

## UNICEF's Immediate Measures in Response to the Independent Task Force (ITF) Recommendations June 2019

The ITF Report on Workplace Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority, commissioned by our Executive Director last year, is an important contribution to our efforts to make UNICEF the best possible workplace in the interests of the children we serve and in the interest of all of us working for children.

The report findings show how much more needs to be done to move the organization to where we want it to be. Its findings strengthen our resolve to improve the culture at UNICEF and to redouble our efforts to take urgent action to reaffirm and exemplify our core values of care, respect, integrity, transparency and accountability.

The ED takes the findings of the Independent Task Force very seriously and sees these as defining times for UNICEF. The time is now for *reaffirming the centrality of our core values in everything that we do and we count on every staff member to be part of this fundamental culture improvement process.*

The ED and UNICEF's management hears the concerns of staff raised through the ITF report, and, also through the global staff surveys and other sources of feedback. We hear you, and we will act.

We understand that changing the culture of an organization takes time. But we must start now and we must be bold. We are committed to accelerating efforts already underway and working with you to identify additional initiatives. We also commit to the following new actions that respond to the recommendations in a concrete and immediate way.

The below actions are only the beginning. We are asking all staff, interns, and consultants for their ideas and suggestions for improving UNICEF's organizational culture. We need to maintain an open dialogue and sharing of ideas and perspectives across the organization. Please use the email [orgculture@unicef.org](mailto:orgculture@unicef.org) to share your ideas. We need to keep hearing from you about what is working, and not working, as we move ahead with acting upon the ITF and other recommendations.

Some of the immediate measures we commit to undertake include, but are not limited to the following:

### 1. Strengthen the Investigation Function

- a) **Introduce lay panel investigations** to complement the capacity of OIAI investigators. Drawing from the experience at the United Nations Secretariat and the provisions of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on the "Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority" (ST/SGB/2008/5), the lay panels would be composed of individuals, internal and external to UNICEF, who have undergone professional training on prohibited conduct investigations by OIAI or the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Formal reports of possible prohibited conduct would be made in line with the procedures for reporting misconduct and would be first independently assessed by OIAI. Lay panels would not normally conduct investigations in relation to complex cases. If OIAI decides to refer a report of possible prohibited conduct for investigation by a lay panel, OIAI would notify the affected individual. The outcome of the lay panel investigations would go through the UNICEF disciplinary process following completion of the investigation. OIAI will be informed of the outcome of the matter. OIAI will provide guidance to the panel as appropriate and needed. Lay panel investigations will be completely confidential. Affected individuals and alleged

offenders may, at the end of the process, appeal improper procedure followed in the handling of formal reports of prohibited conduct pursuant to Chapter XI of the Staff Rules and Regulation.

- b) **Partially outsource investigations:** OIAI currently outsources some investigations on a limited and case by case basis. Opportunities to increase outsourcing of cases to external firms or contractors will be pursued based on a set of criteria established within OIAI.
- c) **Strengthening investigative capacity:** OIAI will increase the number of its investigators to strengthen the receipt and analysis of complaints as well as the investigation process, and the sharing of more regular communications with affected individuals and alleged offenders. Some investigators will be out-posted to “field sections”, operating under the supervision and reporting to the Chief of Investigations at Headquarters, allowing for investigators to be closer to where the majority of our staff operate; this will help improve information flow and communication with complainants, witnesses and alleged perpetrators. To maintain independence and confidentiality, the field sections will not be hosted within UNICEF offices.
- d) **Pooling investigative resources:** UNICEF will explore with other UN sister agencies the feasibility of pooling investigative resources to accelerate and improve the investigation function.

**Timeline:** Set up of the lay investigation panels will be phased. Call for contribution of experts/staff will be done by July 2019, and the first training of selected experts/staff will be completed by September 2019. Partially outsourcing investigations by 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2019. Decentralized investigative capacity in place by 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2019.

## 2. Expand UNICEF’s mediation services through dedicated mediation capacity

Mediation capacity currently exists within the UN Office of the Ombudsman but these resources are not commensurate to the need. UNICEF will therefore reinforce its mediation capacity by creating a **dedicated team of mediators** within the Office of the Ombudsman. The team will have a mandate to provide systematic informal conflict resolution options for workplace disputes not involving sexual misconduct allegations. The team will also facilitate the post disciplinary process reconciliation. The team will have diverse, decentralized and multilingual capacity.

**Timeline:** Mandate, scope, and resource requirements to be determined in collaboration with Ombudsman’s Office by July 31, 2019. Operational by Q4 2019

## 3. Reposition the Administrative Law Section as a stand-alone function delinked from the Division of Human Resources at Headquarters

In order to increase the independence of the Administrative Law function and avoid conflict of interest or perception thereof, the Administrative Law function (responsible for recommendations on disciplinary measures, requests for management evaluations, dealings with the internal justice system) will be delinked from the Division of Human Resources. Options for placement of this unit are currently being looked into.

**Timeline:** Q3 2019

## 4. Advisory Panel on Disciplinary Measures

The DED Management will be supported by a 2-3-person panel consisting of internal and external advisors that will review recommendations for disciplinary measures prepared by the Administrative Law unit and advise the DED Management in his/her final decision making. The DED Management remains accountable for imposing disciplinary measures. The advisory panel members will be announced by end-July 2019.

**Timeline:** Q3 2019

#### 5. Simplify recruitment policies and procedures, make them more transparent and increase the impartiality and fairness with which they are applied

- a) **Strengthen transparency and accountability in recruitment:** The Global Staff Association will review on a quarterly basis the recruitment reports compiled by DHR's M&E function which detail staffing trends as well as results of the spot checks of 100 recruitments per month, including corrective measures taken in cases of noncompliance with policies. Confidentiality will be protected. Communication will be increased around recruitment, including the regular publication of data on recruitment trends and all recruitments will be reported on ICON (post offer acceptance and on-boarding).
- b) **Revisit the process of recruitment of leaders and managers,** including the Global Management Team (GMT) members with the aim of increasing transparency in decision making. Intensive reference checking and interviews by supervisor/peer/supervisees and/or an interview panel with external & internal members will be used. Value based competencies will become a core element in the recruitment of all managers and leaders and in the fulfillment of their duties. All candidates for management positions will be assessed specifically for their people management skills.

**Timeline:** communicate and train HR community and hiring managers in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and 'go live' January 1, 2020.

#### 6. Accelerate the Roll Out of Matrix Management across the organization

By introducing a Matrix Management structure, UNICEF will foster cross-sectoral collaboration and multisectoral programming, in addition to empowering staff at all levels to contribute in their areas of strength and gain exposure to new and different expertise. By providing staff with dual reporting lines, they will benefit from different perspectives regarding their role, their performance and their career and be less dependent on the views of one manager only.

The Executive Director announced the introduction of matrix management in early 2019. Its implementation will be accelerated across the organization starting with:

- a) All GMT members in order to model from the top and gain experience for further roll-out
- b) Dual reporting lines for all HR staff to strengthen the function by promoting (1) greater independence and neutrality of each HR professional and (2) greater consistency in the application of policies, processes, and practices across the HR function globally, as recommended by the ITF

**Timeline:** implementation of dual reporting lines for HR and GMT to commence in Q3 2019. Matrix Management for other staff categories to be put in place in the course of 2019 to become effective for the 2020 performance cycle.

## 7. Update UNICEF's competencies framework

Update UNICEF's competency framework across four pillars: 1) Leadership, 2) Management; 3) Behavioral; and 4) Technical Knowledge and Experiences. The new framework will be integrated in all human resource processes to ensure it becomes a driver of change to:

- a) Strengthen the culture of care, respect, integrity, trust and accountability in every office, promoting inclusivity, diversity and openness.
- b) Focus on developing capacity in people management in managers, and stronger inter-personal skills of all staff.

This will be achieved through the:

- Definition of value-based competencies for all staff and providing the relevant training on the new competencies
- Prioritization of value-based leadership and management competencies for those with people management responsibilities with commensurate learning and peer support

**Timeline:** Phased implementation commencing January 2020

## 8. Reinforce accountability for results

Measures will be introduced to allow us to hold colleagues accountable, including reviewing the performance appraisal form and procedures to make it easier to determine when a colleague is not delivering and reviewing the mechanisms that support managers in the pursuit of their functions.

