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**Midterm review of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021,
including the annual report of the Administrator for 2019**

Report of UNDP on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2019

Summary

In line with General Assembly resolution 59/267 of 23 December 2004, and as reiterated in resolution 62/246 of 3 April 2008, the present report provides a synopsis of UNDP management responses to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and draws attention to the recommendations directed to the legislative bodies of United Nations system organizations.

The present report focuses on the six JIU reports relevant to UNDP issued in 2019. Of the total of 36 recommendations issued in the reports, 31 are addressed to UNDP: 20 to UNDP management and 11 to the Executive Board as the legislative body of UNDP. The present report provides UNDP management responses to the relevant recommendations and includes an update of the implementation status of recommendations contained in reports issued by the JIU in 2018 and 2017.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report, including the management responses to the 11 recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit intended for consideration by the Executive Board.



I. Overview of Joint Inspection Unit reports issued in 2019

1. In 2019, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) issued eight reports, of which two were single-organization reports and six were system-wide. The present report provides a summary of the six system-wide reports issued by the JIU, at the time of the present report, which are of relevance to UNDP. The present report includes the UNDP management responses to the 31 recommendations in the reports directed to UNDP (out of 36 recommendations contained in the reports), as well as the implementation status of relevant recommendations issued in 2018 and 2017. The report draws attention to recommendations made by the JIU in 2019 for consideration by the legislative body of UNDP, and to the proposed management responses (reported in annex II to this report). The complete reports of the JIU, additional annexes and comments of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) can be obtained through the JIU website (<http://www.unjiu.org>), or through the hyperlinked titles of each report in chapter II of this report. Comments of the CEB available at the time of drafting of the present report have been included.

2. The six reports are: (a) Review of the United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women ([JIU/REP/2019/2](#)); (b) Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([JIU/REP/2019/3](#)); (c) Review of change management in United Nations system organizations ([JIU/REP/2019/4](#)); (d) Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2019/5](#)); (e) Review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system ([JIU/REP/2019/6](#)); and (f) Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations ([JIU/REP/2019/8](#)).

II. Synopsis and review of relevant Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations in 2019

3. The management responses to the relevant recommendations in the reports are provided below. Annex I contains a statistical summary of the reports issued by the JIU in 2019, and annex II contains proposed management responses to recommendations directed to the Executive Board as the legislative body of UNDP. Annexes III and IV provide information on the implementation status of recommendations issued in 2018 and 2017.

A. Review of the United Nations system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women ([JIU/REP/2019/2](#))

4. This JIU review is in response to General Assembly resolution 67/226 of 21 December 2012 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which the Assembly requested the Unit to undertake a system-wide evaluation of the effectiveness, added value and impact of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women as a tool for performance monitoring and accountability. The objectives of the review were: (a) to provide the General Assembly with an assessment of the Plan as a system-wide performance monitoring and accountability framework; (b) to review the processes and procedures for its implementation across the United Nations system; and (c) to share good practices and lessons learned. The review covered the first phase of implementation of the Plan, which began in 2012 and ended in December 2017.

5. UNDP welcomes the review, considers it substantive overall with useful findings to improve the system-wide implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan 2.0. UNDP is overall aligned with the comments of the Secretary-General and the CEB ([A/74/306/Add.1](#)).

6. Four of the five recommendations of the review are directed to UNDP. Recommendations 1, 2 and 5 are directed to the Administrator. Recommendation 4 is directed to the Executive Board for consideration and is discussed further and commented on in annex II.

7. Recommendation 1 states that “the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should critically assess on a regular basis the quality assurance mechanisms in place in their organization to ensure that ratings by indicator under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women are accurate according to the technical notes issued by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and that such ratings are appropriately supported by evidence”. UNDP wishes to note that this recommendation should be addressed for consideration by UN-Women as it is better placed to play the role of a quality assurance mechanism for the United Nations system, as it has access to United Nations entities’ reports and can apply comparability across United Nations entities and provide corrective feedback. UNDP is aligned with the note by the Secretary-General and the CEB on this recommendation (A/74/306/Add.1, paragraph 9) that UN-Women plans to create guidance to improve the quality assurance capacity in the context of reporting on the updated version of the Plan (2.0) and encourage more systematic peer reviews across the United Nations system. Bearing that in mind, UNDP does not accept recommendation 1.

