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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 and note of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) issued from 1 January to 31 December 2023. Of the five reports publicly issued during that period, three contained recommendations directly relevant to UNICEF. One note was also issued with six recommendations addressed to UNICEF management. Of the total of 29 recommendations issued in the system-wide reports and note, 21 were addressed to UNICEF: 17 to the UNICEF management and 4 to the Executive Board as the legislative body of UNICEF. This report provides UNICEF management responses to the relevant recommendations and includes an update on the implementation status of the recommendations contained in the JIU reports issued prior to 2023. The organization greatly appreciates the JIU insights and the related observations and recommendations included therein.

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

*E/ICEF/2024/10.

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



I. Overview

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) 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 recommendations for consideration by either the executive heads or the legislative/governing bodies of each organization. Management letters contain recommendations for the attention of the executive heads of all participating organizations for action as appropriate.

2. This UNICEF report to the Executive Board provides a brief overview of the UNICEF response to relevant reports publicly issued by JIU from 1 January to 31 December 2023¹ and comments on JIU recommendations directed to UNICEF (see annex I). The complete JIU reports and note 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 or through the hyperlinked titles of each report presented in section II.

3. Since UNICEF submission of the JIU report for 2022 ([E/ICEF/2023/11](#)) to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2023, the organization has worked with JIU on various reviews. UNICEF management continues to prioritize and provide the implementation status on the recommendations of the JIU. As a member organization of CEB, UNICEF also contributes to the United Nations system-wide consolidated responses to the JIU reports.

4. In 2023, JIU issued five reports and one note. Two were single-organization reports, “Review of management and administration in the United Nations Population Fund” and the “Review of the management and administration in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations”, and therefore did not apply to UNICEF. The three system-wide reports and one note contained a total of 29 recommendations, of which 21 were relevant to UNICEF (4 addressed to the UNICEF Executive Board and 17 to the executive head of UNICEF). The acceptance and implementation status of the 21 recommendations as at 31 January 2024 is presented in annex I and can be summarized as follows:

(a) UNICEF accepted 16 recommendations, of which 7 have been implemented and 9 are in progress;

(b) One recommendation was not accepted;

(c) Four recommendations were not relevant or were outside UNICEF sole remit for implementation.

5. Annex II details the status of the seven recommendations made by the JIU prior to 2023 that were in progress as at 31 January 2024. In summary:

(a) Five were implemented;

(b) Two (issued in 2022) are in progress.

¹ The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) issued four reports during the period 1 January to 31 December 2023, of which three were relevant to UNICEF. At the 2024 annual session of the Executive Board, UNICEF will comment on reports issued after 31 December 2022 that were part of the JIU programme of work for 2021 and 2022. As of the drafting of this document, no reports were issued from the JIU programme of work for 2023.

II. Highlights of Joint Inspection Unit reports issued in 2023

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

A. Review of measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations: managing for achieving organizational effectiveness (JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1)²

7. The review examined how entities in the United Nations system have upheld, in their own institutions, the provisions in the legal and policy frameworks established under the auspices of the United Nations for addressing racism and racial discrimination among the Member States. It provides a description and analysis of the manifestations and configurations of race, racism and racial discrimination across the United Nations system, and of the measures and mechanisms adopted and implemented to enhance effectiveness, coherence, continued relevance and sustainability in preventing and addressing racism and racial discrimination among organizations in the United Nations system.

8. The review found that while there has been progress in some parts of the United Nations system, racism and racial discrimination in the system's organizations are major and under-recognized problems that require urgent whole-of-system responses. Racism and racial discrimination are widespread throughout the United Nations system and the magnitude of these issues, based on evidence of the prevalence, form and effects of racism and racial discrimination, is considerable. Without a clear working definition of race and racism, the system remains unable to undertake the assessment and analysis of the issues of race and racism necessary to deliver effective action, oversight and accountability. There is a lack of confidence among personnel, who predominantly choose not to avail themselves of existing recourse mechanisms, which are rarely perceived as delivering satisfactory outcomes when employed.

9. The review put forward six recommendations, covering support for systems for accountability and transparency; operational activities; and harmonization, coherence and collaboration in working towards a common system-wide objective.

10. UNICEF did not participate in the staff survey part of the review in early 2022 as it was duplicative with an already-planned UNICEF staff survey covering many of the same issues. However, the organization provided extensive information throughout the very comprehensive process of the review.

11. UNICEF co-chaired the Working Group on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion under the High-level Committee on Management in 2022, under which some of the review's recommendations could be actioned. These include the establishment of an accountability framework for addressing racism and racial discrimination, and developing an integrated curriculum to improve awareness, learning and performance that responds to the needs of personnel of various functions, categories and levels to address all forms and configurations of racism and racial discrimination in the workplace. UNICEF believes that all of the review's recommendations would be best implemented using an intersectional approach, building on lessons learned from work undertaken by the United Nations system to promote gender equality, disability inclusion and more balanced geographical representation.

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

B. Review of the internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanisms available to staff of the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2023/2)

12. UNICEF welcomes the JIU Report on the internal pre-tribunal appeal mechanisms, which provides a comprehensive assessment of the appeal mechanisms across the United Nations system organizations. The report highlights the changes that many organizations have made over the past decade to ensure staff have access to impartial and effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

13. The report looks at internal appeal mechanisms that address administrative decisions in general, together with specialized mechanisms that address more technical areas (e.g. performance appraisals and medical determinations). The report draws attention to opportunities for improvements in organizations' processes to ensure staff have access to a meaningful review process and notes possible areas for further study. The report highlights good practices that organizations follow in addressing appeals, including UNICEF structure and processes in relation to appeals involving administrative decisions and performance appraisals. Additionally, the report notes that UNICEF is the second-most-efficient organization (after the United Nations Secretariat) in addressing appeals on an annual basis. These comments reflect UNICEF commitment to providing staff with independent, impartial mechanisms to resolve disputes efficiently and effectively and are a positive indicator that the changes made in response to the 2019 Report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority have strengthened UNICEF systems.

14. The majority of the recommendations are not applicable, or not addressed to UNICEF. Nevertheless, the report gives UNICEF an opportunity to benchmark its processes against other organizations and to look at areas for improvement in its processes. (CEB comments are not available.)

C. Review of accountability frameworks in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2023/3)

15. The review is a follow-up to the 2011 JIU Report on Accountability frameworks in the United Nations system that was requested by the General Assembly in 2010. The objective of the review was to: (a) Examine the status of acceptance and implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2011 JIU report; (b) Update the 2011 JIU reference accountability framework; (c) Compare the existing accountability frameworks with the updated 2023 JIU reference accountability framework; (d) Review how organizations are monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of their frameworks; (e) Review joint United Nations accountability-related activities. UNICEF found the report to be very useful and insightful on the accountability system of the United Nations.

16. During the time of the JIU review, UNICEF was in the process of updating its 2009 Board-approved accountability framework, as requested by the UNICEF Executive Board. UNICEF presented the Report of the accountability system of UNICEF to the Board in September 2022 before the release of the JIU draft report. UNICEF was referenced throughout the JIU report as an example of good practice in line with a number of JIU benchmarks. (CEB comments are available in [A/78/595/Add.1](#).)

D. Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2023/4)

17. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report on the Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in United Nations system organizations, which aims to provide the High-level Committee on Management with essential insights and recommendations for the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. The report emphasizes the declining mental health and well-being of United Nations system personnel, intensified by unique work-related psychosocial risk factors and exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, calls for a system-wide commitment to prioritize mental health and well-being and provides several recommendations.

