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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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Transforming UNAIDS

An agenda for eliminating all forms of harassment and upholding dignity, accountability and well-being in the workplace.

UNAIDS management response to the Independent Expert Panel report

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Foreword

UNAIDS Executive Director

The first of January 2019 will mark 10 years since I was entrusted with the leadership of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, a unique and innovative partnership with a vital mission: supporting countries to advance a shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. Helping accelerate progress towards this vision has been the most rewarding aspect of my professional career.

Just as people are at the centre of the response to the epidemic, the people of UNAIDS, their well-being and their dignity, are also the centre of my focus as I lead the organization. Staff are our most important asset—we have highly committed and skilled people, at all levels and locations. I am responsible for managing our staff effectively and ethically. And I am committed to promoting a healthy, productive work environment that encourages trust, inclusiveness, responsibility, accountability, mutual respect and open communication. Embodying our core values in our daily work is essential not only to attract and retain staff of the highest integrity, competence and effectiveness, but to succeed in our mission.

Yet, I know that not all of our staff, in all their diversity, are experiencing the inclusive work culture to which we aspire. And, as UNAIDS' most senior leader, I know that I am the most important role model. The ultimate responsibility for creating the culture we want is mine. Model behaviour starts with me.

As we take forward the vision, mission and goals of UNAIDS, each of us within the organization has a responsibility to ensure that our conduct is consistent with the standards that we are expected to uphold as international civil servants. All UNAIDS staff members must model inclusive leadership and respect for diversity. Upholding the dignity and worth of the human person, and the equal rights of men and women, is at the core of the United Nations Charter.

The Independent Expert Panel

This year, in the midst of the vitally important #MeToo movement, UNAIDS' own internal challenges were highlighted, resulting in public criticism regarding allegations of sexual harassment. These are difficult challenges, but I am committed to understanding the underlying dynamics more fully so that we are able to solve them. And I want to lead this change. I want to leave a UNAIDS that is fit for purpose for the next generation.

I am, therefore, grateful for the support of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) in accepting the proposal I made for the Board to establish and manage an Independent Expert Panel, with a mandate to examine UNAIDS and provide us with constructive, problem-solving and forward-looking recommendations.

I am convinced that it takes transparency to make organizations recognize hard and uncomfortable truths, and change in fundamental ways. This report does that: it raises awareness of uncomfortable truths that we need to address. I welcome many of its recommendations. The agenda for change we outline in this document has five key components for action, which are informed by the Panel's report:

1. Putting staff at the centre.
2. Strengthening compliance and standards.
3. Galvanizing leadership, governance and oversight.
4. Investing in management systems and activities.
5. Enhancing capacity.

I am eager to be held accountable for making meaningful progress on this agenda, just as I am held accountable for making meaningful progress on the AIDS response.

We have made progress, but much more remains to be done

In my time as Executive Director, the AIDS response—both inside and outside of UNAIDS—has changed dramatically. While so much more remains to be done to achieve the target of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030, significant gains have been made in our relatively short history.

As the Panel acknowledges, the substantive programmes run by UNAIDS have been successful. We have united the efforts of Member States, UNAIDS Cosponsors, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, global institutions and people living with and most affected by HIV. We have helped ensure inclusive country leadership of comprehensive and sustainable responses that are both integral to and integrated with national health and development efforts.

Ten years ago, UNAIDS had 1100 staff members. Through several economic downturns—with fewer financial resources available for global health—I have led two major realignments, insisting upon fairness and equality, which brought us to 700 people, most of whom are at the country level. These transitions took place in a thoughtful measured way, with a human face. Meanwhile, under our Gender Action Plan, we have made strong progress; UNAIDS is the only United Nations entity to have achieved full compliance

with all 15 performance indicators of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women during the first phase of UN-SWAP. Among United Nations entities, we have been a leader in instituting staff-friendly policies; for example, promoting fairness on mobility and treating same-sex couples the same as mixed-sex couples.

UNAIDS has reported all of this to the PCB in the annual update on Strategic Human Resources Management Issues, an agenda item we instituted in 2014, in collaboration with the PCB, to facilitate PCB oversight. It has been critical also for the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association to report to the PCB annually, providing its frank and constructive input to inform our efforts.

Similarly, UNAIDS has a history of welcoming and learning from external reviews and assessments conducted by major donors, including Australia, Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom, as well as the annual audits conducted by our external auditor (which have consistently included unqualified opinions). In every case, these reviews have provided constructive recommendations on how to improve. We have implemented and will continue to implement these recommendations.

Yet, we can and must do better.

Looking forward

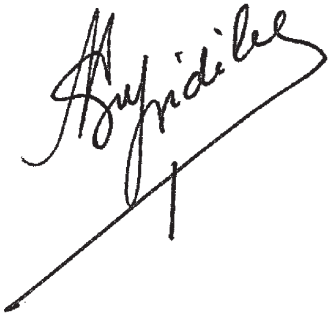
I am committed to using this opportunity to reinforce the dialogue with our staff and its elected staff representatives, as well as members of the PCB and institutional partners, to correct problems and strengthen UNAIDS for the future. And I am committed to using our own change going forward to show what is possible and inspire others, just as we are looking to others to inspire and inform our own
efforts now.

Through our change agenda:

- We will transform our culture into one where:
  - We will dialogue about difficult issues.
  - We will prevent and address unacceptable behaviour.
  - Through a survivor-centred approach, we will protect staff and strictly enforce our rules and regulations.
- Senior managers, as leaders in the organization, will model and insist on accountability for inclusive behaviour.
- We will strengthen our management systems to fit the demands of our decentralized organization and ensure that decision-making happens at the right levels, with full transparency.

- We will continue to seek advice and learn from the best practice and experience of others.
- We will contribute to wider efforts to build a shared, inclusive culture across United Nations organizations.

A more detailed management action plan, complete with review mechanisms and timelines, will be elaborated in early 2019, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including all staff members, the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association and the UNAIDS Dignity at Work Task Force. We welcome experience and views from PCB members as we develop and implement a robust, forward-looking management action plan.



Michel Sidibé
Executive Director, UNAIDS

Introduction

"UNAIDS aspires to be an employer of choice where staff members are passionately working towards ending the AIDS epidemic, and professionally fulfilled by the results of their efforts. UNAIDS is resolute in leading by example and creating an enabling environment for everyone to contribute to their full potential. UNAIDS' workforce is accountable, transparent, respectful and diverse. All staff members, including managers, share their skills and experience to strengthen the organization and further its transformational impact, working hand in hand with the communities we serve and ensuring greater involvement of people living with or affected by HIV."

— Excerpt from the Dignity at Work Task Force statement

Change in UNAIDS has already begun. Where there is honest acknowledgement of problems, and collective will to address them—from senior managers and all staff—meaningful steps can be taken to shift expectations and behaviours in a short period of time. Committed people, in a spirit of collective responsibility, taking ownership of change into their own hands and provided with an enabling environment, can make a difference quickly. This collective will prepares the ground for stronger systems that codify and enable consistent enforcement of norms and behaviours.

It is in this spirit of determination and what is possible that the UNAIDS Secretariat is working to transform itself—eliminating all forms of harassment and the culture that allows it to occur. We will uphold dignity, accountability and well-being in the workplace. For that reason, this paper focuses on the staff of UNAIDS, because together we can ensure a safe and inclusive working environment for all, where we respect and value each other's contributions to our common goal of ending the AIDS epidemic. This is who we want to be, and must be.

UNAIDS will put staff at the centre of our change agenda. We will transform our culture into one where: we will dialogue about difficult issues; we will prevent and address unacceptable behaviour; we will protect staff, in all their diversity, including through a survivor-centred approach; and we will strictly enforce our rules and regulations.

Senior managers, as leaders in the organization, will model and insist on accountability for inclusive behaviour. Management systems will be strengthened to fit the demands of a decentralized organization and we will ensure that decision-making happens at the right levels, with full transparency. UNAIDS will continue to be informed and inspired by the broader United Nations reform agenda to build an inclusive culture. Change in the coming months will be built upon best practice, evidence-based interventions, staff consultations and a foundation of the work undertaken to date.

UNAIDS benefits from candid assessments by its staff in all their diversity, through the annual surveys of the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association (USSA). The survey results inform the organization's staff–management dialogue, focusing on issues of the highest priority for staff and problem-solving where there are concerns. The USSA noted in its June 2018 report to the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) that, "while not always perfect, staff management relations in UNAIDS continues to be held as a model for other organisations."

Issues of bullying, harassment and abuse of power in the UNAIDS Secretariat were identified and brought to the attention of senior management in 2011 following a staff perception survey administered by the USSA. UNAIDS' management responded promptly with steps that were accepted as standard at the time, including mandatory online training, "tone from the top" messages to all staff and office-by-office discussions on ethics and standards of conduct. Over the past 10 years, UNAIDS has also taken significant actions to advance gender equality and women's leadership within the organization and has been recognized for the results achieved to date. Despite these efforts, our internal data indicate that not all our staff, are experiencing an inclusive work culture, and we are committed to continue to improve and close those gaps.

In the current context of the #MeToo movement, many institutions are reviewing their approaches to preventing and addressing harassment and incivility in the workplace. As UNAIDS' management reviewed the situation in UNAIDS, it recognized that the response to date has not been sufficient to produce the desired results. It was this experience and acknowledgement of the persistent problems in our working environment that led the UNAIDS Executive Director to call for an Independent Expert Panel to assist the UNAIDS Secretariat in assessing its organizational culture and the effectiveness of its policies and procedures and to provide a set of recommendations.

Intensified management action was launched in February 2018, when the UNAIDS Executive Director reaffirmed the Secretariat's commitment to take meaningful, proactive measures to create a culture of zero tolerance for sexual harassment, harassment, abuse and unethical behaviour at UNAIDS by launching the five-point plan. The plan has provided an important entry point and opportunity for wider cultural and systemic change across the Secretariat in a manner that supports and empowers all staff. Through this engagement, staff elaborated a dignity at work agenda, designed to respond to the needs and priorities of the staff of UNAIDS and drawing inspiration and experience from others, within and beyond the United Nations.

The UNAIDS Executive Director and senior management are grateful for the support and leadership of the PCB in establishing and providing direction to the Independent Expert Panel. The Panel's report amplified some of the critical issues facing UNAIDS. These will be incorporated into our agenda for change and we expect to see improvements as a result of this more intentional and focused action.

The agenda for change has five key components for action, which are informed by the Panel's report:

1. **Putting staff at the centre.**
2. **Strengthening compliance and standards.**
3. **Galvanizing leadership, governance and oversight.**
4. **Investing in management systems and activities.**
5. **Enhancing capacity.**

These components for action are consistent with the recommendations made by the staff of UNAIDS on how to make change happen at UNAIDS, presented through the USSA at the June 2018 PCB meeting.

A more detailed management action plan will be elaborated in early 2019 to implement this agenda. We welcome experience and views from PCB members. Recognizing that transformative change requires accountability, the action plan will include review mechanisms and timelines, as suggested by the Panel.

Transforming UNAIDS: our change agenda

Key objectives

1. In order to effectively achieve our goal of ending AIDS by 2030, all staff must be able to dedicate their energy towards our shared mission and not be impacted by any form of harassment and exclusionary behaviour that undermines their engagement and productivity.
2. Everyone in UNAIDS feels equipped and supported to raise awareness of and concerns about sexism, intolerance and other undesirable and unacceptable behaviours, through productive dialogue, and everyone is equally prepared to listen, reflect and change their own behaviours.
3. Support structures will be implemented with a survivor-centred approach, and mechanisms and systems will be put in place to protect staff, particularly women, who report harassment and call out unethical behaviour.
4. Policies, procedures and management systems upholding standards of conduct and internal justice are fit for purpose, accessible to all staff, consultants and interns and are used to uphold accountability and integrity across all offices in UNAIDS.
5. Capacity-building programmes develop skills and common approaches that enhance a positive organizational culture, incentivize desired behaviours and increase the awareness of managers and staff of their accountability, including by promoting systematic responses to substandard or unacceptable behaviour and performance. UNAIDS reinforces its recruitment and staff development practices to advance gender equality and diversity, the greater involvement of people living with HIV, inclusion of people with disabilities and leadership by young professionals.

6. Everyone in UNAIDS has a working environment and access to support services which are conducive to good mental health and well-being, with zero stigma and discrimination related to mental health challenges, and people experiencing the negative health impacts of incivility, exclusion and harassment are consistently supported by the organization.
7. UNAIDS strengthens engagement of the PCB on strategic human resources management issues, providing additional information in support of the PCB's oversight functions, building on existing reporting from and dialogue with management, staff and the USSA.
8. The organization is accountable to meet timelines and reinforce review mechanisms for the agenda for change and management action plan.
9. Data-driven dialogue continues between UNAIDS' management and the USSA, helping drive change for an enabling working environment, staff engagement and staff knowledge about and ability to assert their rights at work.
10. As the United Nations system seeks greater harmonization, coherence and use of common services as part of its management reform agenda, UNAIDS advocates for the development of policies, systems and services that promote a healthy, inclusive and safe working environment in all United Nations offices, for all United Nations staff, consultants and interns. UNAIDS works with United Nations entities to propose updated guidelines on burden and standard of proof in harassment investigations, drawing upon best practices in national jurisdictions and in line with the general principles of law.

Five key action areas

1. Putting staff at the centre
2. Strengthening compliance and standards
3. Galvanizing leadership, governance and oversight
4. Investing in management systems and activities
5. Enhancing capacity

ACTION AREA 1

Putting staff at the centre

ACTION AREA 1

Putting staff at the centre

UNAIDS staff members are the greatest asset of the organization, and there is a high level of engagement and commitment. And as reported by the USSA, based on the results of the 2018 staff survey, 73% of respondents said that they were "fully" or "mostly" happy to come to work at UNAIDS on most days, while on the other hand 9% said "not at all". We know that this is in our control and we can and must do better, so that all staff are energized to advance our shared mission.

Transforming the culture of an organization requires the active engagement of staff at all levels, with supportive leadership at the top. UNAIDS' management notes with deep concern the reported observations that "There is a fear that anyone speaking up against abuse of office, bullying or harassment will themselves become the victim." Senior management is committed to ensuring that all colleagues in the organization feel safe and empowered to speak out about any concerns they may have.

Increasing the confidence of staff that they can have difficult conversations about marginalizing, exclusionary or unwelcome behaviours will help to build a prevention platform to address smaller behaviours or give an early indication of behaviours before they grow into larger issues.

UNAIDS will undertake activities that enhance the knowledge and skills of staff to raise issues and access the mechanisms and support they may need. This includes counselling and other support for survivors of workplace harassment. The UNAIDS Secretariat is learning from organizations that are implementing bystander intervention training and is taking steps to promote a culture of "see something, say something, do something".

Key actions

- The UNAIDS Secretariat will build an active bystander system that will be championed by senior managers who will serve as role models for building dialogue about difficult subjects, giving and receiving feedback on behaviours and building a positive and healthy working environment. UNAIDS will introduce active bystander training and other activities, based on existing evidence on what works. Through this staff will be equipped and supported to call out sexism, intolerance and other undesirable and unacceptable behaviours, and everyone will be equally prepared to listen and change their own behaviours.
- UNAIDS will put in place a confidential referral system for survivor-centred counselling and other support services for staff, consultants and interns bringing forward allegations of harassment.

- Mechanisms will be reinforced to protect complainants and people cooperating with investigations from retaliation.
- UNAIDS will work with other United Nations entities to explore joint options for enhancing access to mediation services and other forms of informal conflict resolution, when requested by staff, ensuring their accessibility to all offices and all personnel, notably in the field.
- In the context of the United Nations system workplace mental health and well-being strategy, UNAIDS will address barriers to accessing counselling and other mental health services. Internal capacity to support colleagues dealing with the negative health effects of workplace harassment and discrimination, including mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, will be reviewed. Based on the review, new initiatives will be assessed and taken forward.
- UNAIDS will strengthen its cadre of Dignity at Work Advisers, who will convene online and face-to-face sessions for staff in order to generate dialogue on desirable and undesirable behaviours in the workplace, to have productive discussions about those behaviours and to increase knowledge among staff about the code of conduct and the internal justice system.
- UNAIDS will work with managers to ensure they have the resources and skills to help re-establish trust in teams and between managers and direct reports where that trust has been undermined.
- UNAIDS will include dignity at work and the management action plan on the agenda of regional management meetings in 2019, Senior Management Team meetings and Geneva branch meetings and will involve the USSA in those dialogues in order to ensure that staff priorities and perspectives are consistently at the centre of the organization's change agenda.

Indicators for success

- Survey data show significant progress towards the goal of zero discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, HIV status, national origin, religion, age or any other protected ground.
- Survey data show significant progress towards the goal of zero incidence of harassment, sexual harassment, ill treatment and abuse of authority.
- Increased numbers of staff report that they are knowledgeable about services available to them and comfortable approaching Staff Health and Wellbeing Services and/or their supervisor if they have concerns or needs in relation to their own mental health.

- Staff report feeling comfortable speaking up about exclusionary behaviours they experience or observe in the workplace.
- Staff report that they feel equipped to manage the stresses of their work and that the organization is committed to providing a working environment that is conducive to good mental health.
- Staff report that they are knowledgeable about and confident in mechanisms and offices such as the Integrity Hotline, