**Chief Executives Board
for Coordination**

Report of the High-level Committee on Management at its forty-first session

(Virtual meeting, 25-26 March 2021)

I. Introduction

1. The High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held its forty-first session virtually on 25-26 March 2021. The meeting was chaired by the HLCM Vice-Chair, Ms. Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees.

2. The HLCM Vice-Chair welcomed new HLCM members as well as guests, including representatives from the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), the Staff Federations and Young UN.

3. The consolidated agenda, as adopted by the Committee, focused on the following themes:

    a. Addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the UN system;

    b. Occupational safety and health (OSH) for UN system personnel;

    c. Advancing the UN system's common agenda to respond to current and future challenges.

4. The list of participants at the session is provided in annex I, the checklist of documents in annex II, and the Senior Leadership Commitments adopted by the Committee in annex III to the present document.

II. Addressing sexual harassment within the organizations of the UN system

5.   The HLCM Vice-Chair and Chair of the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the UN System (Task Force), recalled that since its inception in 2017, the Task Force had produced several tools to contribute to a United Nations workplace free of sexual harassment. The Vice-Chair commended the energy, creativity, and self-reflection, which the members of the Task Force exhibited in 2020. Noting the increased complexity brought to the challenge of addressing sexual harassment by the COVID-19 pandemic and intersectional issues of racism, inclusion and diversity, she conveyed to the Committee that the work of the Task Force needed to be sustained in 2021 and beyond. UN system leadership is required to fulfil its obligation to create a workplace that allows organizations to deliver on their mandates, which includes making everyone feel respected and empowered to speak up.

6.   Outlining progress on the workplan 2020-2021 of the Task Force, approved by HLCM at its fortieth session, the HLCM Vice-Chair cited the development of a common understanding of a victim-centred approach to sexual harassment as a priority. Establishing a voluntary survey to capture victims' experiences and perspectives will help improving support to persons affected by sexual harassment.

7.   The Investigators' Manual, developed through the Task Force and provided to the Committee for approval, was presented as a crucial tool to bolster investigative capacity, harmonize victim-centred investigations and improve communication during investigations of sexual harassment complaints.

8.   Augmenting internal communication and learning was highlighted as another focus area of the Task Force. A communications strategy and clear common messaging are being developed to encourage accessibility and use of the tools among the UN system workforce. To enhance monitoring the adoption and use of the Task Force's current and future products, an internal dashboard is being built to promote accountability and leverage emerging evidence.

9.   To demonstrate the commitment of the UN system to prevent and address sexual harassment, multiple Task Force members have engaged in peer-to-peer learning dialogues with Member States and civil society organizations. Outreach and knowledge-sharing efforts will continue with leaders in the UN system, proactively highlighting work being done and targeting thought leaders outside the system to work substantively with them.

10.   To address the underlying issues of values, attitudes and culture, the Task Force has held a leadership dialogue for Task Force members to consider how change can be driven individually and collectively. The Task Force has worked closely with the CEB Task Force on the Future of the UN System Workforce to reflect issues of harassment and discrimination in the Senior Leadership Commitments developed by the latter. The role of technology in increasing the risk of sexual harassment and how it can be leveraged to mitigate these risks will also be a subject of study for the Task Force.

11.   Committee members were encouraged to continue engaging and sharing lessons from their respective organizations' work on addressing sexual harassment to foster a harmonized, coherent, and credible system-wide response.

12. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, Ms. Fatoumata Ndiaye, introduced the Investigators' Manual for Investigation of Sexual Harassment Complaints in the United Nations (Manual) as the foundation for a consistent, effective, and efficient investigation regime. The Under-Secretary-General pointed out the multidisciplinary and system-wide process under which the Manual was developed and underscored its victim-centred. The annexes to the Manual constitute an analysis and comparison of case law to help improve credible investigations decisions.

13. The Under-Secretary-General outlined the main components of the Manual: general principles to underpin fair, transparent and accountable investigations processes; best practices on how to record and assess whether a complaint requires investigation; a common understanding and application of confidentiality and informed consent; best practices on information-sharing with stakeholders during an investigation; criteria used to conduct a credibility assessment; and guidance on how to conduct victim-centred investigations.

14. The Victims' Rights Advocate for the United Nations, Ms. Jane Connors, briefed the Committee on the ongoing development of a Common Understanding of a Victim-centred Approach to Sexual Harassment within the Organizations of the United Nations System, which has advanced with broad involvement from UN system organizations. The approach will serve as an point of reference and will include definitions that respect victims' rights and dignity and protection from retaliation and discrimination. The core principles underpinning the approach are respect, non-discrimination, safety, confidentiality, informed consent, support and prevention. When fully developed, the approach will be presented for endorsement to HLCM.

15. In the ensuing discussion, Committee members commended the progress made by the Task Force and encouraged continued engagement on the issue. The Committee supported the endorsement of the Manual as a living document to be amended on the basis on any evidence that may become available once organizations will be using the Manual in practice. Some members encouraged the wide dissemination of the Manual including to the UN's partners. Several HLCM members suggested that the speed with which investigations of sexual harassment complaints are carried out is in need of examination next.

16. The shift towards placing victims and survivors at the centre of how the UN system organizations can adequately prevent and address sexual harassment was welcomed, and the Committee looked forward to receiving the document on a common victim-centred approach to sexual harassment for approval. It was highlighted by some Committee members that external communications on the UN system's work on addressing sexual harassment could be increased and improved.

17. The HLCM Vice-Chair thanked the presenters and the Committee for their commitment and support to eradicating sexual harassment in the UN system.

The High-Level Committee on Management:

18. *Welcomed the overall progress of the CEB Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within UN System Organizations and encouraged the Task Force to continue the implementation of its 2020-2021 work plan.*

19. *Requested a further report on progress at the Committee's forty-second session in Fall 2021.*

20. *Endorsed the Investigators' Manual for the Investigation of Sexual Harassment Complaints in the United Nations as a living document.*

III. Occupational safety and health (OSH) for UN system personnel

21. In October 2019, the HLCM Task Force on Duty of Care for UN System Personnel outlined, and HLCM endorsed, the "Five Core Principles for a healthier, safer and more respectful UN workplace":

    a. Risk awareness and transparency: proactive information to staff.
    b. Safe and healthy working and living environment: promote and sustain security, safety, health and well-being of the whole workforce.
    c. Inclusion and respect for dignity: treat all staff and non-staff personnel in good faith, with due consideration for individual circumstances, respecting and preserving dignity and diversity.
    d. Caring for consequences of risks: caring for those who have been adversely affected.
    e. Accountability at all levels: creating a just culture that supports effective leadership and individual accountability.

22. The COVID-19 pandemic provided the organizations of the UN system with an opportunity to stress-test their ability to safeguard these principles. This session was designed to take stock of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) measures that have been put in place by UN system organizations during the crisis, and to reflect on what measures worked or did not work well, and areas where the response has been lacking.

23. As it had become increasingly apparent that the pandemic would have long-lasting impacts on organizations and their staff, an objective of the discussion was also to provide Committee members with an opportunity to share experiences and propose possible actions on the following subjects:

    a. Mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic;
    b. Mid- to long-term personal and corporate risks from COVID-19;
    c. Governance, system-wide coordination and support of safety-related action.

HLCM Forum on Occupational Safety and Health

24. The session opened with a presentation by the Chair of the Forum, Mr. Raul Thomas, on the proposed terms of reference and workplan of the HLCM Forum on Occupational Safety and Health .