8. Recommendation 2 states that “before the end of 2020, the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination should coordinate within its the Board’s existing mechanisms to undertake a comprehensive review of the results achieved following the implementation of the first phase of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and provide a forum for endorsing the framework as revised in 2018”. UNDP is aligned with the note by the Secretary-General and the CEB on this recommendation (A/74/306/Add.1, paragraph 12) and would welcome further discussion of possible approaches within the existing mechanisms of the CEB. The implementation of this recommendation depends on the submission of a proposal to the CEB to undertake a comprehensive review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan and UNDP will support this proposal once it is submitted. Bearing that in mind, UNDP notes that recommendation 2 is not relevant, as it is a CEB issue.

9. Recommendation 5 states that “before the completion of the System-wide Action Plan 2.0, the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure an independent assessment of effective progress towards gender mainstreaming to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within their organization, using the Action Plan as a benchmark, as applicable”. UNDP is aligned with the comments of the Secretary-General and the CEB (A/74/306/Add.1, paragraph 21 and 23) that a standardized approach or methodology be used systematically across the United Nations system for assessing effective progress towards gender mainstreaming in order to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within an organization. Such an approach would likely best serve the purposes of such a review, also enabling harmonization for the purpose of comparing results across United Nations entities. UNDP evaluates its Gender Equality Strategy, which is fully aligned to the UN System-wide Action Plan, every four years. UNDP also carries out an independent gender audit every four years. Given the significant investment of staff time required for evaluations and reviews, it would appear unlikely that an entity could meaningfully participate in both a system-wide review and an internal evaluation, both conducted within a short timespan. Bearing that in mind, UNDP does not accept recommendation 5.

B. Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (JIU/REP/2019/3)

10. This review examines the work of United Nations system entities, focusing on inter-agency coordination and systemic coherence for a more effective and efficient implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the revised United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience. The review analyses the extent to which the organizations have integrated the issue of disaster risk reduction in their corporate priorities, with regard to either normative or operational activities to implement their mandates. It also presents the organizations’ self-reported information on their level of engagement to implement their commitments made through their endorsement of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.

11. UNDP is broadly in agreement with the findings of the review, as it identifies both ongoing efforts to reduce disaster risk and prevent the creation of new risk across the United Nations system, while also identifying opportunities to strengthen these efforts.

12. The review has three recommendations which are directed to UNDP for action. Recommendations 2 and 3 are directed to the Administrator. Recommendation 1 is directed to the Executive Board for consideration.

13. *Recommendation 2 states that “the Secretary-General, in leading the reform of the United Nations development system, together with the executive heads of the organizations, should ensure that the new generation of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks systematically include disaster risk reduction as part of the common strategic plans of the country teams, to enable risk-informed development and planning, with allocated resources for its implementation, and a common reporting system to measure progress against the priorities of the Sendai Framework and the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, with detailed reporting on operational activities to the governing bodies”.* UNDP has been engaged in the development of the new guidance on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and has advocated that resilience-building and risk-informed approaches be pursued as part of the UNSDCF. This is through the United Nations Common Guidance on Resilience, an inter-agency process¹ facilitated by UNDP, which was included as reference in the UNSDCF guidance, as noted in the comments of the Secretary-General and the CEB on this JIU review.² The process helps to address multiple risks in a comprehensive manner, thereby complementing recommendation 1 (annex II).

14. Such integration work is expected to be based on evidence and analysis from the country context and is to be informed by priorities emerging from the Common Country Analysis (CCA). Paragraph 80 of the report notes that UNDP is one of the lead agencies supporting United Nations country teams (UNCTs) with the integration of disaster risk reduction in the above-mentioned process. Technical and advisory support is being provided to UNCTs to strengthen internal capacities and develop tools and methodologies to address disaster risk reduction in national development strategies.

15. In order to advance this objective, UNDP is working towards integrated support to the UNSDCF process by strengthening its cross-practice thematic expertise to support the development of country programme documents and ensuring their comprehensive review through the Integrated Project Assessment Committee at corporate level. This mechanism supports country offices from the early stages beginning with the CCA to help identify key risk reduction and resilience-building interventions. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts recommendation 2 and notes that it has been implemented.

16. *Recommendation 3 states that “the executive heads of the organizations working in the field, in contributing to the ongoing reform of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, should ensure that the United Nations country teams plan for dedicated capacity to implement risk-informed development activities and that such activities in the field are reported to headquarters, including by monitoring their contribution to implementing the Sendai Framework, taking into account the reporting framework for the Sustainable Development Goals”.* UNDP disaster risk reduction efforts at the country level focus on helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by protecting development gains from the impacts of disasters and climate change. By working with Governments,

¹ In collaboration with 18 other United Nations entities: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Political Affairs, Development Coordination Office, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Food and Agriculture Organization, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Peacebuilding Support Office, Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Population Fund, UN-Women, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization. .

