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UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Summary

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2001/4, the present report summarizes the response of UNICEF to the recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) issued from 1 January through 31 December 2021. Of the five reports publicly issued during that period, four contained recommendations directly relevant to UNICEF. One management letter was also issued with one recommendation addressed to management. Of the total of 33 recommendations issued in the system-wide reports and the management letter, 22 were addressed to UNICEF: 17 to the UNICEF management and 5 to the Executive Board as the legislative body of UNICEF. The present report provides the UNICEF management responses to the relevant recommendations and includes an update on the implementation status of the recommendations contained in JIU reports issued prior to 2021. The organization greatly appreciates the insight of the JIU and the related observations and recommendations included in the reports.

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report, including the management responses to the five JIU recommendations intended for consideration by the Executive Board.

* E/ICEF/2022/9.

Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.



I. Overview

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) annually issues reports, notes and management letters addressed to the executive heads of United Nations organizations that have accepted its statute. Each report or note contains a series of recommendations for consideration by either the executive heads or the legislative/governing bodies of the organizations. Management letters contain recommendations for the attention of the executive heads of all participating organizations, for action as appropriate.

2. This UNICEF report to its Executive Board provides a brief overview of the UNICEF response to relevant reports publicly issued by the JIU from January through December 2021¹ and comments on JIU recommendations directed to UNICEF (see annex I). The complete reports and notes of the JIU and any additional annexes and comments – for example, those by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) – can be obtained through the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) or through the hyperlinked titles of each of the reports presented in section II.

3. Since the submission of the JIU report for 2020 (E/ICEF/2021/11) to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2021, UNICEF has worked with the JIU on various reviews. UNICEF management has continued to prioritize implementation and follow-up of the recommendations and to provide updates on the implementation status. In addition, in its Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 under indicator E1.a.3, UNICEF monitors and reports on the implementation of JIU recommendations. As a member organization of the CEB, UNICEF also contributes to the United Nations system-wide consolidated responses to JIU reports.

4. In 2021, the JIU issued five reports and one management letter. One was a single-organization report, “Review of management and administration in the World Meteorological Organization (WMO),” and therefore did not apply to UNICEF. Four reports were system-wide reviews. The four system-wide reports and one management letter contained a total of 33 recommendations, of which 22 (67 per cent) were relevant to UNICEF. Out of the 22 recommendations, 5 were addressed to the UNICEF Executive Board and 17 to the executive head of UNICEF. The acceptance and implementation status of the 22 recommendations is presented in annex I, and can be summarized as follows as at 31 January 2022:

(a) UNICEF accepted 16 recommendations, of which 11 have been implemented and 5 are in progress;

(b) One recommendation is under consideration for acceptance;

(c) Three recommendations were not accepted;

(d) Two recommendations were not relevant or outside the sole remit for implementation.

5. Annex II details the status of the recommendations made by the JIU prior to 2021 that were in progress as of January 2022. In summary:

(a) The total number of recommendations was 49, of which 7 were accepted and are in progress and 42 were implemented;

(b) Of the seven open recommendations that were accepted and are in progress, three were issued in 2019 and four in 2020.

¹ The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) issued five reports during this period, of which four were relevant to UNICEF. At the 2022 annual session of the Executive Board, UNICEF will comment on reports issued after 31 December 2020 that were part of the JIU 2020 programme of work.

II. Highlights of Joint Inspection Unit reports issued in 2021

6. The four reports and one management letter with recommendations relevant to UNICEF are summarized below. For additional comments on the relevant recommendations, see annex I.

A. Blockchain applications in the United Nations system: towards a state of readiness (JIU/REP/2020/7²)

7. This report aims to assemble information and a package of recommendations leading to a state of readiness of United Nations system organizations for making good use of blockchain. The report provides an overview of the current use of blockchain applications in the United Nations system, compiles lessons learned and identifies good practices. The report also identifies main challenges and risks while providing inputs for developing guidance, standards and frameworks.

8. UNICEF actively participated in the drafting of this report to reflect its experience, including the Venture Fund, the CryptoFund, the Digicus project and the overall piloting strategy guiding its engagement in blockchain. The report concludes with eight formal recommendations aimed at solving the problems identified, including on the integration of blockchain use into innovation strategies and policies; knowledge-sharing and capacity-building; system-wide action and role playing; and risk management. Many of the recommendations are already integrated into the UNICEF approach, including the focus on open source and interoperability and alignment with the Secretary-General's road map for digital cooperation and its call for the United Nations to deploy digital public goods. (CEB comments available in [A/76/325/Add.1.](#))

B. Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2020/8)

9. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report that paves the way for broader consideration of environmental sustainability within the United Nations system as an organizational entity and recommends that high thematic environmental impacts such as biodiversity and climate neutrality, which cannot be successfully managed at individual agency level, are addressed collectively. The report makes recommendations for a collective buy-in for the design and implementation of policies and guidelines within each United Nations agency in specific management areas. UNICEF has been leading in this area and since the issuance of the report has implemented many of the recommendations, mainly in the areas of procurement, facilities and operations management, travel and events management.

