Report of the
Independent Task Force
on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

CMT	Change Management Team	OIAI	Office of Internal Audit and Investigations
DED	Deputy Executive Director	PER	Performance Evaluation Report
DHR	Division of Human Resources	RBM	Results-Based Management
ED	Executive Director	SG	Stakeholder Group of the ITF
EDGE	Economic Dividends for Gender Equality	TOR	Terms of Reference
HR	Human Resources	UN	United Nations
IRG	Internal Reference Group of the ITF	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ITF	Independent Task Force		

MEMBERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE ON WORKPLACE GENDER-DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, HARASSMENT AND ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

ITF Co-Chairs

Dr. Purnima Mane

Former President and Chief Executive Officer, Pathfinder International; and former Deputy Executive Director/Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

San Francisco, United States of America

Dr. Debrework Zewdie

Distinguished Scholar, School of Public Health and Public Policy, City University of New York; former Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and former Director, Global HIV/AIDS Program, the World Bank

Washington, D.C., United States

Members

Dr. Mabel Abraham

Assistant Professor of Management, Columbia Business School

New York, United States

Mr. Chernor Bah

Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Purposeful Productions

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Dr. Stefano Bertozzi

Dean Emeritus and Professor of Health Policy and Management, University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health

Berkeley, United States

Dr. Amel Karboul

Chief Executive Officer, Education Outcomes Fund for Africa and the Middle East; and Commissioner on the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (The Education Commission)

London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Mr. Marcelo Modica

Chief People Officer, Mercer

New York, United States

Mr. John Mullen

Chairman of Telstra

Sydney, Australia

Ms. Aimée Sentimat de Grimaldo

Chief Executive Officer, Banistmo S.A.

Panama City, Panama

Ms. Ndeye Madjiguene Sock

Global Operations Partner at Dalberg Advisors

Dakar, Senegal

FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

We were honoured to accept the invitation of Executive Director Henrietta Fore to co-chair the Independent Task Force (ITF) on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority. It was a chance for us to contribute to the growth of an organization that already has an excellent reputation worldwide for leading the way in a number of international development sectors. This review was an opportunity to take stock of the organizational culture of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) at an important historical moment of recognition that social norms have changed and that organizations – particularly those such as UNICEF, which stand to uphold the human rights of others – must change with them.

As co-chairs of the ITF, we commend Executive Director Fore for embracing the challenge of independent reviews, including this review and several others recently completed. In being open to and unafraid of suggestions for improvement, UNICEF has set an example for other United Nations entities and lives up to its reputation of leading the way.

We were particularly fortunate to have the support of the eight other members of the ITF, representing external leaders from public and private spheres, international development agencies, academia and the United Nations, each of whom brought their extensive experience to bear on both interpreting and analysing the findings and formulating workable recommendations. We thank them for their enthusiasm and sustained engagement throughout this journey.

In undertaking the initiative, the ITF committed to three important principles.

First, we intended the review to be independent of UNICEF management and avoid any perception that the findings and recommendations were unduly influenced. This we can confirm with certainty. Our aim was to provide an honest report that is constructive and useful.

Second, we took an iterative approach to the endeavour, sharing our findings and recommendations with Executive Director Fore and the deputy executive director for management on an ongoing basis, the first of which were shared as early as September 2018. Our hopes were to contribute to a seamless transition from recommendations to action.

Third, as much as possible, the findings of the review were based on the experiences of staff. To this end, we asked UNICEF to extend our project timeframe from six to nine months so that we could hold as many focus group discussions and bilateral conversations and email exchanges as possible.

On behalf of all of the ITF members, we would like to thank all of you, who put your trust in us and shared your experiences in focus groups, bilateral conversations and through the confidential email account set up for this purpose. We particularly thank the members of the Internal Reference Group and the Stakeholder Group, who dedicated time to us during the discovery phase and who amplified our efforts to reach staff everywhere.

We also take this opportunity to thank the expert consultant, Aulikki Kuusela, and the staff of the ITF Secretariat, who stewarded the efforts of the ITF and exemplified the utmost levels of professionalism and confidentiality throughout our engagement.

As UNICEF management – and all staff members – take forward the recommendations of this report, we remind each and every one of you that not only is it the right of all to work in a safe and caring work environment, it makes good business sense in securing results for children.

We thank you for this opportunity.

Purnima and Debrework

SUMMARY

Overall assessment

UNICEF staff at all levels work hard in difficult and often dangerous environments to accomplish the organization's mandate to protect children's rights and achieve results for every child, every day. There is a visible strength of community among UNICEF staff and a remarkable pride in working for the organization. Staff endeavour to demonstrate the organization's core values of care, respect, integrity, trust and accountability and are its greatest assets in fulfilling its mandate.

"Every child has the right to grow up in a safe and inclusive environment" - UNICEF

Every UNICEF employee has the right to a safe and inclusive work environment

However, the findings of the Independent Task Force (ITF) on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority indicate that despite good intentions, UNICEF is not living those values when it comes to this most important resource.

For example, while UNICEF's workplace culture is centred on results for children, UNICEF does not appear to give equal importance to *how* those results are achieved. This appears to be a misinterpretation of results-based management, which has been embraced by UNICEF with great enthusiasm over the past 15 years. It is both a moral imperative and good business sense to aim for optimal outcomes for children by protecting and supporting those who work tirelessly in their pursuit.

Looking deeper, the ITF findings indicate that this singular focus on *what* must be achieved has allowed an authoritative culture to take root. This 'results at any cost' approach has created an environment where offenses go un-reported or un-investigated and unpunished by the set rules, as long as programmatic results are achieved; and has enabled gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority, which thrive in such conditions.

Furthermore, dysfunctional support from systems designed to provide checks and balances on exercise of authority, such as the management of human resources, the complaint system and internal communication with staff, have exacerbated the negative consequences of this existing culture. This has led to increased stress, frustration and fear among staff, resulting in worryingly low levels of trust in management throughout the organization. Numerous interviews and meetings with staff, both individually and in focus groups across the globe, and confidential emails received by the co-chairs of the ITF, paint a picture of an organization where innovation, critical voices and complaints are stifled by fear of repercussions.

A radical culture change to embed UNICEF's core values of care, respect, integrity, transparency and accountability is needed to set the organization on a path to positive change and towards a workplace that is free from gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority.

Change starts at the top

A deep culture change hinges on changing mindsets and attitudes, as well as systems and policies. UNICEF needs to take a robust position on change at the senior level and enact transformative action to demonstrate that the organization is serious about change.

> **I learn management by observing my supervisor. More often than not, I learn what not to do.**
>
> —A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN HEADQUARTERS

In addition, the people management skills of senior staff need to be assessed through feedback from multiple sources, and measured and valued alongside the achievement of programmatic results. This approach needs to be explicitly incorporated into management accountabilities, in selection and promotion criteria for supervisory positions and in training for all potential managers. Managers demonstrating strong people management skills should be recognized; and managers demonstrating harmful people management practices should be removed from managerial responsibilities if their behaviour is not responsive to remedial training.

Change includes everyone

Today, the UNICEF workplace culture is marked by sharp divides between 'us' and 'them'. Such divides are expressions of power differences and are apparent, not only between genders and between races and ethnicities, but also between managers and teams, international and national staff and staff and contracted employees (non-staff).

Fiefdoms were reported in several offices. Those offices have developed their own micro-cultures defining how things are done and what behaviours are acceptable, often in ways that are not commensurate with UNICEF values or established policies. While UNICEF has comprehensive policies on paper, in offices that function like fiefdoms, they may not be implemented and usually there are no negative consequences for those who flout them. A renewed commitment is needed

at all levels and by all staff to UNICEF's inclusive values and policies, as is an agreement on practical ways of working towards a more coherent, inclusive culture – a culture of 'us'. This requires, among other things, purposefully addressing the long-standing divides.

The ITF concluded that significant cultural change, particularly in the management culture and the way the organization engages with staff, and a transformation of the Division of Human Resources (DHR) and the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) are paramount.

Transforming human resource management

Everyone who works with and for UNICEF has the right to be treated fairly. This can only happen with a DHR that has a strong corporate mandate and leadership capable of providing professional, objective and impartial advice to both managers and staff.

Rather than being neutral and caring in regard to employees, DHR has a reputation among staff for being susceptible to manipulation from managers. In fact, staff perceive DHR as an enabler of uneven application of human resource policies and local mismanagement. The ITF is aware of UNICEF's 'HR Reform' efforts; however, a complete transformation of human resource management is required for DHR to regain the trust of staff. This will entail developing a new 'people strategy' to support the culture change; assessing and improving the competencies and skills of all human resource staff globally; strengthening DHR's capacity to ensure uniform application of policies and practices across offices; and developing capacity to provide professional human resource analytics to underpin management decisions. Direct reporting lines from all human resource staff to a transformed, centralized human resource function will protect them from undue pressures and enhance their role as honest brokers.

To provide swift recommendations before the escalation of a grievance relating to discrimination in human resource processes, such as selection, promotion, rotation and post abolition, a simple and independent first-line review mechanism should be established. UNICEF should also undertake an in-depth review of its career mobility practices and examine how its policies might contribute to talented staff, especially women, leaving the organization.

> **"HR's priority seems to be to protect the reputation of UNICEF, rather than the individual."**
>
> **—A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER FROM THE FIELD**

A justice system to trust

Following discussions with staff, it is evident that as currently configured, OIAI, which investigates misconduct and operates as the justice system, is not appropriately set up to investigate sexual harassment, harassment or abuse of authority. UNICEF staff report a deeply-rooted lack of trust in the independence, speed and impartiality of the existing complaint

mechanism. They perceive it as both ineffective in investigating complaints and in sanctioning perpetrators. They do not trust the confidentiality of investigations and they fear retaliation. Staff have witnessed that those who raise complaints are further harassed, marginalized or have their careers derailed, resulting in many complainants leaving the organization. The lack of OIAI staff with specific skills to investigate sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority is a major lacuna. In general, the investigative function of UNICEF has failed staff, and many staff members report feeling that the United Nations' zero tolerance policy on prohibited behaviour is empty rhetoric. The data on volume, timeliness and outcomes of investigations support staff perceptions.

> "I reported sexual harassment and I regret ever having done so."
>
> —A STAFF MEMBER IN A UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE

The management of the complaint mechanism should, wholly or in part, be shifted to a third party that is experienced in staff misconduct investigations, including sexual harassment, in international organizations and can effectively balance independence and transparency with due process and speed. Protections against retaliation should be strengthened *in practice*, in line with the recent reform of UNICEF's policy to protect whistle-blowers from retaliation.

Effective internal communication

Effective internal communication forms the third pillar of essential systems to support a healthy organizational culture. Although UNICEF is well known for its externally-focused communications to advocate for children, the ITF found that UNICEF has a risk-averse approach to internal communications, particularly regarding the topic of workplace gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority. The ITF found that UNICEF is missing opportunities at all levels to build a forward-leaning, inclusive organization that welcomes creative thinking, a diversity of opinions and constructive dissent using fresh, interactive and appealing technologies and platforms. Two-way communication at the team level facilitated by managers will help to heal the divides in the organization; improve job satisfaction by empowering staff to shape their workplace and become champions of change; and ultimately reduce incidents of abuse of authority and other forms of harassment.

Professional change management

Professional change management is required to support organizational change, particularly change as transformative as that proposed by the ITF. To implement the recommendations of the ITF, as well as other relevant studies, UNICEF must invest in an independent change management team. This team will assist UNICEF to develop a prioritized and phased implementation plan, establish its own culture change management architecture, and measure and communicate progress to staff to eradicate gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority in all its forms.

Conclusion

UNICEF has consistently displayed to the ITF, its resolve to make changes in the organization where needed to make it the best workplace. If openness and intent are matched by action from all levels of the organization and the recommendations of the ITF are implemented, confidence will be built among staff that the organization is serious about the change, and lost trust will be regained. Management will have to pay close attention to the planning, communication and monitoring of the outcomes of the change management process and strengthen the necessary mechanisms and support systems, including policies, management practices and specific functions such as DHR, OIAI and internal communications, while providing consistent and visible oversight from senior management.

Translating intent into action to change work culture is not an easy process but it is a feasible one. The recommendations of the ITF are designed to assist UNICEF to do so. The ITF hopes that the recommendations will be taken seriously to build a better UNICEF to serve the children who need their services.

SECTION 1:

SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 A broad mandate

Upon assuming her duties as the UNICEF Executive Director in January 2018, Henrietta Fore committed to take action to end discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority in every UNICEF office. The Executive Director commissioned several studies aiming to address different facets of harassment. Among them, she established the Independent Task Force (ITF) on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority to "assess patterns of workplace gender-related discrimination, harassment and abuse of authority in UNICEF, consider best practices from within the United Nations and other institutions in addressing similar issues; and provide actionable recommendations to UNICEF".

In addition to the two co-chairs, the ITF is made up of eight members with diverse expertise and backgrounds, including external leaders from the public and private spheres, international development agencies, academia and the United Nations. Collectively, the members of the ITF have a wealth of experience, including with workplace issues of gender equality, discrimination, abuse of authority and harassment, as well as inclusiveness and equity. The membership of the ITF was determined based on recommendations from UNICEF regional offices, country offices and National Committees and members took up the role on a voluntary basis.

Two bodies were created to inform the work of the ITF, as needed. An Internal Reference Group comprising 18 staff members selected by UNICEF acted as a staff sounding-board for the ITF and amplified key messages among the wider UNICEF community. The membership comprised representatives of all grades and was diverse, both in terms of gender and geography. A Stakeholder Group consisted of senior colleagues with a responsibility for policies and procedures relevant to the work of the ITF. Their role was to help the ITF understand UNICEF and United Nations policies and contexts. The Stakeholder Group comprised 15 senior UNICEF staff, plus a representative of the United Nations Office of Staff Legal Assistance and the Office of the Ombudsman for United Nations Funds and Programmes. In addition, UNICEF dedicated staff to support the ITF as the Secretariat.

Throughout the project timeframe, from August 2018 to May 2019, the co-chairs met regularly with the deputy executive director for management and, separately, with the UNICEF Executive Director. These discussions were an opportunity for the co-chairs to give feedback on the findings, provide a progress update on the development of the report and share the proposed recommendations as they took shape. Two consultations between the Executive Director and the full composition of the ITF and multiple consultations between the Executive Director and the co-chairs were held to seek her views on specific elements of the report.

Early in its engagement, the ITF identified fundamental issues, such as abuse of authority and other symptoms of an unhealthy workplace, that if not addressed would undermine even the best of policies. The severity of these issues led the ITF to give more weight to listening to staff to gain a

deep understanding of the work culture that appeared to effectively conceal workplace misconduct. The understanding of the ITF terms of reference evolved accordingly. At their first meeting on 20 August 2018, the ITF agreed that abuse of authority would be given prominence in their research – despite it being omitted from the original title of the ITF – alongside gender-discrimination, sexual harassment and harassment; and emphasised their independence from UNICEF to ensure all pertinent areas would be equally addressed. This decision was later validated in various discussions with staff, including the Internal Reference Group and the Stakeholder Group.

Although the ITF fully supported the Executive Director's goal to move forward swiftly, the members felt that it was critical to give adequate time to hear directly from staff, including those based in the field. Each ITF member visited a UNICEF office close to their home-base or along their travel routes at no cost to UNICEF to get a general sense of the workplace culture and to actively seek out engagement from staff. To complete these visits, UNICEF and the ITF agreed to a three-month extension to the original timeframe.

ITF members also proposed to take an iterative approach to the recommendations, enabling UNICEF to take early action, rather than wait for the final report. Notably, a set of early action recommendations were shared with the Executive Director as early as the end of September 2018 and were made available to all staff. This was followed in December 2018 by specific advice to hire an external consulting firm to serve as a change management team, to overlap with the ITF and assist UNICEF in planning and implementing the culture and management changes recommended by the ITF and the three other relevant reviews. At the request of the Executive Director, the ITF developed draft terms of reference for the change management team and provided advice on the job profile of the vacant deputy executive director for management post to ensure that it retained overall responsibility for change management and for engendering a culture of change.

1.2 Path to discovery

Recognizing that this endeavour was not an evaluation, nor a research project, the experts in the ITF used a methodology that would allow them to understand the broader cultural context in which gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority took place in UNICEF. The methodology of discovery built on interactions with staff through multiple avenues, review of relevant internal and external documents, studies, good practices and analysis of available data. The ITF estimates that it spoke to over 350 staff members. The findings were analysed through the lens of the extensive experience and expertise brought by the ITF members, to pinpoint the root causes that allowed workplace misconduct to flourish in UNICEF. The recommendations were reached by applying solutions that have worked elsewhere to the specific circumstances in UNICEF.

For the duration of the initiative, the ITF prioritized hearing directly from staff. In addition to an intranet page, and a space on the UNICEF social networking service, Yammer, a confidential email account was established, and staff were encouraged to share their experiences of harassment of all kinds and the investigative and disciplinary processes with the co-chairs. A large number of emails were received, which led to further conversations with concerned staff. The report reflects the extensive anecdotal evidence, which turned out to be worrying across the board.

Members of the ITF conducted interviews with key representatives at headquarters, regional and country offices, including staff counsellors, the Global Staff Association, the Ombudsman, UN Globe, the Office of Staff Legal Assistance and regional directors, country representatives and gender advisors, among others.

In addition to interacting with individual staff members who came forward and interviewing representatives of relevant key groups, the ITF wanted to understand the underlying workplace culture and capture the views of managers and staff in UNICEF offices both in the field and in headquarters. Nine field offices were visited in three different continents by members of the ITF, who spoke separately with managers and staff. The meetings with staff were organized by the local staff association and conducted as structured focus group discussions, ensuring no attribution of views to individual staff members (*see Annex 6 for the agreed guidance for these discussions*). In total, the ITF held 25 focus groups, including in both headquarters and the field.

The ITF also consulted with the Internal Reference Group on 10 August 2018 and 18 September 2018, and with the Stakeholder Group on 5 and 20 September 2018. On 8 February 2019, the ITF held a joint meeting with both the Internal Reference Group and the Stakeholder Group to discuss their initial responses to the interim recommendations that had been shared and update them on the progress made thus far.

The ITF members reviewed relevant UNICEF policies related to human resources and investigations and compared them to practices within their own organizations and their specific areas of work and research, drawing on their experiences and expertise. Unfortunately, the ITF was limited in the extent to which it could openly discuss the practices of other organizations, as many such practices are not in the public domain and were shared with the ITF confidentially by organizations/companies within members' professional networks.