² Paragraph 18 in the advance unedited text of the note by the Secretary General on this JIU review, to be issued for the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

partners and UNCT members towards making national, local and sectoral development planning processes risk-informed, UNDP helps build the resilience of communities and nations in line with the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

17. This partner approach helps to foster both the pooling of resources, knowledge and practices and leveraging of partners' comparative advantages, as this is fundamental to achieving sustained progress in disaster risk reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For example, through the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support initiative, UNDP has supported UNCTs to make the Sustainable Development Goal implementation process risk-informed. Similarly, the Global Policy Network configuration of capacities is resulting in increasing integration of disaster risk reduction with climate adaptation and climate mitigation initiatives and vice versa. Apart from UNDP corporate initiatives like the Climate Promise, UNDP is also fostering greater coherence between national adaptation plans and national/local disaster risk reduction strategies. This is helping contribute to advancing the objectives of the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement in a mutually reinforcing manner.

18. As included in the management response to recommendation 1 (annex II), UNDP has in place the requisite accountability frameworks that enable it to track and monitor the activities and resources dedicated to disaster risk reduction. The UNDP corporate reporting and monitoring system enables periodic analysis across the organization and deployment of requisite capacities and resources to meet organizational commitments. The system will foster coherence with the sustainable development and climate change agendas by facilitating inter-operability of data and information across reporting platforms such as the Sendai Framework Monitor and Sustainable Development Goal reporting. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts this recommendation and notes that it has been implemented, but also notes that such monitoring is time- and resource-intensive and requires a sustained investment of human and financial resources.

C. Review of change management in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2019/4)

19. This review looks at the role and practice of change management in organizational reforms across the United Nations system between 2010 and 2018. UNDP appreciates the review's valuable and constructive insights and considers these relevant to the organization's "People for 2030" strategy and the realignment of its human resources function, including its change management function. The review has six recommendations which are directed to UNDP for action. Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are directed to the Administrator. Recommendation 1 is directed to the Executive Board for consideration.

20. *Recommendation 2 states that "executive heads should embed structured and comprehensive change management approaches in their ongoing and future organizational reforms and report thereon to their governing/legislative bodies".* UNDP change management capabilities have evolved as a dynamic effort, central to current organizational transformations and investments and to ongoing engagement with its Executive Board. Change management approaches in UNDP follow structured and comprehensive corporate processes backed by the requisite support resources. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts recommendation 2 and notes that it has been implemented.

21. *Recommendation 3 states that "executive heads, through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, should support the development and standardization of organizational staff surveys across the United Nations system".* UNDP has been successfully implementing organizational staff surveys for a number of years. UNDP sees high potential in comparable data analytics focused on organizational capabilities and resources to drive deeper insights in the United Nations common system reform efforts and to partner directly on change initiatives and processes. The human resources network of the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) is already working on identifying common elements of staff surveys for the purpose of comparison. As part of the HLCM efforts on the "Future of Work", the HLCM human resources network is examining common ways to assess organizational culture and share best

practices. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts recommendation 3 and notes that it has been implemented.

22. *Recommendation 4 states that “executive heads should ensure that resources allocated to change management are clearly earmarked and the intended results are measured, tracked and evaluated”.* UNDP is aligned with the comments of the Secretary-General and the CEB to this recommendation (A/74/669/Add1, paragraph 17), noting that project budgets include resources for change management activities where applicable, and therefore these could not and should not be separated from the substantive implementation of business or organizational changes. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts recommendation 4 and notes that it has been implemented.

23. *Recommendation 5 states that “executive heads should give greater prominence to the role that their strategic human resources management functions play in organizational change management. This would include promoting changes in individual attitudes and behaviours, establishing mechanisms to reinforce these, and creating channels to communicate feedback across all personnel”.* UNDP is undergoing a number of strategic initiatives and transformations to deliver on the objectives of its Strategic Plan, which are reported on in the midterm review of the plan. The UNDP People for 2030 strategy, launched in June 2019, is closely aligned with the Strategic Plan and supports the transformation of the culture and capacity of UNDP to deliver more and better results. The strategy equips UNDP with modern and effective management tools and policies to help personnel to feel valued and to give their very best. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts recommendation 4 and notes that it has been implemented.