25. The Chair recalled that nominations for the Forum had been collected in January 2020. Three videoconferences had been held since then, leading to the finalization of the terms of reference and the development of a workplan composed of four priority workstreams.

26. The Chair stressed the importance of having representatives with the appropriate decision-making authority and cross-functional expertise for the effectiveness of the Forum. He therefore submitted the proposal to re-open the nomination process to review and possibly add new members.

27. In response to requests for guidance put forward by the Chair, the Committee indicated that the Forum should operate as an advisory body, i.e. without delegated authority in the fashion of HLCM's technical networks have. The Committee further clarified that the Forum's scope should be limited to the obligations of the organizations towards their staff and non-staff personnel.

28. HLCM members suggested to rename the Forum to "Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)", to underline the emphasis that will be placed on the health component.

29. Committee members also suggested that the terms of reference more explicitly reflect the need to update norms and standards based on the analysis of the lessons learned from the occupational health and safety measures taken in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with a view to addressing the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on certain vulnerable categories of persons and to developing measures to tackle workplace mental health.

Mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic

30. Citing the growing scientific evidence on the heavy impact of the pandemic on mental health across all populations, but particularly on certain categories such as women and young people, the HLCM Vice-Chair introduced a second discussion theme: *what actions could be taken to protect mental health and offer psycho-social support for UN system personnel, in all duty stations*?

31. Ms. Therese Fitzpatrick, Global Lead for the implementation of the UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy, thanked Committee members for personally taking action, speaking publicly, and acknowledging challenges faced by personnel. She underlined that, in order to improve mental health, the focus should be on what organizations can do to support good workplace culture and practices. She provided a short summary of the activities completed by the UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Implementation Board[1], which included: a new health and well-being survey undertaken in 13 organizations; engagement and communication activities, including regular events during World Mental Health Month; development and sharing of resources among UN system organizations; launch of two websites: Mental Health Strategy website and Mental Health and Well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic; improved access to psycho-social support both internally and with the help of insurance companies; creation of a Domestic Abuse Task Force, offering training for personnel and managers; training for managers including podcasts, factsheets, online learning tools; and, launch of mental health dialogues.

32. Ms. Aiysha Malik, Technical Officer in the WHO's Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, and lead on WHO's guidelines on mental health and work, explained that UN personnel and healthcare workers have very similar characteristics, and for the latter category a great amount of research on mental health is available from before the pandemic, that could be very useful to effectively address mental health issues in the UN system, even in the absence of context-specific studies. She described a three-level normative framework that can be used to effectively prevent the development of mental health issues, and to support those affected:

    a. Employee-level: psycho-social interventions to teach staff members how to manage stress and improve mental health conditions. A key challenge in this area is equitable access and coverage, as large numbers of personnel operate in duty stations where the availability of mental health professionals is extremely limited. The complementary use of traditional mental health professionals available locally, together with digital and remote innovations such as tele-counselling, can provide cost-effective solutions that can be adapted to the requirements of different workplaces, ensuring quality and cultural acceptability standards. Such solutions do not have to exclusively rely on mental health specialists (e.g. other health workers can be trained to offer counselling services) but require continuous monitoring and strong quality controls.

---

[1] The UN System Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy underpins and guides all of the work UN systems organizations are doing in this area. It is governed by an Implementation Board which is multiagency and multidisciplinary.

    b.   Managerial-level: capacity-building interventions on the population that has the most direct impact on the wellness of personnel. These can target both managerial and supervisory skills – i.e. identifying and supporting staff in need, acting as role models, recognizing how managerial practices positively and negatively affect staff, etc.

    c.   Organizational-level: interventions aimed at minimizing and mitigating mental health risk at strategic and operational level, through policies and procedures.

33.   Ms. Tanya Quinn-Maguire, President of the Federation of International Civil Servants Associations (FICSA) and member of the UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Implementation Board, underlined the value of policy interventions such as flexible working arrangements, and the importance for such measures to be simple, clear, transparent and consistently applied. She also noted the strong link between occupational health and safety and work against sexual harassment. She highlighted the importance of managerial and personal skills in day-to-day interactions with personnel, and suggested that special attention should be given to return-to-work policies.

34.   In the ensuing discussion, HLCM members expressed strong interest in the solutions described by the speakers and shared their experience with initiatives within their organizations, such as well-being and mental health digital apps, training for managers on mental health "first aid", and pooling of available mental health professionals. Members noted the challenge of providing adequate mental health support with tight resources, especially as support often needs to be extended to families and members of the household, and as the specificities of UN system's workplace require customized solutions. In light of these considerations, there was strong agreement that pooling of resources and sharing of tools among organizations should be pursued.

Mid- to long-term personal and corporate risks from COVID-19

35.   This segment covered the health and occupational safety risks that the UN system needs to monitor and manage going forward. These include mental health issues, long-term disability related to lingering effects of the virus, fitness to work in high-risk assignments, organizational challenges linked to supporting colleagues and managing teams in blended and remote working arrangements, as well as corporate risks arising from Member States' shifting focus to national agendas and the impact of repaying pandemic borrowing on national budgets.

36.   Ms. Chitra Narayanaswamy, Co-Chair of the Finance and Budget Network and of the HLCM Risk Management Forum, noted that, as risk management had taken centre stage during the pandemic, the UN system had shown impressive resilience and demonstrated that it was on the right track towards risk management maturity. The remaining challenge was to further strengthen the risk culture and now embed risk management in cross-functional deliberations at both strategic and operational levels, to enable better integration of and risk assessment into core decision-making, and to improve organizations' abilities to anticipate, prevent and prepare for major risks to come.

37.   Ms. Narayanaswamy recommended that risk dialogues be launched within and across organizations, especially as decisions in one part of the organization might have a risk-related impact on other parts, and vice-versa. To this effect, the FBN had, at its recent meeting, considered how it could integrate the risk dimension into its work and recognized the importance of cross-functional risk analysis.

Governance and system-wide coordination of safety-related action

38. The final segment of this session was introduced by Mr. Gilles Michaud, Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, who noted that, in line with the HLCM Vision Statement on Occupational Health and Safety, there is a need for the UN system to address health and medical issues, safety, security, and their impact on psycho-social support and on human resources policies in a holistic manner.

39. The Under-Secretary-General also stressed the need to ensure coherence among the policy and strategic guidance of different HLCM and UN system fora and networks – Occupational Health and Safety, Human Resources, Legal Advisers, Security, and Medical.

40. As for the governance and coordination of safety-related aspects of Occupational Health and Safety, the Under-Secretary-General updated HLCM members on the latest discussion in the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN), where members agreed that, although safety and security has been often addressed as a single item, there are several differences in how these matters are managed across organizations.

41. The Under-Secretary-General informed the Committee that responsibility of aviation safety in the UN Secretariat had recently shifted from United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to United Nations Department of Operational Support (UNDOS). There would be no change in the services being provided to the members of the UN Security Management System (UNSMS).

42. In this context, IASMN proposed that there should be a dedicated UN system mechanism managing safety. Meanwhile, coordination and consultations between UNDOS and UNDSS would be launched to find possible ways forward on which is best placed to provide services on the various aspects of safety that require specific expertise beyond security.

43. UNDSS looked forward to supporting the work of the Occupational Health and Safety Forum together with other UN system organizations, while continuing to lead the IASMN on security management.