18. The recommendations emphasize the need for robust governance, accountability and an evidence-based, data-driven approach to mental health and well-being within the United Nations system. Key areas of focus are the inclusion of mental health and well-being in organizational strategies and processes, the enhancement of psychosocial support services, particularly in high-risk duty stations, and the integration of mental health considerations into return-to-work policies and training programmes, particularly for managers. UNICEF is an active member of the Mental Health Strategy Board and is actively implementing many of the proposed recommendations, with most staff well-being priorities already embedded in the UNICEF OneHR Strategy 2022–2025, demonstrating its commitment to enhancing mental health and well-being strategies and practices across the organization and in coordination with United Nations partners. Furthermore, UNICEF acknowledges the importance of a data-driven, evidence-based approach to well-being and will keep working to enhance this aspect. (CEB comments are available in [A/78/695/Add.1](#).)

Annex I

Summary of the status of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF, 1 January–31 December 2023

<i>Relevant recommendations</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Review of measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations: managing for achieving organizational effectiveness (JIU/NOTE/2022/1/Rev.1)¹	
1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board	
Note does not include any recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board.	
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head	
Recommendation 1 The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should collaborate, in the framework of the CEB, to establish a common set of categories for voluntary self-identification by personnel by June 2024, for the purposes of monitoring, analysing, evaluating and reporting on progress and success in achieving the goals of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in addressing racism and racial discrimination.	Outside sole remit This recommendation is outside the sole remit of UNICEF. As one of the three co-chairs of the inter-agency Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group, UNICEF will continue to advocate for implementation of this recommendation at the inter-agency level to the extent possible.
Recommendation 2 The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should direct their respective training and learning units to develop and implement a high-impact and integrated curriculum to improve awareness, learning and performance that responds to the needs of personnel of various functions, categories and levels in order to address all forms and configurations of racism and racial discrimination in the workplace.	Accepted and implemented UNICEF, in line with a recommendation from its internal Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination, is taking an intersectional approach to learning around non-discrimination and inclusive behaviours. UNICEF is in the process of developing an integrated diversity, equity and inclusion learning curriculum that encompasses all forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination. A focus on addressing unconscious biases through a growth mindset is emphasized in these learning modules in order to affect behaviour change.
	Through its Division of Human Resources, UNICEF already has several learning programmes in place for managers and supervisors. These include modules focusing on capacity-building on diversity, equity and inclusion such as the Management MasterClass Programme, the ASPIRE Programme and the Deputy Representative Leadership Initiative. To complement these, a manager support programme was rolled out in early 2024 with additional learning modules on addressing racism and racial discrimination in the workplace as part of the overall topic of diversity, equity and inclusion. The manager support programme

¹ Identification numbers of the Joint Inspection Unit reports do not correspond to the year of issuance.

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

is mandatory for all UNICEF managers to complete within 24 months, and will reach around 6,000 managers within this time period.

In addition, UNICEF has already developed, and is planning to launch in 2024, a new e-learning programme geared to all staff on unconscious bias and becoming an inclusion champion.

The United Nations System Staff College offers courses on different aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion that should ideally be made more accessible and available to all United Nations staff (e.g. by reducing the cost or translating the courses into all official languages of the United Nations).

UNICEF staff can also avail themselves of various courses available on the Agora training platform, which includes courses developed by other United Nations entities and other reputable organizations.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not done so should provide sufficient resources to support the achievement of defined results for the implementation of action plans for addressing racism and racial discrimination.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations, as members of the CEB, should jointly develop and provide resources to a high-level, inter-agency standing mechanism intended to unite organizations, leverage their existing capacities and comparative added value to collaborate and work together to respond to both immediate and longer-term needs for addressing racism and racial discrimination across the United Nations system, and address the transformative changes needed to enhance the continued relevance and value of the various efforts at both the organizational and the system-wide levels.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should establish, by 2024, an accountability framework that sets out the expected results, outcomes and key performance indicators for addressing racism and racial discrimination, and report periodically to their legislative organs and/or governing bodies on progress made in achieving the predefined results.

