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**Proposed programme budget for 2022**

## **Addressing racism and promoting dignity for all in the United Nations Secretariat**

### **Fortieth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for 2022**

#### **I. Introduction**

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on addressing racism and promoting dignity for all in the United Nations Secretariat ([A/76/771](#)). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met in hybrid format with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses dated 12 April 2022.

2. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that in September 2020, he established the Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations to spearhead deeper dialogue and develop a longer-term strategic action plan for the Secretariat. The strategic action plan was finalized and presented to the Secretary-General in early 2022. It outlined concrete actions to address racism and racial discrimination in the workplace and identified areas for further review to determine how best to support diversity, equity and inclusion in the Secretariat. To support the implementation of the strategic action plan, the Secretary-General proposes post and non-post resources, in particular for the establishment of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance ([A/76/771](#), paras. 3–4).

#### **II. Background**

3. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Charter of the United Nations laid out the commitment of the United Nations to human rights, social justice and the promotion of global peace, including in the Preamble, Article 1, Article 8 and Article 55. Efforts to address all forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination, in the Secretariat had been undertaken as early as 1977 by a panel on the elimination of discrimination, which had been constituted following the adoption



of General Assembly resolution 31/26, in which the Assembly had called for the investigation of allegations by staff members of discriminatory treatment in the Secretariat. The Assembly had also adopted resolutions and decisions, including on human resources matters, that addressed that issue. The Committee was further informed of staff regulations that prohibited discrimination and harassment. **The Advisory Committee notes the long-standing efforts by the United Nations to combat racism and racial discrimination, welcomes strengthened efforts to address the issue and supports initiatives aimed at eliminating racism and racial discrimination.**

4. In his report, the Secretary-General indicates that in late 2020, the Secretariat administered its first survey on racism to assess staff perceptions and to guide the activities of the Task Force. The survey was categorized into nine dimensions. The least favourable dimensions were found to be the application of human resources regulations and rules and the Organization's recruitment and hiring practices. The most favourable dimensions were performance management, followed closely by trust and respect within the Organization. An analysis of nearly 84,000 comments showed that the most negative comments pertained to career progression, senior leadership and administration and human resources processes. One in three respondents mentioned having experienced discrimination, with the most reported forms of discrimination based on national origin (49 per cent), racial identity (38 per cent) and colour (31 per cent). Of those who had not reported an incident of racial discrimination, 72 per cent had taken no action because they thought that it would yield no outcome, lacked trust or feared retaliation. Of those who had reported an incident of racial discrimination, 52 per cent said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way in which the situation was handled. Across all dimensions of the survey, female respondents reported experiencing racial discrimination in various forms at a higher rate than male respondents. Across eight of the nine dimensions of the survey, individuals who identified themselves as being Black or of African descent reported the most unfavourable responses (*ibid.*, paras. 7 and 9–12).

5. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the survey had been administered to over 37,000 staff holding permanent, continuing, fixed term or temporary contracts at all duty stations. There were over 8,000 respondents, representing 22 per cent of the staff complement at the time. A separate survey had been administered to personnel in non-staff categories (over 8,000 individuals), which had yielded a 1 per cent response rate, rendering it ineffective in assessing the extent of racism that might be experienced by non-staff personnel. Among the respondents who had reported experiencing racial discrimination, nationals of African States had been the most represented (38 per cent), followed by nationals of Western European and other States (33 per cent), Asia-Pacific States (27 per cent), Latin American and Caribbean States (22 per cent) and Eastern European States (15 per cent). Female employees self-identifying as Black or of African descent had been significantly less positive, had perceived diversity and inclusion in the Secretariat more negatively and had usually been the least positive racial-gender group.

6. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, of the results of the 2021 United Nations Staff Engagement Survey for Secretariat staff. Approximately 25 per cent of the respondents had indicated that they had experienced discrimination in the workplace, with most of them being unsatisfied with how it had been handled. Staff had not been positive when asked if people at all levels were treated with dignity and their perspectives taken seriously, regardless of race, colour, descent, religion, sexual orientation or national or ethnic origin. **The Advisory Committee notes the results of the surveys administered and is of the view that further surveys, based on wider data sources and analysis, and further consultations with United**

**Nations system entities are necessary to comprehensively address and curtail racism and racial discrimination (see also para. 8 below).**

7. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was also informed that the Task Force had established that there was a gap in knowledge on racism and racial discrimination and how they might manifest themselves in the Organization, and that the Task Force had recommended the provision of standard definitions of the terms “racism”, “racial discrimination”, “anti-racism” and “implicit racial bias”, as well as the development of a policy framework and of training, together with data collection, analysis and monitoring, in collaboration with other organizations in the United Nations common system, to develop system-wide terminology. With regard to the definition of racism, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Secretariat, in consultation with stakeholders, intended to further develop the definition provided in the action plan, using existing reference materials, norms and definitions, including those of the United Nations – such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination – and its agencies, funds and programmes. **The Advisory Committee notes the ongoing development of the definition of racism and looks forward to reviewing the relevant definitions and terminology to be standardized across the United Nations system.**

8. The Advisory Committee was also provided, upon enquiry, with a copy of the strategic action plan, including the action matrix, which sets out a list of actions to be taken for each activity in every change area, indicating the responsible department or office, the related action, the expected results, the indicators of success and the implementation timeline. **While the Advisory Committee notes the development of the strategic action plan, in particular the action matrix, it recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to refine the strategic action plan, based on wider data sources and further analysis, in cooperation with United Nations system entities, for the consideration of the Assembly in his next report (see paras. 19–21 below).**

9. Upon enquiry as to the intergovernmental and expert bodies which have a mandate on racism and racial discrimination, the Advisory Committee was informed that there were four mechanisms established following the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance: the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; the Ad Hoc Committee of the Human Rights Council on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action; and the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent. The secretariat of all those mechanisms was the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). There was also a treaty body mechanism – the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – and a Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, which were also supported by OHCHR. In addition, an international independent expert mechanism and the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent had been established in 2021. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretariat will utilize the expertise and outputs of these intergovernmental and expert bodies to guide its work, where applicable.**

10. Regarding other United Nations entities, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the Task Force had administered a questionnaire to the United Nations system organizations to learn from their efforts to address racism and to establish a benchmark based on best practices. Based on responses from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the International Telecommunication Union, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Maritime Organization, the International Labour Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the International Organization for Migration, the Task Force had established that the various organizations had different approaches and were at different stages of progress on that issue. For example, in 2021, the World Food Programme had established a Diversity and Inclusion Office, benchmarked against the World Bank Group, which had had formal diversity targets in place since 1998 and had an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The Office of the World Bank Group had a dedicated capacity of seven staff members, led by a staff member at the senior leadership level (equivalent to D-2), with dual reporting lines to the President of the World Bank Group and the Vice-President of Human Resources. Those efforts were also supported by focal points responsible for a functional unit. The Committee was also informed that the Joint Inspection Unit was reviewing measures and mechanisms for preventing and addressing racism and racial discrimination in the institutions of the United Nations system, and that its findings would further inform actions taken to address discrimination in the Organization. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretariat will apply lessons learned and best practices from the experiences of United Nations system entities in addressing racism.**

### III. Proposal of the Secretary-General

11. The Secretary-General proposes the establishment of an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to lead efforts to address racism and racial discrimination, support diversity, equity and inclusion in all categories and levels of personnel and mainstream the strategic action plan throughout the Secretariat (A/76/771, para. 16).

12. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed Office would coordinate, monitor, advocate, mainstream and ensure the long-term sustainability of efforts to attain diversity, equity and inclusion and address all forms of discrimination, including racism and racial discrimination and the compounded nature of intersectional discrimination. The proposed Office would coordinate and support internal efforts to address discrimination and strengthen internal accountability mechanisms, including investigations, in order to build trust, enhance the credibility of the internal justice system and address claims of unfairness in human resources policies and practices. It would monitor and track all selection decisions undertaken by senior leaders (at the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General level), promotions, lateral reassignments, placements of staff on special projects or assignments, temporary assignments and separations from service. The placement of the Office within the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance would provide independence with regard to oversight responsibilities and provide a centralized structure for the development of high-level coordination and collaboration in the activities of implementing departments and offices, which were tasked with addressing issues such as gender parity, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, and disability and inclusion. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the establishment of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at this stage is not fully justified, especially since the scope is beyond the context of racism and racial discrimination, and the proposal does not take into account existing capacities within the Secretariat performing related functions, and therefore recommends against its establishment (see paras. 19–21 below).**

