal point for the purpose of coordinating with the ongoing study.

The HLCM will designate an ad-hoc group to consult with the Steering Committee, to ensure that HLCM's views are fully represented to the Steering Committee and to the Consultants. The UN Secretariat will ensure that the HLCM is kept up to date on all developments in the progress of the study.

HLCM also notes that the Steering Committee will submit the reports on governance and oversight to the Secretary-General, who would share them with the Executive Heads.

15. The Committee adopted the statement and:
- (a) Requested the CEB secretariat to consult with members to constitute an *ad hoc* group of HLCM to serve as focal point for the Steering Committee, to ensure that HLCM's views are fully represented to the Steering Committee and to the consultants doing the study;
  - (b) Noted that the UN Secretariat would ensure that the HLCM was kept advised of all developments in the progress of the study;
  - (c) Noted that the Steering Committee would submit its reports on governance and oversight to the Secretary General who would share them with the Executive Heads of all UN system organizations.
- (b) Update on management reform in the United Nations Secretariat and other organizations of the UN system<sup>4</sup>**
16. The Committee members exchanged views on management reform initiatives being undertaken in their respective organizations so as to benefit from "lessons learned".
17. Committee was informed by the United Nations that the Secretary General was embarking upon the most sweeping reforms since creation of the organization. A number of measures had already been implemented. These included the establishment of an Ethics Office with the primary responsibility for administering the whistleblower protection and financial disclosure policies and for providing ethics advisory and standard-setting services. This office reported directly to the Secretary General. In addition, to address shortcomings identified by both the General Assembly and the Volcker Inquiry, an Oversight Committee had been created to ensure that appropriate and prompt management action was taken to implement Office of Internal Oversight recommendations. The Committee learned that other major reforms were to be announced by the Secretary General in early March. Among the proposals under study were a streamlining of the Secretariat's structure, simplification of personnel and financial rules and regulations, upgrading of ICT systems, adoption of a universal knowledge management system, alternative service delivery models such as outsourcing or off-shoring, modernization of procurement operations, expanded authority to redeploy posts and to use savings from posts, and linking results more explicitly to managerial performance through more rigorous monitoring and evaluation.
18. Several common themes emerged during the discussion. A number of organizations had already adopted, or were considering alternative service delivery models such as off-shoring or outsourcing selected administrative processes, particularly in the information technology area. Initiatives were also being undertaken regarding management accountability, simplification of personnel and financial regulations, contractual reform, and activities aimed at ensuring ethical conduct and financial disclosure.

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<sup>4</sup> (CEB/2006/HLCM/11/INF.1 and INF.2)

19. The Committee:

- (a) Agreed that there should be more systematic sharing of practices and to this end requested that the secretariat survey organizations on ongoing efforts in this area upon specific request from HLCM members;
- (b) Agreed that the Committee convenes inter-sessional video conferences on specific emerging issues such as the Secretary General's forthcoming reform proposals and alternative service delivery models;
- (c) Urged that the management reforms throughout the system focus on achieving greater impact, and better use of resources, and not just on reform for the sake of reform.

**V. Information and communication technology issues:**

**(a) Progress report on development of the UN system ICT strategic framework <sup>5</sup>**

- 20. General Assembly Resolution A/57/295, adopted in 2002, requested the Secretary General, in his capacity as Chairman of the CEB, to develop a comprehensive ICT Strategy for the United Nations system. The HLCM, at its session in October 2004 endorsed the ICT Strategy presented by the Network of ICT Directors and at subsequent sessions agreed that the ICT Network should work on developing business cases for eight initiatives, deemed as priorities, contained in the strategy document.
- 21. The CEB Secretariat's Advisor on Information Management Policy Coordination introduced the report of ongoing activities of the ICT Network. The Network had made progress on many of the priority initiatives, particularly the ones addressing global network and knowledge sharing. The topic of knowledge sharing was of ever-increasing interest across the system and, at the request of the HLCP, the secretariat was finalizing terms of reference for a task force to develop an inter-agency knowledge-sharing framework. One emerging issue was the role that not only technology, but also management policies play in enhancing participation in the knowledge economy that existed across the system.
- 22. The Committee's attention was also drawn to the work taking place in the area of regional cooperation, i.e. coordination of ICT activities of organizations located at the same duty station. This work presented opportunities for co-located organizations to consider sharing support capabilities and potentially data-center consolidation. At the very least, it made knowledge and best practice sharing much easier. In the past, technology specialists did not always share what they knew or what their organizations were doing; this was beginning to change.