44. The subsequent discussion highlighted the strong connections between risk management and safety. It was noted that several safety hazards were already covered by risk management plans, and it was suggested that such plans be used as a basis for safety-related actions, instead of creating new mechanisms and new documents. One member also reported the decision to establish a global network to track and assess hazards across offices and risk registers.

45. The HLCM Vice-Chair closed the discussion by recognizing the important points that had emerged from the discussion, thanked all participants for an insightful conversation and summarized the key decisions.

The High-Level Committee on Management:

46. *Agreed to rename the Forum from "Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)" to "Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)" to underline the emphasis that will be placed on the health component, which includes mental health and well-being of United Nations personnel.*

47. *Provisionally approved the terms of reference and workplan of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Forum, so that the Forum could expeditiously start its work. The Chair of the Forum would concurrently aim to finalize the terms of reference and workplan on the basis of input received from HLCM members during the discussion, with a view to having them virtually endorsed by HLCM.*

48. *Re-opened nominations of HLCM representatives in the Forum, with a view to ensure appropriate level of decision-making authority and cross-functional expertise.*

49. *Requested the OHS Forum, with input from the UN Medical Directors Working Group (UNMD) and the UN Staff and Stress Counsellors Group (UNSSCG), to coordinate and deliver a comprehensive review on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health of UN personnel, both from an immediate standpoint and a longer-term perspective.*

50. *Requested the OHS Forum, in coordination with IASMN, to discuss and identify options for suitable mechanisms for the system-wide governance of safety-related subjects, and to come back to HLCM with recommendations, building on and avoiding overlap with existing system-wide mechanisms.*

51. *Approved the terms of reference for the Risk Management Forum, concurrently requesting the Forum to launch an analysis on emerging mid- to long-term corporate risks from COVID-19.*

52. *Encouraged HLCM members to enable a cross-functional risk dialogue in their organizations and embed risk management considerations in strategic and operational decision-making, especially in cross-functional deliberations. The documents produced by the Risk Management Task Force – such as the Embedding Risk Management paper – would provide valuable guidance in this endeavour.*

IV. Advancing the UN system's common agenda to respond to current and future challenges

53. To mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report back prior to the conclusion of the seventy-fifth session with "recommendations to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges".

54. At its second regular session of 2020, CEB used the opportunity of the seventy-fifth anniversary and the COVID-19 pandemic to reflect collectively on future opportunities and challenges for the UN system. The Board discussed the potential role of the UN system in the post-pandemic recovery and the key elements of a common agenda anchored in a networked and inclusive multilateralism, and how the UN system could transform to face the future challenges more effectively and efficiently.

55. The Committee's present discussion was informed by an introduction by the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Mr. Volker Türk, on the Secretary-General's "Our Common Agenda" report, the twelve commitments contained in the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (A/RES/75/1), and the five drivers of transformation ("quintet") – innovation and digital transformation; data, analysis and communications; work culture, performance and results orientation; and strategic foresight.

56. The Assistant Secretary-General recognized the work of HLCM in support of the Secretary-General´s reform agenda in the course of his first term, and outlined how the five drivers of transformation relate to the various fields of work of HLCM.

57. The United Nations system requires innovation, digital transformation and strategic foresight to advance its reform agenda. These are all areas where the Committee is leading through multiple streams of work, especially in supporting the implementation of the Secretary-General's Data Strategy for Action by Everyone, Everywhere.

58. Innovation should not only be seen from a digitalization angle but also as a perspective leveraging approaches that countries, communities and other organizations may have already developed. Some organizations have initiated impactful projects that should be adapted by others, and HLCM is a unique platform where such collaboration can be put in motion.

59. Behavioural science can be leveraged to change the work culture for more efficient and simplified business processes and greater coherence within organizations, both at country and corporate levels, as well as to enhance systems integration and coordination.

60. Finally, Member States and stakeholders expect the UN system to show results for their investments. To achieve this, effective coordination that is results-oriented and not driven by process is required. This speaks directly to HLCM's approach, which is driven by a focus on its ability to deliver for the UN system organizations in support of Member States.

61. The HLCM Vice-Chair thanked the Assistant Secretary-General for his illuminating input, highlighting that HLCM is well placed to support the UN system in becoming more fit for purpose to meet the emerging challenges of the next few decades. This will require:

   a. Greater coherence at the country and regional levels to tackle multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary challenges.
   b. Pooling resources such as staffing, funding, technology and services to work on issues such as data, digital cooperation and pensions that no single organization can or should be alone in addressing.
   c. Developing flexible business practices to attract the necessary expertise and develop strong partnerships outside the UN system, including with the private sector.

62. The ensuing discussion was structured around the five drivers of transformation.

Innovation, data, and communications

63. The Chair of the Task Force on the Future of the UN Workforce, Ms. Catherine Pollard, highlighted that the Task Force had, since its establishment, arranged its work along three main streams that align very closely with the framing of the discussion on the Common Agenda: reviewing the current contractual modalities of UN system organizations and preparing broad proposals based on this analysis (innovation); considering "new ways of working" to propose elements to foster an enabling culture and a positive employee experience from multiple perspectives, including leadership, people management, flexible work arrangements, transparency and dialogue (work culture); and, developing pilot initiatives that leverage the digitized work environment (digitalization and data).

64. The Chair of the Task Force drew the Committee´s attention to the proposed Flexible Working Model Policy. As many organizations are currently in the process of revising their flexible work policies, embedding the lessons learned from the pandemic and strategizing about future working modalities, the Model Policy was considered as very timely and enabling further exchange among organizations.

65. The Model Policy is based on a people-centred approach that takes into account gender parity, diversity and inclusion; fairness and transparency in decision-making; resourcing and support to staff and managers; flexibility for field contexts; and ecological responsibility. This framework speaks to innovating the workplace and the ways we work within the UN system organizations – promoting a shift in discussions, practices and mindsets with a focus on enabling greater agility and reducing bureaucracy.

66. The review of contractual modalities was characterized as an endeavour with a long-term perspective. The Task Force would continue to do its due diligence in this area and would engage and consult with the key stakeholders, including the ICSC, the Pension Fund, and the Staff Federations, before concrete proposals may be developed.

67. Stressing how innovation was embedded in the work of the Task Force, the HLCM Vice-Chair noted that the Committee was ready to leverage the opportunity of the Common Agenda framework to push ahead in innovating the way we work with increased momentum.

68. The Vice-Chair also emphasized how reliable and readily available data should underpin management decisions and substantiate advocacy and fundraising efforts. She noted that until recent years, UN system organizations used to outsource most data-related tasks to technology and information management units, however, it had become increasingly apparent that this is a skill that needs to be embedded across all teams and functions.

69. The Human Resources Network Co-Chair and co-lead of Workstream 2 of the Task Force on the Future of the UN Workforce, Ms. Marta Helena Lopez, presented ongoing initiatives aimed to ensure that the necessary data-related skills are built across functions and organizations. The Secretary-General's Data Strategy informed these initiatives, which included the introduction in the UN Secretariat of 24 new generic job profiles on data analysis, data science and data engineering, covering all categories and levels of staff. Collaboration with the Human Resources Network ensured that these generic profiles would be available to other organizations and would serve as a basis for ongoing discussions on joint rosters and resource pools. The Co-Chair highlighted that the demand for data-related skills was likely not to be met by creating additional posts, but that joint work needed to be done to develop such skills within the existing workforce.