13. In paragraph 20 of his report, the Secretary-General indicates that he will also appoint a Special Adviser on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations Secretariat, who will be engaged on a “when actually employed” basis and will be financed by voluntary contributions. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the role was temporary in nature and intended to lay a solid foundation for addressing discrimination in the Organization in the long run and to support the implementation of the strategic action plan. The Committee was also informed that, on 18 March 2022, the Controller had approved the establishment of the position for a two-year period. **The Committee trusts that the Special Adviser will collaborate with all United Nations system entities to ensure a cohesive systemwide approach.**

14. As part of the governance structure, the Secretary-General intends to establish an implementation steering group to guide and oversee the full operationalization, implementation and mainstreaming of the strategic action plan. The group will comprise senior officials and will be chaired by the Special Adviser (*ibid.*, para. 21). The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the group would provide guidance and substantive advice to the proposed Office. **The Advisory Committee emphasizes the importance of an effective governance structure and trusts that the implementation steering group will provide oversight and ensure coherence in the implementation of anti-racism initiatives.**

15. **The Advisory Committee acknowledges the importance of having external and independent expertise to ensure impartiality and address potential racism and biased conduct in the review of the Organization’s policies and practices, for example on human resources management, in particular the roster.**

#### *Proposed resources*

16. Additional resources for post and non-post resources are proposed for the new Office and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, as well as for the Department of Operational Support and the Department of Global Communications (*ibid.*, para. 19). Table 5 of the report sets out the total proposed resources by programme budget section and budget year.

#### **Additional resource requirements (before recosting)**

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	<i>Requirements for 2022</i>	<i>Requirements for 2023</i>
Section 29A, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance	1 324.3	3 273.3
Section 29B, Department of Operational Support	800.0	1 629.1
Section 28, Global communications	50.9	175.9
<b>Total, excluding staff assessment</b>	<b>2 175.2</b>	<b>5 078.3</b>
Section 36, Staff assessment	125.7	425.4
<b>Total, including staff assessment</b>	<b>2 300.9</b>	<b>5 503.7</b>

17. It is indicated in the report that the requirements for 2022 have not been included in the programme budget for 2022. Therefore, additional resources totalling \$2,175,200 would be required under sections 29A, 29B and 28 of the programme budget for 2022. An additional amount of \$125,700 would be required in 2022 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. The requirements for 2023 totalling

\$5,078,300, net of staff assessment, will be included in the proposed programme budget for 2023 (ibid., paras. 43–45).

18. The proposed posts and positions comprise:

(a) In the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, one post of Director (D-2), one post of Senior Programme Management Officer (P-5), one post of Senior Human Resources Officer (P-5), one post of Programme Management Officer (P-4), one post of Communications Officer (P-4), one post of Associate Programme Management Officer (P-2) and one post of Programme Assistant (General Service (Other level));

(b) In the Office of Human Resources, two posts of Human Resources Officer (P-4) and one post of Human Resources Officer (P-3), as well as one temporary position of Human Resources Officer (P-4), one temporary position of Human Resources Officer (P-3) and one temporary position of Legal Officer (P-4);

(c) In the Department of Operational Support, one post of Human Resources Officer (P-4), one post of Data Scientist (P-4), one post of Business Analyst (P-3), one post of Staff Development Officer (P-3) and one Staff Counsellor (P-3), as well as two temporary positions of Human Resources Officer (P-3);

(d) In the Department of Global Communications, one Public Information Officer (P-3).

19. Annex I to the report contains the organizational charts for the relevant departments and offices. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the proposed Office would report directly to the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. The Committee was also provided with job descriptions for the proposed posts. **The Advisory Committee notes the lack of clarity in scope and reporting lines and the potential duplication of some functions with existing posts in the Secretariat, for example in human resources, and trusts that the Secretariat will clarify the scope and the reporting lines and address the potential duplication of existing resources. Bearing in mind the need to achieve efficiencies and mainstream the effort to eliminate racism and racial discrimination, the Committee also sees merit in the designation of focal points within departments/offices.**

20. Taking into account its observations above (paras. 6, 8–10, 12 and 19), including the need for more comprehensive data and analysis, and a refined strategic action plan, the Advisory Committee is of the view that further efforts are required to refine the proposal. The Committee considers that the proposal should have provided a complete overview of related matters, including the applicable Staff Regulations and Rules; the intersection with human resources matters, such as recruitment and disciplinary cases; collaboration with United Nations system entities; and overall related financial resources, both existing resources covering related functions and proposed resources. In addition, considering the system-wide impact, the Committee is of the view that the funding model should be reassessed to determine whether the programme budget and/or other funding sources would be more appropriate.