Separately, the ITF reviewed a large number of analytical discussion papers which put forward lessons and best practices; kept abreast of the progress in other organizations; and monitored emerging materials related to #MeToo and #AidToo. A selection of the documents reviewed are listed in Annex 7.

In particular, the ITF reflected on the findings and recommendations of key work streams initiated by the Executive Director over the course of 2018 and found that many of the findings reviewed confirmed those of the ITF, namely:

» **The Independent Review of UNICEF's Strategy to Respond to and Prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** concluded that the necessary conditions for UNICEF to improve in this area were "not yet sufficient, at scale or strong enough to constitute a fully effective system" (p. 3). The review put forward 32 action points.

» **A review by the law firm Morgan Lewis of the conduct of UNICEF's Office of Internal Audit and Investigation (OIAI)** regarding investigations that involved an allegation of sexual harassment or misconduct concluded that UNICEF was missing an opportunity for the investigation function to play a broader preventative role in changing organizational culture and recommended increased capacity (p. 3).

» UNICEF pursued a detailed examination of its gender equality through the **World Economic Forum's Economic Dividends for Gender Equality Certification,** known as 'EDGE'. On 6 June 2018, UNICEF was certified at the second level of EDGE certification, putting the organization in the top 11 per cent of EDGE-certified companies. UNICEF became the first United Nations agency to gain such certification, underlining the organization's commitment to gender equality and inclusion in the workplace.

In addition, at the beginning of 2018, UNICEF was already partnering with the Harvard Kennedy School of Government to conduct behavioural science studies. The students looked at how organizational design can contribute to gender equality at all levels, as well as diversity and inclusion. Two extensive reports were presented to the Executive Director, one on inclusivity and belonging and the other on retention and promotion.

In early 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General also released the United Nations Safe Space Survey Report, which presented findings on sexual harassment across the United Nations system and related entities globally.

While drawing on the results of analyses such as the UNICEF Global Staff Survey 2017, the subsequent 2018 Global Pulse Survey and data provided by EDGE, the ITF also undertook some data analysis of its own. Unfortunately, the ITF was not granted access to raw human resource data and thus was not able to conduct extensive analyses on recruitment, separation and career progression of staff or the use of various categories of non-staff, as originally planned. The ITF was limited to using the data made available directly from the DHR and OIAI. This put severe limitations on the ITF's analysis of gender discrimination, diversity and inclusion.

It should be noted that during the ITF's term, many work streams to address harassment and related issues were initiated within the United Nations system, as well as within UNICEF, and that the landscape was rapidly evolving. The ITF is particularly aware of steps taken by UNICEF in the last 12 months in this regard. While it is too early to evaluate the success and impact of these steps, the ITF followed their development with interest and many are referenced throughout the report. In particular, the ITF took note of an internal whole-of-organization strategy on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, launched in January 2019, that is currently being rolled out across the organization. Amendments have been made to several internal policies, including the UNICEF Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority policy; the UNICEF policy on the disciplinary process and measures for misconduct; and the UNICEF policy on whistle-blower protection against retaliation. The Executive Director also endorsed the full use of flexible and family-friendly work policies in a message to all staff in February 2019. UNICEF has taken steps to augment the investigative capacity of OIAI with the addition of 10 posts; develop a new investigations case management system; and strengthen human resource capacity to coordinate initiatives on gender in the workplace. In addition, a senior coordinator on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and workplace abuse in the Office of the Executive Director arrived in February 2019 and a new senior culture change advisor is expected to take up his or her functions in mid-June. The ITF is also aware that UNICEF is in the process of developing helpful pocket guides and schematics for 'where to go when' to support staff in navigating the complaints process.

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

2.1 Overall findings

Although UNICEF has a committed workforce, it has an unhealthy organizational culture. This manifests in its unrelenting focus on results without regard for how results are achieved; an authoritative rather than empowering management style coupled with lack of managerial accountability for people management; the many deeply-rooted divides fragmenting the organization; low trust in management; and palpable fear among staff of speaking up or voicing concerns. The ITF found that this culture has concealed unacceptable workplace behaviours and allowed abuse of authority, harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination to proliferate in silence. Such misconduct has been underreported, badly investigated and not adequately sanctioned for a long time.

The ITF also found that the organizational functions designed to support a healthy organizational culture and provide checks and balances on workplace behavioural misconduct have failed. The human resource function is not seen as providing professional and impartial advice to managers and staff, the investigative function is not trusted by staff and the internal communications function is not up to par. While UNICEF has comprehensive policies on paper, the implementation of these policies is uneven.

Some findings are based on data extracted from relevant materials reviewed by the ITF or from the limited analyses conducted. Most are qualitative and based on repeated patterns in the messages received from staff during the many individual interviews or focus group discussions conducted by ITF members or through confidential accounts shared directly with the ITF co-chairs or members.

The ITF's findings are discussed in detail below.

2.2 An unhealthy workplace culture

2.2.1 Deeply-rooted authoritative management culture

The ITF confirmed a deeply-rooted authoritative management culture in UNICEF[1] and identified a clear and repeating pattern in staff perceptions of this management culture in practically all focus group discussions and interviews. This culture typically manifests with managers who motivate staff using their authority, the power given by their position and grade and, in some cases, fear. It concentrates the power over a staff member in one individual – the direct supervisor – who can make decisions regarding contract extensions, influence promotion prospects and abolish positions at the stroke of a pen.

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1   This was also identified in Bohnet, Iris, et al., 'A Workplace for All to Call Home: Promoting inclusion and belonging at UNICEF', Harvard University, 2017, which found that this authoritative culture was rarely challenged (p. 25).

UNICEF management practices focus predominantly on directing, rather than empowering staff to do their work. This promotes micro-management, which may achieve good results in the short-term, but creates organizational vulnerabilities over time. Staff reported feeling frustrated, demoralized and demotivated when their supervisors are never quite satisfied with the deliverables, zero-in on every detail, take pride in making corrections, always want to know what everyone is working on, ask for constant updates and demand face time, rather than focussing on the big picture.

> **Even my draft emails are edited before I am authorized to send them. I spend more time on re-writing simple correspondence than doing my technical job.**
>
> **– UNICEF STAFF MEMBER AT HEADQUARTERS**

These management practices also lead to unchecked favouritism. Staff believe that if they want a career or a promotion they must remain in the good graces of their supervisor and managers higher up in the hierarchy.[2] This is best done by remaining silent and catering to the whims and wishes of their direct supervisor.

> **Promotion is a club. If you don't know the right people and stay in their good books you will never get promoted, especially if you are a female.**
>
> **—A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

Only around half of the 8,000 respondents to the 2018 Global Pulse Survey reported feeling personally empowered to take decisions, raise and address issues and make an impact in the workplace.[3] This corresponds to the findings of the ITF. Staff reported feeling disempowered to manage their own work, point out problems or take initiative to improve results. They feel that they must remain silent, not voice critical views, nor launch complaints if they want a career in UNICEF.[4] This was echoed throughout the organization.

The ITF found that contract employees (non-staff) feel even more vulnerable to sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority than full-time staff given the implicit lack of job security and the lack of protections that are available to other employees.

The ITF found that according to staff, "everything is managed by grade classification". This has led to a strong focus on how to get to the next grade. For managers, this quest has brought the impetus to demonstrate results "at any cost", the quality of which are determined by just one

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2   This finding is supported by 'A Workplace for All to Call Home: Promoting inclusion and belonging at UNICEF': "Employees cited unclear paths to senior-level positions, a perception that privileges were given informally and through networks" (p. 24).

3   Agenda Consulting, 'UNICEF Global Staff Pulse Survey 2018-Whole Organisation Report', UNICEF, 2018, p. 6.

4   These power dynamics were also identified in United Nations Children's Fund, 'Independent Panel Review of the UNICEF Response to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse', UNICEF, 2018, which stated, "there is a shared need […] to recognize the power dynamics at play in workplaces where staff who might want to speak out but dare not" (p. 41).

person – the supervisor. In many cases, staff members have been expected to produce results only for the direct supervisor, even at the cost of their broader portfolio.

> ❝ **Succumb, obey your supervisor and keep quiet,**
> **if you want to survive in this system.** ❞
>
> —A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Results are carefully measured and form the basis for rewards, but *how* results are achieved is not measured, evaluated or rewarded, much less sanctioned. In the absence of an explicit technical career stream, staff who have delivered results are often rewarded with promotion to supervisory or management positions. The ITF found that staff perceive that the current management culture conceals and legitimizes harassment and abuse by managers and other high-flyers, while punishing those who speak up or complain. The ITF repeatedly received feedback from staff in focus group discussions that there are "known abusers" even in higher management positions, but that no action has been taken.

There is no accountability for people management because there is no feedback on managers' or supervisors' people management behaviours. With no accountability for people management, poor or abusive management cannot be detected or corrected.

The situation is further complicated by a lack of clear examples of managerial harassment or abuse of authority on the one hand, and lack of examples of legitimate exercise of managerial authority on the other. This leaves it to the supervisor and supervisee to interpret the available definitions and determine what is a legitimate exercise of managerial authority and what is abuse.

> ❝ **Your contract is on the line if you ever challenge**
> **the supervisor's authority.** ❞
>
> —A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The lack of feedback data on the people management abilities of managers and supervisors also means that these skills and behaviours are not considered in the selection process for higher management positions. Many managers accused by staff of sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority are rotated within the organization, or worse, promoted and rewarded with even greater management responsibilities. There is no systematic process to ensure that this does not happen.

UNICEF has already implemented various management training programmes, but the ITF findings suggest that supervisors and managers had not been exhaustively reached. There is a lack of systematic preparation or mandatory training in people management for staff taking on managerial or supervisory positions. Several managers attested to this in interviews with the ITF, sharing that their training before taking up their role as managers, country representatives or regional directors did not include an emphasis on people management.

> **"When I took up this representative position, I was not given any training or support. I have had to learn on the job – for better or worse."**
>

The ITF concluded that combined, these factors have contributed to low morale and low trust in management and run the risk of leading to reduced productivity and ultimately undermining results for children.

2.2.2 Fiefdoms and micro-cultures

Staff reported conditions akin to fiefdoms in some regions and country offices where the regional director or country representative have established a "personal rule", where he or she dictates how things should be done, what is and is not acceptable, and how UNICEF-wide human resource and other policies should be interpreted and implemented – or whether they should be implemented at all. These micro-cultures with their own value systems are not commensurate with UNICEF's values and have allowed a wide array of bad practices to flourish, including favouritism, retaliatory removal of representative duties, last minute denial of planned duty travel, belittling, marginalizing and isolating those who have had the courage to speak up, disrespecting national staff, ignoring the normal recruitment processes, or implicitly allowing behaviours that would be considered sexual harassment. ITF members heard of several instances of staff experiencing such practices and of managers overtly and tacitly expressing that their rules and ways of doing things were privileged. A lack of checks and balances for people management allows for the development of fiefdoms and harmful micro-cultures. According to staff, UNICEF-wide policies and values were not respected, in some cases not even known, by staff in these fiefdoms.

> **"The representative came to my office to express his anger and disappointment, shouting loud insults at me for not supporting his preferred candidate in the recruitment panel."**
>

Staff reported management by fear and threats in offices that operate like fiefdoms more than anywhere else in the organization. These staff reported feeling at the mercy of one director or manager and cut off from access to other avenues for receiving help and support.[5]

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5   Twelve per cent of staff mentioned fear of reprisals when speaking out, according to MayCoach & Company, 'Cultural Pattern Report: Global Staff Survey 2017', UNICEF, 2018, p. 9.

2.2.3 Ossified organizational divides

Based on consistent feedback from staff in focus group discussions, interviews and confidential accounts, the ITF found that UNICEF does not have a unified workplace culture. Instead, its organizational culture is marked by many long-standing divides between 'us' and 'them', to which UNICEF seems to be tone deaf. This is a sign that while UNICEF has made strides towards diversifying its workforce, particularly at the point of recruitment, less attention has been paid to fostering inclusion and a sense of belonging.[6] Micro-aggressions exist against a variety of identity factors, such as gender, gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, language and nationality. Status of staff (e.g. national versus international or staff versus non-staff) also led to marked divides within the organization. The organizational divides most prominently raised by staff are discussed below.

a.   Gender equality and treatment of minorities

Although UNICEF has made progress on gender equality,[7] for example by achieving gender parity for international professional staff in 2018,[8] gender imbalances still exist among the different types of staff and among regions and headquarters (*see Annex 1, Figures 3 and 4*). The 2018 EDGE certification study found that although UNICEF met EDGE certification standards in most areas, the organization was below the standards in regard to fair opportunities for promotion for men and women, uptake of flexible working opportunities and gender equitable pay for equivalent work, since no pay gap study had been conducted.[9] Recruitment is currently ongoing for a new post in DHR – senior project coordinator for gender at the workplace – which will oversee all of the organization's work on gender equality, per the EDGE recommendation.[10]

The ITF conducted its own analysis on whether UNICEF was achieving gender parity in terms of the composition of regular international staff by grade level,[11] new recruits and promotions. This analysis was based on the limited human resource data made available to the ITF by UNICEF.[12] The ITF noted that while there were more female than male staff at grade levels P1/L1 through P4/L4, male staff had a significantly stronger representation at levels P5/L5 (at 57 per cent) and D1/L6 (at 60 per cent), the typical grade levels for UNICEF managers, such as country representatives and directors (*see Figure 1*).

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6   According to 'A Workplace for All to Call Home: Promoting inclusion and belonging at UNICEF', "promoting equity and inclusion remains a challenge – and a mission critical one, given the diverse international context in which [UNICEF's] work force operates" (p. 3).

7   Defined by EDGE as having: 1) strong gender balance at all levels of the organization; 2) a statistically insignificant unexplained gender pay gap; 3) a solid framework of effective policies and practices to ensure equitable career flows for both women and men; and 4) an inclusive culture as reflected in employees' high ratings in terms of career development opportunities. Economic Dividends for Gender Equality, 'EDGE Gender Assessment and Preparation for EDGE Certification: UNICEF', EDGE, 2018, p. 4.

8   According to UNICEF data, the percentage of women in the professional and higher categories in 2019 is 50 per cent, an improvement from 49.3 per cent in 2015 when UNICEF was already ranked 7 of 35 United Nations entities on this measure. United Nations, Improvement in the Status of Women in the United Nations System: Report of the Secretary-General, A/72/220, United Nations, New York, 27 July 2017, <https://undocs.org/en/A/72/220>, accessed 21 May 2019.

9   'EDGE Gender Assessment and Preparation for EDGE Certification', p. 17, p. 21 and p. 31.

10   Ibid, p. 35. Note that 'A Workplace for All to Call Home: Promoting inclusion and belonging at UNICEF' outlines concerns relating to the EDGE survey methodology, highlighting a potential stereotype threat, stipulating that the questions posed on gender are not conclusive and indicating that, with regard to equality, EDGE neglects other key socio-demographic variables.

11   Staff members in the professional category are recruited internationally (IP). Posts classified as "L" are international posts that are project funded. Staff members in the general service (GS) category are recruited in country. National officers (NO) are of the nationality of the country where the concerned office is located.

12   The ITF requested, but was not granted, full access to raw human resources data to carry out several specific analyses. Instead, DHR shared only limited data on a few specific parameters because all of the requested data, such as data related to career progression, was either not available, not comparable from year to year or the quality of the data was poor.

Figure 1: Gender balance by grade level for international professional staff on regular appointment November 2018
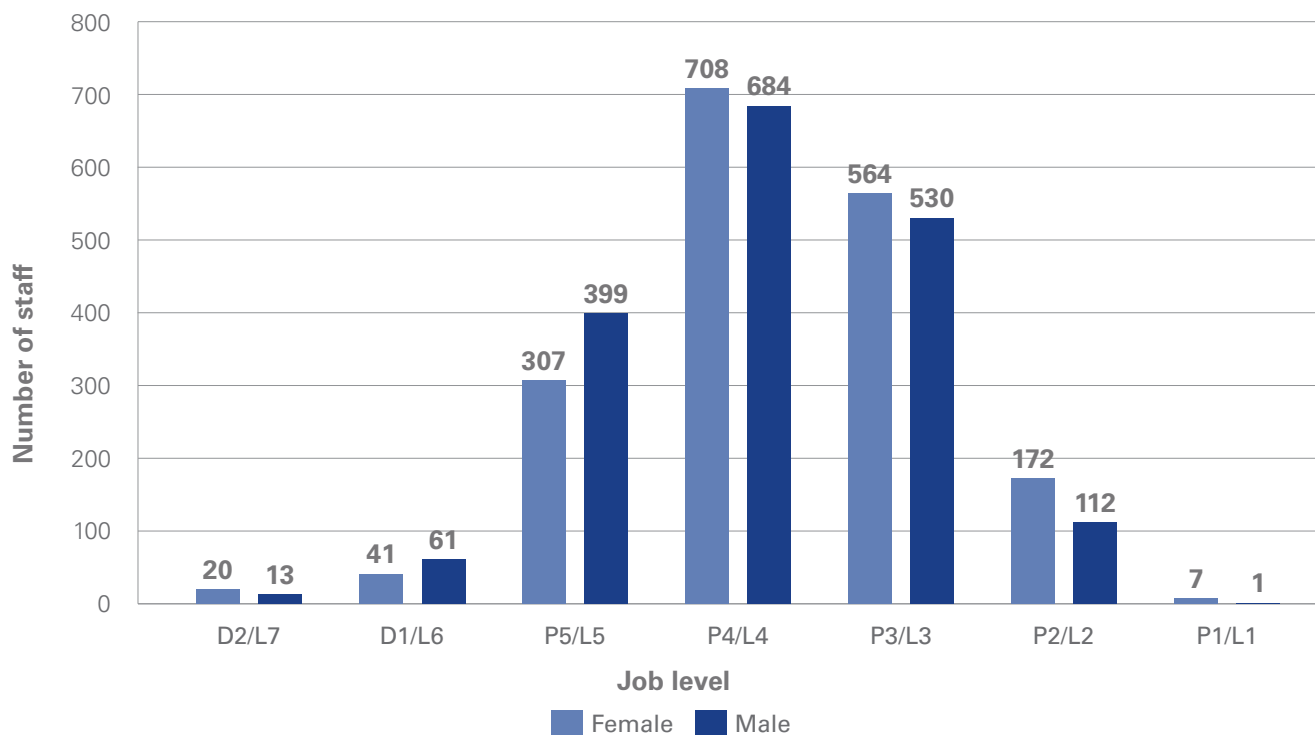
While more initial appointments were made for women than men in the last five years at lower grade levels, particularly at levels P2/L2 and P3/L3 and even up to P4/L4, this changed at levels P5/L5 and above, where more men were brought in (*see Annex 1, Figure 5*).

