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Update on organizational culture and diversity

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Executive Board decision 2022/6, which “*requests* UNICEF to provide an update to the Executive Board on how the organization is improving organizational culture and on its actions to prevent and respond to all forms of discrimination, including racism and racial discrimination, and sexual harassment, in its policies, procedures and programmes at headquarters, regional and country levels, at the annual session of 2023.”

The report provides an update on the ongoing work of UNICEF to strengthen its organizational culture, improve the practice of its core values and become a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section VII.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 19 May 2023.

** [E/ICEF/2023/9](#).



I. Overview

1. The present report provides an update on the ongoing work of UNICEF to strengthen its organizational culture, further embed the practice of its core values and become a more diverse and inclusive workplace. The report focuses on efforts, results and challenges since the last report submitted to the Executive Board on this topic at the first regular session of 2022 ([E/ICEF/2022/6](#)).

2. In addition to the recommendations made by the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority in 2019, the work to improve the organizational culture of UNICEF is guided by the recommendations made by the internal Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination (2021), the 2022 recertification process by Economic Dividends for Gender Equality (EDGE), and internal employee surveys such as the Pulse Check survey on workplace culture (June 2021, December 2021 and June 2022) and the Global Staff Survey (2022). Furthermore, in 2022, there were several other assessment and evaluative exercises that yielded relevant recommendations to guide this work (see below).

3. As of 2022, UNICEF is well-positioned to accelerate and expand its work to build a more respectful and inclusive organizational culture. With the sustained momentum of efforts over the past few years, important new policy and systems changes and dedicated capacity on culture and diversity issues in the Office of the Executive Director, UNICEF has implemented many of the necessary enabling factors for impact at scale across the organization in the coming years. Within the United Nations system, UNICEF has the largest dedicated team of culture and diversity professionals, and has contributed extensively to inter-agency efforts related to the future of work and diversity, equity and inclusion.

4. Specifically, policy frameworks and approaches have been developed, strengthened, or both, to promote a more values-based culture. The UNICEF values charter, developed in 2020, guides staff and managers on expected behaviours under each of the organization's core values. In 2022, four new policies were approved that provide more flexibility for staff with family care responsibilities. An updated flexible working arrangements policy was also adopted. High rates of reporting of possible misconduct remain, having increased significantly after the release of the report of the Independent Task Force in 2019. In 2022, there was increased outreach by staff to the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) and the Ethics Office, which may indicate greater awareness of, or trust in, these offices. New communications initiatives have been developed and rolled out, bringing greater attention to what it means to be a values-based organization. These include the Humans of UNICEF peer-to-peer staff appreciation programme, the values in action initiative, Ethics Month dialogues and conversations with senior leaders. UNICEF has developed new tools such as the dignity at work tool kit, the domestic abuse tool kit, a glossary of terms related to diversity, equity and inclusion, and a guide to help human resources staff and hiring managers understand how to consider diversity, equity and inclusion throughout recruitment processes. The Pulse Check survey on workplace culture and the Global Staff Survey are important tools that help UNICEF to identify and monitor the perceptions of employees about the degree to which progress is being made in their offices. Each of these is elaborated further in the present report.

5. While some progress is being made, challenges persist. Among the most significant challenges are lack of time by offices to devote to workplace culture and diversity, equity and inclusion issues; employees' perceptions of the slow pace and insufficient visibility of progress and its lack of visibility in all UNICEF offices; and

a persistent low level of psychological safety and trust. Global guidance issued in 2022 encourages country offices to include workplace culture in their office annual management plans, which will help to keep these issues visible throughout the year.

6. Inter-agency collaboration remains a key strategy. UNICEF co-leads, with the United Nations Secretariat and the Universal Postal Union, a new working group on diversity, equity and inclusion established in Spring 2022 under the High-level Committee on Management. Among the products this working group is tasked to deliver on diversity, equity and inclusion in 2023 are a United Nations-wide glossary; a vision and guiding principles; and a set of good practices from across the United Nations system. UNICEF is actively engaged in all three streams of work.