10. The report also highlights the importance of well-established governance, accountability and coordination for better environmental sustainability, which UNICEF supports, and further endorses the prerequisites for a successful mainstreaming of environmental sustainability, which are outlined in the report in terms of obtaining commitment and oversight of Member States and United Nations leadership, dedication of financial and human resources, access to technical expertise and investment in business and market intelligence. UNICEF welcomes the report and is committed to use the findings to further achieve results in environmental sustainability. (CEB comments available in [A/76/286/Add.1.](#))

² The identification numbers of JIU reports correspond to the JIU programme of work and not to the year of issuance.

C. Review of the United Nations system support for landlocked developing countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action (JIU/REP/2021/2)

11. This report reviews the opportunities and challenges across the United Nations system in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action to support landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). It makes several important recommendations, including the appointment of an organizational focal point on LLDCs with clear terms of reference, the development of a clear results framework for support of LLDCs, and a system-wide evaluation of the contribution by the United Nations system to the development results of the Vienna Programme of Action, ensuring that the findings inform the preparation of the successor programme of action.

12. UNICEF acknowledges the need for relevant United Nations entities to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action priorities in activities of organizations that are pertinent to their mandates. However, it is also worth noting that most actions laid out in the Vienna Programme of Action are not directly relevant to UNICEF given both the UNICEF mandate and the limited scope of its implicit contribution to the Vienna Programme of Action. UNICEF indirect support to LLDCs is primarily to work under priority 5, “Structural economic transformation”, under the result areas related to work in the social policy domain of Goal Area 5 of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025. In this regard, the aggregated results in related areas, namely child poverty, social protection and public finance for children, are already systematically monitored, captured and reported through existing mechanisms and available in the public domain. Moreover, the UNICEF operational model does not lend itself to most of the key recommendations. This underscores the absence of differentiated policy and technical assistance for LLDCs in the UNICEF mandate, since the specificities of countries like LLDCs are dealt with at regional and country levels, including the development of country programme documents.

13. Nonetheless, UNICEF makes substantial contributions as part of broader (United Nations) well established system-wide efforts and inter-agency mechanisms at global, regional and country levels, particularly as it relates to issues directly relevant to the UNICEF mandate. In this regard, UNICEF implicitly contributes to the Vienna Programme of Action through the results achieved in the area of social policy, which falls within Goal Area 5 of the Strategic Plan. Given that many United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, have recently undergone an extensive and highly consultative Strategic Plan development and approval process, which includes the elaboration of results and resources frameworks, UNICEF cautions against the risk of setting up duplicative reporting mechanisms and processes. (CEB comments are not yet available.)

D. Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2021/3)

14. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report and considers that its objectives, scope and methodology provide a useful lens to look at common cybersecurity challenges and risks. The review highlights important elements that promote understanding of the general cybersecurity capacities of the United Nations agencies and the common issues that may be better addressed through a more coordinated approach.

15. UNICEF supports the recommendations and is currently participating in the United Nations Information Security Special Interest Group (the principal inter-agency mechanism for cybersecurity coordination) and the United Nations International Computing Centre Common Secure Threat Intelligence Service.

UNICEF implements digital development and humanitarian programmes in partnership with Member States and implementing partners. The organization will continue working through private and public partnerships, including the possibility of receiving direct support from Member States for the delivery of these digital programmes that will entail cybersecurity aspects. Finally, UNICEF acknowledges the mention in the JIU report of the importance for organizations to retain an appropriate degree of cybersecurity control, oversight and technical capability internally and will keep working towards achieving these. (CEB comments are not yet available.)

E. Management letter on securing the integrity of documents, records and archives of the United Nations system organizations (JIU/ML/2021/1)

16. This management letter, addressed to the executive heads of United Nations participating organizations, underscores the need to secure and safeguard documents, records, data and archives that are of legal, normative, administrative, political, or historical significance. The recommendation was highlighted during the preparation of the JIU report entitled “Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations” (JIU/REP/2021/3). The letter reinforces several important points, including every organization’s responsibility as custodian for intergovernmental documents, and describes the risks associated with vulnerabilities and a lack of data integrity in digital systems. The letter recommends a few potentially effective prevention measures, urges the application of heightened safeguards and revisiting of security parameters, and advises inclusion of the outlined risks in each organization’s risk registry.

17. UNICEF has reviewed the management letter in detail and has already taken some measures to improve and secure the authenticity and integrity of historically significant documents and data, organizational cybersecurity and information governance and archives. UNICEF will continue to make improvements and fully implement the recommendation made in the management letter.

Annex I

Summary of the status of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF, January–December 2021

Relevant recommendations

Remarks

Blockchain applications in the United Nations system: towards a state of readiness (JIU/REP/2020/7³)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 1

The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that, when applicable, the use of blockchain applications will be integrated, together with other digital technologies, into the innovation strategies and policies adopted by their respective organizations.

Accepted and implemented

The UNICEF innovation strategy identifies digital innovation and digital public goods as one of the four priority categories to pursue. The Office of Innovation's office management plan for 2022–2025 includes a specific output related to the identification, support and acceleration of solutions that leverage frontier technology solutions, of which blockchain is one. This is financially backed by the UNICEF Innovation Fund that supports pilot programs in blockchain. With the launch of the CryptoFund, the organization has also adopted strategies and policies relevant to the acceptance, partnership selection, contracting and management, custody, disbursement and accounting of cryptocurrencies.