The same trend seems to apply to promotions to higher grade levels. Since there are more female staff at level P4 and slightly more females than males are included in the talent pools, it would seem possible to prepare women at P4 levels to be promoted to senior levels. However, this does not seem to be happening; instead, more male staff have been promoted to levels P5 and D1 (*see Annex 1, Figures 7 and 8*). This is also reflected in the average annual promotion rates between 2014 and 2018 (November): The promotion rates to levels P4 and P5 have been notably higher for male staff than for female staff.

Figure 2: Average annual promotion rates to levels P3 and above by gender 2014-2018
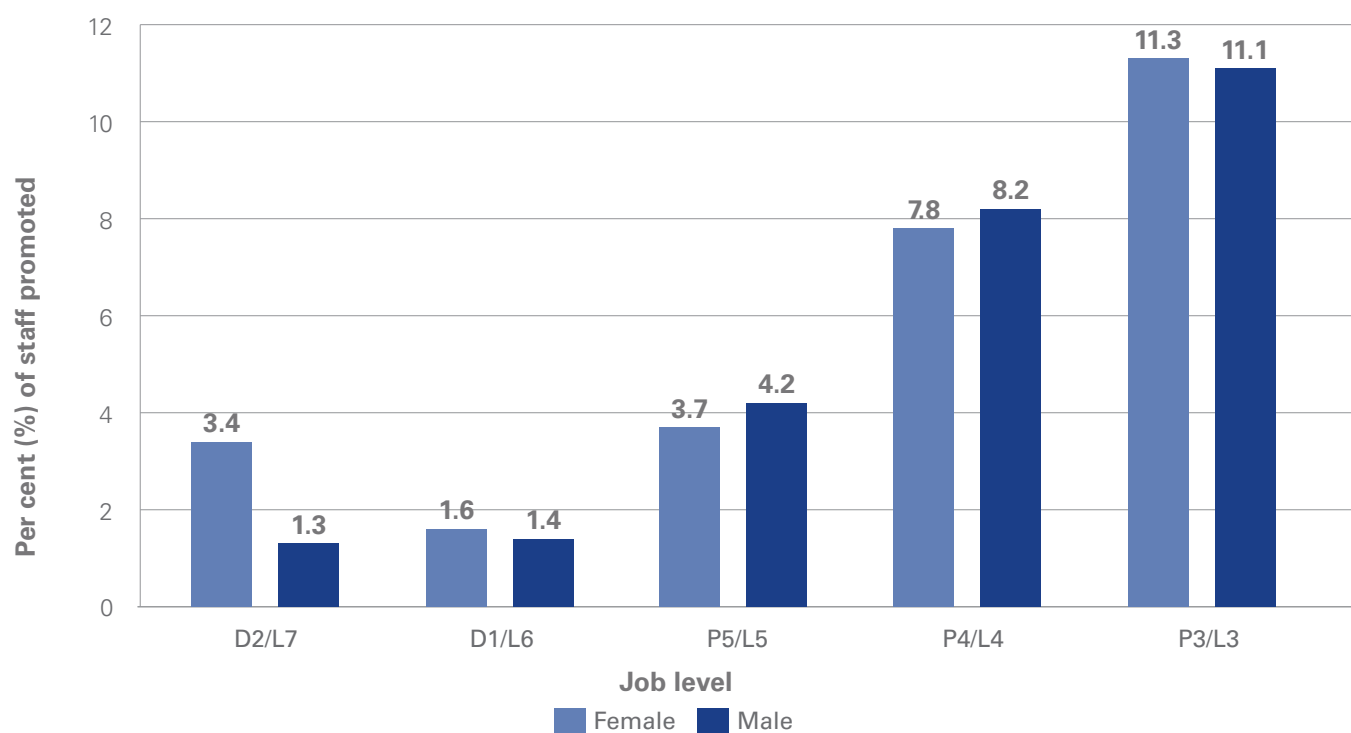
Gender issues also arise in connection with other career-impacting processes, such as rotation,[13] particularly assignments to non-family postings in hardship locations. The ITF found that internal mobility was slightly higher for male staff than for female staff (*see Annex 1, Figure 6*).[14] More male than female staff were assigned to duty stations with high hardship ratings, for example 60–61 per cent of staff assigned to non-hardship locations (hardship ratings A and H) are female. At the other end of the spectrum, only 27 per cent of staff assigned to duty stations with the highest hardship rating E are female (*see Annex 1, Figure 9*). Listening to staff feedback, the ITF found that more female staff would accept postings in high hardship locations if the challenges posed by these assignments were better managed and more flexibly addressed by the organization. These results suggest that UNICEF may be overlooking women interested in these rotations. This has direct implications for future promotion since assignment to hardship locations is thought to lead to opportunities for upward mobility.

Staff defining themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or queer felt that there were insensitivities relating to their careers, especially to rotational assignments, including proposed reassignments to environments hostile to their sexual orientation and/or gender expression. They felt that the awareness of gender in non-binary terms among UNICEF's managers, human resources staff and colleagues was weak and needed to be addressed.[15]

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13   That women at UNICEF are significantly less satisfied with the duty station mobility and mobility in general was highlighted in Génot, S., et al, 'Retention and Promotion at UNICEF', Harvard Kennedy School, 2017, p. 7.

14   These findings concur with 'Retention and Promotion at UNICEF': "Overall, fewer women have been able to reach higher level positions and hardship postings at UNICEF" (p. 4); and 'EDGE Gender Assessment and Preparation for EDGE Certification': "Women were more likely to be promoted into levels P1, P2 and NO-A and NO-B and P3, P4 and NO-C and NO-D, while the reverse was true for levels P5, D1 and D2 and above" (p. 3).

15   That UNICEF adopt a more diverse and inclusive definition of families was specifically mentioned in 'Retention and Promotion at UNICEF', p. 25.

The ITF also examined staff exits from the organization over the past five years and found that while male staff generally leave UNICEF in greater numbers than female staff for reasons such as retirement and appointment expiration, this was not the case for resignations. Of the 366 resignations of international professional staff in the last five years, 57 per cent were female.[16] This is most marked at the senior level, especially at P5/L5, where more women than men resign, despite a smaller pool of female staff at that level (*see Annex 1, Figure 10*). In the absence of systematic exit interviews, it is not possible to pinpoint the exact reasons for these resignations. However, the ITF found one group of women that may have contributed to the higher resignation rates for women: staff who want to start a family find the institutional policies and culture inflexible and unsupportive. Many are reported to have left for that reason.

Staff in focus groups and interviews also reported that gender-related discrimination occurs regularly in the workplace. The nature of gender-related discrimination revealed by staff ranged from visible discrimination, such as removing senior female staff from representation duties, denying them the opportunity to interact with partners even when they have the deepest substantive knowledge of the issues at hand, and not allowing them to make presentations at important meetings; to more demeaning behaviour, such as literally not providing female staff with a seat at the table or not allowing them to speak in meetings.

b.   Racial and ethnic divides

Staff also referred to discrimination based on race or ethnicity, particularly in field offices. According to staff, this mostly manifests as everyday subtleties, micro-aggressions, negative stereotyping and cultural insensitivity in the workplace, though examples were also given of either favouring or cold-shouldering staff of certain nationalities in recruitment decisions and work assignments. Staff originating from many countries bring a wide range of professional, cultural and personal experience to bear on UNICEF's work for children, but this strength does not seem to be fully harnessed.[17]

UNICEF does not currently have a coordinated approach to advancing and monitoring diversity and inclusion in the workplace. From what the ITF learned, there seems to be no clear or shared understanding of what diversity and inclusion mean for an organization that is both global and local. This in turn implies that not all staff members will have an opportunity to contribute to their full potential.

c.   International and national staff

An obvious divide is that of international and national staff, comprising 29 per cent and 33 per cent of the workforce, respectively. In addition to the well-known systemic contrasts in human resource policy, such as the vastly different compensation and benefits structures, national staff in most offices visited by ITF members pointed to the "power difference" and said that they often felt like "second-class citizens" without career prospects, respect or voice.[18]

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16   'Retention and Promotion at UNICEF' noted similarly that: "Overall, women are less likely than men to retire after UNICEF [...] and more likely to resign or transfer to another UN [United Nations] organization" (p. 4).

17   'A Workplace for All to Call Home: Promoting inclusion and belonging at UNICEF' similarly noted that: "Respondents perceived a number of inequities: prioritization of those with English language capabilities; bias towards those with Master's degrees; poor representation of socioeconomic diversity- perhaps because of educational requirements; aversion to multi-sectoral experience; and a focus constrained to increasing female and recipient country presence in the workforce, at the expense of diversity in race, ethnicity, LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer] individuals, and ability level." (p. 24).

18   ''A Workplace for All to Call Home: Promoting inclusion and belonging at UNICEF' also noted that those outside the traditional positions of power within the organization lack agency to make their voice heard. Power dynamics that individuals cited as reducing their or others' levels of agency included: a headquarters field dynamic; an old school new school dynamic, and a senior junior dynamic (p. 25).

> **"If a field office has an abusive international staff then it can be easier just to remain patient until they are someone else's problem, rather than pursue a claim."**
>
> —A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

This divide seems to manifest in various ways, sometimes as bullying or outright abuse, clear racial discrimination, gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment or cultural insensitivity. At other times, there is a distinction as to how information is shared, who can act in their supervisor's absence, speak at meetings or participate in certain work teams. For example, in a country office, having two different cafeterias with pricing differences results in a separation of international and national staff over meals. Locally-recruited staff do not see the OneHR[19] approach as being a reality on the ground; instead the 'us and them' culture is prevalent in most field offices.

It is understood that there will always be differences between the jobs, associated skill requirements and total compensation for staff who are globally mobile, able and willing to undertake work for UNICEF in various environments on the one hand and those jobs that do not require mobility on the other. The ITF also appreciates that the staff categories and their terms and conditions of employment are tied to those of the United Nations system. However, the ITF believes that more can be done within the degrees of freedom afforded to individual United Nations agencies to harmonize the human resource framework for the three types of staff (international professional, general service and national officer) and open up more career development opportunities for national staff and general service staff.

> **In this country office, staff do not even sit together over lunch because the local staff cafeteria serves only local food and is cheaper than the staff cafeteria which serves only international food and is more expensive.**

Staff perceptions of imbalances among the different staff categories are underpinned by United Nations rules that see a junior international staff paid significantly more than a very experienced national officer.

d. Staff and non-staff

The divide between staff and non-staff is even more evident. The non-staff workforce, comprising consultants, contractors, volunteers, partner staff, interns, seconded staff, etc., do important work for UNICEF, often side-by-side with staff in difficult environments. These

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19   OneHR is an approach that commits human resources to support managers and staff to shape an empowered workforce that meets evolving needs. United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Human Resource Strategy 2018-2021', UNICEF, 2018, p. 5.

appointments are locally managed. Worryingly, DHR does not know the total size of UNICEF's non-staff workforce. There is no reliable data on how many non-staff there are in each category, where they work, what they work on and for how long. This is an indication of the low priority given by UNICEF to this sizeable segment of the workforce. The non-staff workforce feels vulnerable to harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority, due to complete lack of job security and limited access to organizational information, networks and resources. They reported feeling that they have no voice and no recourse.

e.   Managers and staff
The ITF found that the accounts of UNICEF's culture in focus group discussions and interviews differed significantly between managers and staff. Managers tend to feel that problems have been exaggerated and that they have been seen mainly from the viewpoint of disgruntled staff members who are unhappy about the exercise of legitimate managerial authority. Some managers admit that while there are some problems, they tend to be specific to each type of workplace, for example headquarters and field offices, and these problems are no worse or different from the problems found in other organizations.

Staff, on the other hand, paint a very different picture. Staff reported that managers dismiss the feelings and grievances of staff and, crucially, that systematic and safe ways for staff to air complaints do not seem to exist. As a result, tensions fester between managers, who wield enormous power, and their subordinates. They feel that the organization has changed for the worse in the past 10 years and gave numerous examples of ongoing abuse of authority and fear-inducing, unacceptable behaviours by supervisors.

Feedback from focus group discussions, interviews and confidential accounts suggest that staff do not feel that they can trust recourse avenues or that protections exist for them, if launching a complaint.

2.2.4 Culture of silence

Survey data and qualitative data from focus group discussions, interviews and confidential feedback to the ITF attest to a low level of trust in management throughout the organization. For example, in the 2017 Global Staff Survey, only 51 per cent of respondents believed that if they reported misconduct, they would be protected from retaliation; and 15 per cent stated that whether a person was held accountable to charges of misconduct depended on their seniority within the UNICEF hierarchy.[20] The feedback from focus groups and interviews corroborate these findings. Despite good intentions and encouraging rhetoric, staff report having seen limited change or practical action to address the issues discussed above.

"Why bother? Nothing good comes out if you complain."

—A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

20   'Cultural Pattern Report: Global Staff Survey 2017', p. 6.

Staff often referred to a "culture of silence". In more than half of the focus group discussions, staff members reported that they had personally witnessed that those who were assertive (especially strong-performing senior women) and those who speak up or make a complaint do not have a future career in UNICEF. They have seen complainants being marginalized and isolated by their managers and supervisors. Some staff call what they have experienced "assassination" of their professional career. They are no longer included in meetings or informed of important developments in their area of responsibility; their performance evaluations use gendered language or call them "difficult to manage"; and they suddenly find themselves cut off from professional opportunities. They are excluded from shortlists and removed from talent pools managed by human resources, thus closing all avenues for continuing or advancing their career elsewhere in the organization. Many have left UNICEF after being targets of abuse of authority by their manager or in the aftermath of their complaint. Staff have witnessed that even colleagues and friends who continue to interact with complainants or people critical of their management have been marginalized in the workplace. Several cases exemplifying this kind of retaliatory behaviour in the past were bought to the attention of the ITF and the ITF was also made aware of ongoing examples of sexual harassment and abuse of authority where the staff member has decided not to make a complaint due to fear of retaliation. This fear was also noted in all focus group discussions. Staff wanted assurances that their identity – or even where they worked – would not be revealed. In a focus group discussion with UNICEF senior female retirees, the participants declined to even share their first names with the ITF co-chairs for fear of being black-listed for future UNICEF assignments if their names were revealed to UNICEF.

"Your troubles start after you report."

—A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

'Voice', a recent grassroots movement and 'UNICEF in the Mirror: A story for change', a 2018 document compiling staff experiences, have both been making the case that everyone has the right to speak up, whether to defend their professional role in the workplace, bring up a new initiative, make a critical comment or launch an informal or formal complaint. 'UNICEF in the Mirror' documented testimonials from staff, clearly indicating what staff are going through and how the system had failed them. Recent examples of action from Executive Director Fore, including new policies and changes in policies, have raised hopes but implementation will prove whether good intention is turned into reality throughout the organization.

2.3 Poor checks and balances

UNICEF, like most international organizations, has systems designed to support a healthy workplace free of discrimination, harassment of all kinds and abuse of authority. These support systems are expected to provide checks and balances on workplace behaviours, including the exercise of managerial authority. They are also expected to ensure that the organization's policies and values are respected by all. The first pillar of support is the human resource function, which has a mandate to act as an honest broker; ensure that the organization has the necessary policies and practices in place to maintain a healthy workplace; and track and guarantee that these policies and practices are implemented equitably across the organization. The human resource function

also recommends disciplinary action when misconduct has been proven. The second pillar of the support system is the investigative function. It comes into play when there is an accusation of misconduct. The third pillar of support is provided by the internal communications function, which provides a vital feedback loop designed to empower staff and builds community to strengthen the organization's culture.

The ITF's findings related to these three pillars are discussed in this section.

2.3.1 Dysfunctional human resources

a. Human resource function

The human resource function is uniquely positioned to support a healthy organizational culture as a partner to both management and staff. When managed effectively, the human resource function acts as a guardian of equitable implementation of human resource policies, practices and processes across the organization. It is an efficient watch dog on workplace behaviours, both good and bad, and the honest broker in resolving workplace conflicts, giving impartial, professional advice to both managers and staff. A well-managed human resource function also provides valuable analytics for decision-making, monitoring and evaluation of key human resource sensors on organizational health.

> "**Human Resource's priority seems to be to protect the reputation of UNICEF rather than the individual [staff member].**"
>
> **—A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

However, this does not seem to be true in UNICEF. While the UNICEF Human Resource Strategy, 2018–2021, expresses some high-level intentions, it does not provide for any practical guidance supported by data as to how the human resource function will manage the workforce. It also does not include guidance as to how policies should be aligned to support UNICEF's business strategy and a healthy culture or how to ensure equitable implementation of those policies throughout the organization.

Despite the recent HR Reform effort,[21] staff feedback to the ITF on UNICEF's human resource function is extremely concerning. Field-based and headquarters staff alike expressed a universal lack of confidence in it. In general, staff feel that the human resource function has failed them and that it cannot be trusted. At all levels, it is seen as an extension of management – in the field or at headquarters – and not as the honest broker it should be.

Staff do not consider the human resource function as a resource for support or advice when they feel targeted by harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority. Several staff related encounters with both DHR and field-based human resource staff to the ITF in which they had been advised not to launch a complaint because "it would bring nothing good". Others

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21   According to 'Cultural Pattern Report: Global Staff Survey 2017', HR Reform received a 51 per cent positive score, but only 44 per cent of the respondents were confident that HR Reform would increase recruitment transparency (p. 11).

related examples of retaliation from their manager only days after seeking confidential advice from human resource staff about how to report the abuse of authority or sexual harassment they had experienced. Many staff have the impression that DHR has been actively protecting abusive managers and other senior staff and allowing, ignoring and even permitting retaliatory behaviour against staff who have voiced concerns about them, for example in review panels where staff are assessed for reassignment or promotion.

In addition, staff generally considered human resource staff in the field as serving in an administrative, transactional capacity and lacking professional skills in people management and organizational culture. These staff are seen as being controlled by the regional director, the country representative or the manager to whom they report. Standing up to the managers that write their performance evaluations and telling them what they should or should not do is not an option for many human resource staff. The ITF was informed that many field-based human resource staff feel unsupported by DHR and that staff have witnessed retaliatory behaviour towards those who tried to defend proper human resource practices, including their removal from their post.