70. In the ensuing discussion, participants welcomed the input received from the Task Force. The need to ensure agility and flexibility in organizations in a broad sense was highlighted, including not only contractual arrangements but also aspects such as work processes, workplace culture and inter-agency cost-sharing arrangements. The need for close dialogue with the Pension Fund was stressed by many.

71. A large part of the discussion centred around to the proposed Flexible Working Model Policy. A common approach was welcomed by participants, while stressing that implementation would need to take into consideration the programmatic needs of individual organizations. The challenge to ensure equity between field and headquarters duty stations was highlighted. The strong link between leadership and new working modalities was pointed out, as was the expected benefits of enhanced flexible working arrangements for gender parity efforts.

72. Members suggested to build on the experience of remote working throughout 2020 and conduct more systematic efforts to measure productivity and performance. Several participants also highlighted that the phrase "flexible working modalities" may be misleading as these arrangements are currently the norm, and hence a different name should be chosen for the Model Policy.

73. Staff Federations supported the Flexible Working Model Policy in general. They suggested that provisions for job-sharing be applied across staff categories, and conveyed their perspective on the responsibility of employers to ensure proper working environments for staff when working remotely. Lastly, they stressed that data privacy and data security are areas of concern and importance to staff.

74. In reflecting on the discussion, the Chair of the Task Force confirmed that the model policy should be implemented by organizations based on individual needs. She suggested that the Task Force refine the Model Policy based on the comments and share an updated version with HLCM for virtual endorsement.

The High-Level Committee on Management:

75. *Welcomed the proposed Flexible Working Model Policy and requested the Task Force to refine it based on input received during the discussion, and share the updated Model Policy with HLCM members for virtual endorsement.*

76. *Agreed to continue its active contribution to the implementation of the Secretary-General's Data Strategy, through the ongoing work on common job profiles for data-related jobs, the compilation and expansion of data-related training initiatives, and the timely and comprehensive implementation of the Data Cube roadmap.*

Digital transformation

77. The HLCM Vice-Chair noted how, within the context of the pandemic, UN system organizations had adapted to incorporate new digital tools almost overnight. This paradigm shift brought new opportunities, but also some challenges. Among the latter was how to balance ICT and legacy investments with an increasingly dynamic working environment and innovative technological landscape. The need for a new approach for expanding connectivity across existing systems that is "future-proof" enough to be considered both technically and financially sustainable was crucial for HLCM to consider.

78. The co-lead of Workstream 3 of the Task Force on the Future of the UN Workforce, Mr Hans Baritt, provided the Committee with an update on several pilot projects and initiatives that had demonstrated the potential offered by digitalization processes, and that HLCM could leverage at the inter-agency level.

79. Workstream 3 focused on identifying solutions that can scale across multiple organizations to achieve cost savings and efficiencies across common operational areas. This scouting process benefited from the input of various sources inside and outside the UN system and entailed the crowdsourcing of ideas, an evaluation of on-going pilots and seeking suggestions from key business communities.

80. The Committee learned of progress made to introduce Jambo, a directory application used to create a combined global directory of UN system telephone contacts. Further updates were shared on projects centered on other technologies.

81. A notable innovation within the portfolio of Workstream 3 was the UN Digital Identity (ID) project, presented to the Committee as a means to address data fragmentation and duplicative processes within the UN system, introduce inter-operability, scalability, and verifiability to simplify and secure the exchange of data between organizations.

82. The project currently has two components, namely identity federation and a blockchain wallet. Identity federation, the process of delegating an individual's or entity's authentication responsibility to a trusted external party, was presented as the technical means necessary for scaling of a Digital ID initiative. As a use case for blockchain technology, a Digital ID also allows for the exchange of human resources data between agencies, for example supporting processes relating to transfers, onboarding to pension, and validation of security compliance records. In pursuing this project further, it would be necessary to adopt a cross-functional approach in the design and scaling of this system to incorporate future use cases.

83. Currently in its pilot phase, this UN Digital ID project has benefited from the active participation of the World Food Programme (WFP), UNHCR, United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) and UNDSS. The Committee also learned that UNDP has developed a plan to federate digital IDs managed by other trusted entities.

84. It was underlined that moving past the pilot stage would require a project team with leadership, strong governance, and the active participation from founding organizations. A clear process for the addition of other organizations and a cost-sharing formula were also considered fundamental to ensuring continued progress.

85. Committee members gave their unanimous support to the pursuit of a UN Digital ID. The engagement of HLCM and all relevant networks was considered fundamental to the design and delivery of the optimum solution and to ensure the project is driven by business needs. The need for close coordination with the technical community was underlined in order to ensure advances made by other agencies on similar projects are leveraged to effectively address the need for data privacy, cross-platform inter-operability and scalability to incorporate emerging cross-sector requirements. Likewise, it was considered necessary to not force organizations to adopt proprietary commercial technologies from any specific vendor which has cost and technology strategy implications.

The High-Level Committee on Management:

86. *Endorsed the creation of a resourced project team to deliver the UN Digital ID. This project will focus first on developing a governance model that engages with all relevant HLCM networks.*

87. *Recommended an expanded use of the Jambo telephone app to other UN system's organizations, in consultation with the Digital and Technology Network (DTN), with the aim to make it the standard for a common directory of telephone numbers and email addresses across the UN system.*

Work Culture

88. The HLCM Vice-Chair introduced the last segment of this discussion, "work culture", stressing that change management and behavioural change are elements that are addressed too often only after work on the structural and policy topics. Successful transformations require culture- and behaviour-related angles to be actively considered and integrated in all management processes. This was critical to achieve a conducive workplace culture in a future United Nations system that fosters diversity, respect and inclusiveness.

89. The co-lead of Workstream 2 of the Task Force on the Future of the UN Workforce and Co-Chair of the Humans Resources Network, Ms. Catty Bennet Sattler, highlighted that what has emerged from the experience of recent years is that work culture is more effectively adjusted by nudging key behaviours than by launching large scale change programme.

90. United by the highest standards of the international civil service and the Secretary-General's call for "principled and visionary UN leadership", the Task Force has identified five Senior Leadership Commitments (SLCs), that have been developed to help prepare UN leaders to steer the transition of their organizations and workforces towards the future of work. These commitments build on the UN System Leadership Framework and incorporate the lessons that have been learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

91. The pandemic has accelerated transformational change and provided the opportunity to challenge many previous assumptions about the way we work. For example, assumptions that linked productivity to a common physical space and standardized work schedules may need to be reconsidered, and principles of trust and results-based performance have never been more important.

92. The five Senior Leadership Commitments are supported by three cross-cutting principles and provide a structure for leaders to embark on a journey to embrace the future of work. Leaders need to model the behaviours they want to see in others. Upholding and embodying the five Commitments will require openness, determination, resilience, and sustained support from UN system entities to their senior leaders, especially in the form of ongoing coaching and collective reflection.

93. This new way of working will help to reinvigorate the UN system's organizational culture by shifting away from a top-down approach to inviting proactive and inclusive leadership. For those assuming leadership roles, a thorough onboarding process anchored in these Commitments and the practices and behaviours they entail will need to be developed by their respective entities.

94.   As a final element of this discussion, the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and Chair of the Secretary-General's Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations, Ms. Catherine Pollard, emphasized that racism is learned behaviour. She clarified that the Task Force would also address institutional racism, and emphasized that this transformation would take time. Going forward, the Task Force would develop a strategic action plan to build an anti-racist culture. Ms. Pollard concluded by confirming that the Task Force would continue to work with all UN system organizations, also aiming to build a repository with measures that all organizations can draw from.