21. In order to support efforts to combat racism and racial discrimination, and to carry out the work of refining the proposal and strategic action plan, in consultation with the Special Adviser, for submission to the General Assembly at the main part of the seventy-eighth session, the Advisory Committee recommends the approval of eight general temporary assistance positions for 18 months, from 1 July 2022, as follows: (a) in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, one Director (D-2), one Senior Programme Management Officer (P-5), one Senior Human Resources Officer (P-5), one Programme Management Officer (P-4), one Communications Officer (P-4), one

**Associate Programme Management Officer (P-2) and one Human Resources Officer (P-4); and (b) in the Department of Operational Support, one Data Scientist (P-4). Any related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.**

22. Under operational costs, the total amount of \$512,800 is proposed for contractual services, including for training group sessions on diversity, equity and inclusion and anti-racism as well as sessions on awareness-raising; for products and specialized recruitment and staffing services in support of anti-racism; and for training (A/76/771, paras. 30 (e) and 39 (f) and (g)). **In line with its comments above, the Advisory Committee recommends an overall reduction of 40 per cent (\$205,100) to the total proposed resources under contractual services.**

23. Resources are also proposed in the total amount of \$417,000 for consultants, including to copy-edit communications, advocacy and educational materials; review overall learning requirements, identify gaps and develop programmes; and support the procurement of external assessment services, training development and/or other specialized tasks (ibid., paras. 25 (b), 30 (c) and 39 (d)). **Noting its comments in the paragraphs above, the Advisory Committee recommends a reduction of 30 per cent (\$125,100) to the total proposed resources under consultants and consulting services.**

#### IV. Other matters

##### *Reporting mechanism*

24. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that it was intended that the Secretary-General would provide a progress report through the existing legislative process, including in his report entitled “Composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics”. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the refined proposal mentioned above will include a review of the reporting mechanism, given that anti-racism efforts extend beyond human resources matters.**

##### *ClearCheck database*

25. Regarding the inclusion of staff with racist behaviour in a specific list such as ClearCheck, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the ClearCheck database did not currently include information on types of misconduct other than sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. However, consideration was being given to the possibility of extending the scope of the tool to include other types of misconduct, and if it was established that staff had exhibited racist behaviour, and they had undergone the necessary disciplinary process, that information might be included in the ClearCheck database in the future. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the inclusion of information about staff with racist behaviour in a database such as ClearCheck will be considered for the refined proposal.** The Committee’s observations and recommendations on disciplinary matters are contained in its report on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour, 1 January to 31 December 2020 (A/76/724).

##### *Accountability*

26. On the accountability of managers, the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that by signing a compact with the Secretary-General, senior managers committed to ensuring that all possible measures were taken to prevent all forms of misconduct, including discrimination based on race or disability, by personnel under their authority and to respond to, redress and remediate any violation. They

furthermore committed to promoting a culture free from all forms of discrimination and to rapidly respond to all reports of discrimination. Lastly, the compacts contained diversity indicators, which supported gender and diversity, equity and inclusion. **The Committee trusts that measures to enhance accountability, in particular that of managers, will be factored into the refined proposal.** The Committee makes detailed observations and recommendations on accountability in its report on the eleventh progress report on accountability: strengthening accountability in the United Nations Secretariat ([A/76/728](#)).

## V. Conclusion

27. The actions requested of the General Assembly are set out in paragraph 47 of the report of the Secretary-General. **Subject to its observations and recommendations above, while it recommends against the establishment of the proposed Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the Advisory Committee recommends that, for the support of efforts to address racism and racial discrimination, the General Assembly:**

- (a) **Approve the establishment of eight new general temporary assistance positions for 18 months, as detailed in paragraph 21 above;**
  - (b) **Approve an additional appropriation in the amount of \$1,194,200, comprising \$861,400 under section 29A, Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, and \$332,800 under section 29B, Department of Operational Support, of the programme budget for 2022;**
  - (c) **Approve an additional appropriation in the amount of \$55,700 under section 36, Staff assessment, of the programme budget for 2022, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.**
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