Recommendation 6

The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should encourage Member States to engage with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law in its exploratory and preparatory work on legal issues that relate to blockchain in the broader context of the digital economy and digital trade, including on dispute resolution, which is aimed at reducing legal insecurity in that field.

Outside sole remit

This recommendation is outside the sole remit of UNICEF. In any engagements with Member States on blockchain, UNICEF will aim to reflect this recommendation, where relevant. This is an area where the expertise of the respective United Nations body managing this recommendation will help to promote cohesion among the agencies.

The Office of Innovation will initiate engagement with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law to assess Member State engagement in this area and explore collaboration.

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 2

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should make sure that the examination of possible blockchain use cases will be based on assessments of project risks, including with respect to relevant organizational policies and regulations on privileges and immunities, data protection,

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF has developed criteria to assess the use of cases of blockchain which, during the early stages and piloting, are applied through the assessment criteria used by the Innovation Fund. The UNICEF portfolio system Invent (that collects innovation projects led by country and regional offices and headquarters divisions

³ Identification numbers of reports of the JIU do not correspond to the year of issuance.

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

confidentiality, cybersecurity, system integrity, and reputation.

across the organization) incorporates criteria at specific stages that assess and select projects on this basis for further piloting, acceleration or scale up. UNICEF already has standard operating procedures that consider relevant regulations for the acceptance, holding and disbursement of cryptocurrencies. These regulations have been endorsed by the Office of Innovation; Information and Communication Technology Division; Data Protection Office, Legal; Division of Financial and Administrative Management; and Supply Division. UNICEF is also initiating processes to identify new solutions that will improve ‘know your customer’ and anti-money-laundering processes on donors providing contributions in cryptocurrency and in securing custody of any crypto assets being held and transacted in.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that any decision on using blockchain should be based on an appropriate determination of the business case and of the most suitable solution, using as guidance a decision-making matrix.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF, through its co-leadership of the United Nations Innovation Network, authored a Practical Guide to Blockchain that includes a decision-making matrix to guide decisions on the suitability of using blockchain in different cases. The decision-making tree has also been communicated internally as part of capacity-building courses available to staff that are implemented on a demand basis by the Office of Innovation. Financial support to external and internal projects through the Venture Fund (that provides support to UNICEF country offices and start-ups external to UNICEF) that are looking to explore the use of new technologies across programmes and countries also follows the decision-making matrix, along with detailed technical criteria to assess the quality of the specific solution proposed.

Lessons learned from previous explorations into the applications of blockchain supported by the Venture Fund are captured in publicly available articles. A review of blockchain solutions must include a critical analysis of solutions that emerge from stand-alone initiatives in which the units developing them are not adequately versed in the complexities of integration and consequently avoid the pitfalls that may be encountered at the stage where they consider options for scaling-up.

Recommendation 7

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have developed blockchain applications - in line with the call by the Secretary-General in his Roadmap for Digital Cooperation for the United Nations to deploy digital public goods – should follow, whenever possible, open-source principles

Accepted and implemented

Explorations in blockchain supported by UNICEF through its Innovation Fund and internally developed prototypes are open source, with the code available on GitHub. For UNICEF-led explorations, code can be found at: <https://github.com/unicef>. For those codes built by Innovation Fund-supported companies, code repositories can be accessed through: www.unicefinnovationfund.org. In accordance with

Relevant recommendations

when they develop software, and make available the codes to other United Nations organizations.

Remarks

agreements in place, all companies are required to provide all code on open repositories midway through their contract with UNICEF. Solutions are then submitted to be vetted as digital public goods.

Recommendation 8

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations, through the relevant coordination mechanisms, including with support from the United Nations International Computing Centre, should consider the adoption of a non-binding inter-agency blockchain governance framework for use by interested organizations, with a view to ensuring coherent and consistent blockchain approaches across the system by the end of 2022, including for projects that may involve multiple United Nations organizations.

Outside sole remit

This recommendation is outside the sole remit of UNICEF. The organization is supportive of the establishment of a non-binding governance framework and engaging in this process.

UNICEF proposes that the system leverage current governance mechanisms. One such avenue would be through the United Nations Digital and Technology Network. UNICEF, through its Office of Innovation, will engage with counterparts in other United Nations agencies and the network to assess the status of this recommendation and to contribute to any related actions.

Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2020/8)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 2

The legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, direct the executive heads to embed environmental sustainability considerations into the management of their organizations and request them to include in the annual report on the work of the organization the results of efforts to mainstream environmental sustainability in the internal management functions of the organization.

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF has embedded environmental sustainability in its operations and facilities management and issued the Procedure on Eco-Efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations (PROCEDURE/DFAM/2020/001) to supplement the sustainable procurement procedure issued in 2018. From the programmatic perspective, UNICEF has included climate and the environment as part of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025. UNICEF has taken further steps by undertaking an environmental footprint and accessibility assessment exercise aiming to collect resource use, costs and environmental impact data resulting from office operations, which will then be translated into data showing the level of carbon emissions for UNICEF operations in each country. The outcome of the exercise will be used to identify efficiency projects that contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions. Key achievements, challenges, lessons learned and initiatives are reported in the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF to the Executive Board. Internal communication campaigns aimed at raising staff awareness have been launched. The Pledge to Act Sustainably was launched to commit staff to increasing their awareness of environmental sustainability.