The High-Level Committee on Management:

95.   *Endorsed the Senior Leadership Commitments as presented.*

96.   *Committed its full support to the work of the Secretary-General's Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations.*

97.   *Requested HLCM's Task Force on the Future of the UN Workforce to develop, as part of work-life harmony actions: (a) a new approach to a modern family definition and related HR policy revisions; and (b) UN system-wide principles to govern the "right to disconnect" for employees in all types of working environments.*

Performance and results orientation, and Strategic Foresight

98.   In concluding the session, the HLCM Vice-Chair noted that, for reasons of time, the discussion had not dived deeper into two other drivers, "performance and results orientation" and "strategic foresight".

99.   On performance and results orientation, she noted the increasing importance of connecting the input variables, among which are financial resources, with the output variables. A key initiative that speaks directly to such connection is the UN System Data Cube – which represents a powerful amplifier of the Secretary-General's messaging on transparency and accountability to stakeholders and beneficiaries, and supports the twelve commitments of Our Common Agenda.

100.   The Data Cube team is working closely with partners in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to ensure that their respective data sets are compatible. This approach makes it easier for the UN system to meet its commitments in the Grand Bargain and the Funding Compact and improves visibility to UN system contributors.

101.   The path has been paved to start disaggregated financial reporting to the CEB secretariat against Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and geographical location by 2022. This would mean that the UN system would have, for the first time, a comprehensive view of what is being delivered, in support of a specific SDG in a specific location, further broken down by type of intervention (normative, development, humanitarian or peace).

102.   Beyond the existing six data standards, the project is currently working with IATI and OECD on defining an expanded minimum data set with the aim to identify additional variables, such as a Gender Marker and the OECD-DAC sectors, to meet the high demand for data for decision-making, foresight and measuring impact.

103. With respect to strategic foresight, work to support this driver would be conducted mostly through the newly established HLCM Risk Management Forum. The Forum will serve as a multidisciplinary UN system-wide advisory body which will aim to produce guidance and common methodologies.

104. The Forum will constitute a key element in ensuring effective integration and prevention of risk, supporting the UN system in its aim to integrate risk management in cross-functional deliberations, and ensure that the UN system "will be prepared", as stated by the declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

The High-Level Committee on Management:

105. *Agreed to distil the key elements of its discussion as the building blocks of a "Next Generation United Nations: a contribution by HLCM to advance the United Nations Common Agenda", for consideration by CEB.*

V. Any other business

A. Dates and venue of the next session

106. The forty-second HLCM session will be held on 11-12 October 2021, at a location to be determined.

Annex I

List of participants

HLCM Vice-Chair: Kelly T. Clements (Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees)

HLCM Secretary: Remo Lalli (CEB secretariat)

CEB Secretary: Simona Petrova (CEB secretariat)

Organization	Participant
United Nations	
Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance	Catherine Pollard
Office of Internal Oversight Services	Fatoumata Ndiaye
Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Jens Wandel
	Volker Türk
	Arnab Roy
Department of Safety and Security	Gilles Michaud
Office of Human Resources	Martha Helena Lopez
	Therese Fitzpatrick
Department of Operational Support	Lisa Buttenheim
Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate	Jane Connors
Office of Information and Communications Technology	Patrick Carey
Office of Legal Affairs	Jay Pozenel
Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	Igor Shpiniov
International Labour Organization	André Bogui
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Mario Lubetkin
	Greet De Leeuw
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Nick Jeffreys
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	Tim Martineau
	Alison Holmes
International Civil Aviation Organization	Arun Mishra
	Kamini Balram
	Fabio Buonomo

World Health Organization	Raul Thomas
	Françoise Nocquet
	Roberto Balsamo
	Bernardo Mariano
	Aiysha Malik
Universal Postal Union	Pascal Clivaz
International Organization for Migration	Laura Thompson
	Tamara Keating
International Telecommunication Union	Anders Norsker
	Diego Ruiz
International Maritime Organization	Arsenio Dominguez
	Richard Greenwood
World Intellectual Property Organization	Andrew Staines
	Chitra Narayanaswamy
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Guoqi Wu
	Rima Alcadi
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Cecilia Ugaz Estrada
	Okusitina Bulavakarua
World Tourism Organization	Zoritsa Urosevic
International Atomic Energy Agency	Tristan Bauswein
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Adnan Issa
United Nations Development Programme	Angelique M. Crumbly
	Darshak Shah
	David Bearfield
United Nations Environment Programme	Sonja Leighton-Kone
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Kelly T. Clements
	Catty Bennet Sattler
	Hans Baritt
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Leni Stenseth
United Nations Children's Fund	Hannan Sulieman
	Geetanjali Narayan

United Nations Population Fund	Ib Petersen
	Andrew Saberton
	Josephine Mbithi
	Naquib Noory
	Eva Bolkart
World Food Programme	Manoj Juneja
	Sergio Arena
	Sara Adam
	Joyce Luma
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/United Nations Office at Vienna	Dennis Thatchaichawalit
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)	Haris Pajtic
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)	Anita Bhatia
	Katja Pehrman
	Prasun Chakraborty
	Paul Ohanlon
United Nations Office for Project Services	Victoria Campbell
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	Ovais Sarmad
	Daniele Violetti
International Monetary Fund	Brian Christensen
	Trevor Ncala
World Bank	Jodi T. Glasow
	Anne-Marie Burns
	Ferran Perez Ribo

Other representatives:

United Nations System Staff College	Jafar Javan
United Nations Volunteers	Toily Kurbanov
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	Patrick Grenard
International Criminal Court	Ivan Alippi
Development Coordination Office	Kamran Baig
	Bakhodir Burkhanov
International Civil Service Commission	Aldo Mantovani
	Regina Pawlik

Federation of International Civil Servants Associations	Tanya Quinn-Maguire
	Cosimo Melpignano
Coordinating Committee for International Staff Associations and Unions of the United Nations System	Guy Avognon
	Patricia Nemeth
United Nations International Civil Servants Federation	Mark Polane
	Vesna Markovic Dasovic
Young United Nations Network	Kamila Karimova
	Simon Bettighofer
	Antoine-Olivier Raymond
UN Data Cube	Henriette Keijzers

Annex II

Checklist of documents

	Title/description	Summary sheet	Document symbol
	Revised Provisional Agenda		CEB/2021/HLCM/1/Rev.1
1	Manual for Investigations of SH Complaints	Yes	CEB/2021/HLCM/3
2	Terms of Reference for the OSH Forum, including proposed Workplan		CEB/2021/HLCM/4/Rev.1
	Terms of Reference for the HLCM Risk Management Forum	Yes	CEB/2021/HLCM/5
	Guidance Note - Embedding Risk Management *(for reference only)*		CEB/2020/HLCM/4
3	Progress Report of the CEB Task Force on the Future of the United Nations System Workforce		CEB/2021/HLCM/6
	UN System Model Policy on Flexible Working Arrangements	Yes	CEB/2021/HLCM/6/Add.1
	Senior Leadership Commitments		CEB/2021/HLCM/6/Add.2/Rev.1
	Concept Note on UN Digital ID		CEB/2021/HLCM/6/Add.3
	UN-EOSG: Our Common Agenda		n.a.
	Discussion Paper by UNISERV - The case for a unified personnel structure		n.a.
	Discussion Paper from FICSA – Enabling Technologies		n.a.