24. *Recommendation 6 states that “executive heads should include an item on the agenda of the next meeting of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to consider how to support the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge to play a greater role in United Nations system reforms”.* UNDP is aligned with the comments of the Secretary-General and the CEB on this recommendation (A/74/669/Add1, paragraph 21) that while on the one hand many United Nations entities face common challenges and would benefit from a common body of change management practice and expertise, a full cost-benefit analysis of this recommendation was not provided in the JIU review. Further experience and evidence of the impact of the United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge change model is needed prior to endorsing such a role. Bearing in mind the above, UNDP notes that recommendation 6 is forwarded to the HLCM secretariat and UNDP considers it not relevant.

D. Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2019/5)

25. The review analysed the different cloud computing frameworks, strategies, policies and practices in selected United Nations organizations, to identify best practices, innovative approaches and lessons learned promoting effective cloud computing governance. The review examined and identified specific security and data privacy issues arising from the use of cloud computing, as well as current risk management mechanisms, including business continuity and disaster recovery plans. The review also examined cloud computing governance at the United Nations system-wide level, notably coordination and cooperation within the system, such as through the Digital and Technology Network and other relevant mechanisms. The review provides best practices, including ideas and recommendations to inform the development of safeguards in using cloud computing services.

26. UNDP welcomes the review and its findings, noting that it is compliant with the review’s recommendations. Four of the five recommendations of the review are directed to UNDP. Recommendations 1, 3 and 4 are directed to the Administrator. Recommendation 2 is directed to the Executive Board for consideration.

27. *Recommendation 1 states that “the executive heads of the United Nations organizations should ensure that business continuity planning includes strategies and measures to mitigate the risk of failure by cloud service providers to deliver the contracted services”.* In 2013, the United Nations Chief Information Security Officers (CISO) network, chaired by UNDP, established recommendations to mitigate the risks of cloud computing. Prior to migrating to the cloud, UNDP

implemented the recommendations including those of independent audits of cloud service provider solutions. Bearing this in mind, UNDP accepts recommendation 1 and notes that it has been implemented.

28. *Recommendation 3 states that “the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that their corporate [information and communication technology] ICT strategies are closely aligned to the organization’s business needs and priorities and include, inter alia, the use of cloud computing if applicable, yielding value for their investment”.* The UNDP Digital Strategy drives the organization’s digital transformation which is centred on the use of cloud technologies and is fully supported by an organization-wide ICT Strategy. These strategies support the organization’s business needs and priorities, creating environments and systems that drive and support innovation, and build new capabilities to develop and apply digital solutions that enhance the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP work. Bearing this in mind, UNDP accepts recommendation 3 and notes that it has been implemented.

29. *Recommendation 4 states that “the executive heads of the United Nations organizations should ensure that a comprehensive risk analysis exercise is undertaken before contracting ICT services, including cloud-based services. The risk analysis exercise should consider both technical and financial risks and benefits, and relevant safeguards should be included in the service-level agreement”.* As mentioned in paragraph 27 above, UNDP has implemented the recommendations of the United Nations CISO network on mitigation of cloud computing risks. Prior to migrating to the cloud, UNDP had implemented the recommendations of independent audits of cloud service provider solutions. Decisions to contract ICT services are taken following comprehensive analyses of operational and financial risks and benefits of the respective contract, followed by inclusion of relevant safeguards in the service-level agreement. Bearing this in mind, UNDP accepts recommendation 4 and notes that it has been implemented.

E. Review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2019/6)

30. This review analyses audit and oversight committees across the United Nations system and advocates that audit and oversight committees of United Nations entities should report to the entities’ legislative organs. The review has seven recommendations which relate to the UNDP Executive Board as legislative organ, for consideration in its role with respect to audit and oversight committees. UNDP has responded with respect to these recommendations in the context of the reporting of its Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC) to the Administrator of UNDP.

31. The review’s recommendations in their present wording, referencing the reporting lines of audit and oversight committees, are not actionable for UNDP for the following reason: in its current practice, the UNDP AEAC is an independent advisory body appointed by and reporting to the Administrator. This practice is in line with the UNDP Accountability Framework, as approved by the Executive Board, and is the same as current practices in similar organizations, with AEAC-equivalent advisory bodies reporting to the executive heads.

32. Beyond the above-mentioned reason and noting that UNDP does not accept recommendation 1 (remarks are reported in annex II) in its present wording that references the AEAC reporting line, UNDP wishes to note that prior to this JIU review, it had already adopted the practices referenced in recommendations 2 to 7 prior to this JIU review, except for the AEAC reporting line. These practices include the committee’s terms of reference and accountability functions. UNDP also wishes to note that the AEAC also provides an independent report to the Executive Board at its annual session and is present at the Board’s deliberations during the presentation of the report, providing an opportunity to the AEAC to have an independent dialogue with the Board. Bearing this in mind, UNDP considers recommendations 2 to 7 as not relevant, as these are not actionable for UNDP in their present wording.

F. Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2019/8)

33. This review assesses how organizations see the need for inter-agency mobility within and outside the United Nations system, considering the requirements for support to the 2030 Agenda.

34. UNDP appreciates the review's recommendations on facilitating exchanges with non-United Nations system actors and using staff exchanges strategically in career frameworks. Overall, the review's comments on the universality of application of inter-agency staff exchange measures are well received and the deference to specific organizational requirements appreciated. UNDP will continue to participate actively in the discussions and follow-up actions referred to in the review. The review has 10 recommendations of which seven are directed to UNDP for action. Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are directed to the Administrator as executive head

35. *Recommendation 2 states that "executive heads should, by the end of 2021, review all administrative issuances to clarify how inter-agency mobility is treated in each of those contexts".* UNDP is currently working on its new mobility and rotation policy. Staff mobility is a prerequisite for the organization to more effectively meet its evolving operational needs with the necessary degree of agility and speed. The policy will enable UNDP to fulfil its mandate as a global field-based development organization with a workforce that is mobile. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts recommendation 2 and notes that is in progress.

36. *Recommendation 3 states that "executive heads of organizations party to the 2012 Agreement should not apply the practice of asking incoming staff to resign instead of agreeing to transfers in view of its corrosive effect on the integrity of the inter-agency mobility regime and the immaterial impact of these transfers on the management of long-term employment-related liabilities, and decide by the end of 2021 to accept benefits and entitlements on the basis stipulated in the Agreement".* UNDP acknowledges the general sentiment of the recommendation. At the same time, it would like to further explore the financial impact of accepting persons on transfer under the terms stipulated in the 2012 Agreement³ versus a system where organizations compliant with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards are transferring accrued liabilities upon transfer of their staff. Bearing this in mind, UNDP notes that recommendation 3 is under consideration.

37. *Recommendation 4 states that "executive heads should, by the end of 2021, revise the 2012 Agreement to specify procedures for the handling of allegations of misconduct by staff who have moved to another organization under the terms of the Agreement".* As this is a system-wide agreement, this recommendation is for the consideration of the HLCM, following prior consultations in the HLCM human resources and legal networks. Bearing this in mind, UNDP notes that recommendation 4 is forwarded to the HLCM secretariat and considers it not relevant.

38. *Recommendation 6 states that "the Secretary-General, in coordination with other executive heads in the framework of the High-Level Committee on Management, as he considers appropriate, should, by the end of June 2022, articulate the business case for inter-agency mobility by setting out what it should accomplish for the organizations as well as how it contributes to human resources management objectives and to the delivery of programmatic results".* UNDP will participate in the inter-agency forums to share how inter-agency mobility benefits UNDP and helps it accomplish the objectives of its People for 2030 strategy. Bearing this in mind, UNDP notes that recommendation 6 is forwarded to the HLCM secretariat and considers it not relevant.

39. *Recommendation 7 states that "the Secretary-General, working with other executive heads, should assess the impact of the United Nations system leadership framework on the development of a common management culture supportive of a One United Nations mindset and report to the Economic and Social Council at its 2022 session in the context of his report on the work of CEB".* As part of the HLCM working group on "The Future of Work", discussions are already ongoing on assessing and building an enabling common management culture within the organizations which is supportive of a One United Nations

³ Inter-Organization Agreement concerning Transfer, Secondment or Loan of Staff among the Organizations applying the United Nations Common System of Salaries and Allowances

mindset. An assessment of the impact of the United Nations leadership framework could be considered if most organizations agree. Bearing this in mind, UNDP notes that recommendation 7 is in progress for the United Nations system but considers it accepted and implemented for UNDP.

40. Recommendation 8 states that “executive heads should enable all United Nations system staff members to compete for vacant posts on a basis equal to that established for their own staff, while considering downsizing contexts, the abolition of posts and position, and the administration of rotational placements”. UNDP will consider this recommendation during implementation of its People for 2030 strategy with specific focus on how to support internal and external mobility. Bearing this in mind, UNDP notes that recommendation 8 is under consideration.

41. Recommendation 9 states that “the Secretary-General and other executive heads who are members of CEB should, by the end of 2021, define how the mutual recognition of rules and procedures will be applied to overcome regulatory and procedural barriers to inter-agency mobility, and report on measures taken to the Economic and Social Council at its 2022 session in the context of the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of CEB”. Applying the mutual recognition of rules and procedures to overcome barriers to inter-agency mobility is a matter for inclusion in the CEB programme of work if most of the CEB member organizations agree to consider such an agenda item. Bearing this in mind, UNDP notes that recommendation 9 is under consideration.