This situation has allowed for unchecked management behaviour and enabled uneven adherence to UNICEF's human resource policies. The ITF concluded that UNICEF's human resource function does not fulfil the important roles of watch dog, honest broker or impartial professional partner to both managers and staff. A complete organizational transformation from the ground up is required to ensure that the human resource function becomes a guardian of fair treatment of all staff, ensuring that policies support a healthy organizational culture and that human resource policies and practices are implemented fairly across the organization.

b. Human resource analytics

The analysis of human resource processes, such as recruitment, talent management, career progression, performance management, and staff retention and exit – disaggregated by gender and other relevant parameters – is a powerful tool for workforce planning, as well as for monitoring human resource indicators and managerial accountabilities for implementation of human resource policies and processes. This function is weak in UNICEF.

The ITF identified serious issues with the comparability of UNICEF's human resource data over time and with the quality of reporting discipline and data capture. Consequently, tabulated human resource data is used mostly for information purposes rather than for decision-making or regular monitoring. The ITF was given many examples of areas that should be monitored through rigorous human resource analytics. In one focus group, female staff discussed a leadership training programme conducted a few years ago, noting that all male colleagues in that class were now in management positions, representatives or directors, while the female colleagues in the same class had left the organization. Important human resource indicators, such as career growth patterns, exit patterns or uptake of optional policies cannot be effectively monitored with the data available in the current systems.

The ITF concluded that UNICEF's human resource information systems and analytics practices need to be strengthened to ensure that analytics effectively support both decision-making and regular monitoring of important human resource indicators.

c.   Human resource policies and practices

The ITF reviewed UNICEF's human resource policies and found that most policies were up to date and available for managers and staff through a well-developed e-HR system, which also provides practical implementation guidance on several human resource processes. In addition to the universal problem of implementation identified earlier, an examination of UNICEF's human resource policies against the ITF's findings have made some problems apparent.

First, the performance management system does not hold managers accountable. While performance management policies and processes are well developed and have recently been further strengthened, they neither incorporate a mandatory evaluation of people skills or people management behaviour nor do they enable UNICEF to hold managers and supervisors accountable for people management.

While results are measured against specific objectives cascaded from UNICEF's objectives, linking individual performance to organizational results, the performance management process fails to provide regular feedback on behaviours exhibited in achieving those results. This sends a message to the organization that workplace behaviours exhibited by staff and people management behaviours exhibited by managers and supervisors are not important – only programmatic results matter. Because staff have no anonymous outlet to provide feedback on their supervisors in the regular performance evaluation process, unacceptable people management behaviours and practices, such as harassment and abuse of authority by managers and supervisors, remain concealed. This means that there is no real information on managers' ability to manage people when their performance is rated and when they are considered for reassignment or promotion. Similarly, excellent people managers cannot be rewarded. It should be noted here that, as currently set up, the managerial 360-degree feedback programme recently introduced in UNICEF will not fulfil this function because it is considered developmental and cannot be used for evaluation purposes.

Looking at the performance management process from the perspective of the staff member, it is obvious that the process is vulnerable to abuse of authority. Although the recently introduced joint management review of top and bottom performers at the end of the UNICEF performance evaluation review process is a step in the right direction, the supervisor is still the sole source of feedback on the supervisee's performance. The joint management review facilitates comparison of relative performance between staff members at the same level and across organizational units, but does not present multiple sources of feedback from those with whom the individual has worked over the performance year.

Lack of multiple sources of feedback enables supervisors and managers to provide a retaliatory evaluation for staff members who have voiced critical views or complained, even if their results and workplace behaviours are fully satisfactory. It also allows staff who may be high achievers but exhibit harassing behaviours towards their peers to be rated as star performers on track to become managers and supervisors.

The ITF fully agreed with the objective in the UNICEF Human Resource Strategy to make performance evaluations "honest, agile and effective",[22] but there is a need for safeguards against abuse of authority by the manager and supervisor, as suggested by staff in most focus group discussions. Multi-rater feedback, objective management group review of relative performance, and an unbiased, professional involvement by the human resource function could provide such safeguards.

Similarly, career-impacting human resource processes in which staff are screened for rotation, reassignment or promotion, for example, were found to be equally vulnerable to abuse of authority. The voice of the manager or supervisor carries the most weight. The ITF encountered many cases of senior women, where the manager or supervisor had weighed-in at a review board, sometimes after only months of working with them, while years of excellent performance were ignored. This kind of vulnerability to abuse of authority has been amplified by the failure of the human resource function discussed in the previous section.

Second, the ITF received feedback from staff on flexible working and family-friendly policies and found that these are almost universally not respected by managers and supervisors. Although several options of flexible working arrangements have been available for some time in UNICEF, the uptake has been low not because staff do not want to take advantage of them, but because many supervisors prefer face time and have been reluctant to approve requests from staff. In cases where managers have made their views known, for example, "I am an old-fashioned manager and believe in face-to-face", staff have been afraid to even request such arrangements despite family circumstances calling for flexible working.[23]

Staff have also observed the uneven and inconsistent implementation of these policies. Staff reported that while some people can work for years remotely even from another country, requests for temporary arrangements to care for children, elderly family members or due to a difficult pregnancy have been denied to other staff reporting to the same manager. Though these flexible policies are not (and should not necessarily be exclusively) targeted to women, failure to effectively implement such policies likely contributes to observed gender differences since women and single parents, both male and female, bear a larger share of family responsibilities.

Remote working technologies that enable the staff member to fully participate in meetings and have access to all organizational resources have been mainstreamed and successfully used by the private sector and many comparable global organizations for years. It should be possible for UNICEF to use these resources to a greater extent when required. A global broadcast message from the Executive Director sent on 4 February 2019, calling for more flexibility by managers and much stronger implementation of existing policies, has been received by staff with enthusiasm, though monitoring the uptake of these policies in various work units remains a work in progress.

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22   'UNICEF Human Resource Strategy 2018-2021', p. 6.

23   'Retention and Promotion at UNICEF' also noted that a few interviewees reported social stigma when asking after these [flexible work] policies, indicating that the lack of implementation is occasionally accompanied by a culture which does not support the policies (p. 26).

2.3.2 A broken complaint system

On 28 September 2018, as part of the early action recommendations, the ITF recommended that UNICEF consider identifying an independent third party with experience handling complaints in the global workplace to receive staff complaints of sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority. The complaints could be received through multiple channels, as appropriate to different locations and diverse situations, and investigated more promptly. That recommendation was based on initial findings and the conclusions of recent reports commissioned by UNICEF, data on complaints shared at the time and interactions with numerous staff bodies and individuals through the confidential channels established for this purpose. Importantly, this recommendation was based on the experiences of the ITF members who are knowledgeable and have experience with successful applications of such arrangements, which are commonly used for certain kinds of misconduct in other sectors. Initial findings included low confidence in the independence of the complaint system, a broken investigative process, prolonged investigations, the palpable fear of retaliation and perceived lack of protection against retaliation.

> **"It would need to be a huge issue of life and death before I would launch a complaint."**
>
> —A UNICEF MANAGER IN AN INTERVIEW

Historically, UNICEF has experienced an abnormally low number of complaints on sexual harassment, sexual abuse, harassment and abuse of authority considering the size of the

> **In a country office where sexual harassment was reported, female staff are so afraid of being sexually assaulted that they do everything together, including going to the bathroom.**

organization. Data obtained on a confidential basis by the ITF from other global organizations of similar size would suggest a 'normal' range of complaints to be approximately 30–35 per year, while the typical range for UNICEF was much lower. For example, in 2016 and 2017, only eight such complaints were received each year. This cannot be taken to imply that UNICEF was an exceptionally safe workplace; rather, it reflects the fear of retaliation and extreme mistrust in the complaint system.

> **"I reported sexual harassment and I regret ever having done so."**
>
> —A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

In the five years prior to 2018, the ITF noted that about 30 per cent of complaints were closed without investigation for reasons such as withdrawal of the complaint[24] or separation of the accused after the allegation was launched. This makes it challenging to hone in on the seriousness of the complaint.

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24   The ITF understands that complaints cannot be investigated when the complainant does not consent to a formal investigation, but also found that in some cases the withdrawal of a complaint was a result of feared retaliatory actions or retaliatory actions already experienced by the complainant.

About 15 per cent of complaints over those five years were substantiated, though very few perpetrators were dismissed for misconduct. Instead, many have been allowed to leave the organization quietly. Conversely, many complainants left the organization, especially after experiencing retaliatory actions by their management. The ITF examined cases involving abolitions of posts, removals from shortlists and retracting of extensions of contract, among other actions, immediately following the launch of the complaint.

Figure 3: Cases reported in 2018 compared with 2017

2017   2018 (end October)

■ Sexual harassment   ■ Harassment and abuse of authority
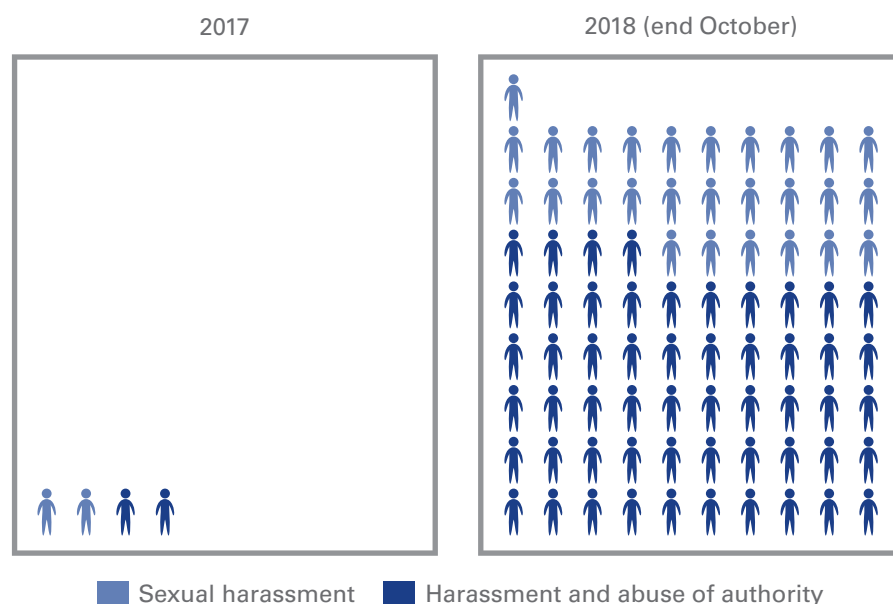
In 2018, the departure of a UNICEF deputy executive director in the wake of allegations of misconduct in another organization raised the profile of how misconduct was handled in UNICEF. The Executive Director actively encouraged staff to come forward if they had any complaints and the deadline for filing complaints was extended. It is likely that staff felt more comfortable in reporting misconduct as a result, and the number of cases reported increased exponentially (*see Figure 3*).

A total of 27 complaints of sexual harassment and 54 complaints of harassment and abuse of authority were reported to OIAI between March 2018 and October 2018, compared with only two complaints in each category in 2017. Staff reported that they are waiting to see what, if anything, will happen as a result of the increase in the number of staff that came forward in 2018.

The 2018 annual report on disciplinary measures from DHR states that a total of 21 complaints of sexual harassment were closed in 2018. Of those 21 complaints, eight (38 per cent) were not substantiated and six (29 per cent) were substantiated. The remaining complaints were not investigated for various reasons, including that the accused had already separated from the organization.

In the six substantiated cases, the investigative report was sent to DHR. By the end of 2018, two individuals had been disciplined; one had resigned during the disciplinary process; and in three cases, the disciplinary process was still ongoing.

Similarly, 20 complaints of harassment and abuse of authority were closed in 2018. Of those 20, nine (45 per cent) were not substantiated and four (20 per cent) were substantiated, while the remaining seven (35 per cent) were not investigated for various reasons.

One disciplinary action had been taken by the end of 2018 and three substantiated cases were pending disciplinary proceedings with DHR.

Sexual harassment cases reported 2016-2018 (Fall)

Who are the complainants?

- Overall 73 per cent of complainants are female, 16 per cent are male and 11 per cent are gender unknown – female staff are disproportionally represented (43 per cent of all staff).

- International professional staff are represented proportionally among the complainants, accounting for about 30 per cent of reported complaints; national officers are under-represented, accounting for just over 20 per cent of cases; non-United Nations staff account for about 15 per cent of reported cases; other United Nations agency staff account for about 10 per cent of reported cases; consultants, interns and contractors each account for about 3-4 per cent of reported cases; and the type of staff is not known for about 15 per cent of reported cases.

Who were the accused?

- About 93 per cent of the accused were males; gender was unknown for about 7 per cent of cases.

- International professional staff, who make up 29 per cent of all staff, were heavily overrepresented among the accused, accounting for almost 70 per cent of the accused in all sexual harassment complaints (P4 and P5 staff count for over half of all reported sexual harassment cases); national staff account for about 15 per cent of reported cases; and all others account for about 15 per cent of reported cases.

It is important to note that, although OIAI might consider that the investigative report substantiates the complaint, DHR could make a different judgement, such as that the evidence is not sufficiently compelling to warrant disciplinary measures.

The ITF also observed that because women are disproportionately represented in lower ranking levels, a failure to address and resolve cases of misconduct and sexual harassment may disproportionately harm female staff and serve to produce additional inequities.

It is clear from consultations, reports, testimonies and focus group discussions that staff do not trust the complaint system. The ITF identified several reasons for their mistrust:

» There is a palpable fear of retaliation, which has led to serious underreporting. While it is not possible to estimate the extent of underreporting exactly, the recent United Nations Safe Space Report on sexual harassment, commissioned by the United Nations Secretary-General, indicates that more than 38 per cent of staff reported having experienced sexual harassment while working for the United Nations. Only one third of those who reported a complaint took action to deal with the problem and less than 15 per cent of those who took action launched a formal complaint. If the same ratios were true for UNICEF, the 27 reported cases of sexual harassment in 2018 would represent more than 500 cases. The fact that there were staff members in each focus group discussion conducted by the ITF who indicated that they had experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment or abuse of authority, but had decided to stay silent, also indicates serious under-reporting.

» Staff observed that those who launch complaints can face repercussions and that many have felt forced to leave the organization. There is a general belief among staff that if you want a career in UNICEF, you need to stay silent.

Harassment and abuse of authority cases reported 2016-2018 (Fall)

Who are the complainants?

- 69 per cent of the complaints were from female staff, 24 per cent were from male staff and in 7 per cent of the cases, the gender was not known.

- International professional staff were heavily overrepresented among harassment and abuse of authority complainants, accounting for almost 45 per cent of cases; followed by general service staff accounting for about 20 per cent of cases; national officers accounting for about 18 per cent of cases; and consultants, non-United Nations staff or staff of unknown type accounting for 17 per cent of cases.

Who were the accused?

- 58.5 per cent of the accused were female staff and 41.5 per cent were male staff.

- The overwhelming majority of the accused were international profes-sional staff, accounting for about 80 per cent of the accused (P5 level at 30 per cent, P4 level at 25 per cent, D1 level at 15 per cent and D2 level at 10 per cent). National officers accounted for about 10 per cent of the accused, general service staff for about 5 per cent and the last 5 per cent was equally divided between contractors and staff of unknown type.

» The UNICEF Ethics Office is unable to assist. While the protections against retaliation have recently been revamped and strengthened in the updated UNICEF policy to protect whistle-blowers from retaliation, better outcomes for complainants are yet to be demonstrated. Staff feel that the Ethics Office, while trusted for confidential advice, is "without teeth" when it comes to ensuring protection.

» Staff widely perceive that the OIAI has alliances with senior staff, including in DHR. There is a strong belief that investigations and their outcomes are being influenced by management in the absence of checks and balances. Staff repeatedly told the ITF that they feel that abusers, particularly at senior levels, are protected by the two parties involved in the complaint process: OIAI, which investigates the complaints, and DHR, which reviews the findings and makes recommendations on sanctions.

» Managers and staff interviewed also told the ITF that the complaint system is complicated and cumbersome to navigate. The regulations and processes involved are difficult to understand and the role of each player is not clear to staff. This must be an even bigger problem for staff in the field and for those whose main language is not a United Nations language in which most documents are made available. More importantly, a distressed staff member will not know where to go or how to initiate a complaint.

» The investigations take far too long – up to a year and in some cases even longer – to be completed. The fact that large numbers of complaints are and have been closed without investigation, including many 'she said/he said' cases, is troubling to staff.

> **"I was forced by Human Resources to testify in front of my abuser and then told to leave the room. I was never told about the outcome."**
>
> —A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER IN A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

» Furthermore, staff feel that the investigative process is uncaring and disrespectful to the complainant. Staff noticed how poorly the investigators interact with all parties involved. At times, such interactions have been described as "rough", "disrespectful" and even "hostile". A senior manager participating in an interview as a witness reported that she broke into tears following an interview, due to the extremely unfriendly tone of her interviewer. This has further eroded any trust that may have existed. As the professional background of many investigators has traditionally been in general law enforcement, many staff have concluded that while OIAI seems to have the necessary skillset to investigate financial fraud and corruption, it lacks the skills and competencies to deal with other types of misconduct investigations, especially on sexual harassment and abuse of authority.

> **"I was interrogated for two days, but didn't even know what, exactly, I was accused of – until 45 days later."**
>
> —A UNICEF MANAGER IN AN INTERVIEW

Staff believe that transparency has been sacrificed with the excuse of due process requirements. Some complainants even said they had never been informed of the outcome of their complaint. Staff also generally feel that the burden of proof is largely left to the complainant. For example, while the substance of the complaint and the complainant's identity are disclosed to the accused, the complainant is not kept informed of submissions made by the accused and is therefore not in a position to respond. While investigations are supposed to be confidential, staff are of the opinion that confidentiality only exists on paper. There is no enforcement in practice and there are no consequences for breaking confidentiality. This has resulted in many staff becoming knowledgeable of and openly talking about issues under investigation, which has increased the stigma associated with filing a complaint and resulted in the further isolation of the complainant on the one hand, and the accused, who is immediately considered guilty, on the other. The irony is that so-called confidential proceedings become well-known; while the so-called transparent outcome is kept confidential. The ITF learned of several cases of rough treatment during investigations, haphazard investigative processes and extreme delays narrated by both managers and staff and by accused and complainants alike. Such examples clearly indicate a broken system that does not serve anyone on either side of an investigation.

Based on the data analysis, the findings of the Morgan Lewis review and, most importantly, the vast input received from staff, the ITF has concluded that investigations into staff misconduct have not been handled independently, promptly or adequately. Although UNICEF has taken steps to augment the capacity of the investigative unit, this will not address deep functional failings.