Annex III

United Nations System	**12 March 2021**

CEB
Chief Executives Board
for Coordination

High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM)

41st Session, 25-26 March 2021

Virtual

<u>Senior Leadership Commitments</u>
for the Future of Work in the United Nations System

Table of Contents

Introduction

United by the highest standards of the international civil service and the UN Secretary-General's call for 'principled and visionary UN leadership,' the CEB Task Force on the Future of the United Nations System Workforce has identified five critical Senior Leadership Commitments (SLCs) that have been developed to help prepare UN leaders to steer the transition of their organizations and workforce towards the future of work. These commitments build on the UN System Leadership Framework and incorporate the lessons that have been learned from the COVID-19 crisis as well as the challenges that need to be addressed by entities.

The UN System Leadership Framework set out nine defining characteristics of UN leadership: It is *norm-based*, *principled, accountable, inclusive, multidimensional, transformational, collaborative, self-applied, pragmatic and action-oriented.* While these remain unchanged, the pandemic has accelerated transformational change and provided the opportunity to challenge many previous assumptions about the way we work. Assumptions that linked productivity to a common physical space and standardized work schedules are no longer valid, and principles of trust and results-based performance have never been more important. In this new space, leadership will be defined by the experience individual leaders can provide.

The five Senior Leadership Commitments (SLCs) are supported by three crosscutting Principles and provide a structure for leaders to embark on a journey to embrace the future of work. Leaders need to model the behaviours they want to see in others. The SLCs are designed for all senior leaders across the UN system.

Upholding and embodying all of these five Commitments will require openness, determination, resilience, and sustained support from UN entities to their senior leaders, especially in the forms of ongoing coaching and collective reflection. This new way of working will help to reinvigorate our organizational culture by shifting away from a top-down approach to inviting pro-active and inclusive leadership. For those assuming leadership roles, a thorough onboarding process anchored in these Commitments and the practices and behaviours they entail will need to be developed by their respective entities.

There are several accountability mechanisms that organizations could consider to promote the implementation of these Commitments. An illustrative list of suggestions is provided below:

- Ensure regular dialogue and reflections in which these Commitments and Principles and their concrete application are discussed and reflected upon.
- Encourage senior leader to share and discuss the Commitments with their teams in order to identify together achievements, challenges or ways how these can be best put into practice.
- Integrate the Commitments and Principles into entity-specific competency frameworks, performance appraisals and other relevant frameworks.
- Ensure personnel in leadership positions review and adopt publicly (in front of their teams) the Commitments and Principles.

The Senior Leadership Commitments

Five commitments designed for leaders who pledge to uphold them across the UN System to enable excellence everywhere.

❶ **People first:** Fostering employee engagement and inclusion by putting people first.

❷ **Grow:** Recognizing learning and development as a fundamental and continuous necessity.

❸ **Connect:** Embracing new leadership and organizational models that encourage greater collaboration.

❹ **Trust:** Cultivating a culture of authenticity, participation and transparency.

❺ **Evolve:** Nurturing the passion and change needed for excellence.

Crosscutting Principles

These principles provide the underlying foundation for the Senior Leadership Commitments and should be incorporated into their operationalization.

1   **Leveraging technology** to enable new and more efficient ways of working.

2   **Embracing a truly 'One UN'** spirit that goes beyond each organization and genuinely places common objectives first.

3   **Being ecologically conscious** of how we work and act to ensure the lightest possible environmental footprint in everything we do.

1st commitment:

People first

_____

Fostering employee engagement and inclusion by putting people first.

Striving for superior service delivery by providing an environment for employees to thrive, no matter where they serve. Offering the best possible employee experience to sustain and strengthen engagement and to ensure the people we serve are at the forefront of our work.

As a Senior Leader, I commit to:

- **Shape an inclusion culture:** Support and treat all employees respectfully, fairly and equitably, equipping colleagues to thrive through inclusion, engagement, openness, collaboration and innovation, so that people feel empowered and valued to contribute to an organizational culture that is participatory, where everyone can flourish and strive for excellence in an environment free from abuse of authority, harassment, including sexual harassment, and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **Optimize the employee experience:** Ensure that every aspect of the current model works harmoniously to deliver the best possible experience for employees. It is important to recognize that by changing what doesn't work, we can adapt and drive employee engagement.
- **Harness continuous improvement**: Consciously investing in and recognizing the need to develop all employees and fostering a productive, fulfilling and purposeful workplace where everyone may thrive.
- **Align people and purpose:** Continuously seeking alignment of organizational and individual purpose, so that employees may honour their calling within an authentic and people-centric context, where an entity's values are integrated into every aspect of their organization.

Ideas for the journey – or examples of concrete actions:

- <u>Moments that matter:</u> I apply a flexible mindset to support employees when faced with difficult moments in their lives, and develop internal communication initiatives with managerial teams to encourage a similar management style.
- <u>Being a champion:</u> I advocate for improved recruitment experiences, better onboarding, and for providing managers and employees with the tools and environment that enable them to deliver their best and where development is seen as critical for performance.
- <u>Enabling flexibility</u>: I endeavour to provide employees with the right tools and a supportive environment that enables them to deliver their best.
- <u>Inclusion</u>: I make myself available to meet with individuals or various groups that represent the broad diversity of the global workforce with an open mindset that welcomes the perspective of all, especially the more invisible segments of the workforce and endeavour to "listen to understand" rather than "listen to respond".
- <u>Be an advocate</u>: I actively advocate for all employees' rights, especially in regards to gender equality, freedom from sexual harassment, advancing the concerns of marginalized groups and being particularly mindful of women, persons with disability, minorities and LGBTIQ+ employees who may be more likely to experience discrimination in certain duty stations.
- <u>Meetings with intentionality</u>: I structure and conduct meetings that are welcoming of everybody's participation, irrespective of their communication styles

2nd commitment:

Grow

_____

Recognizing learning and development as a fundamental and continuous necessity.

In an increasingly complex world, the ability to learn and adapt is crucial. Our understanding of learning should therefore extend beyond individual educational and training activities and consider growth and development as an essential and ongoing part of our work. Continuous learning opportunities are necessary both to be attractive to employees and to allow our workforce to adapt effectively to rapidly changing contexts and needs.

As a Senior Leader, I commit to:

- **Promote and facilitate learning:** Enable and encourage personnel to take advantage of meaningful learning opportunities, either to build on existing skills or to develop new ones. Ensure that learning needs are regularly identified and addressed.
- **Enable personal growth and career pathing:** Provide employees with the opportunity to discuss professional development or career aspirations within the UN system and support them in exploring opportunities in a versatile and flexible way.
- **Be open for different learning approaches:** Give employees the freedom and opportunity to identify and use the learning format best suited to their specific goals and needs either by using learning formats that are already widely used or by exploring new approaches provided the costs can be justified.

Ideas for the journey – or examples of concrete actions:

- Capacity-build: I actively support and encourage my team and peers to develop their capacity for creativity and change through on-the-job experiences and by accessing the wealth of on-line learning content that is readily available both within the UN context and beyond.
- Learning from work: I invite the practice of reflection within my team, considering calculated risks and lessons learned. We develop a method to make this approach part of how we work.
- Learning 'on-the-job': I recognize that as most learning actually takes place while we are working, I advocate for supporting teams with job aids to work on concrete task. For instance, this might include engagement with broader learning opportunities e.g. establish communities of practice; encourage the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) etc.
- Learning from others: I invite colleagues or employees from another department/entity to shadow me and my senior management team for a period of time to provide candid feedback regarding opportunities for improvement. I also encourage participation in formal and informal mentoring and coaching initiatives for employees' growth and development. I am open to learn from others, irrespective of their seniority.