Accepted and implemented

Since 2022, UNICEF has had a dedicated team working on organizational culture and diversity, equity and inclusion. Racism is one of the issues the team seeks to address, along with other forms of discrimination.

Outside of sole remit

This recommendation is outside the sole remit of UNICEF. The organization welcomes the call for more inter-agency coordination around racial discrimination, and supports the use of the already existing and functional mechanisms such as the Working Group on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, led within the High-level Committee on Management Human Resources network, rather than creating a parallel body. UNICEF co-chaired the working group until the end of 2023 but will continue to be an active member and will advocate for implementation of this recommendation.

Accepted and implemented

Since 2021, UNICEF has been implementing a comprehensive action plan based on the recommendations from its internal Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination. The action plan includes the expected outcome for addressing racism and discrimination. The actions are intended to address all forms of discrimination in a holistic and integrated manner, rather than singling out racial discrimination. UNICEF has shared its action plan with other United

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks***Recommendation 6**

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should strengthen the equal distribution of opportunities in human resources management for all personnel.

Nations organizations in the spirit of collaboration, sharing learning and benchmarking.

UNICEF reports annually as a standing agenda item to the Executive Board on progress made specifically in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion and organizational culture.

Accepted and in progress

Under the UNICEF OneHR Strategy 2022–2025 and the Human Resources Delivery Model and Human Resource Strategy, UNICEF has included diversity, equity and inclusion as one of its cross-cutting priorities. In 2024, an integrated talent development framework for all personnel is under development by the Division of Human Resources, as well as a new people strategy. UNICEF tracks diversity in each functional area, such as human resources, child protection, education, etc. This allows the organization to see where special measures may be necessary to increase representation from underrepresented groups, as was done at the P-5 level for women in 2022. In addition, as reported to UNICEF Executive Board in 2023, a new approach to increasing workforce diversity is being rolled out in 2024.

UNICEF will continue to monitor representation across different groups, regions, levels and functional areas as part of its regular human resource systems and reporting.

Review of management and administration in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (JIU/REP/2023/1)

1. No recommendations addressed to UNICEF.

Review of the internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanisms available to staff of the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2023/2)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 5

The legislative organs and governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request their respective executive heads who have not yet done so to report to them annually, starting in 2025, on the functioning of their formal internal appeal mechanisms, including the specialized recourse mechanisms. The reports should include details on the number, subject matter and outcome of appeals, including cases deemed irreceivable, information on the demographics of applicants and information on whether the appealed decisions were upheld or

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF has well-established reporting modalities on the formal internal appeal mechanisms. Specifically, with regard to the management evaluation request mechanism, UNICEF reports annually to the General Assembly under the agenda item, “Administration of Justice at the United Nations”. The Secretary-General’s report contains contributions from UNICEF on the number of management evaluation requests and their outcomes. Although the report does not include information about demographics or subject matter, given the limited number of management evaluation

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

revised, disaggregated by type of procedure, as applicable.

requests received by UNICEF, information on the demographics of staff members could prejudice the confidentiality of the appeal process without providing any meaningful information. Regarding the performance management rebuttal mechanism, UNICEF publishes annually on its Intranet the number of rebuttal cases and the percentage of cases that were upheld and not upheld. For reasons of confidentiality, UNICEF does not publish brief descriptions of each case nor information on the demographics of applicants.

2. No recommendations addressed to the executive head

Review of accountability frameworks in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2023/3)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 1

The legislative organs and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request their executive heads to assess their organization's accountability framework against the updated JIU reference accountability framework and adjust it as necessary, by the end of 2024.