2.3.3 One-way ineffective internal communications

Effective internal communication is integral to a cohesive and strong organization and forms the third pillar of essential systems to support a healthy organizational culture. Although UNICEF is

well known for its externally-focused communications to advocate for children, the ITF found that UNICEF has a risk-averse approach to internal communications, which is antiquated. This is evident in how UNICEF engages with staff on the topic of workplace gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority.

In 2018, staff resorted to an open letter to the Executive Director and an online petition to have their voices heard on this subject. Once the ITF was commissioned, staff spoke to the ITF repeatedly about instances in which attempts to receive information went unanswered and no updates related to complaints made by staff were provided, which increased stress and uncertainty. There was also no guidance on who to approach for answers to unanswered questions and concerns, and there has reportedly been an increase in rumours and gossip, a decline in staff morale, and potentially an enhanced reputational risk to the organization.

The ITF found that this risk aversion was indicative of UNICEF's overall style of communication with its own staff – mirrored in the management style of supervisors – which the ITF found to be an antiquated, one-way broadcasting of information. Such communications included informing staff of how well the organization is doing, making internal communication appear as more propaganda/public relations-oriented, and protecting the organization's image rather than issuing honest communication related to staff concerns and questions about specific issues. The UNICEF town hall meetings, which take place every few months are an example of this. The ITF noticed that agendas consisted predominantly of updates from management on several different process issues. The ITF recognized some effort to gather questions from staff around the world, but the questions addressed in the meeting were pre-selected and the responses were scripted. There was very little room given to the staff association to speak on behalf of staff, only a few questions were received from the floor, and most of those questions came from headquarters staff. In its current format, staff are aware that the purpose of this meeting is for them to become "informed". This one-way approach is also evident in the regularly emailed global broadcasts – appropriately named – and seemingly also in the new tool, UMessage.

> **It seems that the town halls are carefully orchestrated headquarters-focused events rather than modern participatory fora that encourage open communication across UNICEF.**
>
> **—A UNICEF STAFF MEMBER AT HEADQUARTERS**

The ITF found that this style of messaging from headquarters was generally perceived as "noise" in an overflow of information by those closest to the source, while those in the field reported feeling "left in the dark". In the opinion of the ITF, UNICEF is missing opportunities to restore trust by failing to acknowledge mistakes and addressing questions and concerns directly, and by not providing evidence that staff are being heard.

A new two-way dialogue approach that reinforces the values of the organization, educates staff openly about difficult issues, actively seeks staff concerns and addresses them more directly or

at least points to where to go to get the information they need, and allows staff to have some say in which issues need to be addressed and how, will go a long way towards establishing trust and confidence in, and the credibility of UNICEF's internal communications. This will also help to build a forward-leaning, inclusive organization that welcomes creative thinking, a diversity of opinions and constructive dissent using fresh, interactive and appealing technologies and platforms.

Two-way communication at the team level – enabled by well-trained managers – will ensure that the organization moves from communication that is disconnected from action, to communication that supports and provides evidence of action. It will also move from internal communication perceived as questionable and as an instrument to manage risk, to communication that is genuine and trusted; from unappealing and irrelevant messages, to information that is anticipated and sought out; and from an antiquated style of communication, to one that is fresh and takes advantage of multiple communication methods and styles. Importantly, it could also support organization-wide efforts to heal the divides in the organization; improve job satisfaction by empowering staff to shape their workplace and become champions of change; and ultimately reduce abuse of authority and other forms of harassment.

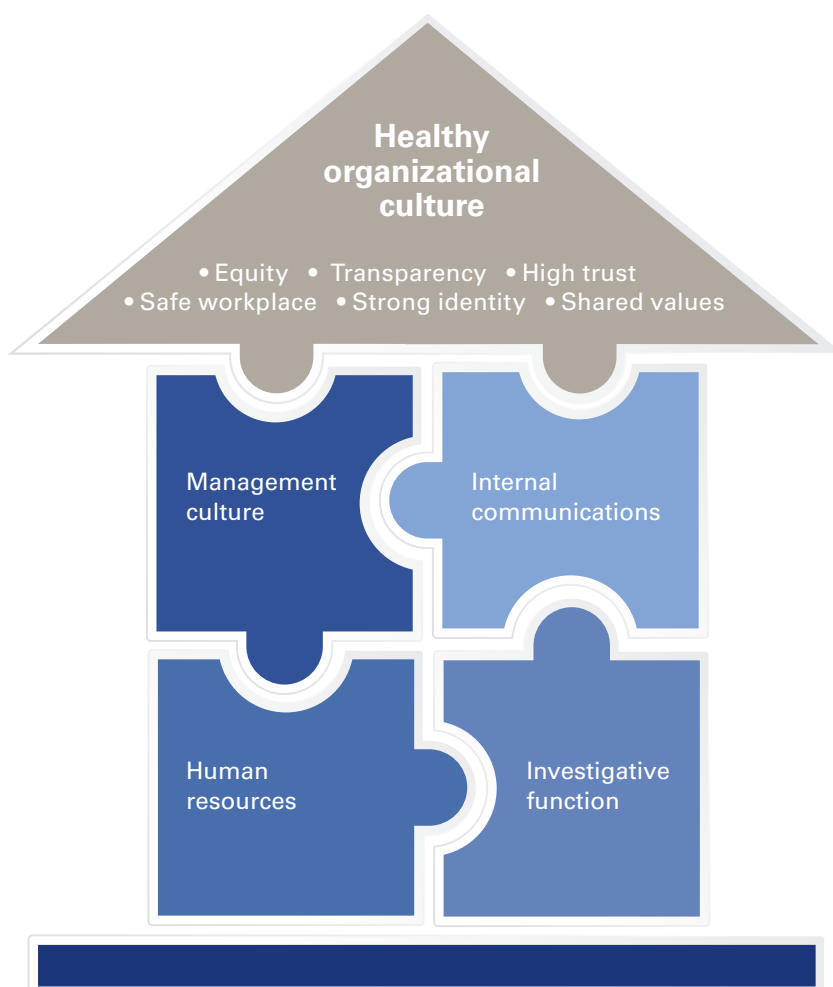|	
An antiquated, bureaucratic broadcasting communication style	Two-way communication that hears staff and uses multiple platforms
Communication disconnected from action	Communication that supports action
Communication perceived as an instrument to manage risk	Communication that supports dialogue
Unappealing and irrelevant communication which is ignored	Communication that is sought out and anticipated

A PATH TO POSITIVE CULTURE CHANGE: FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Healing an unhealthy culture is the first step towards becoming a high-performing organization characterized by openness, trust and collaboration. In such an organization, managers model the desired behaviours; their management of the performance of the organization and its people holistically connects the 'what' and the 'how'; accountability is defined and accepted; and staff are motivated to perform to their highest potential.

In this report, the ITF has identified the missing elements of a healthy organizational culture in UNICEF. These are a strong organizational identity, a high level of trust, shared values, a safe workplace, transparency and equity. These elements need to be underpinned by the requisite institutional systems, as illustrated in the diagram below.

Healthy organizational culture

- Equity   • Transparency   • High trust
- Safe workplace   • Strong identity   • Shared values

Management culture

Internal communications

Human resources

Investigative function

As stated earlier, in September 2018, the ITF made early action recommendations to the Executive Director (*as seen in Annex 9*); and in December 2018, the ITF further recommended that UNICEF start the process of bringing an independent change management team on board to kick-start implementation. This section discusses the ITF's final recommendations to UNICEF on the actions needed to put the organization on the path to a positive culture change and to strengthen the support systems to nurture this change.

3.1 Change starts at the top

In UNICEF, where the management culture has been based on the power given by a hierarchical structure, a fundamental change in mindset through introspection is required to bring about a radical change in the organizational culture. This change needs to start at the top, trickling down to management at all levels. Zero tolerance for gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority should be embraced and implemented by all in its truest sense and not as mere lip service.

In order to achieve this culture change, **the ITF recommends that UNICEF:**

3.1.a   Articulate and drive a new management culture commensurate with the organization's values, in a broad dialogue across UNICEF. This should reflect that management is moving from the traditional 'command and control' culture to one in which managers lead by example, using inclusive decision-making, motivation and empowerment of teams and individuals. In this culture, managers will accept accountability, welcome checks and balances, appreciate feedback and foster humility and self-awareness.

3.1.b   Develop new managerial competencies for people management that reflect UNICEF's values and the new leadership culture and incorporate these into management selection processes and performance evaluation review process criteria. These new leadership standards should be communicated throughout the organization so that staff understand what to expect and feel empowered to speak up when those standards are not met by their supervisor.

3.1.c   Establish managerial accountability through the development of key performance indicators for people management, based on the new competencies and measured through multi-rater feedback in the performance evaluation review. Those meeting the standard should benefit from positive reinforcement; and there should be clear repercussions for those who do not (i.e. remedial training, downgrading or departure from the organization).

3.1.d   Make visible changes by removing people management responsibilities from managers who consistently do not live up to the organization's values.

3.1.e   Offer comprehensive training in people management to current managers commensurate with their responsibilities (and any additional training to address individual skills gaps) and ensure that all new managers receive training in people management before they take on their responsibilities and benefit from ongoing coaching.

3.1.f   Ensure that all managers are fully appraised of procedures pertaining to identifying and reporting incidents of gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority, and know their responsibilities and accountabilities vis-à-vis victims, witnesses and perpetrators.

3.2 Change includes everyone

Given the findings of the ITF, UNICEF needs to define what the desirable workplace norms should be, while being mindful of the value systems in the surrounding society. As discussed, a respectful and value-driven workplace culture has a positive impact on organizational performance. While culture change is not easy, it is possible and, in this instance, imperative.

The ITF recommends that UNICEF:

3.2.a **Draw up a code of conduct** that articulates an organizational identity and how core values are operationalized, is subject to organization-wide consultation and dialogue, and is supported by awareness building and training, including for new incoming staff as part of a universal induction and onboarding programme. The code of conduct should be signed and regularly reviewed by all current and future employees as a commitment to UNICEF's workplace culture.

3.2.b **Derive a revised set of core competencies** and functional competencies, as appropriate, from the code of conduct and ensure that these do not remain competencies on paper only by adequately incorporating them into all relevant human resource processes and measuring both managers and staff on these competencies.

3.2.c **Seek to purposefully address all organizational divides**, including through the following:

Gender

i.   Monitor and annually report data disaggregated by location to the lowest possible level, while preserving confidentiality, on gender gaps and equality issues, including but not limited to recruitment, selection, compensation and career advancement opportunities, including the rotation programme, and take timely corrective actions.

ii. Implement a gender sensitivity training for all staff, to include non-binary expressions of gender identity, with specific modules for those responsible for human resource processes and for people management.

iii. Undertake systematic and structured exit interviews to understand what drives resignations and separations from the organization, particularly for women.

iv. Survey, monitor and report disaggregated data on sexual harassment, including all types of harassment and micro-aggressions that create a hostile work environment for women.

Diversity

v.   Monitor and annually report data disaggregated by location to the lowest possible level, while preserving confidentiality on diversity and pay gaps, including but not

limited to recruitment, selection, compensation and career advancement opportunities (i.e. the rotation programme) and take timely corrective actions.

vi.   Implement a diversity and inclusion training for all staff, with specific modules for those responsible for human resource processes and people management.

vii. Undertake systematic and structured exit interviews to understand what drives resignations and separations from the organization, particularly for minority groups.

viii. Survey, monitor and report disaggregated data on all types of harassment and micro-aggressions that create a hostile work environment for minority groups.

ix.   Establish an institutional focal point with adequate authority to survey, monitor and report on diversity and inclusion in UNICEF, and propose remedial action to senior management.

International staff/national staff

x.   Embark on a comprehensive review of the international, national and general service staff divides with a view to modernizing and harmonizing human resource policy frameworks for all categories of staff. This will be a long-term project and needs to include a review of everything from roles, job profiles and competencies to career advancement opportunities and total compensation.

xi.   In the short- to medium-term, UNICEF should ensure a work environment with clear career paths for national and general service staff. Qualified national staff should receive serious consideration for international professional positions.

Staff and non-staff

xii. Put in place human resource systems that provide regular data on the sizeable, locally-managed non-staff workforce, including numbers, locations, profiles and functions.

xiii. Ensure that the non-staff assignments are truly temporary and time-bound in nature and that non-staff are not working side-by-side with staff in the long-term doing the same job as staff without the corresponding compensation and benefits.

xiv. Review and revise the human resource policy for non-staff to ensure that they benefit from the same protections against misconduct and retaliation as staff.

Managers and staff

xv. Demonstrate in practice that complainants, those critical of management and those speaking up or taking initiative do not face repercussions but are encouraged and given a platform to speak up.

xvi. Monitor the career paths of those who file complaints to ensure that no retaliation or marginalization is detected, and that swift action is taken to protect and support the complainant.

xvii. Recognize and reward managers who create an environment of intellectual diversity in which all staff are encouraged to participate, voice dissenting opinions, make suggestions and take initiative; pay special attention to soliciting and hearing the voices of minority groups and women.

3.3 Transformation of the Division of Human Resources

A healthy culture rests on living the organization's values every day. Organizations with healthy and inclusive cultures welcome checks and balances. In most organizations, these are largely provided by the human resource function. As discussed in the previous section, the ITF's findings point to serious shortcomings that will prevent the UNICEF human resource function from playing this vital role.

The ITF recommends that UNICEF:

3.3.a **Develop a people strategy** aligned with its business strategy/plan and its core values to support both the organizational realignment and the culture change efforts. This strategy should strengthen and clarify the corporate mandate of DHR, articulate and reaffirm its role as the honest broker and provide practical direction, based on data, on workforce planning and management as well as policy development.

3.3.b **Professionalize the human resource function** throughout the organization by:

    i. Developing benchmark competencies for each role and grade level in human resources throughout the organization; and

    ii. Assessing the capabilities of existing human resource staff against those benchmarks and providing remedial skills training to close skill gaps whenever possible, offering reassignment outside of the human resource function or ensuring departure from the organization, as appropriate.

3.3.c **Make the necessary changes in the reporting relationships** of decentralized human resource staff to ensure the human resource mandate is delivered equitably across UNICEF and enable field-based human resource staff to stand up to local managers who demonstrate poor people management practices. This will require matrix management with the primary reporting relationship to DHR and secondary reporting line to the director or representative in the field.

3.3.d **Build a human resource analytics function** to regularly produce relevant, timely and high-quality human resource analytics based on reliable data to inform management decisions and ensure monitoring and implementation of human resource policies, practices and accountability.

3.4 Reform human resource policies and practices

The ITF identified four critical areas of policy and practice for change that would address the following: i) the lack of measuring and evaluating people skills and people management; ii) the lack of accountability for people management; iii) the vulnerability of many human resource processes to manipulation, discrimination and abuse; and iv) the need to increase flexibility in the workplace.

The ITF recommends that UNICEF:

3.4.a **Fundamentally reform the annual performance evaluation** with respect to managerial accountability by placing people management behaviours at the centre of the evaluation, together with programmatic results, also measured through other means, by:

i.   Incorporating the redefined people competencies (staff) and people management competencies (supervisors and managers) into the performance evaluation report to be *evaluated* along with programmatic results.

ii. Instituting regular *anonymous multi-rater feedback* in the performance evaluation report on results and people behaviours for staff and results and people management for supervisors and managers, underpinned by a rigorous training programme. The feedback should:

   °   Be considered in the evaluation;

   °   Be shared with the staff in question in aggregate;

   °   Be made available during the management group review where top and bottom performers are discussed at the end of the performance evaluation report cycle; and

   °   Be filed in the performance evaluation report system.

Once this reform has taken root, UNICEF should consider taking a holistic approach to performance management at the organizational level by better harmonizing the management, monitoring and evaluation of results for children with management, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of its people.

3.4.b **Strengthen the checks and balances against discrimination, favouritism and abuse of authority** by ensuring that career-impacting decisions, such as promotion, reassignment, rotation, etc., are based on the entire career of the staff member and not only the last performance evaluation report, guaranteeing that in every review process, a single strong voice cannot derail a career.

3.4.c Establish an independent, simple and informal appeal mechanism (one reviewer or a small panel) to review staff complaints related to a decision made in the performance management process and/or in connection with the human resource processes discussed above. This review would, as may be warranted, recommend actions to the deputy executive director for management to resolve the issue. The deputy executive director would then decide whether to take any or all actions recommended. A mechanism for early resolution of complaints related to human resource decisions has been shown to reduce workplace conflicts and formal complaints in other organizations.

3.4.d Improve and fully implement the workplace flexibility policies by developing a greater variety of flexible work options adapted to the needs of staff, recognizing that the needs may vary from office to office and global to local. UNICEF will need to ensure monitoring and reporting on managerial implementation and uptake/approval rates.

3.5 A justice system to trust

The ITF concluded that UNICEF's investigative function needs a total overhaul and mere corrective adjustments, such as augmenting its resources, will not be adequate. To win back confidence and trust, UNICEF will need to restore the independence of its justice system by outsourcing[25] all or part of the process to a third party that is experienced in handling discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority complaints in global organizations.

The ITF recommends that UNICEF:

3.5.a Ensure that disciplinary action is taken against proven perpetrators and that they are not put on long administrative leave with full pay, rotated within the organization or allowed to resign without repercussions. This also includes ensuring that those dismissed due to misconduct cannot be rehired in any capacity by UNICEF or its partners and third parties working with UNICEF – and ideally by any organization within the United Nations system.

3.5.b Ensure that staff are protected against retaliation by strengthening the mandate and capabilities of the Ethics Office and safeguarding its independence.

3.5.c Demonstrate that complainants' careers are not derailed as a result of filing a complaint. This requires monitoring of human resource decisions impacting the complainant's career. Conversely, UNICEF will also need to ensure that the complaint system is not abused. Preventing frivolous or ill-informed complaints is best done by clearly communicating the definitions and examples of discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority on the one hand and what is appropriate use of authority on the other.

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25   In making this recommendation, the ITF is aware of the related recommendations of the Joint Investigative Unit.

3.5.d Ensure that all staff involved in a complaint investigation, including those against whom a complaint is launched and witnesses are interviewed, are treated with the dignity and respect deserved by all UNICEF staff throughout the investigative process, and the different aspects of the investigation are kept strictly confidential.