7. UNICEF priorities with respect to organizational culture and diversity for 2023 include: the application of behavioural science approaches to help to influence individual and team behaviours in favour of UNICEF core values and greater inclusion; development and roll out of a “whole of diversity” approach to increasing workforce diversity; system strengthening and capacity-building on disability inclusion; establishment of help desks to enhance physical and digital accessibility for persons with disabilities; and greater attention to building psychological safety and trust through actions such as bystander intervention support and increased internal communications around good practices related to values-based behaviours and inclusive practices. Ensuring follow-up and monitoring of the impact of actions taken to respond to the 2022 Global Staff Survey will be another key priority, in partnership with the staff associations at country, regional and global levels.

II. Evidence-based and data-driven approach

8. UNICEF is committed to utilizing an evidence-based and data-driven approach to improve its organizational culture and diversity, equity and inclusion. UNICEF continues to enhance the collection and reporting of metrics related to its workforce composition and employee experience.

9. The Pulse Check survey on workplace culture, launched in June 2021, was most recently conducted in June 2022. The Global Staff Survey, a more comprehensive employee perception survey conducted every two years, was held from early-October to early-November 2022. The data from the June 2022 Pulse Check and the Global Staff Survey were very much aligned in terms of areas where UNICEF is doing well and where it can improve with respect to its organizational culture. The June 2022 Pulse Check had a response rate of 70 per cent (with more than 13,000 respondents) and indicated that most offices have a positive values-based culture, with an overall workplace culture score of 71, which reflects the percentage of participants who reacted positively to the questions posed. The highest-scoring areas were empowerment, trust in supervisor, internal communications and work-life harmony. Overall, the responses from female respondents on the questions were less positive than those from men, with the largest gaps in the areas of trust in senior management and standards of conduct.

10. After each Pulse Check, follow-up conversations are held with the lowest-scoring offices (and when requested, with other offices) to provide support and advice on how to improve their workplace culture. In 2022, conversations were held with 28 offices around the world, with discussions including promoting in-depth understanding of the data on each office, as well as how to build on specific success areas and identifying ways to improve in lower-scoring areas. In some cases, these conversations were held as part of broader efforts to improve the office culture, such as office retreats or learning sessions. The conversations are facilitated by the Culture and Diversity team, with the participation of human resources staff and the staff

association, as well as country office management and other relevant staff. The next Pulse Check survey will be conducted later in 2023.

11. In the 2022 Global Staff Survey, the employee engagement index (a composite index that summarizes the overall employee experience at UNICEF) was 76 per cent, an increase of 3 percentage points from 2020. UNICEF employees responded more positively in 2022 across seven out of the eight key indicators in the index, as compared to 2020. The topics with the highest positive scores were the UNICEF response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic as an employer, staff security and standards of conduct.

12. Respondents indicated very high levels of knowledge of what constitutes misconduct at UNICEF (96 per cent), and where and how to report it (90 per cent), including how to report sexual harassment (92 per cent). The areas of greatest improvement since the 2020 Global Staff Survey related to being comfortable having discussions about racism and discrimination in the office (an increase of 14 percentage points, but still low at only 56 per cent of respondents feeling comfortable); engaging in discussions and contributing to decisions affecting one's work (an increase of 8 percentage points); and feeling safe to raise concerns, questions and issues with managers in one's office (an increase of 7 percentage points).

13. As noted in the update on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse being presented at the current session, having a psychologically safe workplace can be an important enabler for reporting as well. In terms of areas to improve, the Global Staff Survey found the lowest topic areas to be management responses to the survey and independent reviews related to organizational culture; office efficiency and effectiveness; and diversity, equity and inclusion. Specifically, the lowest-scoring question in the entire survey was that only 27 per cent of respondents indicated that they felt comfortable to speak up or support the affected person where they had witnessed a situation of discrimination. Performance management was another area with low scores, with low confidence (45 per cent) that underperforming staff members are given relevant feedback and support to improve their performance. There was also weak agreement (48 per cent) that both UNICEF global management and office management had taken effective action in response to the 2020 Global Staff Survey, further confirming the need for visible, concerted action in response to the 2022 survey. Taken together with the areas of progress since 2020, the Global Staff Survey data indicate not only the success of efforts to raise awareness of misconduct (and especially of discrimination) and to build more psychological safety across UNICEF, but also the need to increase the focus on equipping employees with the knowledge, skills and confidence to intervene constructively when they witness discrimination, or any other instance of non-adherence to the core values.