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<sup>5</sup> (CEB/2006/HLCM/R.5)

23. Multi-lateral, informal knowledge sharing was proceeding through the ICT Network; increasingly, technical staff consulted their colleagues in other organizations on a wide range of issues, from outsourcing, ERP implementation, licensing, networking, etc. This capacity was being enhanced through the new CEB web site.
24. The Committee's discussion centered on the importance of pursuing more aggressively the initiative on ERP systems, and in particular the ongoing work on studying how payroll systems could be leveraged across the system.
25. The Committee thanked the ICT network for the update and endorsed the progress report.

**(b) Clarifying inter-agency ICT collaboration**<sup>6</sup>

26. The Committee was informed that, while the ICT Network continued to devote its time to substantive issues, the question of coordination, both with working groups of the Network as well as with the International Computer Center (ICC) occasionally hindered progress. To address this issue, an *ad hoc* working group of the ICT Network had finalized, through a consultative process, two documents for presentation to the Committee.
  - (a) The first one contains a set of guidelines agreed upon by the ICT Network and the ICC that were intended to enhance coordination of the work of the two bodies.
  - (b) The second document, *inter alia*, elaborated the role that special interest groups and working groups played in the operation of the Network.
27. The Committee also took up the question of the appointment of the Chairperson/Convener of its ICT Network to succeed Mr. Roger Jones of IMO, who had since retired. It requested the representative of IMO to convey to Mr. Jones its appreciation for the work he had accomplished in advancing the ICT goals within the system.
28. The Committee:
  - (a) Endorsed the guideline documents of the ICT Network;
  - (c) Requested Susana Malcorra, Deputy Executive Director of Administration of WFP to act as the Chairperson/Convener of the ICT Network.

## **VI. Security and Safety of Staff**

29. Security and safety of staff is a standing item on the agenda of the Committee. The Under-Secretary General for Safety and Security briefed the Committee on the status of the implementation of the new security management arrangements and his vision for ensuring the security and safety of staff in light of current and projected threats. Ensuring the safety

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<sup>6</sup> (CEB/2006/HLCM/R.6 and R.7)

and security of all staff was an increasingly complex challenge in view of the trends, which ranged from an increase in attacks on UN personnel as well as threats to safety, such as kidnappings, air transport and motor vehicle accidents, fires and disease. The Committee was reminded that some terror groups continued to regard UN personnel and premises as legitimate targets.

30. The Department of Safety and Security, put in place thirteen months earlier, seeks to be in the vanguard of superior security service delivery to all entities of the United Nations system. Nearly six hundred additional security personnel had been recruited and reinforcement of field operations was expected to be completed by April. The profile of security personnel was evolving in line with best practices of the major security organizations in the world. Greater cultural and linguistic diversity amongst security personnel was also being sought. Training was being dramatically enhanced - the first basic CD ROM- based training programme was well established and mandatory for all staff, while a more advanced package was under development. In light of the trends, staff training must more clearly encompass safety issues as well as security.
31. The operational security chain was being strengthened by making more direct use of Designated Officials, who were best placed to leverage the primary role of host countries for the security of UN personnel. The USG considered that the key to operational effectiveness in security was simplicity, directness of reporting and working more closely with all levels of host countries' governments from head of state to ministries of interior and key leaders in the local security environments. Partnerships with NGOs were also being strengthened. For the future, organizations must provide for security arrangements and budgetary requirements at the earliest stage of programme planning to ensure they were more closely calibrated to local needs.
32. On the issue of cost-sharing arrangements for field-related security costs, the Committee was informed that there appeared to be little opportunity to present a viable case for a different budgetary approach for consideration by the General Assembly before the current expanded security arrangements were evaluated in approximately five years' time. None the less, several members called on DSS to take leadership in developing a strategy to put the issue back on the agenda.
33. Finally, other areas under consideration to strengthen the security management system included:
  - Creation of a UN Safety Council for the purpose of promoting good practice;
  - Consideration of a second generation of MOSS and MORSS;
  - Further development of insurances;
  - Initiatives to better provide for the safety and security of locally-recruited staff such as in situations of poor sewage, lack of electricity and local fire services, etc;
  - Expansion of stress counseling capacities.
34. The Committee:
  - (a) Thanked Mr. Veness for his presentation and expressed its appreciation for the role

played by the IASMN in support of DSS's mandate;