III. Status of UNDP implementation of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations

42. In 2019, of the 31 recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit directed at UNDP: 15 recommendations (48 per cent) are accepted: 14 (45 per cent) are implemented and 1 (3 per cent) in progress; 3 (10 per cent) are under consideration, 3 (10 per cent) are not accepted and 10 (32 per cent) are not relevant. Of the three recommendations that are not accepted, two concern the Review of the United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (JIU/REP/2019/2) (recommendations 1 and 5) and are addressed to the Administrator. The other is recommendation 1 of the review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2019/6) addressed to the Executive Board. The management response is presented in annex II of this report. Of the 10 recommendations that are not relevant, four recommendations are system-wide and are not the sole remit of UNDP: one is under the review of the United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (JIU/REP/2019/2) (recommendation 8), one is under the review of change management in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2019/4) (recommendation 6) and two are under the review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2019/8) (recommendations 4 and 6). Six recommendations are under the review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2019/6) and are not actionable for UNDP in their present wording (recommendations 2 to 7).

43. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/258 of 8 May 2006, in which the General Assembly requested the Joint Inspection Unit to enhance dialogue with participating organizations and thereby strengthen the implementation of its recommendations, the summary of the implementation status of relevant recommendations contained in reports issued in 2018 and 2017 is reported in annexes III and IV to the present report. Full narrative updates are provided in the web-based JIU follow-up system accessible to Member States.

44. UNDP has implemented 21 recommendations (57 per cent) and is pursuing 8 (22 per cent) of the 37 relevant recommendations (29 accepted and one under consideration) directed at UNDP by the Joint Inspection Unit in 2018. Of the eight recommendations that are in progress:

- (a) Three recommendations (5 per cent) relate to opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation, as these are system-wide and are not of the sole remit of UNDP;
- (b) Five recommendations (14 per cent) address enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system and relate to

implementing measures to improve accessibility-related matters as part of the implementation of the new [United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy](#).

45. UNDP has implemented 30 recommendations (83 per cent) and is pursuing 3 (8 per cent) of the 36 relevant recommendations (33 accepted and 3 under consideration) directed at UNDP by the Joint Inspection Unit in 2017. The three recommendations in progress are system-wide and are not the sole remit of UNDP.

46. UNDP is committed to following up on implementing the remaining recommendations relevant to it, and to continuing its contribution to the various future initiatives of the Joint Inspection Unit.

Annex I

Summary of reports issued by the Joint Inspection Unit in 2019 of relevance to UNDP, as at 29 February 2020

Document symbol	Title	Total recommendations	Directed at UNDP	Of which recommendations directed to the Executive Board	Implementation status of recommendations directed to UNDP				
					Accepted		Under consideration	Not accepted	Not relevant
					Implemented	In progress			
JIU/REP/2019/2	Review of the United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	5	4	1	1	-	-	2	1
JIU/REP/2019/3	Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	3	3	1	3	-	-	-	-
JIU/REP/2019/4	Review of change management in United Nations system organizations	6	6	1	5	-	-	-	1
JIU/REP/2019/5	Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system	5	4	1	4	-	-	-	-
JIU/REP/2019/6	Review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system	7	7	7	-	-	-	1	6
JIU/REP/2019/8	Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations	10	7	-	1	1	3	-	2
Total		36	31	11	14	1	3	3	10

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit not issued at the time of the present report:

[JIU/REP/2019/9](#): Review of contemporary practices in the external outsourcing of services to commercial service providers by United Nations system organizations

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit issued in 2019 not relevant to UNDP

[JIU/REP/2019/1](#): Review of management and administration in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

[JIU/REP/2019/7](#): Review of the management and administration of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

Annex II

Review of relevant Joint Inspection Unit recommendations in 2019 for consideration by the Executive Board