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, develop an organization-wide policy for environmental sustainability in the areas of internal management functions.

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF continues to prioritize a climate neutral strategy (measure, reduce and offset carbon emissions) through data reporting, evaluation of individual and collective performance and implementation of applicable eco-efficiency projects. In 2020, UNICEF introduced the Procedure on Eco-Efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations, (which included environmental sustainability measures in internal management functions that further complement the UNICEF Procedure on Sustainable Procurement (SUPPY/PROCEDURE/2018/001). In addition, significant actions to improve carbon emissions reductions, such as the long-term agreements on solar leasing, are under way. Internal quality assurance of reporting mechanisms has improved with the introduction of data validation by the Regional Chiefs of Operations. As part of process improvement to the environmental management system, an Environmental Footprint and Accessibility Assessment Tool publishing module was implemented for automatic generation of reports for field office use, reference and ease of data sharing. Other projects, such as the Smart energy metering, have been piloted to digitize UNICEF energy and carbon emissions data reporting. There is increased synergy between environmental focal points working in the Programme Group, Operations and Supply Division in sharing views that help to advance the UNICEF agenda.

UNICEF continues to actively participate in and contribute to the Environmental Management Group, Sustainable United Nations and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Task Team on Common Premises and Facility Services meetings in finding common goals, sharing of good practices and supporting United Nations environmental governance.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, devote adequate resources in specific budget plans, including by better utilizing existing available resources, to mainstreaming environmental sustainability in their respective organizations, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF has established the Capital Asset Fund and the Greening and Accessibility Fund, which enable the implementation of a significant number of eco-efficiency projects.

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks***Recommendation 4**

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the end of 2022, task procurement offices with incorporating specific provisions for integrating environmental sustainability considerations into procurement policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant interagency mechanisms, as necessary.

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF supply operations play a critical role in improving children's health, environment, learning, protection and inclusion. While delivering essential supplies and services for children to survive and thrive, UNICEF considers the environmental and social impacts that may stem from its supply operations. The UNICEF Procedure on Sustainable Procurement encourages staff to consider environmental, social and economic issues in supply planning, procurement strategies and decisions wherever feasible, taking into consideration the full supply chain cycle, from the definition of requirements through use, disposal or decommissioning. The procedure was supplemented by the UNICEF Guidance on Sustainable Procurement (Guidance/SD/2021/002) issued in 2021. Moreover, staff in UNICEF and across the United Nations organizations have access to sustainable procurement resources from the United Nations Global Marketplace (e.g., sustainable procurement product sheets and sustainable procurement indicators guidance) and in the *UN Procurement Practitioner's Handbook*.

The UNICEF Supply Division already has a series of complementary initiatives (e.g., a repository of best practice sustainability requirements used in UNICEF tenders; sample supplier sustainability questionnaire; sustainable procurement intranet site). The Division also delivers training sessions to regional and country offices on the implementation of sustainable procurement.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, ensure that all recruitment and selection processes, as well as performance appraisal systems, incorporate and give adequate weight to environmental sustainability understanding and behaviours, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Under consideration

This recommendation is under consideration. Environmental sustainability has been added as one of the organizational values and broad-based socialization initiatives will be rolled out across UNICEF. The Director of Human Resources assumed duties in February 2022 and will consider this recommendation in determination of human resource priorities.

Recommendation 6

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, with the support of the resident coordinator system and the United Nations country team mechanisms, strengthen the coordination between the headquarters and field agencies, as well as among field agencies, in pursuing measures to reduce the environmental impact of field

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF is actively involved in promoting measures to reduce its environmental impact as the lead agency chairing the UNSDG Task Team on Common Premises and Facility Services. Further, the UNICEF Procedure on Eco-Efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations prescribes compliance with the Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies standards for construction of new buildings or renovations with the

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

presences, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

objective of making United Nations premises energy efficient.

UNICEF has increased its presence in common premises from 50 per cent in 2020 to 53.44 per cent in 2021, resulting in a reduction in the negative environmental impact and increased energy efficiencies in buildings. Implementation of passive design strategies and eco-efficiency best practices are being prioritized in the planning, design and construction of new projects and renovation projects. Furthermore, coordination between headquarters and field offices has increased with the involvement of resident coordinators in the Task Team on Common Premises and Facility Services meetings that UNICEF chairs. UNICEF headquarters continues to collaborate with field offices in the development and implementation of greening and accessibility project ideas, including providing technical support and various webinars. UNICEF regularly reports to the Executive Board on such initiatives, as noted in previous recommendations.