- (b) Reaffirmed the importance of the unity of the security management system encompassing all organizations of the United Nations system, including meeting financial commitments, so as to ensure the system's operational effectiveness;
- (c) Expressed the hope that the outstanding issue concerning the accountability framework would soon be resolved;
- (d) Welcomed the increased transparency regarding security-related expenditures and looked forward to receiving an implementation report on results achieved in addition to expenditure for each result of cost-shared field related security arrangements for the biennium 2004-2005 at the forthcoming meeting of the IASMN;
- (e) Requested a revised programme of work and budget for 2006-2007, focused on results achieved as related to planned results;
- (f) Reiterated the need for robust and timely inter-agency consultations for the development of the cost-shared portion of security arrangements for the biennium 2008-2009, with a clear results-based focus, in line with modern management approaches and wider reforms within the UN system.

## **VII. Finance and budget issues:**

### **A. Accounting Standards: Terms of reference and budget for the continuation of project resources to ensure support and coordination for IPSAS adoption by the UN System**

- 35. In 2004, HLCM recommended the creation of a Task Force on Accounting Standards, with a budget of USD 881,000 to be jointly financed by UN System organizations. On 30 November 2005, HLCM accepted the Task Force's recommendation that the UN System adopt IPSAS and that:
  - Support, coordination and leadership for this system-wide change should continue to be provided through the Task Force on Accounting Standards, together with continuation of project resources to ensure consistent interpretation and application of IPSAS requirements across the System; and
  - Inter-agency funding and other support would continue to be provided to ensure Effective UN System representation on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board.
- 36. The Committee considered the document, which provided the terms of reference for the continuation of the accounting standards project with an estimated budget of USD 4,427,000 for the period 2006 – 2009.
- 37. The HLCM noted that expected savings of USD 710,777 from the previous Accounting Standards project would be brought forward to the new project, resulting in a balance of

USD 3,716,223 to be shared among participating organizations as indicated in Annex II to CEB/2006/HLCM/4/Rev.1.

38. The Committee, having also considered the unanimous endorsement by the Finance and Budget Network:
- (a) Approved the terms of reference and budget for the continuation of project resources to ensure support and coordination for IPSAS adoption by the UN System, as provided in the document;
  - (b) Agreed that the budget, including a progress report on results achieved, should be reviewed in two years to verify consistency with the work completed and with the activities and needs still to be covered;
  - (c) Requested the Task Force to keep HLCM informed on the progress of work and on all developments with this critical project.

### **VIII. Human resources issues:**

#### **A. Update on the United Nations System contingency plan for an influenza pandemic**

39. The spokesperson for the HR Network briefed the Committee on the status of the preparation of administrative guidelines for dealing with an influenza pandemic, which would form part of the overall UN System Planning and Preparedness Guidelines currently under development. The current version of the administrative guidelines, developed by the New York based organizations under the leadership of the United Nations and aimed at staff members in New York, included detailed requirements to establish provisions for the determination of critical staff to serve during a pandemic situation and the modalities of absence for non-critical staff. It was the intention of the HR Network to review and discuss the guidelines at its forthcoming session in order to arrive at a generic framework applicable to field staff and possibly other headquarters.
40. The New York based organizations were also working on the development of guidelines for non-staff, such as interns and consultants.
41. The Committee:
- (a) Thanked the HR Network spokesperson for her presentation;
  - (b) Requested the Network to continue its work on the finalization of the administrative guidelines as a framework applicable to all UN staff.