14. The first-ever annual employee separation report was published in 2022, and included data from 2020 and 2021. The report examined who leaves UNICEF and the reasons for their separation. It indicated that the turnover rate in UNICEF was 4.6 per cent among regular posts (not including temporary appointments), which is considered quite low compared to the public service in countries for which data are available. Women accounted for 60 per cent of those resigning from UNICEF during this time period, despite accounting for only 49 per cent of UNICEF staff. The vast majority of those staff leaving the organization – 95 per cent – indicated that they would return to UNICEF if given the chance. The most frequent reasons for resignation included lack of career opportunities and incompatibility of the job with personal responsibilities (e.g., family, caregiving).

15. In 2018, UNICEF became the first United Nations agency to receive EDGE Certification. Since then, UNICEF has been recertified three times, most recently in

2022. In the most recent certification process, UNICEF made improvements in several areas, such as balanced gender representation at different post levels; a strengthened framework of policies and practices in the areas of recruitment and promotion; leadership development training; mentoring; and flexible working arrangements, with all five areas meeting the EDGE standard. Some of the key areas of work in the UNICEF EDGE Action Plan 2022–2024 relate to increasing gender parity in hardship duty stations (which can also serve to encourage more reporting of possible sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in these locations), promoting uptake of more family-friendly policies, and clarifying roles and accountabilities related to prevention and response to sexual harassment.

16. As part of the evaluability assessment and formative evaluation of the UNICEF positioning to achieve the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, the enabler on dynamic and inclusive people and culture was evaluated as being “sufficient/good enough”, with buy-in and attention across the organization. However, the evaluation also found that resources may not be sufficient for the task at hand, and that more emphasis is needed on having an effective performance management system that empowers managers to hold underperforming employees accountable without fear of retaliation.

17. Ensuring a robust and effective approach to managing performance is fundamental to UNICEF practicing its core value of accountability. Hence a thematic audit of the performance management function was completed in early 2023 by OIAI. The audit found the performance management approach to be partially satisfactory, with major improvements needed. A management response to the audit is under preparation, with specific actions to be undertaken in 2023 and subsequent years.

18. An evaluation is under way of the reasonable accommodation fund, which was set up in 2013 to help provide accommodation support to employees with disabilities in any UNICEF office. The evaluation is expected to provide recommendations to help the fund to evolve as an instrument to promote a more inclusive environment in UNICEF offices around the world; one that attracts and retains talent irrespective of a person’s disability.

19. Accountability is fundamental to building a values-based organizational culture. Employees need to know – and perceive– that anyone violating the values, policies and standards of conduct of UNICEF will be held accountable. Since 2021, OIAI has collected data and reported on allegations of discrimination, classified by type. In its annual report for 2022, which is also being presented to the Executive Board at the current session, OIAI reported that in 2022 it had opened six cases of alleged discrimination, including cases based on race, gender, religion, ethnicity and other characteristics.

20. With respect to sexual harassment, in 2022, OIAI received 23 reports. In four cases received in 2022 or carried over from 2021, OIAI found a factual basis indicating that a staff member had engaged in possible misconduct. The cases were transmitted to the Deputy Executive Director, Management, for possible disciplinary proceedings. Of these four cases, two resulted in findings of misconduct and the imposition of disciplinary sanctions. As of January 2023, two cases remained under review. In one other case closed in 2022, OIAI found a factual basis indicating that non-staff personnel had engaged in possible misconduct and transmitted the case to the head of the relevant office for possible management action, including contractual termination. In 2022, OIAI closed three sexual harassment cases on the basis of the alleged victims’ lack of consent to proceed with a formal investigation and where the allegations could not be established through other means.

III. Policy and governance

21. A dedicated team, based in the Office of the Executive Director, leads UNICEF work on organizational culture and diversity, equity and inclusion issues. The team is responsible for monitoring, coordinating and supporting all aspects of the work on organizational culture change and diversity, equity and inclusion across UNICEF.