Recommendation 7

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, make all conferences, events and meetings organized by their respective organizations “paper smart”, while providing printed material only upon official request and with adequate cost recovery measures following a differential pricing system in respect of different customer groups – such as official delegates, research institutions, other conference participants and students – and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF is already engaged in various initiatives promoting “paper smart” and paperless meetings, e.g., by creating efficient digital content-sharing platforms and encouraging staff to make frequent use of them. To avoid the use of paper at meetings, UNICEF ensures all conference and event spaces at its headquarters are equipped with digital presentation capabilities. UNICEF has also introduced innovative printing options that allow tracing of printed materials via identification scan technology and associating costs to the source. Such efforts are an integral part of the implementation of the UNICEF Procedure on Eco-Efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations. UNICEF country offices continue to innovate in this area and additional initiatives are therefore envisioned.

UNICEF aligns with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) comments in the Note by the Secretary-General on this recommendation (A/76/286/Add.1, paragraphs 29–31) given the limited control on the management of events organized by Member States/host countries. However, when under the auspices of UNICEF and as possible, UNICEF will implement environmental sustainability practices in its activities.

Recommendation 8

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should, by the

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF aligns with the CEB comments in the note by the Secretary-General on this recommendation

Relevant recommendations

end of 2022, task the relevant offices responsible for organizing conferences, meetings and events with developing a policy for incorporating provisions relating to environmental sustainability considerations into policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, including through the relevant inter-agency mechanisms, as necessary.

Remarks

(A/76/286/Add.1, paragraphs 33–35). Given the limited control on the management of events organized by Member States/host countries, when under its auspices and as possible, UNICEF will implement environmental sustainability practices when organizing conferences, meetings and events. Ongoing efforts are also being made by the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy (formerly the “Division of Communication”) to create more awareness to strengthen the implementation of paperless events.

Through the UNICEF Procedure on Eco-Efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations, UNICEF has taken concrete steps towards making meetings environmentally sustainable. To raise staff awareness on environmental sustainability, UNICEF has launched behavioural change campaigns across offices, such as the Pledge to Act Sustainably at UNICEF, which provides learning on paperless practices. UNICEF has established Green Teams across offices to promote awareness on sustainable practices, including paperless practices, and to stimulate ideas and actions for system improvements within offices.

Recommendation 9

The executive heads of organizations of the United Nations system should ensure that, by the end of 2022, information and communications technology services’ actions and projects comply with environmental sustainability considerations, including ensuring that greenhouse gas emissions are at a level compatible with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris agreement.

Accepted and in progress

The UNICEF Procedure on Eco-Efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations is an organization-wide effort to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to installing smart energy meters in data centres to automatically feed data into the web-based Environmental Footprint and Accessibility Assessment Tool, UNICEF plans to operate data centres together with the Global Service Centre information and communication technology (ICT) services in Brindisi, Italy and Valencia, Spain, and will ensure that all hosting agreements and operations are conducted in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

Recommendation 10

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, by the end of 2022, make all official documentation, publications, brochures, and communication and advocacy materials available online, including through online conferencing applications or other information technology means, and report on the implementation to their legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.

Accepted and implemented

All UNICEF externally published advocacy and communication content is made available online in digital form on the global website at www.unicef.org. Documents for the UNICEF Executive Board are published in all available languages on the Official Document System of the United Nations and the UNICEF Executive Board website. The latter website also houses presentations for the Board and informal Board documents.

Internally, UNICEF has an Intranet platform, a business intelligence site (InSight) and an online regulatory framework library and has implemented SharePoint-

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

based enterprise content management across the organization to make all official documentation, publications, brochures and communication and advocacy materials available online.

In addition, UNICEF conducts awareness-raising campaigns to promote education and learning on sustainable practices, which help to stimulate ideas and actions for sustainable outcomes within offices. While promoting behavioural change campaigns on greening meetings and paperless practices, UNICEF is also making efforts to complete digitalization of its physical resources, documentation and archives.

UNICEF reports annually to its Executive Board on the organization's digital transformation.

Review of management and administration in the World Meteorological Organization (JIU/REP/2021/1)

1. No recommendations addressed to UNICEF.

Review of the United Nations system support for landlocked developing countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action (JIU/REP/2021/2)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 7

The legislative organs and governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should issue directives, if they have not already done so, by the end of 2022, for their organizations to mainstream the priorities of the programme of action for landlocked developing countries that are pertinent to their mandated work and request that their organizations report periodically on its implementation.

Not accepted

This recommendation is not directly related to the mandate of UNICEF. The organization acknowledges the need for relevant United Nations entities to mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action priorities that are pertinent to their mandates in activities of organizations through their strategic plans. Given the UNICEF mandate, UNICEF can **indirectly** lend support to landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) through work under priority 5, "Structural economic transformation" under the result areas related to work in the social policy domain (under Goal Area 5 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 and to a lesser extent, priority 2 (b), where UNICEF contributes through its work on climate, energy, environment and disaster risk reduction.

In this regard, the aggregated results in related areas are already systematically monitored, captured and reported through existing internal mechanisms and made available in the public domain (e.g., through Global Annual Results Reports). Moreover, UNICEF reports results on this area of work annually to its legislative body through the annual report of the Executive Director as part of the organization's coordinated efforts to report on the implementation of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan. As relevant, UNICEF will streamline these results in

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should designate, if they have not already done so, by the end of 2022, an organizational focal point on landlocked developing countries with clear terms of reference, developed with guidance from UN-OHRLLS, that define the focal point's role and responsibilities in supporting implementation of the programme of action for landlocked developing countries.