3.5.e Outsource the following parts of the process at minimum to provide independent, confidential channels for reporting, adequate safeguards against manipulation by management and more transparent, un-biased reporting of outcomes:

° **The receiving of complaints** through safe, credible and confidential channels (e.g. a hotline) made available in multiple locations and in multiple languages, and the recording, cataloguing and triaging of those complaints;

° **An audit function** at the tail-end of the process, involving the review of each case before it is closed, including any investigative findings and disciplinary measures proposed; and

° **Regular (quarterly and annual) reporting** on complaints received, complaints closed without investigation, complaints investigated, outcomes of investigations and disciplinary measures taken. The annual reporting should include demographic parameters at a level that still protects confidentiality.
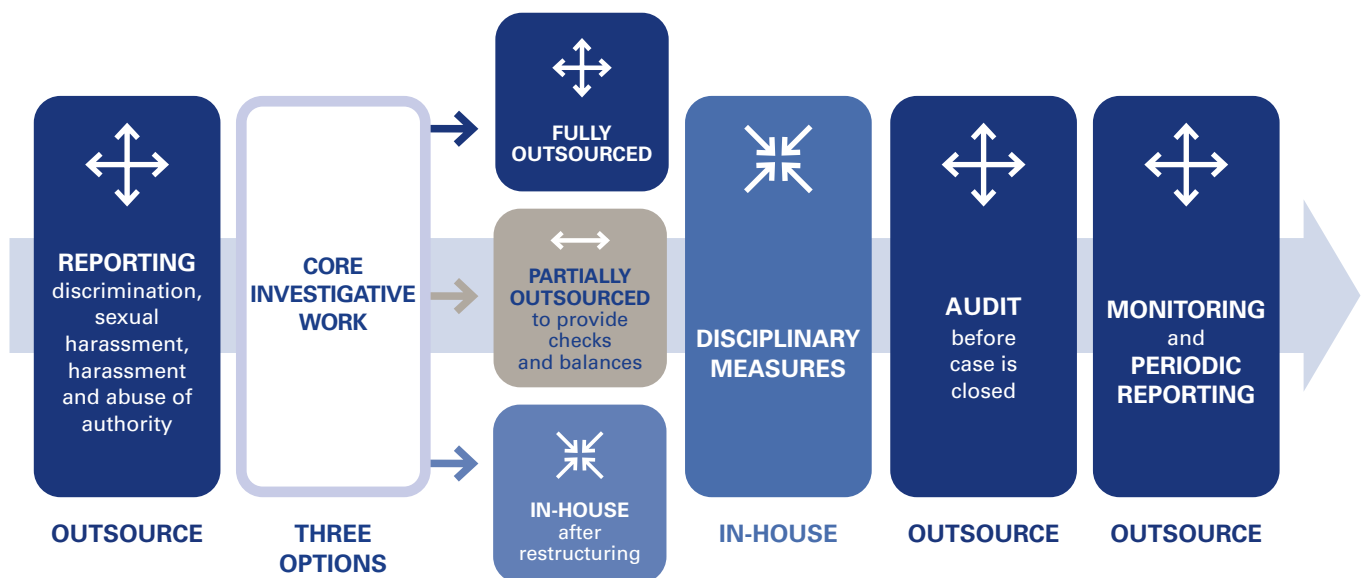
3.5.f Consider the following three options in regard to **the core investigative work**, written in the order of preference from the ITF:

OPTION 1: Full outsourcing

In addition to the above, UNICEF fully outsources the investigative work to an independent third party. This would externalize the entire process of handling complaints, as was recommended by the ITF in the early action recommendations. The third party would investigate the complaints to the fullest extent possible, applying industry best practices and UNICEF policies, including on interactions with complainants, those accused and witnesses. Investigative findings would be shared with UNICEF once the investigation is completed, within an agreed timeline for completion. The third party would recommend disciplinary action, as may be appropriate based on UNICEF's policies and case law, for a decision by the deputy executive director for management in consultation with DHR.

OPTION 2: Partial outsourcing

In addition to the above, UNICEF outsources the management of the investigative work to a third party in conjunction with an internal review committee. The review committee would comprise a third-party case manager and four UNICEF representatives – two appointed by management and two appointed by staff. Investigative case work would typically take 90 days and include the following principal steps:

- The third-party case manager conducts a preliminary inquiry within 21 days of submission to determine whether the case warrants a full investigation. The case manager submits specific questions pertaining to this inquiry to be answered by UNICEF's investigative function within 14 days and presents the answers with a judgement to the review committee.

- The review committee decides whether a full investigation is warranted. If not warranted, the case is closed, and the case manager informs the complainant. If an investigation is warranted, the review committee submits a request for evidence through the case manager to UNICEF's investigative function to be completed within 30 days. The case manager informs the complainant and the accused. The case manager contacts DHR so that a decision can be made by UNICEF on whether the case warrants administrative leave or temporary reassignment of the accused for the duration of the investigation.

- The review committee reviews the evidence and, under the guidance of the case manager, prepares findings and disciplinary recommendations, as appropriate. The case manager prepares the final report and any recommendations on disciplinary action for submission to the deputy executive director for management, who makes the decision on disciplinary actions, as may be warranted.

OPTION 3: Internal reforms without outsourcing the investigative work

Further to the above, this option would entail keeping the investigative work in-house while ensuring the independence of this function by separating the investigations on fraud and corruption from investigations on misconduct related to discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority. Such a specialized investigative unit could be established under the Ethics Office and staffed by investigators specializing in workplace ethics related to behavioural misconduct. The investigative unit would conduct all such investigations except those where the third party, which receives all complaints, recommends that due to special circumstances, the investigation should be conducted externally. The investigative work itself needs to be brought up to the standards described and recommended in the Morgan Lewis review, particularly regarding methodology, confidentiality and fair treatment of the parties involved. The results of the investigations would be subject to review by the external party, which would also be responsible for monitoring and reporting, as recommended above.

3.6 Effective internal communication with staff

Internal communication is integral to organizational culture and needs to play an important role in the culture change process. The current approach to internal communications needs to be recast and elevated and the centrality of communication to effective management needs to be internalized by every manager.

To this end, **the ITF recommends that UNICEF strengthen its internal communications** with the necessary human and financial resources in the following ways:

3.6.a Re-conceptualize its internal communications approach and develop a cohesive internal communications strategy that emphasises two-way communication, invites staff to participate and is action oriented, genuine, trusted and sought out by staff. It should reinforce the application of core values and evaluate the extent to which staff voices are being heard.

3.6.b Train and support UNICEF managers so that they improve two-way communication within their teams to:

- ° Improve the work of the organization because it solicits creative thinking from everyone, particularly those directly responsible for programme implementation;

- ° Reduce the divides that fracture the organization (by gender, national/international, professional/general service, race, etc.);

- ° Improve job satisfaction because all staff will feel empowered and engaged in shaping their workplace; and

- ° Build trust by progressively demonstrating that UNICEF welcomes diverse opinions and constructive dissent.

3.6.c Ensure strategic communications advice to senior management about how to best share information with UNICEF staff.

3.6.d Support the entire organization, but especially the nascent change management process, in transparently communicating about progress (or lack thereof) on institutional priorities.

3.6.e Develop policy and procedures and associated roles and responsibilities for internal and external communication on issues pertaining to workplace gender discrimination, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, including investigations, aligned with organizational values and branding.

3.7 Professional change management

The ITF recommends that on receipt of this report, the Executive Director communicate as quickly and as clearly as possible to UNICEF staff and the UNICEF Executive Board on how the organization will respond to the recommendations. This communication would also serve as a charge to the change management process. The ITF understands that change, particularly changes as transformative and multi-faceted as those proposed here, is a challenging undertaking. In December 2018, the ITF recommended to the Executive Director that UNICEF bring on board an external consulting firm to overlap with the ITF and serve as a change management team to assist UNICEF in planning the culture and management changes recommended here and in other relevant reviews. Working from the Office of the Executive Director, this change management team should:

3.7.a   Develop a comprehensive, prioritized and sequenced implementation and institutionalization plan.

3.7.b   Propose the structure and governance of an internal group to manage the change process over a period of two years. This group will:

° Be led by a senior full-time appointee in the Office of the Executive Director, reporting directly to the Executive Director to ensure its ability to coordinate change across the organization;

° Have the resources and authority to ensure compliance across the organization, particularly among managers at all levels who will need to model the behaviours expected during the culture change journey;

° Ensure that the change management process models inclusive, two-way communication and broad engagement across the organization, including with the Global Staff Association;

° Project manage the change process and support the Executive Director and the senior management team, including by establishing a system to monitor, evaluate, report on and communicate on progress on a quarterly basis; and

° Develop the institutional capacity to ensure ongoing oversight of the reforms and the sunsetting of its operations.

SECTION 4:

CONCLUSION

Throughout the path of discovery, the ITF members have observed the strong intent and resolve of the Executive Director to make UNICEF an excellent workplace. She has demonstrated an openness to bringing about the changes needed to achieve this and to taking the recommendations of the ITF seriously. However, it will take action, not just words, at all levels of management, to convince UNICEF staff of management's genuine desire to bring about this change. Culture change is not an event, but a journey that needs the complete and unequivocal engagement of all managers. That engagement will help staff believe in and trust the change process and play their part in ensuring its success. The trust that has been lost will have to be regained.

Critical elements to regaining that trust include: communication of expected outcomes at the end of this journey of culture change, consistency of action and intent throughout the process, and regular reporting on where things stand. Management will have to pay close attention to the planning, communication and monitoring of the outcomes envisioned through the change management process and ensure that the necessary mechanisms and support systems, including policies, management practices and consistent oversight from senior management, are put into place. These will foster the planned change and help it take root. More importantly, it will build staff confidence that this change is not a passing whim of management, but here to stay, by engaging them in the change and making them proud of the organization for which they work.

The ITF is confident that UNICEF will take the recommendations to heart and move on them with the help of the change management team, the internal support and oversight team, all of its managers and the involvement of staff at all levels. Translating intent into action to change work culture is not an easy process but is definitely a feasible one. The recommendations of the ITF are designed to assist UNICEF in doing so and the organization's strong motivation and commitment to take these recommendations forward will make the goal more attainable, placing UNICEF in the lead within the United Nations system on effectively managing change.

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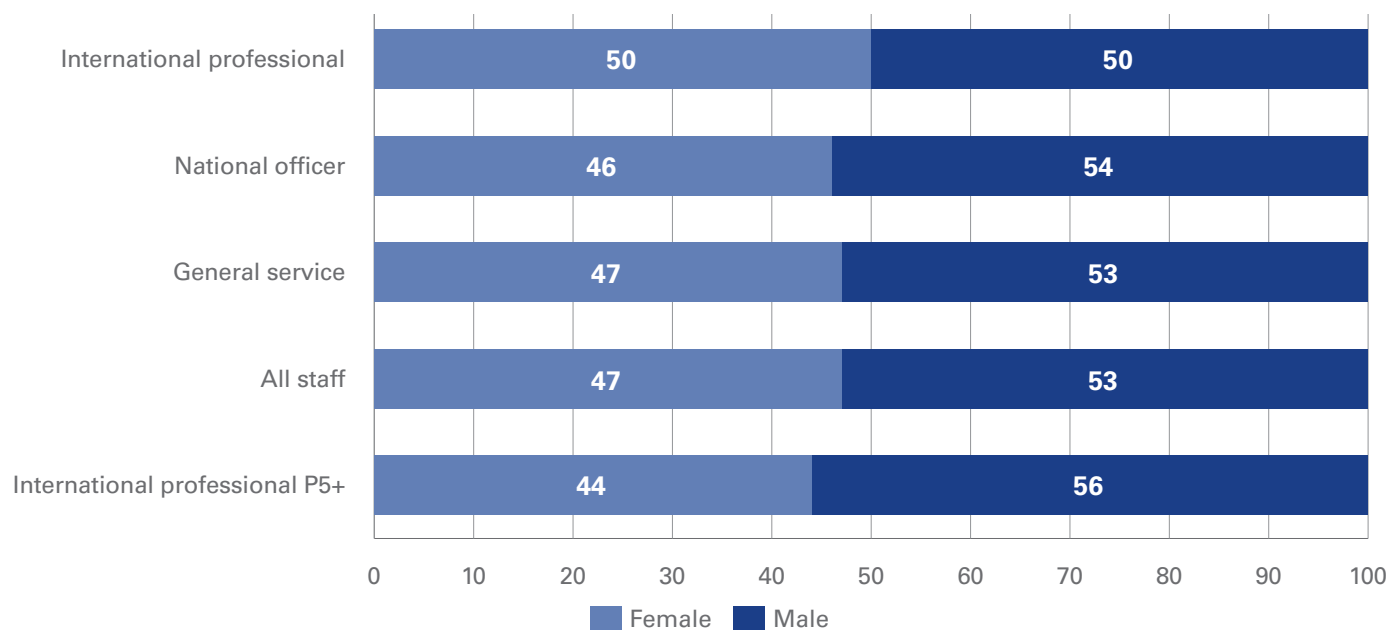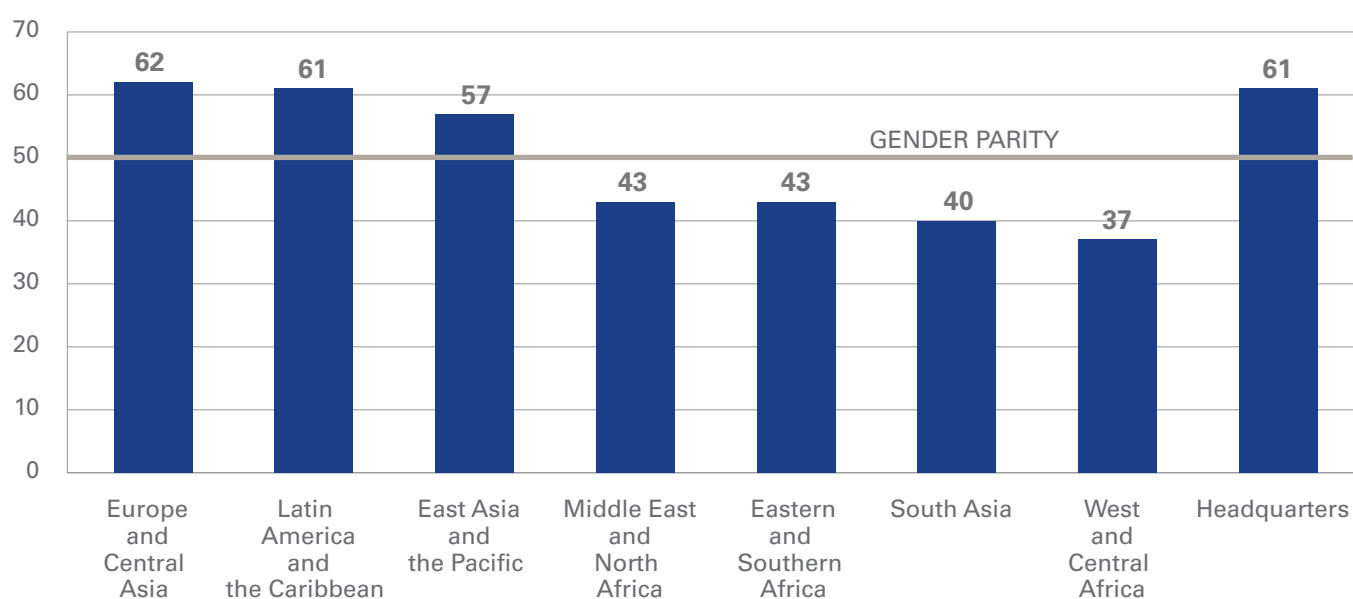
FIGURES

Figure 3: Gender balance by type of staff and international professional staff at levels P5/L5+, 2018

	Female	Male
International professional	50	50
National officer	46	54
General service	47	53
All staff	47	53
International professional P5+	44	56

Figure 4: Percentage of female staff in regions and in headquarters, 2018

Region	% Female
Europe and Central Asia	62
Latin America and the Caribbean	61
East Asia and the Pacific	57
Middle East and North Africa	43
Eastern and Southern Africa	43
South Asia	40
West and Central Africa	37
Headquarters	61

GENDER PARITY

Figure 5: Initial appointments by post level and gender (international professional staff, regular), 2014-2018 (as of November)

USG: Under Secretary-General
ASG: Assistant Secretary-General
D: Director
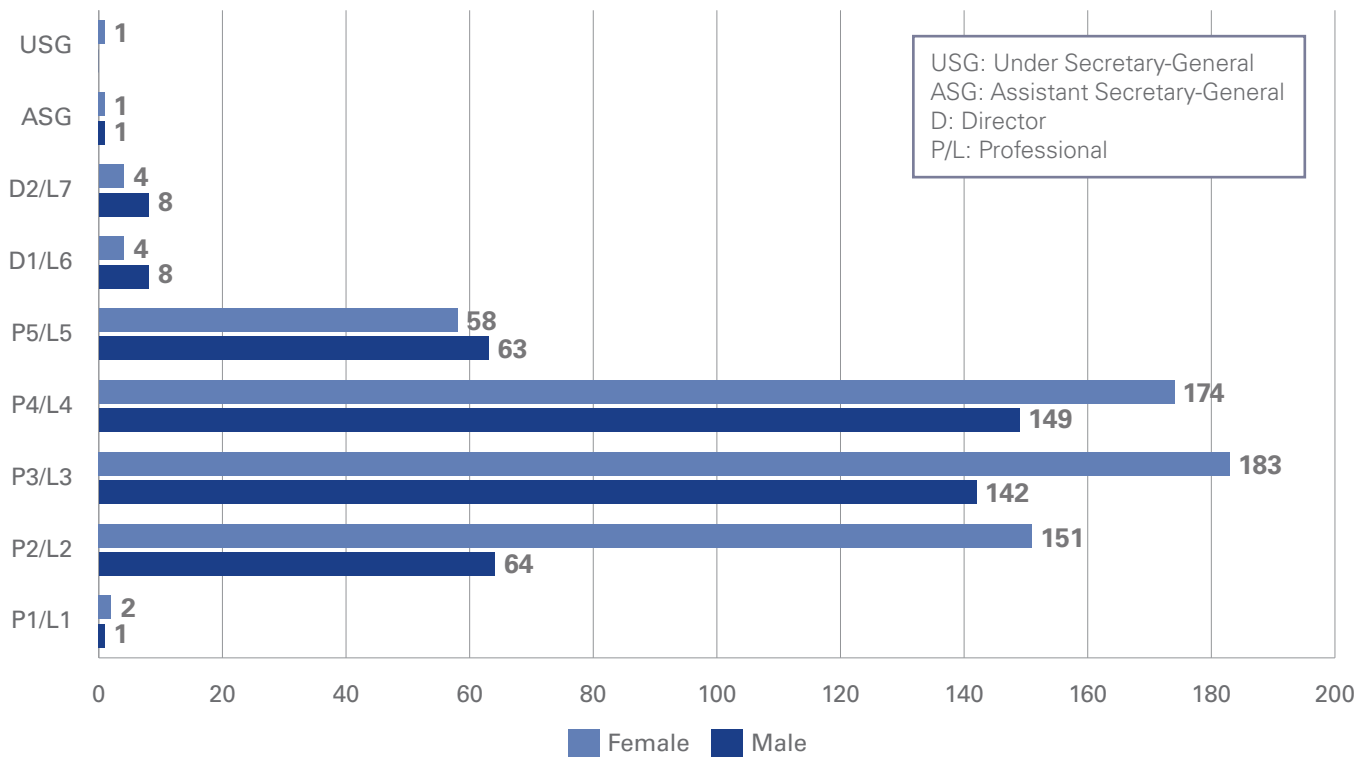P/L: Professional