22. In December 2022, UNICEF adopted the Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy, which covers organizational commitments and targets in both programme and operational areas until 2030. The Policy and Strategy is linked to the implementation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and will guide UNICEF work on programmes, operations and culture towards disability inclusion. The Policy and Strategy outlines UNICEF priorities for children with disabilities and provides strategic direction and a framework for accelerating disability-inclusive programming and results at scale, based on evidence, lessons learned and good practices. It also includes operational targets, such as progressively increasing the number of staff with disabilities in the UNICEF global workforce to 7 per cent by 2030; having disability inclusion specialists in all regional offices; and ensuring that 75 per cent of UNICEF employees complete disability-inclusion training by 2025.

23. In 2022, UNICEF adopted several new policies with a view to strengthening a people-centric approach to human resources management. These new policies provide for more consideration of the spouses of staff members for consultancies; additional flexibilities with respect to caretaking, bereavement, family and parental leave; and more consideration of the unique needs of diverse colleagues (e.g., employees with disabilities) when it comes to rotation and mobility exercises.

24. To help country offices to improve monitoring and reporting on workplace culture change, new guidance and templates were developed for office-level annual management plans. The new guidance was developed as part of an overall organizational effort to simplify and streamline planning processes in the interest of greater efficiency. It is expected that the new guidance and templates will allow offices to maintain attention to workplace culture issues as a key management priority each year.

25. A diversity, equity and inclusion advisory group was established in 2022 and tasked to guide and provide strategic advice to this area of work. Membership is drawn from different parts of the organization, covering country and regional offices and headquarters, the Global Staff Association and employee resource group representatives, relevant functional areas and senior management. The advisory group meets twice a year. Topics reviewed by the group in 2022 included data emerging from the country office annual reporting process and the Global Staff Survey, as well as the Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy and proposed changes to UNICEF current approach around workforce diversity.

26. Collaboration between the Culture and Diversity team and the independent offices, such as OIAI and the Ethics Office, is strong, continuous and within the limits of confidentiality. For example, the offices have come together to provide coordinated and coherent support to country offices through joint missions, developing comprehensive communications materials around the core values and standards of conduct, and providing follow-up support to offices with low scores on the Global Staff Survey and Pulse Check survey. In addition, the Division of Human Resources, the Global Learning Centre in the Global Shared Services Centre, and the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy are important strategic partners and co-creators in various initiatives, including the Humans of UNICEF programme, the values in

action initiative, diversity, equity and inclusion learning programmes and communications outreach and messages shared with all staff.

27. Partnership with the staff association at the global, regional and country levels has been critical to moving key agendas forward. For example, the staff associations have been strong voices encouraging employees to participate in the Global Staff Survey and Pulse Checks, and in office-level follow-up actions. The Global Staff Association has been a critical partner in the Humans of UNICEF programme, as well as in the values in action initiative. The Global Staff Association has also represented the views of staff in various policy review processes and in different governance forums.

28. Several employee resource groups exist in UNICEF and have been supported by the organization to help to contribute to inclusion in different ways. Some of the current groups focus on employees with disabilities; younger employees (i.e., under 35 years of age); gender issues; and employees from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning and other terms (LGBTIQ+) community. Some activities undertaken by the employee resource groups included bringing in external experts and speakers on specific topics relevant to the employee resource group; expanding outreach to increase membership, especially from country and regional offices; setting up informal mentoring programmes for members; and providing feedback to the Culture and Diversity team and the Division of Human Resources on different initiatives from the perspectives of their members. Employee resource groups have also been consulted on new policies relevant to staff, such as mobility and parental leave.