LLDCs to ensure they support the Vienna Programme of Action framework to the extent possible.

Not accepted

This recommendation is not directly related to the mandate of UNICEF. Although UNICEF has programmes and a physical presence in 31 out of 32 LLDCs, the Vienna Programme of Action falls outside the UNICEF mandate as UNICEF programmes do not directly contribute to the Vienna Programme of Action. Although UNICEF agrees with the inspector's analysis regarding the dedicated capacity needed to strengthen internal coordination and technical support for LLDCs, UNICEF does not explicitly work in any of the priority areas outlined in the Vienna Programme of Action and therefore does not see a need to designate organizational technical focal points. The UNICEF contribution to the Vienna Programme of Action outcomes (primarily priority 5: Structural economic transformation) through its contributions under Goal Area 5 of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 (including multidimensional child poverty, public finance for children and local governance), and to a limited extent priority 2 (b) on energy and ICT infrastructure where UNICEF contributes through its work on climate, energy, environment and disaster risk reduction. The UNICEF strategic presence in LLDCs will allow country offices to continue to contribute to the results of the Vienna Programme of Action through the resident coordinator's office and the broader United Nations country team on associated topics. Nonetheless, when an LLDC embarks on a new country programme and considers its landlocked status a critical factor contributing to the vulnerability of children and their families (including multidimensional poverty), UNICEF will reflect this in the design of the country programme documents and its implementation and monitoring strategies.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should develop, by the end of 2022, a clear results framework for support for landlocked developing countries, including linkages among the outcomes to be achieved, the main outputs strategy and core activities.

Not accepted

This recommendation is not directly related to the mandate of UNICEF as the Vienna Programme of Action priorities do not fall within the mandate of UNICEF. The organization contributes indirectly to the Vienna Programme of Action outcomes and is limited to only Priority 5, which is specific to social policy, public finance for children and multidimensional child poverty, or Goal Area 5 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 (every child and adolescent has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty). Goal 5 of

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

the Strategic Plan is accompanied by a clear theory of change, and indicators with corresponding baselines, milestones, and target values. And, to a lesser extent, priority 2 (b), where UNICEF contributes through its work on climate, energy, environment and disaster risk reduction. UNICEF will continue to streamline these issues particularly as they relate to Goal Area 5, focusing on its work on social policy, multidimensional child poverty and public finance for children in LLDCs to ensure they support the Vienna Programme of Action framework to the extent possible. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily translate into the entity's priority in developing a corporate results framework specifically for at-scale implementation of Vienna Programme of Action priorities.

Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2021/3)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 2

The legislative and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should consider the reports on the elements contributing to improved cyber resilience prepared by the executive heads and provide strategic guidance on further improvements to be implemented in their respective organizations, as necessary.

Accepted and implemented

This recommendation is addressed to the Executive Board. Based on the recommendation, the UNICEF ICT function will report annually on priority areas, including elements and progress of the cybersecurity programme.

In addition, the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee and ICT Board, the formal governance body for cybersecurity, is briefed on the UNICEF cybersecurity programme. Through the annual report of the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee, the UNICEF Executive Board is also briefed on this area of work.

UNICEF will continue to engage and interact with the Executive Board regarding the cybersecurity programme and relative initiatives and will provide periodic briefings to the Audit Advisory Committee regarding the high priority the organization places on risk management as it relates to cybersecurity.

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should prepare, as a matter of priority and no later than 2022, a comprehensive report on their cybersecurity framework and present it to their respective legislative and governing bodies at the earliest opportunity, covering the elements contributing to improved cyber resilience examined in the present report.

Accepted and implemented

Cybersecurity risk mitigation is embedded across various levels, including through staff-awareness efforts, technology controls, testing and processes. Based on the recommendation, the UNICEF ICT function will report annually on priority areas, including elements and progress of the cybersecurity programme.

In addition, the UNICEF Executive Board is briefed on this area of work through the Audit Advisory Committee's annual report.

Relevant recommendations

Remarks

Management letter on securing the integrity of documents, records and archives of the United Nations system organizations (JIU/ML/2021/1)

Management letters and subsequent recommendations are addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 1

The Inspectors request the executive heads of United Nations system organizations to give due consideration to devising and applying appropriate safeguards to secure their current and historical documents, records and archives including by revisiting, if necessary, the security parameters applied to the storage of such documents in both the physical and cyber environment and including the matter in their organizations' risk registry, and to report to the Joint Inspection Unit through the web-based tracking system no later than the end of 2022 on the measures taken to implement the present recommendation.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF accepts the recommendation issued in the management letter and will take measures to implement the recommendation via its ongoing cybersecurity, information governance and archives functions. UNICEF ICT has defined workstreams that will strengthen the integrity of the organization's records, documents and archives environments. Additional efforts are being made to strengthen the information governance regulatory landscape, and the exploration of technological solutions to better secure, manage and preserve content in the organization's digital environments.