Female   Male

Figure 6: Internal mobility (lateral move, reassignment, reappointment) of regular staff (international professional, national officer and general service), 2014-2018 (as of November)
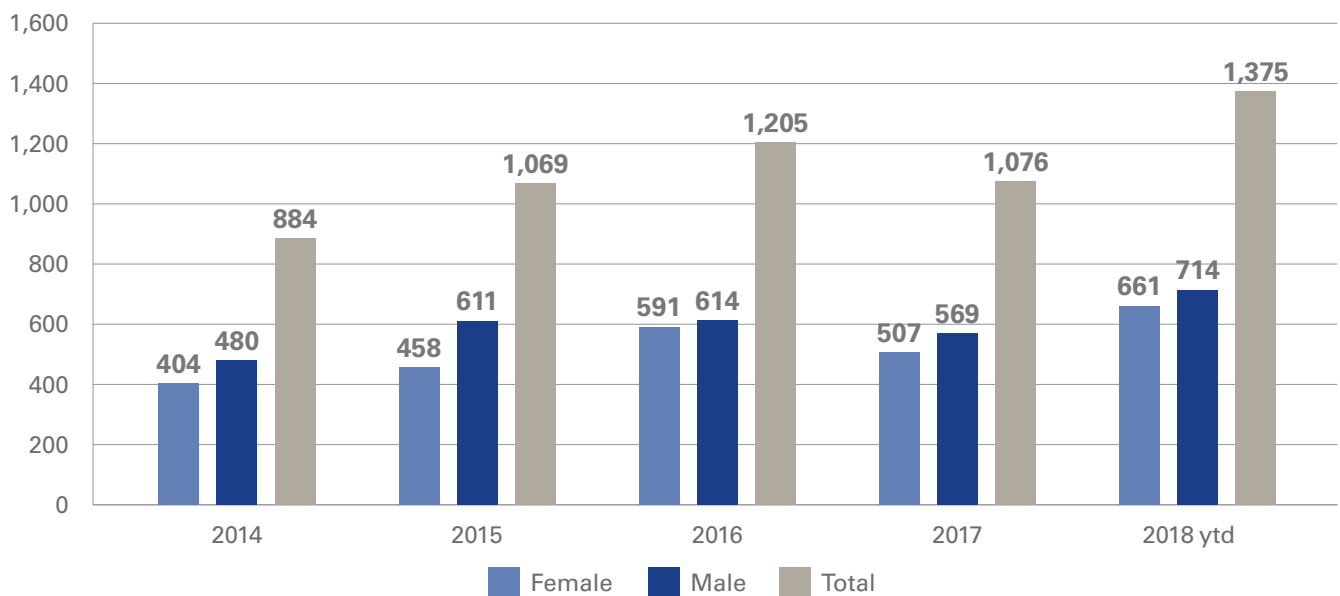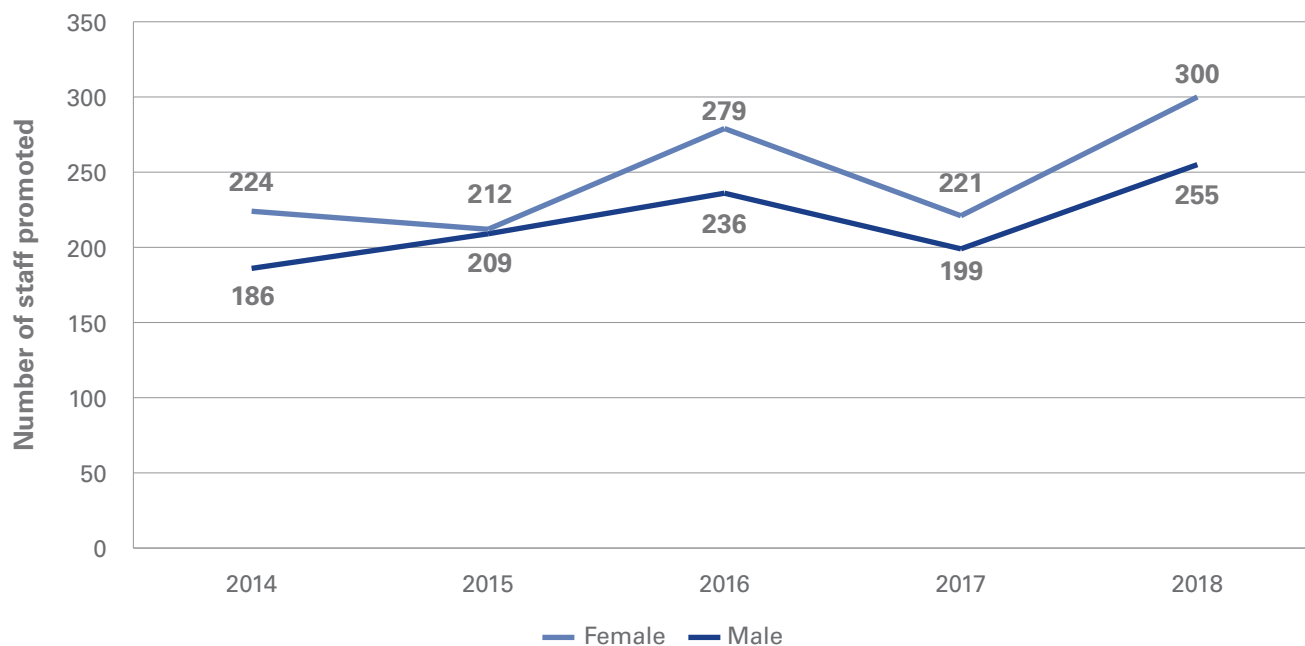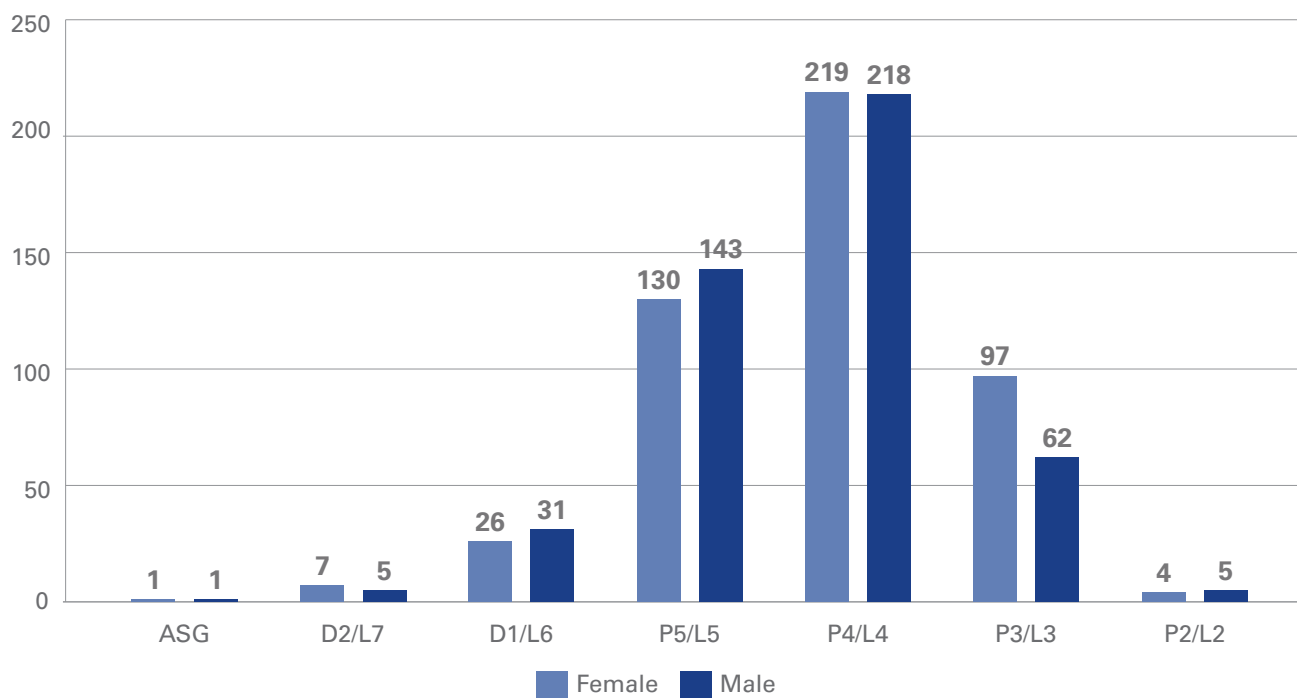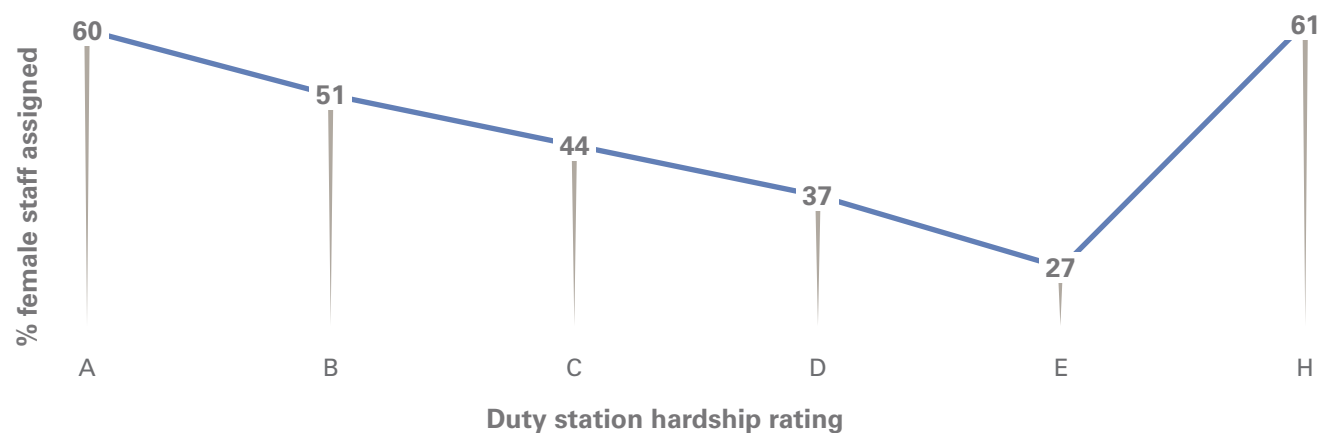

Female   Male   Total

Figure 7: Promotions of regular staff, 2014-2018 (as of November)

Number of staff promoted

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Female	224	212	279	221	300
Male	186	209	236	199	255

— Female — Male

Figure 8: Promotions by gender and job level, 2014-2018 (as of November) (N=949)

	ASG	D2/L7	D1/L6	P5/L5	P4/L4	P3/L3	P2/L2
Female	1	7	26	130	219	97	4
Male	1	5	31	143	218	62	5

■ Female ■ Male

Figure 9: Percentage of female staff by duty station classification, 2018

Figure 10: Resignations by grade level and gender, 2014-2018 (as of November)
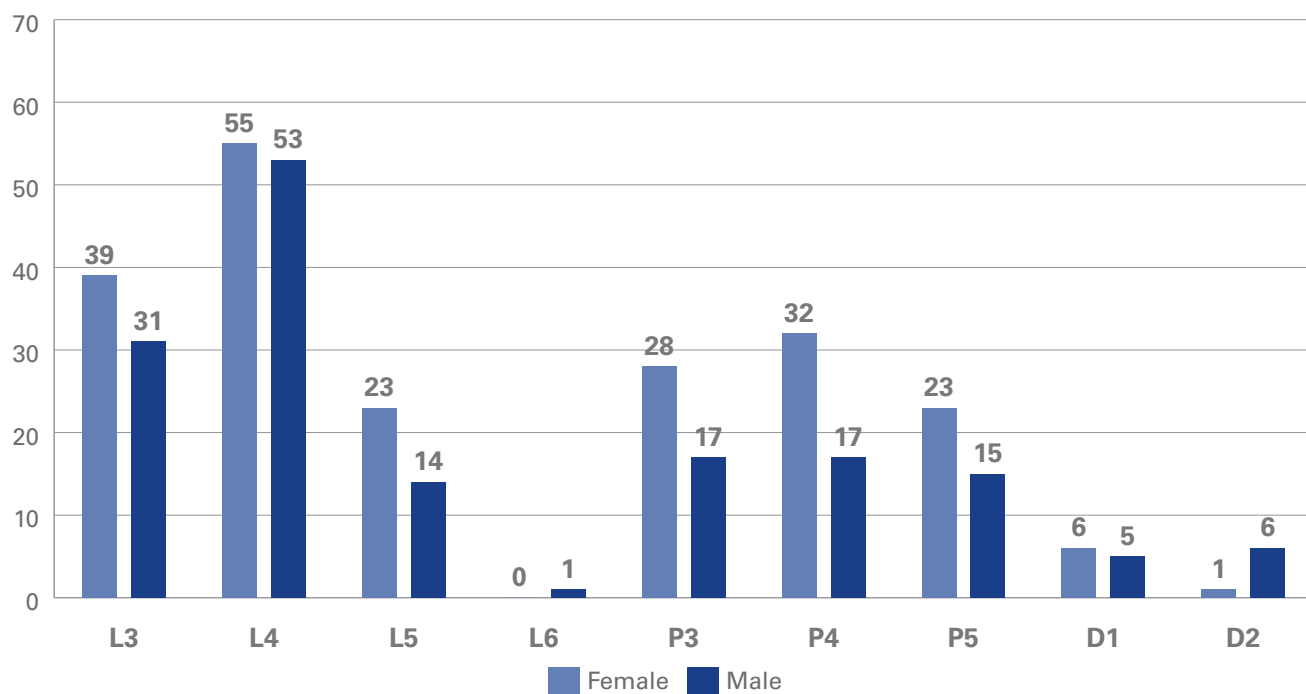
BIOGRAPHIES OF THE INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The ITF co-chairs

Purnima Mane has served as the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pathfinder International, and as an Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director for Programmes at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Mane has also served as Director of Policy, Evidence and Partnership at the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), as Vice President (International Programs) at the Population Council, and in senior roles at the World Health Organization (WHO). She holds a doctorate from Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India, where she has served as Associate Professor. Mane has had an illustrious career in India and internationally, addressing public health and gender-related issues.

Debrework Zewdie is a distinguished scholar at the City University of New York's School of Public Health and Health Policy; and a Richard L. and Ronay A. Menschel Senior Leadership Fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where she taught a course on leadership in public health. She has held leadership positions in Ethiopia and at the World Bank where she led the development of the Bank's strategy to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic and was responsible for the first billion-dollar programme to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa. She was Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, where she co-led the transformation of the Global Fund. Zewdie has had years of experience as a researcher, thought leader, programme implementer and manager at the country, regional and international levels. She has been an advocate for people living with HIV and AIDS, women's health and equity for over 30 years.

The ITF members

Mabel Abraham is an Assistant Professor of Management at Columbia Business School, where she examines gender inequality, entrepreneurship and social networks, and assesses how organizational and social processes contribute to gender differences in business outcomes. Her academic work includes comparing the relative benefits received by male and female entrepreneurs through the strategic social networks they use to generate new clients. Prior to focusing on this research, Abraham spent five years working for Fidelity Investments in Boston and New York City.

Chernor Bah is a feminist activist who has dedicated his life to building the power and amplifying the voices of girls and young people worldwide and in his home country of Sierra Leone. At the age of 15, Chernor founded and led the Children's Forum Network, a mass movement of children who organized and mobilized to demand their voices be included in peace and reconciliation efforts after Sierra Leone's brutal civil war. He has led initiatives for UNFPA, the Nike Foundation and others. In 2012, Bah co-founded, alongside Gordon Brown (former British Prime Minister) A World at School, a global mobilization and campaign organization for global education. Chernor has twice been appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General to high-level steering committees, is an expert advisor to the Security Council on youth, peace and security, and is the founder and CEO of Purposeful, a movement-building hub for girls and their allies in Sierra Leone and the Global South.

Stefano Bertozzi was formerly the Dean and is currently Dean Emeritus and Professor at the School of Public Health, at the University of California, Berkeley. Previously, he directed the HIV and tuberculosis programmes at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and worked at the Mexican National Institute of Public Health as Director of its Center for Evaluation Research and Surveys. He was also the Director of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS and has held positions with UNAIDS, the World Bank and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Amel Karboul, a social entrepreneur, author and politician, is currently CEO of the Education Outcomes Fund for Africa and the Middle East, and Commissioner of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. She has held leadership roles at Mercedes-Benz and DaimlerChrysler, was a senior strategic advisor at the Boston Consulting Group and served as Secretary-General of the Maghreb Economic Forum. Karboul was also Minister of Tourism in Tunisia's transition government from January 2014 to February 2015, following successful negotiations by the country's National Dialogue Quartet, which won the Nobel Peace Prize. At the time, *Jeune Afrique* magazine named Karboul one of Africa's 10 most influential young politicians. Her 2015 book, *Coffin Corner*, outlines a new leadership culture suited to the complexity and dynamics of the 21st century.

Ndeye Madjiguene Sock is Dalberg Advisors' Global Operations Partner based in Dakar, Senegal. She has supported development projects and organizational transformation initiatives in various sectors, including agriculture, health, information and communication technologies, and economic development. She also co-leads Dalberg's gender practice and is the co-founder of the Women's Investment Club in Senegal. Prior to joining Dalberg, Sock worked for Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu in Washington, D.C., where she served both in the Emerging Markets Group and Financial Advisory Services.