- a) Review of the performance management system: mandatory feedback sessions mid-year with KPIs; reinstating the second reporting officer in line with the introduction of matrix management
- b) Strengthen the HR case management function to support managers and help address disagreements over performance in a timely manner.
- c) Formalize a mentorship programme for managers (and other staff)
- d) Recognizing managers that role model values and notable managerial skills

**Timeline:** Phased implementation commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2019

## 9. Establish a new corporate email address for staff to channel general institutional concerns, ideas and suggestions around organizational culture

A dedicated corporate e-mail address - orgculture@unicef.org - will be created, succeeding the ITF's confidential e-mail, to provide staff with a channel — outside the usual line management structure — to share with the Organizational Culture Advisor concerns, ideas and suggestions on organizational culture. These will be consolidated by the Organizational Culture Advisor and brought to the attention of the relevant division/office on a regular basis, in an anonymized way, to inform ongoing processes. This e-mail must not be used to report individual case related concerns and will not replace any of the existing mechanisms to reporting misconduct allegations.

**Timeline:** Effective date of new e-mail June 20 2019

## 10. Build a state of the art Global Learning Center housed in GSSC

The Centre will prioritize the development and application of cutting edge training and learning methods and approaches, with an initial focus on people management. The emphasis will be on continuous

learning for all managers at all levels of the organization. The aim is to have every UNICEF manager participate in some form of leadership or management training by end 2020. Focus will be placed on the actual application by staff of the new skills and knowledge acquired.

The Centre will translate learning content into innovate and engaging formats, leveraging technology and best didactic practices for adult learning. It will provide a convening platform for physical and virtual learning activities.

Immediate priorities will be to develop a mechanism to support and assess whether leaders and all managers are applying the skills they have acquired in people and office management. A second priority is the design and roll-out of a comprehensive on-boarding programme for all incoming staff, to ensure greater consistency and higher standards in onboarding across different offices and to help promote a value-based organizational culture from day 1 for new hires.

**Timeline:** define scope of the Global Learning Center in support of the global learning strategy by end of 2nd quarter 2019. Identify 'pilot' innovative learning intervention that could be developed and/or scaled up through the GSSC by end Q3. Complete training of all managers by end 2020.

## 11. Strengthen, diversify, and amplify our internal communication channels

For culture change to take root, we must communicate and collaborate around the changes that are needed. A new internal communications strategy is in development that will help define the purpose of the various tools and platforms we use to communicate and share information across the organization. This strategy will also seek to ensure a more strategic approach is taken to internal communications. To this end, we will strengthen, diversify and amplify our internal communication channels so that we hear each-other's voices on an ongoing basis, through formal channels (e.g. via Staff Associations) but also informal channels (e.g. online forums, webinars). Each country/regional/HQs office will organize discussions across teams and locations using whatever modality best suits each team and location. We want you to tell us what's working in your offices and how we can scale that up and the areas where change is most needed.

The roll out of the Enterprise Content Management tools should not only allow better approaches to shared work, but also easier exchanges between colleagues across offices. Technology that will allow more interactive live engagement between staff in Town Hall meetings is being trialed as are ways to ensure that information and engagement takes place in our various working languages.

**Timeline:** Strategy in place by 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2019, with immediate rollout.

## 12. Strengthen partnership with Staff Associations at all levels as change agents

The staff association should play a critical role in transforming the workplace culture. To achieve this, all managers will be sensitized on the role of Staff Associations as partners in enabling a respectful workplace and promoting UNICEF values. This will be achieved through:

- Including staff representatives in Management Masterclass/other leadership trainings.
- Supporting implementation of the VOICE Initiative in all duty stations.

**Timeline:** 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2019.

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Let us remember that sometimes what is most needed is the smaller, day-to-day, less glamorous actions to make a real difference – such as walking around and engaging with staff about non-work issues; recognition of staff accomplishments; celebration of failures, etc. These smaller actions need to be shared, captured, and taken to scale – it is often hard to find these unless we talk to each other directly, and hear what makes a difference in our daily working lives.

We also need to reinforce accountability for results and recognize the critical role managers have to manage performance. We need measures that allow us to hold colleagues accountable including reviewing the performance appraisal form and procedures to make it easier to determine when a colleague is not delivering and review the mechanisms that support managers in the pursuit of their functions.

It should never be a trade-off between good performance OR good results for children. We must strive for both – delivering the very best for children and doing so in a way that empowers and uplifts our people. We are on a journey, like many we have taken throughout our 70-year history. But remember, we are travelling this journey together and we will succeed, because we must. Because the world's children demand and require us to be the very best UNICEF we can be.