Recommendations	Remarks
Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (JIU/REP/2019/2)	
<p>Recommendation 4 The legislative and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should review the UN-Women annual letter addressed to the executive management, accompanied by indications of strategies and measures envisioned by the executive heads to be undertaken to improve compliance with the indicators included in the System-wide Action Plan and their expected contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women.</p>	<p>UNDP is aligned with the note by the Secretary-General and the CEB on this recommendation (A/74/306/Add.1, paragraph 17) that the letter was not designed to serve the proposed functions and that its circulation will duplicate tools and processes, place an additional reporting burden on generally small gender teams and have a negative impact on the ownership of corporate goals and the means of their implementation.</p> <p>UNDP notes that as of 2019, it has incorporated in the annual report on the implementation of its Gender Equality Strategy, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan reporting cards of the letter circulated by UN-Women. This annual report to the Executive Board includes analysis of challenges and ways to overcome them, including those of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan. Bearing this in mind, UNDP accepts this recommendation and notes that it has been implemented.</p>
Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (JIU/REP/2019/3)	
<p>Recommendation 1 The governing bodies of the organizations of the United Nations system should request the secretariats of their organizations to present a map of interlinkages between the core mandate of their organizations and disaster risk reduction and report on the progress made on disaster risk reduction accordingly, using the specific guidance provided by the “Results Framework of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience – guidance for monitoring and reporting on the progress of the implementation of the United Nations Plan for Action on disaster risk reduction”.</p>	<p>UNDP is fully aligned with the note by the Secretary-General and the CEB on this recommendation (paragraph 13)⁴ which states that mapping the interlinkages between the core mandates of the United Nations organizations and disaster risk reduction should not be done as a stand-alone process, but either through existing corporate reporting tools or as part of the 2030 Agenda reporting process on progress made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in order to gain time and cost efficiencies and reduce duplication of efforts.</p> <p>As acknowledged in paragraph 90 of the JIU review report, UNDP is among the examples of good practices among the funds, programmes and specialized agencies, having developed accountability frameworks that enable it to track and monitor the activities and resources dedicated to disaster risk reduction.</p> <p>The UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 encompasses an integrated results and resources framework (IRRF) with a set of concrete and well-defined outputs and related interventions and indicators to guide the work of the organization and monitor delivery of the Strategic Plan. On resilience specifically, there are eight output indicators to measure the UNDP contributions to resilience-</p>

⁴ Advanced unedited text of the note by the Secretary General on this JIU review, which will be issued for the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly.

	<p>building, including disaster risk reduction. These are spread across the three Strategic Plan outcomes, with the objective to mainstream risk and resilience across the full spectrum of UNDP work.</p> <p>UNDP country, regional and headquarters offices monitor their results against all IRRF outputs and indicators, and report to the Executive Board through the annual report of the Administrator using the data collected throughout the year for the purposes of performance assessment and learning lessons.</p> <p>Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, UNDP accepts this recommendation and notes that it has been implemented.</p>
Review of change management in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2019/4)	
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Governing/legislative bodies are encouraged to ensure that executive heads embed change management approaches and methods in their organizational reforms and report on the results.</p>	<p>UNDP will continue to build change management approaches and resources into its reform processes, as is the practice for the organization. UNDP endorses the recommendation, while reflecting on the nuances of how change management support can manifest in relation to other avenues of organizational transformation, namely innovation and adaptive change such as the Accelerator Labs initiative. UNDP is focusing on adapting its organizational behaviours to work with agility, understand challenges, design solutions, pilot initiatives and learn from the successes and failures. To the extent that organizational transformation is intrinsically linked to innovation, UNDP endeavours to institutionalize these behaviours in its ongoing dialogue with the Executive Board. Bearing this in mind, UNDP accepts this recommendation and notes that it has been implemented.</p>
Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2019/5)	
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request the heads of their respective organizations to include, in their financial strategies, provisions that facilitate the adaptation, responsiveness and efficient use of operational expenditures and capital investments related to new technologies.</p>	<p>UNDP investments in cloud and information technologies (IT) are managed by a dedicated corporate Digital Governance Group, which oversees corporate IT projects in line with the organization's digital and IT strategies. The group considers the impact of cloud and IT investment on the delivery of the UNDP IT strategy along with the impact on its recurring IT costs.</p> <p>These structured corporate IT financial mechanisms and their associated governance afford UNDP the flexibility to adapt and have the necessary visibility on its corporate IT budget for investment, adaptation and operational expenditures related to new technologies.</p> <p>Bearing this in mind, UNDP accepts this recommendation and notes that it has been implemented.</p>
Review of audit and oversight committees in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2019/6)	
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>The legislative and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not already done so should ensure that the terms of reference or charters of their respective audit and oversight committees are revised and updated by the</p>	<p>UNDP does not accept this recommendation, as in its present wording referencing the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee (AEAC) reporting line, the recommendation is not actionable for the following reasons:</p> <p>(a) The UNDP AEAC is an independent advisory body to the Administrator (appointed by and reporting to the Administrator).</p>