Marcelo Modica is the Chief People Officer at the global consulting firm Mercer, where he is responsible for developing the company's talent strategy through all aspects of human resources management. Modica joined Mercer from JP Morgan Chase, where he was the General Manager driving a culturally relevant strategy for Hispanic customers. He had previously served as the Managing Director and Head of Human Resources for Consumer and Business Banking at Chase. Before joining Chase, Modica was the Chief Human Resources Officer at Discover Financial Services, where he developed the talent strategy, managed his unit's 2007 spin-off from Morgan Stanley and was a member of Discover's Management and Operational Risk Committees. He has also worked for Prudential Securities and Lehman Brothers.

John Mullen has extensive experience in international transportation and logistics. With more than two decades in senior positions at some of the world's largest transport companies, Mullen has lived and worked in 12 countries. He is currently Chairman of Telstra, Executive Chairman of the Toll Group and a director of Brookfield Infrastructure, a publicly traded company, and recently retired as CEO of Asciano, Australia's largest rail and ports operator. Mullen was previously the global CEO of DHL Express – a US$20 billion company employing over 140,000 people – and spent 10 years with the TNT Group, including a stint as CEO of TNT Express Worldwide, based in the Netherlands. He has served as the Chairman of the National Foreign Trade Council in Washington, D.C., a member of the Advisory Council of the Australian Graduate School of Management and Chairman of the Australian National Maritime Museum Foundation.

Aimée Sentmat de Grimaldo is CEO of Banistmo, Panama's second-largest bank, and a member of the Board of Directors at Sumarse, a non-governmental organization that supports social responsibility programmes to advance sustainable development across Panama. As one of two women leading a major Panamanian bank, she works to build gender equality and women's access to financial solutions. Under her leadership, Banistmo became the first bank in Panama to join the Global Banking Alliance for Women – the first bank to adhere to the empowerment principles of the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in Panama – and its cooperation with other gender-focused initiatives and organizations is ongoing.

INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE CONCEPT NOTE

Purpose

UNICEF Executive Director Henriette Fore has committed to take action to end discrimination, harassment and abuse of power in every UNICEF office and work environment in response to concerns raised by staff, and as a reflection of her determination to make UNICEF an organization driven by its core values of respect, inclusivity and caring.

To that end, the Executive Director is forming an Independent Task Force (ITF) to i) review and assess the existing policies, practices and patterns on workplace gender-related discrimination, harassment and abuse of power; and, based on their findings, to ii) provide actionable recommendations to address current concerns raised by staff. This represents an important step in UNICEF's broader journey towards eliminating discrimination and abuse of power of any kind.

Mandate and terms of reference

The mandate of the ITF is to assess the extent of the current problem, analyse best practices from United Nations and other institutions in dealing with similar problems, and provide recommendations to UNICEF to put in place effective systems to address workplace discrimination and harassment with a focus on gender-related dynamics, specifying timeframe and urgency. The ITF terms of reference include:

» Review current and historical organizational culture and systems related to harassment, discriminatory practices and abuse of power, with a special focus on gender-related dynamics.

» Evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and procedures to prevent and address gender-related harassment and discrimination; and contextualize the findings vis-à-vis recent assessments and policies on these issues within and outside of the United Nations system.

» Harness and apply evidence and best practices from the international development sector but also more broadly to advance gender equality in the workplace and reduce sexual harassment.

» Recommend a comprehensive set of prioritized measures and systems to advance fundamental shifts in organizational systems and culture, such that the principles of zero tolerance for gender-based discrimination and harassment can be realized in practice.

Composition, timeframe and support

The ITF is expected to be operational for about six months. It will be made up of two co-chairs and eight members who represent external leaders with a commitment to and experience in realizing inclusive, non-discriminatory and gender-equitable work environments.

The ITF will be supported by a Secretariat of three staff based in UNICEF headquarters. The role of the Secretariat will be to act as a conduit for information and reporting for the Task Force.

An Internal Reference Group will act as a support body to the Secretariat and the Task Force. The Reference Group will be made up of 18 staff from diverse backgrounds and experience. It will serve as both a sounding board and a resource. In this capacity, the Reference Group will provide consultation and feedback to help align the deliberations and recommendations of the Task Force with UNICEF's aspiration to be a workplace free of gender inequality, harassment, discrimination and abuse. The Reference Group will also function as a consultative body to support the implementation phase when UNICEF will take the necessary steps to shift its organizational systems and culture.

While remaining independent in its actions and recommendations, the ITF will consult regularly with a key set of internal stakeholders who have expertise and responsibility in the areas of work closely related to the Task Force's agenda. Each of these stakeholders will nominate a focal point to whom the Task Force can direct requests and seek support on relevant actions and recommendations.

These UNICEF stakeholders include:

» The deputy executive director for management

» The Division of Human Resources

» The Ethics Office

» The Staff Association

» The Staff Well-being Section

» The Office of the Ombudsman

» The Office of Staff Legal Assistance

» The Office of Internal Audit and Investigation

Other stakeholders include staff-led initiatives that are already working on the issues of gender discrimination and harassment, which will be invited to contribute to the work of the ITF. In addition, the Task Force and its Secretariat will provide monthly updates to the Office of the Executive Director and may seek the support of the Executive Director in undertaking the work of the Task Force.

Implementation

UNICEF recognizes that implementation is the key to successful outcomes for any change work. The implementation of the recommendations of the ITF, once endorsed by the Executive Director, will be the responsibility of the sections listed above and others as necessary. The responsibilities of each of these units and the associated time frame will be mapped out in the implementation plan that will be produced by the Secretariat and the Internal Reference Group, in close consultation with relevant internal departments and stakeholders, following the Task Force's recommendations. This plan will spell out the responsibilities, expected outcomes and timeframes for each implementing unit, among which are the units listed above.

Implementation will be overseen by the deputy executive director for management with support from the Secretariat and the Internal Reference Group to ensure accountability, cross-unit collaboration, timely follow-up and regular progress reporting to the Executive Director and staff.

Workplan

With the support of the Secretariat, the ITF will:

1. Review a summary of and make its assessment on relevant documentation and data analyses regarding patterns of gender-related harassment, discrimination and power imbalances throughout UNICEF, including headquarters, regional, country and field offices. These include:

    a. Analysis of cases and complaints to date and steps taken/not taken by the organization, with a view to assess the extent of current issues of gender discrimination and harassment.

    b. Mapping of existing policies, tools, processes, procedures and mechanisms that are intended to prevent and respond to gender discrimination, harassment and abuse of power in the workplace.

    c. Documents, research and related analyses of the experience with practices involving prevention, response, organizational systems and culture change that have been used within the organization to tackle gender-related workplace issues thus far.

d. Relevant quantitative and qualitative data and analyses regarding patterns of gender inequality, harassment and discrimination throughout the organization, including Division of Human Resources data on gendered patterns in staff and consultant hiring, pay, promotions, leave, departures, flexible work, etc.; gender-related data from staff and other organizational surveys; and any other documented data on staff perceptions and feedback gathered through various institutional mechanisms.

e. Synthesis of staff concerns, complaints and recommendations for action, a key basis for the formation of the ITF.

2. Assess landscaping, findings and research on other United Nations and non-United Nations organizations, and their successes and challenges in effectively designing and implementing policies, practices and more comprehensive systems to both prevent and redress harassment, discrimination, distortion and abuse of power related to gender dynamics. This will be done through reviews of documentation provided by the Secretariat.

3. Undertake individual and group consultations with key stakeholders, internal and external individuals and focus groups, and other individuals or groups as identified by the work listed in points 1 and 2.

4. Produce a final report and set of recommended actions based on points 1-3.

    a. The Task Force will present its final report and recommendations to the Executive Director at the completion of its investigation, estimated to last six months.

    b. The Task Force may also be required to present preliminary and/or final recommendations to the Global Management Team and the Executive Board in 2018 and/or early 2019 as requested and approved by the Executive Director.

5. Following the Executive Director's review and acceptance of the Task Force recommendations, the Secretariat and the Internal Reference Group will produce an implementation plan in consultation with key stakeholders, based on the recommendations.

Communication

UNICEF is committed to ensuring open communication channels between the ITF and staff to enable staff to contribute to and review the processes, preliminary insights and final recommendations. In addition to the consolidation of existing inputs and information received through the Internal Reference Group, the Task Force will solicit direct input from current and former staff with diverse backgrounds to better understand the nature of concerns and complaints and to learn about positive experiences and constructive resolutions from the staff perspective. This will be done through both online mechanisms and phone/in-person discussions.

The Task Force aims to make its work as transparent as possible and allow for ongoing feedback on documents and recommendations. In addition to periodic meetings with the Internal Reference Group and any other stakeholders, UNICEF's internal and external online communication systems – with support from the Division of Communications – will be used for ongoing inputs and report outs.

A Task Force team site, with a link on the front page of the UNICEF internal website, ICON, will be established. This site will house a library for posting documents and an engagement portal to allow for real-time staff feedback and input, and periodic posting of updates. Former staff will be invited to send feedback and input. the Division of Communications will also manage any media releases, briefings and external updates, as appropriate.

The Secretariat and the Office of the Executive Director will manage communications with UNICEF's Executive Board. The Public Partnerships Division and the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division will provide assistance and channels for communicating with Member States, donors, National Committees, United Nations sister agencies and civil society organizations, both to provide updates and to glean best practices that could be applied to UNICEF.

ANNEX 4:

TERMS OF REFERENCE: INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE INTERNAL REFERENCE GROUP

To ensure that the recommendations from the ITF are operational and practical in orientation for UNICEF as an organization, and that they are in alignment with UNICEF's ambition for a gender-equitable, fair, just and respectful workplace, an Internal Reference Group of UNICEF staff is being established to support and collaborate with the Task Force and the Secretariat to the Task Force.

Membership and duration

The Internal Reference Group will be comprised of 18 staff representatives from UNICEF headquarters, country and regional offices, and from different staff function areas to ensure diversity. It will be operational for six months, beginning in late July 2018.

Mandate

The Internal Reference Group will serve as both a sounding board and a resource for the ITF and the Secretariat, providing consultation and feedback to align the Task Force's deliberations and recommendations with a) UNICEF's aspiration to be a workplace free of gender inequality, harassment, discrimination and abuse; and b) operational and actionable steps for undertaking the necessary shifts in organizational systems and culture.

To fulfil its mandate, the Internal Reference Group will work closely with the ITF and the Secretariat throughout the duration of the Task Force deliberations, in the following areas:

Serving as a sounding board and providing guidance and technical support to the Secretariat and the ITF. Members of the Internal Reference Group will be requested to provide preliminary insights and guidance on ongoing discussions to ensure relevance and alignment of emerging recommendations with UNICEF experience and on-the-ground realities.

Providing inputs, examples, experiences and feedback to key ITF documents and recommendations. Internal Reference Group members will also provide critical input on findings and recommendations to strengthen the prevention, design and reporting of gender-discrimination and harassment in various UNICEF workplace settings and to promote more systematic efforts at organizational change.

Operationalizing ITF findings and recommendations: The Internal Reference Croup will be a key resource for providing inputs into the development of an associated action plan to operationalize the Task Force recommendations.

Methods of work:

» Participate in initial meeting with the ITF co-chairs and the Secretariat.

» Identify two co-chairs for the Internal Reference Group, which can be rotational.

» Participate in monthly meetings with the Secretariat, and/or ITF co-chairs.

» Share relevant experiences, examples and feedback in a closed Yammer group, which will be shared with the ITF periodically.

» Engage with the ITF and co-chairs, where needed and upon request.

TERMS OF REFERENCE: INDEPENDENT TASK FORCE STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The Stakeholder Group is being established to support and help the ITF understand UNICEF policies and contexts. This group is different from the Internal Reference Group in that the members are either direct developers, custodians and implementers of the policies, or will represent the policies/culture to external partners and/or are responsible for ensuring that policies are implemented in the organization's daily work. The group is also being established so that UNICEF can learn directly from proactive interaction with the ITF and start reflecting that learning in its practices and culture.

Membership and duration

The Stakeholder Group will be comprised of lead staff from UNICEF and United Nations technical divisions who are policy makers, implementers and owners of relevant data. It will also have staff from divisions and offices that can help communicate the work of the ITF to important external partners. In total, the Stakeholder Group will include 15 staff representatives from UNICEF headquarters, country and regional offices, and two external offices within the United Nations system that have relevance to the work (the Office of Staff Legal Assistance and the Office of the Ombudsman).

Mandate

During a six-month period, from August 2018 to February 2019, members of the Stakeholder Group will be at the disposal of the ITF and the Secretariat, providing consultation and feedback as the Task Force seeks information, deliberates and finalizes recommendations. They will advise to ensure recommendations are operational and steps are actionable for undertaking the necessary shifts in organizational workplace gender-related systems and culture.

Ultimately, Stakeholder Group members will be the stakeholders who must bring the recommendations of the ITF report forward. Those specific members will be a key resource for providing inputs into the development of an associated action plan to operationalize the Task Force recommendations.

Engagement required

» If requested by the ITF co-chairs, participate in initial meeting with the co-chairs and the Secretariat;

» Members to make themselves available as either single entities or part of a sub-group for queries as they arise from the ITF;

» Share relevant policies, case studies, analysis and feedback when requested; and

» Proactively engage the ITF in issues relevant to its work.

ANNEX 6:

ITF AGREED GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Conducting focus group discussions in field offices and headquarters:

1. Meet with management and staff separately.

2. Focus groups with staff can be organized in collaboration with the local staff association according to the local preference (one group of all staff, international and national staff separately or female and male staff separately).

3. All ITF members have extensive experience conducting focus groups and it will not be necessary to follow a structured questionnaire, but the following areas should be covered:

   a. Introduction: Introduce the ITF, discuss its mandate, the centrality of hearing directly from staff and the timeline of the ITF's work.

   b. Confidentiality: Views expressed in the focus group will not be attributed to any individual or a specific office.

   c. Culture: Get a sense of the local office culture and discuss how staff feel about UNICEF as a workplace.

   d. Staff experiences (gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority) relevant to ITF's mandate. Encourage staff to discuss:

      ° Their own experiences while in UNICEF;

      ° Instances they have witnessed while in UNICEF;

      ° Experiences with the investigative function, if any;

      ° Experiences of support provided to victims/complainants, if any; and

      ° Communications in connection with misconduct cases.

   e. Any relevant local initiatives that are ongoing or planned.

   f. Overall comments and suggestions on UNICEF's efforts to ensure a safe workplace.

   g. Any questions staff may have regarding the work of the ITF.

Conducting interviews with managers and staff in key advisory roles:

- ° **Introduction**: Start by introducing the ITF, its mandate and how the ITF has worked so far, consulting with the Internal Reference Group and the Stakeholder Group, holding focus group discussions with staff and managers in many offices, conducting numerous interviews and receiving confidential feedback from a wide range of staff on their experiences. Explain that the ITF also decided to do interviews with managers and staff in key roles across UNICEF to capture their unique perspective against the backdrop of the ITF's initial findings of unhealthy culture, low trust and fear of repercussions among staff if they speak up.

- ° **Confidentiality**: State that nothing the interviewee says in this confidential interview will be attributed to him or her; only the messages emerging from all interviews will be used by the ITF to shape the diagnosis and the recommendations.

- ° **Culture**: As a suggestion, probe the following questions (adding follow-up questions as appropriate): What are his/her own experiences related to gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority? Why does he/she think the culture of low trust has developed and become so pronounced? What, in his/her opinion, has contributed to it? What does he/she think should be done? By whom? How can this culture be changed? What could be done at the headquarters, regional or country levels (as appropriate)?

- ° **The managerial role**: In cases where the interviewee is a manager, suggested to probe about the managerial role and management culture in UNICEF, the training and support he/she as a manager has received: What kind of preparation did you participate in before taking on your role as the _____ manager? What kind of training have you received since you took on your managerial role? And, based on her own experience, what should be done and by whom to better prepare and support managers in UNICEF? Any suggestions he/she wants to share specifically as a manager in UNICEF?

  » One could further probe what he/she has done personally to make UNICEF a better place to work. Are there any initiatives he/she may have already taken or is planning to undertake? How do he/she and his/her staff react to the messages about culture change coming from the Executive Director and the deputy executive director for management? What does his/her staff expect to happen? What would be the one outcome he/she would like to see from the work of the ITF?

  » **The advisory role**: In cases where the interviewee is a special advisor, it is suggested to probe about the role and relevant experiences from the advisor's vantage point and any advice he/she may have on how to improve UNICEF to become an inclusive and safe workplace for all. Any advice for the ITF?

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ANNEX 8:

DEFINITIONS USED

As outlined in UNICEF's Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment, the following definitions have been adopted by the United Nations system and are common across all United Nations system organizations:

a. **Sexual exploitation:** any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

b. **Sexual abuse:** the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

c. **Sexual harassment:** any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, sexual harassment may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct shall be considered.

EARLY ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS, SEPTEMBER 2018

DIAGNOSED ISSUE	PROPOSED EARLY ACTION TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE	MONITORING TOOLS
Many sexual harassment and abuse incidents are not reported	1. (a) Consider identifying an independent third-party company with experience in the global workplace to receive staff reports of sexual harassment and abuse through multiple channels appropriate for different locations and to conduct the investigations; (b) Consider restructuring the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) after delegating the responsibility for sexual harassment and abuse investigations to a third-party company.	Share of received complaints fully investigated; speed and cost of investigations; staff feedback
Lack of trust	2. Consider communicating directly to staff acknowledging that trust was broken and mistakes were made in the past, while highlighting what has been done to date to restore trust, including the ongoing work. 3. Showcase existing positive examples of units/offices that are front-runners on desired behaviours such as promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion, reducing work-family conflicts, etc.; gradually move to holding managers of units lagging behind accountable through their performance evaluations.	Staff feedback; Global Management Team feedback; monitor outcomes against set targets through the human resources system
Family-friendly policies already exist, but the uptake is low	4. Encourage uptake of flexi-time, teleworking and alternative work schedules through senior management communications and holding the Global Management Team accountable by instituting regular reports on the actions taken by the Global Management Team and the uptake among staff, publicizing the statistics on uptake on a yearly basis.	Establish a tracking mechanism in the human resources system; periodic reports from the regional directors and other Global Management Team members
Gender-related pay gaps have not yet been studied and addressed	5. Consider commissioning a third-party study to identify gender-related pay gaps at entry and gaps created through salary progression, which are not explained by other factors. Once results are available, prioritize corrective actions within available funding.	Monitor implementation of agreed corrective actions through salary data

In addition, the ITF submitted recommendations relating to professional change management (*see the main report, Section 4*).