Annex II

Summary of the status of all open accepted Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF prior to 2021

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
JIU/REP/2014/9⁴ Contract management and administration in the United Nations system	(2) Incorporate in their annual statements of internal controls certifications, by individuals with procurement and contracts management authority, that the execution of contracts has been in full compliance with the organization's policies, procedures and rules.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2016/4 Fraud prevention, detection and response in United Nations system organizations	(8) Ensure that statements of internal controls address the adequacy of organization-wide anti-fraud controls.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2016/8 State of the internal audit function in the United Nations system	(6) Allocate adequate financial and human resources to the internal audit services to ensure sufficient coverage of high-risk areas...during risk-based audit planning.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2016/10 Knowledge management in the United Nations system	(3) Take incremental measures aimed at embedding knowledge management skills and knowledge-sharing abilities in their respective staff performance appraisal systems, annual work plans, job descriptions and organizational core competences.	Executive head	Implemented
	(4) Establish norms and procedures for the retention and transfer of knowledge from retiring, moving or departing staff, as part of the organization's succession planning process.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2017/2 Donor-led assessments of the United Nations system organizations	(4) Engage with donors to determine the key elements in their assessments...and to consider taking these elements into account in their risk assessments and work plans.	Executive head	Implemented

⁴ Identification numbers of reports of the JIU do not correspond to the year of issuance.

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
JIU/REP/2017/9 Review of mechanisms and policies addressing conflict of interest in the United Nations system	(1) Map the most common occurrences and register the risks of situations exposing their respective organizations to organizational conflicts of interest.	Executive head	Implemented
	(4) Introduce adequate legal clauses in contractual agreements with their staff and non-staff, as appropriate, binding them to the period of restriction set for their function that prohibits them from engaging in clearly defined post-employment activities for the duration of that period of time.	Executive head	Implemented
	(5) Take the necessary steps to: (a) ensure that all staff members, irrespective of their level and grade, successfully complete the initial and periodic mandatory ethics training course and obtain the respective certification; (b) link certification of the required ethics training course to the annual staff performance appraisal cycle; (c) include ethics training in the induction training of non-staff, including refresher courses after service intervals, as appropriate.	Executive head	Implemented (a); Previously implemented (b) and (c)
	(6) Regularly monitor conflict of interest issues, including updates to relevant policies, administrative instruments and mechanisms.	Legislative body	Implemented
JIU/REP/2018/5 Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation	(4) Initiate...the testing of a model under which a single agency provides hosting services for the others.	Executive head	Implemented
	(5) Formulate a proposal for consolidated country-level administrative support arrangements, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 72/279.	Executive head	Implemented
	(6) The United Nations Sustainable Development Group should refocus the common business operations of United Nations country teams on a more limited agenda, such as common premises, facility services and procurement. All country teams should be required...to put forward a business case on common premises...[and] to establish joint long-term agreements and service contracts.	Executive head	Implemented
	(10) Constitute a shared services board to develop the business case for and	Executive head	Implemented

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
	operational design of global shared services.		
JIU/REP/2018/6 Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system	(1) Develop...a draft policy on the accessibility of conferences and meetings for persons with disabilities, as well as guidelines for policy implementation, and present them to their respective legislative bodies, should the endorsement of those bodies be required for the policy to take effect.	Executive head	Implemented
	(2) For all major conferences that are hosted off the premises of United Nations system organizations...ensure that accessibility requirements are clearly stipulated in individual agreements concluded with the hosting entity for specific conferences and meetings.	Executive head	Implemented
	(4) Develop standard operating procedures with regard to their operational responsibilities to improve the accessibility of conferences and meetings for persons with disabilities.	Executive head	Implemented
	(5) Make it mandatory for organizers of meetings and conferences to ensure... that: (a) the participation of persons with disabilities is fully supported by registration processes that are accessible for persons with diverse disabilities; (b) clauses are included in accessible registration forms to ask specifically about accessibility requirements; (c) information on accessible facilities and services is disseminated to all potential participants through accessible websites and information notes; (d) accessible post-conference and post-meeting satisfaction surveys consistently include questions to assess satisfaction with the accessibility of facilities and services.	Executive head	Implemented
	(8) Draft provisions for incorporating accessibility checks and/or requirements into procurement policies and guidelines for consideration and adoption by the relevant decision-making authority.	Executive head	In progress
	(9) Develop and implement through relevant inter-agency mechanisms...a common system-wide mandatory specialized training module on disability inclusion and accessibility for personnel	Executive head	In progress

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
	involved directly or indirectly in the servicing of conferences and meetings.		
JIU/REP/2018/7 Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	(6) Establish a system-wide policy on open data access, supporting software and research sharing among the United Nations system organizations.	Legislative body	Implemented
JIU/REP/2019/3 Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	(1) Present a map of interlinkages between the core mandate of the organization and disaster risk reduction and report on the progress made on disaster risk reduction. (3) Plan for dedicated capacity to implement risk-informed development activities and that such activities in the field are reported to headquarters, including by monitoring their contribution to implementing the Sendai Framework, taking into account the reporting framework for Sustainable Development Goals.	Legislative body Executive head	Implemented Implemented
JIU/REP/2019/4 Review of change management in the United Nations system organizations	(1) Embed change management approaches and methods in their organizational reforms and report on the results. (2) Embed structured and comprehensive change management approaches in...ongoing and future organizational reforms and report. (4) Ensure resources allocated to change management are clearly earmarked and the intended results are measured, tracked and evaluated. (5) Give greater prominence to the role strategic human resources management functions play in organizational change management including promoting changes in individual attitudes and behaviours, establishing mechanisms to reinforce these and creating channels to communicate feedback across all personnel.	Legislative body Executive head Executive head Executive head	Implemented Implemented Implemented In progress