## IX. Other Matters:

### A. United Nations System Staff College <sup>7</sup>

42. The interim Director of the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) presented his proposals for the future of the Staff College, focusing on the development of a core curriculum for the Staff College. The proposals were based on the responses received to an options paper, circulated in December 2005 to the College's Board, members of HLCP and HLCM and to members of the Expert Technical Review Panel. He recalled that the members of the Board of Governors had requested that the curriculum, which should be clearly linked with the ongoing reform process, should be presented through the High-Level Committees, to CEB "for commitment in both content and the curriculum programming and their financing".
43. The Director explained that the current situation of the College was a difficult one. While some programmes, such as the "resident coordinator" and the "early warning and preventive measures projects", continued to be successful and attract funding, marketing efforts for new initiatives and donors had not met with much success. While the finances of the College were in good shape for the moment, the Director drew the attention of the Committee to the fact that three quarters of the funding came from the Government of Italy. Some organizations recalled that the original mandate of the United Nations System Staff College did foresee the college moving to a self-financing model, and requested the interim Director to report back to a future meeting of the HLCM on this matter. In terms of staffing, the College had experienced a high degree of turnover, with many of the best staff leaving, due mainly to a general insecurity about the future of the institution.
44. For the core curriculum, the Director proposed that "life cycle" training should be the development priority. This would include (a) induction training (possibly complementary to agency-specific programmes) and the updating of the distance learning CD-ROM "Welcome to the UN", (b) mid-level management training targeted at the P-4 and P-5 levels, specifically for smaller agencies that could not afford the development of their own programmes, and (c) senior management training, focused on the leadership programme to be developed for the Senior Management Network.

The development of these new programmes could be funded from existing College resources; delivery would be financed through participation fees. In addition to these life cycle programmes, existing programmes in the areas of resident coordinator system, peace and security and support to the UN learning community would be maintained. The Director expressed confidence that with the proposed core curriculum, new marketing strategies and adjustments to the governance structure, the College could in the future meet the expectations of the UN system. He therefore requested the Committee to make a commitment to the proposed core curriculum, "on a trial basis".

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<sup>7</sup> (CEB/2006/HLCM/R.3)

45. In the discussion, some Committee members expressed their confidence in the feasibility of the proposals and stated that they stood ready to request the College to move ahead with the implementation on a trial basis. Several members considered that the Staff College needed to focus on its complementarity with what individual UN system agencies were offering as training. Others were of the view that a decision could only be taken once a business plan for the implementation of the curriculum had been prepared. One organization remained skeptical of the value that could be provided through the College.
46. The Committee:
  - (a) Expressed its appreciation to the interim Director for the frank presentation and for the work done with regard to the development of a core curriculum;
  - (b) agreed, in principle, to the development of the curriculum, on a trial basis and subject to the review of a business plan to be provided to the Staff College Board at its next session.

## **B. Gender mainstreaming, and women, peace and security <sup>8</sup>**

47. Gender mainstreaming was adopted as a global strategy in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. In 2005, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to it an action plan for the implementation of the resolution on women, peace and security with a view to “strengthening commitment and accountability at the highest levels, as well as to allow for improved accountability, monitoring and reporting on progress on implementation with the United Nations System”. In the 2005 World Outcome document, world leaders reaffirmed “that the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals.”
48. On 16 January 2006, in a letter addressed to CEB members, the Secretary-General asked HLCP and HLCM to develop, in cooperation with his Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, a system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy. He also informed CEB members that the issue of the full implementation of the resolution would also be the subject of discussions of both High Level Committees. He had requested that both High level Committees oversee the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan. Finally, he requested members to inform his Special Adviser of the steps being taken to implement these mandates.
49. In introducing the note on these subjects, the representative of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women informed the Committee that a system-wide action plan had been developed by a Task Force of the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE). Thirty-seven entities of the UN system had indicated that they were either taking action or had planned action. Following the Security Council’s review of this

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<sup>8</sup> (CEB/2006/HLCM/R.4)

plan, it had welcomed the action plan and requested the Secretary General to update, monitor and review its implementation and integration on an annual basis.

50. For this reason, organizations were requested to (a) ensure the necessary resources for the execution of the action plan, (b) monitor and assess its implementation and (c) provide an accountability mechanism. The Committee was therefore requested to determine whether a system-wide approach could be applied to the implementation of the action plan in these three areas.
51. The Committee:
  - (a) Recognized that the issue was one of management accountability, particularly at the senior levels;
  - (b) Noted that capacity building mechanisms would involve the need to ensure that staff training and development reflected the need for improved competencies for gender mainstreaming;
  - (c) Further noted that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be emphasized in the measurement of outcomes through results based management;
  - (d) Considered that the commitment and accountability should be made explicit through individual performance appraisal reviews of managers;
  - (e) Agreed that improved gender balance in the secretariats of all organizations as well as in inter-agency and inter-governmental bodies would also strengthen organizations' efforts in achieving the goals of gender mainstreaming;
  - (f) Requested the CEB secretariat to work with the Office of the Special Advisor with a view to developing proposals for common approaches in the areas of data collection, accountability, monitoring, reporting and training.