3rd commitment:

Connect

_____

Embracing new leadership and organizational models that encourage greater collaboration.

Traditional organizational structures with a hierarchical command and control structure are not well-suited to meet the challenges of new ways of working. High-performing organizations today operate as a network of interconnected, empowered teams that are more responsive and effective in meeting challenges. Inviting new and collaborative ways of working allows us to leave siloed thinking behind and operate more freely by removing barriers, flattening structures, and engaging in open dialogue.

As a Senior Leader, I commit to:

- **Simplify processes and flatten organizational structures:** Foster autonomy and empowerment so that responsibility and decision-making authority are shared more widely to strengthen accountability across the organization, shorten approval processes and create more efficient administrative procedures.
- **Strengthen collaboration and teamwork across boundaries:** Promote the formation of cross-functional teams that are appropriately resourced and trusted to work effectively and flexibly. Encourage and enable teams to explore more autonomous ways of working and give them the information and decision-making power they need to do so. Enable personnel to engage in projects and initiatives that may extend beyond their functional areas.
- **Define management from a facilitating and supporting perspective:** Adapt the role of managers from a command and control function to an enabling and guiding one - coaching, connecting and helping teams to reach their full potential. Ensure that people in leadership roles have the necessary skills and if not, have the opportunity to develop them.

Ideas for the journey – or examples of concrete actions:

- <u>Why not flexibility?</u>: I begin from this perspective when approached by supervisees who need more flexible working arrangements. I set an example by publicly availing myself of flexible work arrangements regularly and encourage my team to do the same.
- <u>Enhance autonomy</u>: I enhance autonomy within all teams that I supervise by setting clear performance output expectations, trusting lead personnel to deliver and providing necessary support. I encourage teams to explore more autonomous ways of working that leverage self-management principles.
- <u>Supportive leadership</u>: I embark on a personal journey to develop my own leadership repertoire so that I model a supportive leadership style as my default set of behaviours – always bearing in mind that my actions are crucial for a positive employee experience.
- <u>Break down the silos</u>: I support the premise that personnel can join and contribute to various teams, groups, or networks beyond their job description, unit, or organization.
- <u>Unleash the potential of our workforce</u>: I encourage creativity and invite finding ways to connect people and their skills with support needs or opportunities for collaboration within my entity and across the UN system.

4th commitment:

Trust
_____

Cultivating a culture of authenticity, participation, and transparency.

In order for the United Nations to honour its values, all employees should expect a respectful, open and honest workplace. As the UN largely operates from a paradigm of complex rules and regulations, this context impedes rather than perpetuates trust. Leaders must be mindful of that and transform the workplace into an environment where all employees can benefit from a culture of trust.

As a Senior Leader, I commit to:

- **Foster psychological safety:** Prioritize the critical dimension of psychological safety by nurturing a healthy culture where employees feel safe to be themselves and can speak their minds and where prompt action is taken in instances of misconduct, including sexual misconduct. Recognize that employees' psychological safety and mental health are fundamentally important to their well-being and performance.
- **Enable a positive culture:** Work on self-awareness and growth to build trusting and authentic relationships and team dynamics. Trust and enable employees to manage their own life and work commitments.
- **Break down barriers that impede trust:** Work on reducing and simplifying rules, where they are not needed to shape an organizational culture where employees are trusted, free to be resourceful and not impeded by bureaucracy.
- **Ensure meaningful dialogue and transparency:** Widely share information to ensure transparency and prevent the 'knowledge is power' approach. Proactively invite feedback and seek opinions from others.

Ideas for the journey – or examples of concrete actions:

- Information sharing: I encourage meaningful two-way dialogue that invites lively discussion for anyone to join in, such as video streaming a meeting without any agenda other than to share ideas, or to pilot and experiment on new initiatives.
- Champion authenticity and share experiences: I can blog, write or be interviewed for internal communication platforms and help normalize and standardize an open and authentic approach.
- Action for trust: I advocate for trust to be discussed by senior managers in my organization as part of having broader reflections and action plans at a team level. I regularly engage in open discussions with my team in order to build trust.
- Allow employees to say "No": I personally empower employees at all levels to decline specific tasks when they have reasonable grounds, without fear of retaliation.
- Keep talking about how we work together: I promote trusting and constructive exchanges between supervisors and supervisees and among teams to explore what is going well and what could be improved.

5th commitment:

Evolve

_____

Nurturing the passion and change needed for excellence.

Given the complexity and fast-moving dynamics of today's challenges, the UN must be agile and able to adapt quickly to fulfil its vital role and diverse mandates. This requires vision, courage and determination, as well as innovative strength and the openness to explore new ways of working.

As a Senior Leader, I commit to:

- **Augment my entity's capacity for innovation:** Normalize the understanding that innovation is something that everyone is capable of. Empower and support personnel to experiment and develop ideas. Provide time, space and (where possible) funding to reflect, think critically and test new approaches to work and deliver.
- **Foster a culture of creativity, sharing experiences and learning from failure:** Champion calculated risk-taking, create a culture of piloting and testing, allow for mistakes and share personal learning experiences related to risks, mistakes or lessons learned. Rethink 'failure' as part of human nature and opportunities to learn, grow and develop.
- **Amplify and sustain initiatives driving change:** Enable employees to be agents for change, whether as part of smaller internal teams or larger systemwide networks. Contribute the resources needed to build sustainable initiatives.
- **Embrace organizational change as an ongoing opportunity:** Encourage the exploration of new ways of working and delivering, and create the necessary space if initiatives require time to function well. Promote the use of new methods and approaches, such as crowdsourcing ideas and feedback from personnel, trying out new partnerships with actors outside the UN system, or rapid prototyping to rapidly identify opportunities for improvement.

Ideas for the journey - or examples of concrete actions:

- Experimentation: I personally embark on experiments to enhance my capacity and to reflect and share my frustrations and insights in this regard. I support my team to include, as a minimum, one innovative activity/experiment in their performance plans for coming years.
- Freedom to innovate: I provide space to personnel to identify new approaches for how we work and deliver and solutions to overcome obstacles in order to improve workflows and organizational performance.
- Reflection spaces: I introduce regular events where we reflect on what is working well and not so well with the team – using methodologies such as action learning sets or peer learning. We 'stop, pause, reflect' as part of how we work.
- Collaborate and act on solutions: I use suitable formats to obtain collective views and feedback (either in-person, open door policy, or through brief online anonymous surveys). Most importantly, I ensure that the inputs gathered are analyzed transparently and put to good use.

Crosscutting principles

1st principle:

Leveraging technology
_____

Leveraging technology to enable new and more efficient ways of working.

Digital technologies are shaping our world and continue to transform the way we connect, communicate and collaborate. UN senior leaders encourage open communication by enabling robust data to be shared transparently wherever it is needed and to connect people and skills in new and innovative ways. Reinvigorating how we work needs cultural, behavioural and technological advancements to make this new era of collaboration beyond organizational boundaries a reality. These changes require systems thinking and agile mindsets where sharing information and decision-making power are actively encouraged to enable teams to act quickly and employees are given equitable learning opportunities, so nobody is left behind.

2nd principle:

Embracing a truly 'One UN'
_____

Embracing a truly 'One UN' spirit that goes beyond each organization
and genuinely places common objectives first.