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
JIU/REP/2019/5 Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system	(1) Ensure business continuity planning includes strategies and measures to mitigate the risk of failure by cloud service providers to deliver the contracted services.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2019/8 Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations	(2) Review all administrative issuances to clarify how inter-agency mobility is treated in each of those contexts.	Executive head	Implemented
	(3) Not apply the practice of asking incoming staff to resign instead of agreeing to transfers...and decide to accept benefits and entitlements on the basis stipulated in the 2012 Agreement.	Executive head	Implemented
	(6) The Secretary-General, in coordination with other executive heads in the framework of the High-Level Committee on Management, should...articulate the business case for inter-agency mobility...[which] could usefully include examination of success stories, such as the impact on career trajectories.	Executive head	Implemented
	(8) Enable all United Nations system staff members to compete for vacant posts on a basis equal to that established for their own staff, while considering downsizing contexts, the abolition of posts and positions, and the administration of rotational placements.	Executive head	In progress
JIU/REP/2019/9 Review of contemporary practices in the external outsourcing of services to commercial service providers by United Nations	(9) The Secretary-General and other executive heads...should define how the mutual recognition of rules and procedures will be applied to overcome regulatory and procedural barriers to inter-agency mobility, and report on measures taken to the Economic and Social Council.	Executive head	Implemented
	(1) Develop a common organization-wide definition of outsourcing and further concretize it by developing approaches and procedural guidelines on the subject matter.	Executive head	Implemented
	(4) Ensure that the sourcing of any strategic, sensitive or high-value service and related goods from a commercial service provider is preceded by the conduct of a clearly-documented strategic analysis.	Executive head	Implemented

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
system organizations	(7) Develop clearly detailed guidelines for managing vendor transition, including corresponding backup arrangements, and ensure that solicitation documents clearly outline the responsibility of the vendor as regards transitional assistance and knowledge transfer to the organization and incoming vendor.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2020/1 Review of the state of the investigation function: progress made in the United Nations system organizations in strengthening the investigation function	(1) Organizations should include in their internal oversight charters a provision for the periodic revision and, where necessary, update of the charters and a requirement for their endorsement by the legislative bodies.	Legislative body	Implemented
	(2) Ensure that the heads of internal oversight offices periodically review and, where necessary, update their investigation policies and guidance on the basis of new developments, the jurisdiction of the administrative tribunals, lessons learned and good practices.	Executive head	Implemented
	(9) Annual internal oversight activity reports should contain information on both complaints and investigations, including details on the number, type and nature of the complaints and investigations and trends in this regard.	Legislative body	Implemented
JIU/REP/2020/2 Policies and platforms in support of learning: towards more coherence, coordination and convergence	(1) Establish a minimum set of key performance indicators and associated targets for the efficiency of learning programmes and their effectiveness in support of business outcomes, which the organizations should monitor and report upon to the governing bodies.	Executive head	Implemented
	(4) Better integrate staff learning plans into performance assessments and to ensure that managers are also held accountable for implementation.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2020/3 United Nations common premises: current practices and future prospects	(2) Work together in the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to amplify the objectives of common premises, addressing programmatic, public image and environmental sustainability considerations, as well as efficiency gains, and also set out the modalities for tracking results and reporting thereon.	Executive head	Implemented

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
	(4) The Secretary-General and the other executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should work together in the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to expedite the compilation of the database component of the envisaged common premises platform and ensure that periodic reporting to the General Assembly.	Executive head	Implemented
	(5) The Secretary-General and the other executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should work together in the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to review lessons learned from experience with public-private partnerships for common premises and formulate...measures that address the capital financing requirements of initiatives regarding common premises.	Executive head	Implemented
	(7) The Secretary-General and the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations with premises in the field should study the feasibility of a unified mechanism for real estate management in the field and report on the findings of that study to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session.	Executive head	Implemented
	(8) The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should work together in the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to improve...the inter-organizational arrangements for support of common premises by strengthening the oversight of common premises by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.	Executive head	Implemented
JIU/REP/2020/5	(1) Incorporate enterprise risk management into meetings at least annually, with substantive coverage determined by the organization's mandate, field network and risk exposure.	Legislative body	In progress
Enterprise risk management: approaches and uses in United Nations system organizations	(2) Undertake a comprehensive review of their enterprise risk management implementation against JIU benchmarks 1 to 9, as outlined in the present report.	Executive head	In progress
	(4) Report on the outcomes of a comprehensive review of the implementation of enterprise risk	Legislative body	In progress

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
	management against JIU benchmarks 1 to 9.		