#### **Date and location of next session of HLCM**

52. While noting that the next regular session should take place in New York in the autumn, the Committee felt that, once the first joint session with HLCP had taken place, it would have a better appreciation of the need for both High Level Committee meetings to take place jointly in the future.
53. The Committee:

Requested the secretariat to undertake consultations on the timing and venue of its next session with a view to determining the need for a joint meeting with HLCP while at the same time remaining responsive to the availability of the Committee's membership.

#### **Working methods of HLCM**

54. Committee members commented that, given the pace, scope and depth of ongoing UN reform processes and initiatives, there was a need to revisit the working methods of the Committee and the interaction with other mechanisms, such as UNDG.

The Committee:

- (a) Requested that the Secretariat ensure that future HLCCM documentation is provided in good time to allow for pre-reading before sessions, failing which the item should be removed from the agenda. Papers should be provided in a concise manner, providing summaries of the main points and issues to be discussed for each agenda item. Each agenda item should indicate whether the item is for information, discussion, or decision and, if for decision, what action is requested from the Committee, including whether it is endorsing issues for final decision by CEB.
- (b) Noted that inter-sessional HLCCM meetings through videoconferences and other means would be needed as a standard practice both for decision-making and information sharing purposes.

## Attachment 1

### List of Participants

**Chairperson:** **Ms. Thoraya Obaid**  
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## **Attachment 2**

### **Agenda**

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Dialogue with FICSA and CCISUA
3. Preparations for joint session of HLCM and HLCP
4. Management reform
  - (a) UN system collaboration on accountability and transparency
  - (b) Update on management reform in the United Nations Secretariat
5. Information and communication technology issues:
  - (a) Progress report on development of the UN system ICT strategic framework
  - (b) Clarifying inter-agency ICT collaboration
6. Security and Safety of Staff
7. Finance and budget issues:
  - (a) Accounting Standards: Terms of reference and budget for the continuation of project resources to ensure support and coordination for IPSAS adoption by the UN System
8. Human resources issues:
  - (a) Update on the United Nations System contingency plan for an influenza pandemic
9. Other Matters:
  - (a) United Nations System Staff College
  - (b) Gender mainstreaming, and women, peace and security
  - (c) Date and location of next session of HLCM
  - (d) Working methods of HLCM

### Attachment 3

#### Statement of FICSA

Distinguished colleagues,

At this session, in addition to offering comments on your agenda, we will also describe the atmosphere that prevailed at the 59th FICSA Council, our annual meeting of the membership, which concluded just over two weeks ago, and draw your attention to the priorities identified by our members. In anticipation of this session of the HLCM today we have endeavoured to ensure that our message, the voice of the staff we represent, will be conveyed to you in the most appropriate and effective fashion. This message to you represents both an honour and a challenge for FICSA, since it is not easy to condense in a few minutes the opinions, the feelings, the expectations and the vision of thousands UN staff members.

We note from the agenda that HLCM members at this session will be discussing the latest reform efforts in the UN Secretariat and other organizations of the UN system. While we will come back to this issue in the second part of our presentation, we wish to comment on the objective stated in paragraph 8 of document CEB/2006/HLCM/R.8: The system's response to the outcome of the 2005 World Summit: "Promoting a system-wide learning culture rooted in shared values and common objectives for all staff of the UN system," [particularly] ...as they enter the international civil service, joining not only one organization but also an integrated system of organizations." FICSA believes that, for the idea of one United Nations to be realised, it is vital that intra-agency mobility be facilitated.

Paragraph 18 of the same document refers to efforts being made within the UN Secretariat to create an independent Ethics Office, a new whistleblower policy and a new management performance board. We would hope that the same efforts are extended across the common system and are supported by strengthening the administration of justice.

Regarding document CEB/2006/HLCM/R.4: Gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security, FICSA notes the recognition of the "pervasive unacceptable personal discretion among other staff as well as some senior managers and the need to develop clear accountability mechanisms that would strengthen support for the system-wide gender mainstreaming policy and strategy at all levels of the UN system". FICSA also supports the further development and implementation of codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures for all categories of United Nations staff, related personnel and partners to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, the enhancement of monitoring mechanisms, the need to thoroughly investigate and address cases of alleged misconduct and last but not least, the need to increase efforts to identify suitable women candidates for senior and decision-making positions.

Turning to item 6 of the provisional agenda, FICSA continues to play an active role in the development of safety and security measures for staff. We are pleased to see that the UN security management system continues to evolve and to strengthen staff security. However, it remains regrettable that the accountability framework for the security management system has not yet been finalized. We would like to urge that this be done without delay.