29. To further diversify its workforce and increase representation of underrepresented or marginalized groups, UNICEF is developing a whole of diversity approach. This means that, in addition to considering gender and nationality as diversity factors, UNICEF will also consider factors such as age, disability status, region of origin and other locally relevant factors as it strives for a workforce that better represents the diverse populations it serves. In addition, UNICEF will place a stronger focus on assessing candidates for alignment to the organization's six core values (care, respect, integrity, trust, accountability and environmental sustainability), while maintaining as the paramount consideration for all recruitments the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

IV. Awareness-raising and capacity-building

30. Building knowledge and skills can be a critical first step for lasting behaviour change. A major area of focus for UNICEF in 2022 was improving the knowledge, understanding and practice of values-based behaviours, and of which behaviours should not be practiced or encouraged, among all employees. With respect to diversity, equity and inclusion specifically, 20 offices were supported through diagnostic exercises, tailored awareness-raising and learning sessions, and conversations related to discrimination, living the core values, how to be an ally or upstander when witnessing discrimination or other inappropriate behaviours, and conscious and unconscious bias. More than 1,000 employees were directly reached through these sessions. Additional sessions with other offices are planned in 2023 and subsequent years.

31. UNICEF continued to deliver various training and learning packages that included topics such as the core values, building self-awareness among managers and leaders and inclusive leadership. In 2022, 342 managers participated in the Management Masterclass Programme, which was aimed at strengthening their personal leadership and managerial capacities. Forty-two per cent of senior leaders

(approximately 132 colleagues, comprising Representatives, Deputy Representatives and Directors) were reached with learning programmes that included diversity, equity and inclusion training and modules (within the Deputy Representatives' Leadership Initiative, Senior Leaders' Orientation and the newly launched Leading for the Future learning series). A total of 109 senior leaders were part of the Executive Insight Programme and completed 360-degree feedback assessments and benefited from executive coaching to improve their leadership skills.

32. Global induction and orientation are available to all new staff and provide an overview of the core values, ethical standards and Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service. A total of 871 new staff were reached in 2022, or about 47 per cent of external recruitments over the same period. All UNICEF employees are required to complete an online training course on prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of authority. The staff completion rate for the training is 94 per cent, while the completion rate for all personnel is 79 per cent.

33. The report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority noted that career development opportunities for national staff needed to be improved, including opportunities that aim to help national staff to transition into international positions if they so desire. In 2022, 43 national staff completed the REACH programme, a global professional development and transition programme for high-potential national staff who want to pursue international careers. Twenty-eight per cent of those who completed the programme were offered international professional posts. Given the high demand for and global interest in the programme, a new iteration of the programme was launched in 2023. In addition, 128 national staff participated in the IMPACT+ programme, which covers fit-for-work fundamentals to support staff to excel in their current roles by providing a combination of technical and soft skills learning tools. The ASPIRE (Aiming to Strengthen People Skills, Individual and Role Effectiveness) programme delivered sessions to 393 staff in all seven regions and three headquarters locations.

34. A leadership development programme for staff 35 years of age and younger was rolled out in 2022, along with two new career support pilot programmes: one for staff with disabilities and one for female staff. These programmes reached a total of 126 staff.

35. Building UNICEF capacity on diversity, equity and inclusion requires new tools and guidelines to help to deepen employees' ability to apply relevant approaches. A glossary was prepared and shared with all employees, providing a common understanding and reference point for sensitive terms; the glossary was also shared within the United Nations community working on diversity, equity and inclusion issues and served to inform a United Nations-wide glossary. An online guide on diversity, equity and inclusion in recruitment processes was developed to help human resources practitioners and hiring managers to understand how to consider diversity from the initial stages of any recruitment and throughout each step of the process. A dignity at work tool kit was developed on an internal website, providing a one-stop shop for key policies, tools and guidance on different aspects of misconduct and inappropriate behaviour, including harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. This tool kit guides employees who are directly affected by such misconduct, as well as others with associated responsibilities (e.g., supervisors and active allies). The tool kit offers advice on how to select a person to seek advice from, how to prepare for a conversation with a person behaving in an inappropriate way and how to deal with denial by that person. With links to other internal resources, the tool kit also covers the formal complaints and investigation process and other avenues for assistance and support. A tool kit on how to address domestic abuse affecting UNICEF employees was finalized for roll-out in 2023.