Recognizing the importance of the unique experience and resources that the UN system brings to bear on global issues, senior leaders strive to enhance service delivery that requires a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better performing United Nations. One that operates holistically and is supported by a common management, programming and monitoring framework and enables cohesion across the UN System. By design, delivering as one enables every senior leader to achieve excellence across our global operations.

3rd principle:

Being ecologically conscious
_____

Being ecologically conscious of how we work and act and
ensuring the lightest possible environmental footprint in everything we do.

As the world standard-bearer, the UN system must lead by its own environmental standards that are set out for the world to follow. Championing an eco-conscious mindset is a fundamental principle that needs to be given far greater prominence in every entity, to encourage a lighter and greener environmental footprint across our entire operations. Virtual conferences reduce the need for face-to-face interactions and help to reduce carbon footprints. Our collective adaptation to travel restrictions shows that an obvious place to increase the 'greening' of the UN system's operations is around the reduction of official travel. Increased use of technology also represents a hidden environmental cost, which must also be factored into how we operate now and in the future.

Ensuring that supply chains, procurement and partnerships are as clean as possible, while enabling personnel to make green choices at their workplace and home offices represents a vital change that should become commonplace in every entity. There is much to be done in championing responsible environmental stewardship everywhere we serve.

Entities must strive to ensure that sustainability and earth-friendly measures are incorporated into all facets of our operations, which is aligned with the United Nations objective for 2021 to build a global coalition for carbon neutrality. Just as we call upon the World's Governments and companies to act, tackling climate change must also be at the heart of everything we do internally throughout our global workforce, so that everyone actively has a stake in the 'state of our planet'.

Support for the leadership journey

Ideas for senior leaders to consider as they implement the Senior Leadership Commitments in their respective organizations.

The Senior Leadership Commitments (SLCs) are grounded in the UN System Leadership Framework, which frame the SLCs. They represent the "glue" between all of the touchstone documents that govern and shape leadership within the UN System. The SLCs connect to the objectives and sentiment expressed in both the Charter of the United Nations as well as the 10 Principles of the UN Compact. They should be treated as a guide for the future of work for all senior leaders; a guide for what is expected from those who lead the entities of the United Nations in the 21st century.

The Commitments and Principles are not mutually exclusive; they do not replace any individual organizational values, competencies or other organizational frameworks, but instead complement what individual UN entities have identified as important to their respective organizational goals.

In considering how to approach and implement the SLCs and reflect on what support or tools you may need to integrate the Commitments and Principles into your responsibilities as a leader, the following areas of work particularly warrant attention:

Leaders' Support | Invest in sustained support to senior leaders who in turn are responsible for adopting and implementing the SLCs. Leading others can be a lonely responsibility, and opportunities for honest exchange, feedback and reflection are not always easy to find. Yet leaders especially should be given a space to learn and grow, as they bear great responsibility as well as the expectation of leading by example to others. Organizations should therefore consider providing the following types of support thoughout:

(i) Regular sustained coaching, not just during crisis or on an ad-hoc basis;

(ii) Leadership programmes and/or learning opportunities focused on applying Commitments (e.g. how to build trust; how to think through increasing collaboration, etc.) and Principles (e.g. how to better leverage technology or how to integrate ecocologically reponsible thinking into operations);

(iii) Take care to notice and respond effectively to the impact on personnel of poor workplace practices, general work overload, all forms of misconduct especially sexual misconduct, and other significant stressors particularly in field contexts. De-stigmatize mental health issues and foster a supportive environment. Make use of the [UN mental health strategy](#) which provides practical guidance on how to support oneself and others;

(iv) Create appropriate time and space to informal opportunities to exchange ideas and learning, such as through peer-to-peer networks or facilitated dialogue sessions;

(v) Put in place feedback mechanisms (e.g. 180, 360 degree feedback tools; standing agenda item to solicit feedback during meetings; virtual suggestion boxes; etc.) and offer learning to senior leaders on how to provide constructive feedback. The goal is to create a shift in mindset and create a culture of that sees feedback as a value to improve, not a fear or criticism.

Champion Networks | Picking up on the benefit of peer-to-peer networks for senior leaders, networks of like-minded leaders who champion the principles and commitments laid out in the SLCs can be a powerful catalyst for change. They serve both as a way to exchange good practice, as a community to reflect and discuss what works and doesn't and as a motivator for others to get involved.

But leaders should also leverage the existing networks to test ideas and seek input. The UN system has benefited from numerous networks, and can learn from their experiences. There are networks that are focused on specific communities of practice, such as innovation (UN Innovation Network), human resources (HR network) or change management (UNSSC's UN Lab for Organizational Change & Knowledge). Then there are networks that were

started to drive change, address existing shortcomings and promote new ways of working. This includes self-organized and co-created networks at the system-wide level, such as Young UN: Agents for Change or the Alliance to Reimagine the UN Together, and at the organisational level initiatives such as #New Work.

More work needs to be done to ensure perspectives from the various countries/regions where the UN works are better represented. The networks that are more widely used at country-level or in the region should be augmented. Alternatively, new support mechanisms should be put in place where existing networks can be leveraged to better support colleagues away from HQ; and finally more awareness and urgency needs to be created to strengthen the liaison between HQ and coutries/region to routinely include the field perspective in HQ-led initiatives.

Commitment to Engagement and Open Communication | As with any organizational or behaviour shift, it cannot happen in isolation and requires exchange, dialogue and commitment to engaging with each other. Clear, honest and open communication is the foundation for all Commitments. Organizations are invited to frame the SLCs in language that works best for their respective entity. Senior leaders are strongly encouraged to engage their colleagues and teams in conversation around how to approach and implement these Commitments and to ensure an open feedback loop.

Accountability | It is up to the discretion of each UN entity on how to adopt the SLCs and hold each other to account in living and modelling the behaviours and actions. In the context of the future of work and how the global pandemic has accelerated the shift we have experienced in our work over the past year, the invitation is to look for alternative approaches to measuring accountability. Rather than starting with the assumption that accountability needs to be 'controlled' and 'monitored', leaders should consider to focus inwardly first and identify their own work. Secondly, accountability will be more successful, if expectations are communicated clearly, so colleagues understand what it is they are supposed to do and expect from others. Lastly, psychological safety and trust are critical for accountability to be effective. This is what would allow for honest conversations and dialogue around what works or doesn't and why work priorities may need to shift. Leaders should seek out feedback all the time, from colleagues at all levels, using different platforms and forums, so it becomes a habit. And in so doing, they role model the right behaviour.

There are numerous options and tools available that could be used, such as the following:

(i) Storytelling is an impactful way to demonstrate and showcase learning. It can create new cultural habits and patterns.

(ii) Using 180 or 360 feedback tools could be a helpful way to provide feedback, as long as the process is divorced from performance reviews and instead framed as a developmental tool.

(iii) Organizational culture assessment tools or pulse checks can be used to understand personnel's perception on leadership behaviours and the current levels of trust. Assessments can serve as a useful data-set to explain and move actions forward and highlight opportunities and gaps.

(iv) Integrating and aligning SLCs into existing performance management systems and compacts in form of learning and growth goals (not in a punitive manner), to emphasize the importance of checking in on one's own understanding and awareness.(v) Introducing elements of showcasing one's progress with one another. Nudging each other to strengthen transparency, comparability, sharing lessons learned, and capacity within the office.