With regard to item 4 of your agenda, FICSA would like to commend the efforts taken by the UN medical services, staff of the UN Department of Safety and Security and HR managers on the guidelines,

strategies and the HR component of implementing the UN system contingency plan. What is important now is that these measures are communicated to staff and that they are applied consistently throughout the UN system.

FICSA read with interest 'The Development of a Core Curriculum for the United Nations Staff College', CEB/2006/HLCM/R.3, and would like to recommend that the new curriculum include a component on labour relations in international organizations. This idea had been raised several years ago when some courses had been organized by CCAQ through Cranfield University. The component on labour relations should be an integral part of training for managers and staff alike.

Although not on your agenda, we would like to turn our attention to the Report of the panel on strengthening the international civil service and the unfinished business of the reform of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). As you are aware, FICSA pushed for such a review for over 10 years, and welcomed the first eight recommendations of the panel's report that refer specifically to reforming the Commission. While FICSA continues to meet with Fifth Committee delegates to stress the need to implement those recommendations, Member States remain polarized over this issue. Thus, FICSA would welcome hearing from you what further efforts have been made by the organizations to obtain reform of the ICSC.

We would also like to raise the issue of the contractual framework recommended by the ICSC in its 2005 report to the General Assembly. If and when the framework is approved, FICSA intends to work closely with its members to monitor the organizations' interpretation of the three models and urges the administrations to consult fully with local staff representatives on any changes required to the legal framework governing contractual arrangements.

As mentioned, our annual FICSA Council finished on 10 February. Participants were pleased to be able to congratulate IAEA, through its staff representatives, on winning a Nobel Prize, and we would like to commend the IAEA Administration for including staff representatives in the award ceremony. FICSA also won a prize in 2005, which was perhaps not as prestigious but every bit as meaningful: the René Maheu International Civil Service Prize. The prize was awarded for "activities in the defense of the interests of international civil servants before inter-agency bodies and the legislative organs of the United Nations on common system issues. For fifty years FICSA has been the voice of the staff in the Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and all inter-agency organs which hold sway over conditions of service in the common system". The work of international civil servants is not often recognized, and much less the work of staff representatives. These types of award do much to increase motivation, improve the image of the UN system and encourage staff.

Unfortunately, not everything at our Council was that upbeat. First and foremost, our members expressed serious concern about the survival of the international civil service. This concern prompted the selection of the keynote speaker this year, Mr. Larry Brown, who is Secretary of the National Union of Public and General Employees of Canada. FICSA realizes that it can look to the reform and restructuring experience in the public sector as an indication of what might occur in the international civil service. It is the intent of FICSA to continue to study the effects elsewhere in its effort to evaluate its own experience. Over the years there has been an enormous growth in what was and is termed the 'contingent' work force comprising temporary, casual, part-time or contractual labour. The shift was governed by the fact that 'non-permanent' staff were not only cheaper as they received fewer benefits, but they were also much

less secure and thus unable to assert themselves vis-à-vis their employers. There is also evidence that the use of contingent workers contributed markedly to ineffectiveness in the workplace: something that employers came to recognize. We cannot help but ask if this is what we want for the UN system. Staff whose loyalty and dedication is questionable because they never truly integrate into an international workforce? Staff who never establish a tenable relationship with their workplace, and consider their employer just one in a long string of similar employers?

In fact, a statement in one of this session's documents clearly illustrates the impact on staff of 'short-termism' and great expectations. Paragraph 9 of the document concerning the Staff College says, "The College has experienced a high turnover of staff. Its program staff other than those for the resident coordinator and peace and security clusters is reduced to two. General insecurity about the future of the College and contracts that offer little security or advancement have provoked most of the outflow. Some have left however, because they have been unable to generate sufficient income to cover their salary expense plus a contribution to overhead. This atmosphere resulted in staff responding to specific requests with short term results, being unable to make investments for which returns are long term and fraught with risk."

This situation drives home, with a concrete example from within the UN system, the need for continuing contracts and job security. It also illustrates our concern that, under policies such as pay for performance, staff choose to do the work that gets results in the short-term with minimal risks.