<p>end of 2021 to include specific references to their independence and reporting line to their legislative and/or governing bodies.</p>	<p>This is in line with the Executive Board-approved (decision 2008/37, paragraph 3) Accountability Framework (DP/2008/16/Rev.1).</p> <p>(b) Changing the AEAC reporting line to the Executive Board, in contrast to the applicable Accountability Framework, would necessitate another body to advise the Administrator on matters currently under the AEAC purview. This is not efficient or effective.</p> <p>(c) The UNDP recommendation is to retain the current reporting line of the AEAC to the Administrator with the independent report of the AEAC to the Executive Board, noting that the AEAC has an advisory function.</p> <p>As such, UNDP has implemented the principle of independence and reporting lines of the AEAC, noting that it has an independent advisory function role to the Administrator. This is reflected in the updated AEAC terms of reference as included in the annual report of the AEAC in 2016 and noted by the Executive Board (decision 2016/13, paragraph 10). The updated terms of reference are always annexed to the AEAC annual report to the Executive Board. The AEAC also has the opportunity for an independent dialogue with the UNDP Executive Board through its independent annual report which is made available to the Board at its annual session. The AEAC Chair or delegated member attends the session and is available to answer questions, if addressed by the Executive Board.</p>
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Annex III

Status of implementation of relevant Joint Inspection Unit recommendations issued in 2018, as at 29 February 2020⁵

Document symbol	Title	Total recommendations	Directed at UNDP	Of which recommendations directed to the Executive Board	Implementation status of recommendations directed to UNDP				
					Accepted		Under consideration	Not accepted	Not relevant
					Implemented	In progress			
JIU/REP/2018/1	Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system	7	5	1	2	-	-	3	-
JIU/REP/2018/4	Review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations	11	8	2	5	-	-	1	2
JIU/REP/2018/5	Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation	10	7	1	2	3	1	-	1
JIU/REP/2018/6	Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system	10	10	1	5	5	-	-	-
JIU/REP/2018/7	Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ⁶	12	7	1	7	-	-	-	-
Total		50	37	6	21	8	1	4	3

⁵ Full management response update narratives to all JIU reviews are provided in the JIU's web-based tracking system accessible to Member States.

⁶ The full management response to this JIU review is provided in the JIU's web-based tracking, as at the time of the *Report of UNDP on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2018 (DP/2019/10/Add.1)* this JIU review was not yet published.

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit issued in 2018 not relevant to UNDP

[JIU/REP/2018/2](#): Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system

[JIU/REP/2018/3](#): Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

Annex IV
Status of implementation of relevant Joint Inspection Unit recommendations issued in 2017, as at 29 February 2020⁷

Document Symbol	Title	Total recommendations	Directed at UNDP	Of which recommendations directed to the Executive Board	Implementation status of recommendations directed to UNDP				
					Accepted		Under consideration	Not accepted	Not relevant
					Implemented	In progress			
JIU/REP/2017/2	Donor-led assessment of the United Nations system organizations	6	6	3	4	-	-	-	2
JIU/REP/2017/3	Review of air travel policies in the United Nations system: achieving efficiency gains and cost savings and enhancing harmonization	9	3	-	3	-	-	-	-
JIU/REP/2017/5	Outcome of the review of the follow-up to the Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations by the United Nations system organizations	7	6	1	5	-	-	-	1
JIU/REP/2017/6	Results-based management in the United Nations development system: Analysis of progress and policy effectiveness	7	6	1	6	-	-	-	-
JIU/REP/2017/7	Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system	7	7	2	6	-	-	-	1
JIU/REP/2017/8	The United Nations system – Private sector partnership arrangements in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ⁸	12	6	-	3	3	-	-	-

⁷ Full management response update narratives to all JIU reviews are provided in the JIU's web-based tracking system accessible to Member States.

⁸ The full management response to this JIU review is provided in the JIU web-based tracking, as at the time of the *Report of UNDP on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2017 (DP/2018/10/Add.1)* this JIU review was not yet published.

Document symbol	Title	Total recommendations	Directed at UNDP	Of which recommendations directed to the Executive Board	Implementation status of recommendations directed to UNDP				
					Accepted		Under consideration	Not accepted	Not relevant
					Implemented	In progress			
JIU/REP/2017/9	Review of mechanisms and policies addressing conflict of interest in the United Nations system	6	6	2	3	-	-	2	1
JIU/NOTE/2017/1	Results-Based Management in the United Nations system: High-impact model for results-based management - Benchmarking framework, stages of development and outcomes	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total		56	42	9	30	3	-	2	7

Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit issued in 2017 not relevant to UNDP

[JIU/REP/2017/1](#): Review of management and administration in the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

[JIU/REP/2017/4](#): Review of management and administration in the Universal Postal Union (UPU)