36. Along with raising awareness, it is important to provide tools, guidance and good practices to help employees to understand and adopt expected behaviours. UNICEF has drafted a diversity, equity and inclusion storytelling good practices guide that aims to empower employees to think critically about how they use language and tell stories that reflect the organization's core values and consider diversity and inclusion. The guide emphasizes that, by making sure that its advocacy and communications are anti-racist and inclusive, UNICEF strengthens its ability to reflect the different needs of different children, no matter their background. In 2022, global webinars were held for UNICEF communications professionals on topics such as deconstructing "white saviourism" in international development and avoiding harmful stereotypes in UNICEF communications products. New guidelines were also developed on respectful child imagery, and were shared with the National Committees for UNICEF and country and regional offices to guide their external communications and fundraising efforts. An external expert on diversity, equity and inclusion conducted a content review of the public websites of selected National Committees and provided recommendations on language and how they can incorporate diversity in their communication products.

37. A new spectrum of behaviours tool was launched to support UNICEF personnel in practising behaviours that align with the core values. The tool catalogues nearly 200 behaviours known to be practiced across the organization, connects each behaviour with the core values, and helps employees to reflect on how to practice values-based behaviours and understand when behaviours are not aligned with the core values or standards of conduct. Each behaviour has a "wiki-style" intranet page that includes relevant policies and guidance, anecdotal examples and questions and answers that can help colleagues when considering a course of action.

38. UNICEF continues to encourage recourse to mediation as a first step to resolve interpersonal conflicts between colleagues. UNICEF is exploring the possibility of expanding mediation services in the context of the mediation pledge that it adopted in 2021. The Office of the Ombudsman for United Nations Funds and Programmes is considering mechanisms to evaluate the suitability of mediation for every case that is subject to a request for management evaluation and litigation in the United Nations Dispute Tribunal as a first step, and one that will avoid unnecessary litigation. This is consistent with General Assembly resolution [77/260](#) (30 December 2022), which, in paragraph 18, reaffirmed the importance of the informal dispute resolution process: "requests the Secretary-General to increase awareness among staff of the possibility of having conversations with the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services to explore informal resolution, including mediation, as a first step, where feasible, prior to filing a formal complaint, encourages such conversations, and also requests the Secretary-General to provide further information in this regard."

39. In 2022, the Office of the Ombudsman for United Nations Funds and Programmes received a total of 506 ombuds and mediation cases, of which 152 were from UNICEF. The Office received a total of 168 mediation requests, of which 59 were from UNICEF personnel. A total of 81 of all mediation requests were converted into actual mediations, and 31 of those mediation cases involved UNICEF personnel, compared to 22 UNICEF mediation cases in 2021. The settlement rate of all mediation cases was 88 per cent, and the satisfaction rate was 4.2 on a 5-point scale.

40. The Office of the Ombudsman also conducted various outreach and learning programmes on mediation, reaching more than 37 UNICEF county offices and headquarters teams. In addition, the Office has prepared video materials that showcase the stories of the colleagues who have been party to mediation and have agreed to share their mediation experience anonymously. The Office also prepared interviews with mediators who are part of its Global Mediation Panel. All materials and information are available on the Office's [website](#).

41. More than 3,900 UNICEF personnel in 39 offices were reached through targeted ethics training and outreach activities. The activities were led by the Ethics Office and included face-to-face, hybrid and virtual sessions for offices, and sessions for different groups of audiences at the regional and global levels, including senior leaders, security personnel and staff associations.

42. These internal capacity-building efforts will continue and expand in 2023. An e-learning programme on unconscious bias is in development. The programme will help to raise awareness of how unconscious bias affects all human beings and how it can be mitigated. Conversations are being planned with male employees about how to make the UNICEF workplace more gender-sensitive. This planned action is in response to the significant differences in the perceptions of male and female staff as reflected in the Pulse Check surveys and the 2022 Global Staff Survey. An organization-wide learning pathway for all managers is also being developed in 2023, with the aim of reaching all 4,000 managers across the organization within an 18-month period.

V. Strategic internal communications with and for staff

43. Strategic internal, two-way communication with and for staff was identified as an enabler in the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025. An organizational-wide initiative, values in action, was jointly developed by the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy, the Ethics Office, the Culture and Diversity team, the Division of Human Resources and the Global Staff Association, and further implemented in collaboration with human resources teams, staff associations, staff counsellors, Peer Support Volunteers and Ethics and Culture Champions across all offices.