The public sector is the greatest defender of public services, just as the international civil service should be the greatest defender of the services it provides around the world. People working in the public sector have a different ethos. They choose to get involved in an organization that serves the public good. They believe in their work and they own the issues. Ability to do the job well is paramount in their minds, and thus the goal is to create working conditions and an effective working environment, one that contributes to getting the job done well, as well as to maintain and enhance the identity of the international civil servants. This does not preclude reform and yet, it is apparent that reform means different things to different people. Leadership and vision is required, and the courage to stand up to Member States that may not have the best interests of the international civil service foremost in their minds is needed now more than ever.

Organizations that respect and seek the contribution of staff representatives to securing an effective workplace will work better. The negotiating process can be difficult and sometimes controversial, but it is the only one that can ensure the "buy-in" by staff and true commitment to our institutional mandate. As the representatives of staff, we have a direct link to what does and does not work in an organization. The key words are respect and inclusion.

The demonstrations carried out in 2005, which in some cases included walkouts and work stoppages, testify to the severe discontent that staff experience when they are prevented from participating in and influencing decisions that affect their conditions of service. The administrations and staff and the Member States - all parties concerned - approved and recognized the importance of staff participation and influence when they agreed to the ICSC framework on human resources management, adopted in the year 2000. However, what if anything have the administrations done to implement and respect those provisions of the framework concerning staff representation?

With our greatest concern being the furtherance and strengthening of the international civil service, and in light of the work actions just mentioned, we are also concerned about rights and protections. The immunity granted to maintain the independence of international organizations has prevented employees of those organizations from enjoying the protection of national laws. Therefore, there must be a workable legal framework consistent with modern labour management practices that guarantees to all civil servants due process and equal protection equivalent to the rights and principles they would enjoy under relevant national laws. International civil servants should have the right, through their staff associations or unions, to freedom of association, to collective bargaining, due process and judicial review, and protection of fundamental rights such as those extended under international human rights instruments as well as relevant international labour standards as embodied in ILO Conventions and Recommendations relating to conditions of employment.

And yet, we learned from our members at the FICSA Council that some associations/unions were not accorded the freedom to choose which federation – FICSA or CCISUA – to belong to. We learned that some staff representatives were not permitted to travel to New York for the Council on administrative leave, but had to take their annual leave instead. We learned that at least one representative was denied a laissez-passer in spite of a specific request from FICSA. Moreover, we learned that only a handful of organizations fully respect the minimum guidelines for facilities for staff representation established in 1982.

FICSA intends as usual to participate fully in all inter-agency forums this year and will actively pursue the objective that the views of staff will be respected and acted on. At the local level, FICSA will work closely with the staff associations and unions to help them confront the lack of dialogue at the local level. Our message is simple but needs the commitment and good will of all: if the international civil service is to be respected throughout the world, the administrations and the Member States must respect the staff.

## **Attachment 4**

### **Statement of CCISUA**

#### **CONSULTATION**

CCISUA wish to stress the importance of the staff representative bodies being included in any subject having a direct effect on the schemes, conditions of service and security and safety of staff at the earliest opportunity. Where this practice has been followed in the past and Unions have become stake holders it has been proven that successful results have followed.

CCISUA would like it noted that we have requested a return to SMCC at the soonest opportunity.

#### **TRAINING**

CCISUA would like to request that an official accredited training programme for elected staff representatives be provided. CCISUA is convinced this would benefit both elected officials and the management directly in providing the expertise and skills to deal with the challenging and demanding work that presents itself during the tenure of the representative's office.

In professionalising the role of elected staff representative it is proven to have a direct impact on how disputes are handled, and more importantly how partnerships can work which includes the renaissance currently in the public and private sector unions on win win partnerships.

CCISUA has already made some progress on this subject and we wish to work together with management to provide the tools, process and protocol for the incumbents of these highly visible office.

CCISUA is more than happy to meet with and share our current findings, contacts and experiences with any management or administration who are interested.

#### **SECURITY**

CCISUA at this years General Assembly agreed to request that the Secretary General , when evacuating International UN staff from a mission area or duty station consider the evacuation of local UN staff who are in fear of their lives or retribution and have indicated a desire to be included in the evacuation process. Unfortunately it is a fact that local staff are often subject to imprisonment, attacks and death due solely to the local staff's link with the UN.

CCISUA believes the UN has a duty of care to all who serve irrespective of nationality, or employment status.

CCISUA wishes to express its full support for DSS management who has excelled in continuous dialogue and consultation with staff representative bodies both at the Federation and Field level.