Accepted and implemented

At the request of the UNICEF Executive Board in its decision 2022/16, UNICEF presented the Report of the accountability system of UNICEF to the Board in 2022. To complement the report, UNICEF prepared a Compendium on the organization of UNICEF, which outlines the structure of the organization and contains an updated description of the functions and responsibilities of country, regional and headquarters offices in support of the organizational mandate for children. Additionally, UNICEF has produced a Summary of the accountability system and organization of UNICEF, which is a synopsis of both the Executive Board report and the compendium. These documents outline the structures through which UNICEF ensures accountability and underscore the organization's commitment to performance management and decision-making, supported by effective risk management and underpinned by UNICEF core values.

After assessing the recently updated UNICEF accountability framework and corresponding documents against the JIU model, it was determined that UNICEF meets the majority of the benchmarks. Throughout the JIU report, UNICEF was also cited as an example of best practice. UNICEF will continue to strengthen alignment with the JIU model and benchmarks.

Recommendation 2

Beginning in 2025, the legislative organs and/or governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the oversight plans of internal oversight offices cover all elements of their

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF considers this recommendation implemented as this practice is in line with the updated UNICEF

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

respective accountability framework within a reasonable time frame and that, if coverage is incomplete, a rationale is provided.

accountability framework that was presented to the Executive Board in 2022.

The Office of Internal Audit and Investigations conducts its internal audits based on a risk-based workplan that is refreshed periodically to select audits covering the highest residual risks to the achievement of the organization's objectives. Elements of accountability and its underlying components figure within the audit universe for periodic risk assessments undertaken by the office. Starting in 2024, the Office began communicating the basis and rationale of the annual audit workplan to the Executive Board, thus providing the Board a clear overview of the audit coverage and key gaps, if any.

Similar to the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, the Evaluation Office plans evaluations to cover those areas it deems to be of highest strategic priority to UNICEF based on its independent analyses coupled with internal and external consultations. In conjunction with the Revised evaluation policy of UNICEF (2023), the Evaluation Office will be gradually phasing in another means of conducting its quadrennial and annual evaluation planning processes. This will not only be based on residual risk, as does the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, but also on potential forward-looking opportunities for the evaluation lens to be applied.

Similarly, the Ethics Office submits periodic reports to the Executive Board that outline activities conducted under its mandate, along with the required parameters and priorities. At the end of each report, the Office lists its strategic priorities for the coming year. These priorities are informed by various diagnostics, including a risk-mapping tool designed with other offices and the periodic staff surveys conducted within UNICEF. In addition, the office administers the annual UNICEF Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme for staff, which is designed to identify and manage any conflicts of interest that may arise from the personal relationships, financial interests, or outside activities of the staff member participating in the programme.

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should, starting from 2025, present to their legislative organs and/or governing bodies a regular report on the implementation of the

Not accepted

UNICEF aligns itself with the Note by the Secretary-General on the review of accountability frameworks in the United Nations system organizations, [A/78/595/Add.1](#).

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

accountability framework and on the costs of its key components.

UNICEF already reports on accountability-related matters to its Executive Board, as defined in the Report of the accountability system of UNICEF, during its three formal sessions each year through pre-established reporting mechanisms. Documents of these sessions are publicly available on the UNICEF Executive Board website. Accountability is well covered in these reports and so a separate additional annual report would therefore be duplicative.

In terms of the costs of key components of the accountability framework, UNICEF reports on specific costs of key components of the accountability system in the documents presented to the Executive Board. However, not all components of the accountability system can be costed as many internal control mechanisms are embedded throughout the processes and practices of UNICEF.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should prepare, by the end of 2024, through consultations held in the appropriate inter-agency mechanisms, a common United Nations system reference accountability framework maturity model, taking into consideration the updated JIU reference accountability framework.

Outside sole remit

This recommendation is outside the sole remit of UNICEF. As UNICEF is one of the organizations that has recently reviewed its accountability framework, the organization is prepared to engage and share experiences through inter-agency consultations, if such a mechanism is established.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should prepare, by the end of 2025, an assessment of the maturity of their own accountability frameworks against the common United Nations system reference accountability framework maturity model and share the results with their respective legislative organs and/or governing bodies for information.