44. The values in action initiative was formally launched globally during Ethics Month in October 2022, with a focus on the UNICEF core value of accountability. As part of this, more than 1,700 participants from 143 countries attended a global conversation on accountability in action hosted by the Deputy Executive Director, Management, the Director of the Ethics Office and the Chair of the Global Staff Association. This conversation focused on practical examples of how accountability is demonstrated in UNICEF, including in areas such as managing performance, collaboration of teams and protection from sexual abuse and exploitation. Aligned with these global efforts, in the fourth quarter of 2022 more than 3,200 colleagues in close to 70 offices took part in local discussions and activities led by Ethics and Culture Champions on different aspects of accountability. The network of Ethics and Culture Champions is jointly managed by the Ethics Office and the Culture and Diversity team. In 2022, 78 per cent of UNICEF offices reported rolling out initiatives and campaigns to align staff behaviours with the UNICEF core values.

45. The Humans of UNICEF programme continues to contribute to building a more values-based workplace culture. The programme expanded in 2022 with more than 200 new nominations, bringing the total number of employees nominated by their peers as Humans of UNICEF to 2,600 since its launch in February 2020.

46. The ‘conversations on leading effectively in a dynamic UNICEF’, which were initiated to support senior leaders dealing with unprecedented leadership challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, continued throughout 2022. Topics discussed included how to strengthen individual accountability for questionable behaviour; how to encourage a culture of learning from mistakes or failures; how to encourage a speak-up culture and appreciate those employees who do speak up; and how to handle behavioural performance issues more effectively. On average, more than 100

Representatives, Directors and other senior leaders attended these quarterly conversations.

47. Recognizing the need for an increased focus on changing individual and team behaviours, UNICEF has initiated research in two selected country offices on a few behaviours based on the values charter. The research will examine motivations and constraints for these specific behaviours, and provide initial ideas on how to encourage and motivate employees to embrace values-based behaviours more explicitly.

48. UNICEF adopted a sixth core value, environmental sustainability, in 2022. Socialization of this new value was rolled out among employees, with more than 1,300 colleagues voting on its visual identity or taking part in regional consultations to define what this new value means for the organization and its employees.

VI. Inter-agency collaboration

49. Collaborating, sharing and exchanging experiences with other United Nations entities helps UNICEF to enrich its work on culture and diversity, in the spirit of mutual learning and joint progress. From 2020 to 2022, UNICEF co-led, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Secretariat, the substream on new ways of working under the Task Force on the Future of Work established by the High-level Committee on Management. The main results of the new ways of working workstream were: a set of senior leadership commitments that define the expectations of senior leaders in the United Nations; a United Nations System Model Policy on Flexible Work that builds on UNICEF leading progress on implementing flexible work arrangements; a repository of good practices on organizational culture; a proposal for assessing and developing organizational culture; a review of work-life harmony actions across the United Nations system; United Nations system model guidelines on ‘boundaries at work/right to disconnect’; and an overview of considerations, challenges and recommendations on diversity, equity and inclusion.

50. The new working group on diversity, equity and inclusion established by the High-level Committee on Management in 2022, is co-chaired by the Universal Postal Union, the United Nations Secretariat and UNICEF. The group has already prepared a United Nations-wide glossary on diversity, equity and inclusion, which builds on the one developed by UNICEF in 2022; good practices on diversity, equity and inclusion; and a United Nations-wide vision and set of principles on diversity, equity and inclusion. UNICEF is also a member of, and engages with, the focal points network of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

51. UNICEF is actively engaged in the task force on sexual harassment under the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, contributing to joint results related to data and reporting on sexual harassment, and knowledge-sharing and learning. Based on the insights of the fifth annual survey done by the task force and published in November 2022, UNICEF will incorporate good practices and feedback received through the survey report focusing on risk indicators such as vulnerable categories of personnel, environments in which employees are at greater risk of sexual harassment and the most common types of sexual harassment. This will allow for targeted prevention and a victim-centred approach to the issue.

VII. Draft decision

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the update provided by UNICEF on the progress made to make its culture more values-based and inclusive;
 2. *Requests* UNICEF to provide an update to the Executive Board on how the organization is improving organizational culture and on its actions related to diversity, equity and inclusion at the annual session of 2024.
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