

UNICEF Executive Board
Annual Session 2022
Item 8
Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021
Joint Statement delivered by Germany

Check against delivery

Madam President,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, the United States, the EU as a donor [...] and my own country, Germany.

We welcome the present report and congratulate the Ethics Office on handling a record number of requests in 2021 despite limited resources. We commend Mr. El Cid Butuyan for his first year heading this newly independent organisational unit.

We welcome and support the preventive and proactive strategy on ethical issues. We do agree that this approach plays a vital role in preventing and mitigating misconduct as well as organizational harm. We especially want to emphasise the targeting of personnel with greater and specific training needs. We specifically welcome the launch of a network of ethics and culture champions to act as multipliers for those often far away and in most need of support in the field.

We support the work of the Ethics Office in strengthening its collaboration and coordination with other UNICEF offices, such as the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, Organisational Culture, Internal Communications, the Division of Human Resources and the Office of the Ombudsman/Mediation to ensure visibility, consistency, uniformity and clarity towards the organisation's personnel. We take positive note of the Office's increased efforts in ethics training and outreach, especially the joint awareness raising activities with related departments.

We positively note UNICEF management's strong stance on ethics and the follow-up on the various recommendations on organisational and workplace culture as well as diversity and inclusion.

We concur with the Audit Advisory Committee's (AAC) opinion and remain very concerned about the continued inadequate resourcing and low number of staff positions. Despite the Executive Board Decision 2020/19, funding does not seem to have improved since 2020. While UNICEF often is a forerunner within the UN family, it is regrettable that its Ethics Office is one of the least resourced in the UN system. We therefore urge UNICEF to expand financial and human resources, especially permanent positions, to firmly establish the Ethics Office as an independent institution. UNICEF has stated in their management response that it is conscious of these deficits. We would like to know whether UNICEF has already planned new permanent positions or an increase in funding for the Ethics Office to remedy the situation.

We commend the implementation of recommendations regarding the financial disclosure programme. We welcome the stronger focus of the programme on staff seniority and organizational risk. Achieving a 100% compliance rate for the second year in a row is a commendable achievement for UNICEF and the Ethics Office. In view of the AAC

recommendations on the Financial Disclosure Programme, and considering the Ethics Office's workload, we call upon UNICEF to explore the different options mentioned in the report.

To conclude, let me underline that the role of the Ethics Office is crucial in UNICEF's efforts to improve workplace culture. On the one hand the increase in requests for ethics advice is a helpful indicator where improvements still need to be made. On the other hand, the newly introduced Pulse Check survey provides an additional useful tool. We believe though that Global Staff Surveys remain important, and regret to hear that the one scheduled for 2021 has not been conducted. Can UNICEF please inform us when the next Global staff survey is planned?

Thank you