Outside sole remit

This recommendation is outside the sole remit of UNICEF. This recommendation is contingent on the implementation of Recommendation 4. If a common United Nations system accountability maturity model is developed at the inter-agency level, UNICEF will engage and participate, including by assessing its own accountability framework against the common model.

Review of mental health and well-being policies and practices in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2023/4)

1. Recommendations addressed to the legislative body/Executive Board

Recommendation 3

Legislative and/or governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request that executive heads provide, by the end of 2026, an update on the development and implementation of the mental health and well-being workplace action plan developed according to their evidence-based and data-driven organizational approach on the matter.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF supports this recommendation to ensure governance and accountability across the entire United Nations system. UNICEF mental health and well-being priorities are reflected in the UNICEF OneHR Strategy 2022–2025 under Strategic Result Area 3. Key achievements, challenges, lessons learned and initiatives related to mental health and well-being are reported in the Annual report of the Executive Director

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks*

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of those United Nations system organizations that do not already participate on the Implementation Board of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy should nominate a representative to serve on the Board by its first meeting in 2024.

Recommendation 2

Executive heads of United Nations system organizations, who have not already done so, should define an evidence-based and data-driven organizational approach to the mental health and well-being of their personnel and design, by the end of 2025, a workplace action plan and reflect its principles in their enterprise risk management process, their occupational health and safety framework and their human resources strategies.

Recommendation 4

By the end of 2024, executive heads of United Nations system organizations should review the rules governing the return to work of personnel, including provisions for granting accommodations to facilitate the return process, in order to ensure the inclusiveness of mental health-related considerations, and develop standard operating procedures that clearly identify roles and responsibilities, including decision-making.

of UNICEF to the Executive Board. Detailed updates on the development and implementation of the OneHR Strategy and workplan are available in the Annual report of the Division of Human Resources.

Accepted and implemented

UNICEF has been represented on the Implementation Board of the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy since its inception.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF has defined its organizational approach to mental health and well-being through its OneHR Strategy 2022–2025 under Strategic Result Area 3. The five priority actions are aligned with the United Nations Mental Health and Well-being Strategy for 2024 and beyond and adopt the four-step approach (workplace assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation) specified in the compendium United Nations System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Implementation Guide.

UNICEF has defined an evidence-based and data-driven approach using data from existing surveys (such as the Global Staff Survey and Pulse Check on Workplace Culture survey, human resources-related data and trends from the global team of staff counsellors), alongside the results from evidence-based instruments, to determine baseline measures and to assess specific workplace mental health issues. UNICEF will continue to work to strengthen the evidence-based approach and reflect these principles in the enterprise risk management process.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF has begun internal discussions regarding the need to review the rules governing the return to work of personnel, including provisions for granting of accommodations to facilitate the return process. UNICEF plays an active role at the inter-agency level through the United Nations Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Board and will continue to advocate for the inclusiveness of mental health-related considerations in the rules governing return to work of personnel.

*Relevant recommendations**Remarks***Recommendation 5**

By the end of 2024, executive heads of United Nations system organizations should assess and identify any gaps or areas to improve their counselling function in their organizational context, using the guidance on professional standards for counsellors prepared by the United Nations Staff/Stress Counsellors Group and endorsed by the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as well as key elements highlighted by the Joint Inspection Unit in the present report.

Recommendation 8

Executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure that their organizations collaborate on the mapping of psychosocial support capacity available in all locations and consider the system-wide capacity when designing their workplace action plans, capitalizing on shared services, cost-sharing and other models for cost-effective and efficient delivery.

Recommendation 9

Executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure that their workplace action plans on the mental health and well-being of their personnel, to be designed by the end of 2025, identify barriers to accessing psychosocial support services, including prioritizing stigma reduction through mental health literacy initiatives, outreach and health-promotion measures.

Recommendation 10

To maximize return on investment, executive heads of United Nations system organizations should, by 2026, ensure that well-being programmes and activities are embedded in and complement the evidence-based and data-driven approach of the organization to mental health and well-being and are routinely monitored and assessed.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF counsellors already abide by the United Nations Staff/Stress Counsellors Group Professional Standards for United Nations counsellors, are licensed or registered mental health practitioners and have access to monthly individual clinical supervision paid by UNICEF. The organization also provides counsellors with opportunities for further professional training.

UNICEF is working to strengthen global coordination of the staff counselling team while improving reporting systems to better identify systematic issues.

Accepted and in progress

UNICEF supports this recommendation and will collaborate with any mapping exercise led by the Critical Incident Stress Management Section of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security. The Chief, Staff Wellbeing, is part of the inter-agency Critical Incident Stress Management Working Group, which is considering the development of a psychosocial support heat map as part of its workplan for 2024. The results of this exercise will provide a solid basis for UNICEF to explore cost-sharing and other models for staff counsellor posts that are focused on supporting staff in emergency duty stations.

Accepted and in progress

One of the priorities of the UNICEF Staff Well-Being Team is to reduce stigma through mental health, literacy training and improving communications to strengthen awareness of mental health issues. UNICEF has established baseline measures for stigma and mental health literacy through mental health questions that are included in the Pulse Check survey.

Accepted and in progress

As outlined in the response to Recommendation 2, the use of evidence-based and data-driven approaches has already been documented for well-being programmes and activities. Monitoring and assessment of programmes and activities are reflected in the Annual report of the UNICEF Division of Human Resources.

The Indicator Scorecard developed as part of the United Nations Mental Health and Well-being Strategy for 2024 and beyond is used to report progress annually against the 12 indicators specified.

Relevant recommendations

Remarks

Recommendation 11

Executive heads of United Nations system organizations should explore integrating, by the end of 2024, mental health and well-being considerations into training programmes, in particular for managers, as a means to provide opportunities for facilitated discussions and enhanced learning and to support employees with mental health conditions.

Accepted and in progress

One of the mental health and well-being priorities in the UNICEF OneHR Strategy 2022–2025 is to strengthen the capacity of managers as key partners in supporting the mental health of their teams, while focusing on the managers’ well-being. A module focused on helping managers to support the well-being of their teams is included in the manager support programme that was rolled out in early 2024. In addition, UNICEF plays an active role in the United Nations Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy Board Working Group that is in the process of developing the United Nations Staff College Lead and Learn Programme Phase 2 Mental Health for Managers.

Annex II

Summary of the status of all open accepted Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF prior to 2023

<i>JIU report symbol</i>	<i>Recommendation (number) and summary text</i>	<i>Addressee</i>	<i>Current status</i>
JIU/REP/2019/8² Review of staff exchange and similar inter-agency mobility measures in United Nations system organizations	(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	Implemented
JIU/REP/2020/5 Enterprise risk management: approaches and uses in United Nations system organizations	(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	Implemented
	(2) Undertake a comprehensive review of their enterprise risk management implementation against Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) benchmarks 1 to 9, as outlined in the present report.	Executive head	Implemented
	(4) Report on the outcomes of a comprehensive review of the implementation of enterprise risk management against JIU benchmarks 1 to 9.	Legislative body	Implemented
JIU/REP/2020/8 Review of mainstreaming environmental sustainability across organizations of the United Nations system	(5) 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 the legislative organs and governing bodies from 2023.	Executive head	Implemented

² Identification numbers of the Joint Inspection Unit reports 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/2021/4 Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations	(6) Incorporate implementing partner risks into the organization's risk management frameworks by the end of 2023.	Executive head	In progress
JIU/REP/2021/5 Review of the ethics function in the United Nations system	(4) By 2024, supported by the Ethics function of the organization, evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency, including "value for money", of financial disclosure and declaration of interest programmes and, on the basis of the findings, propose changes to the relevant policies where appropriate.	Executive head	In progress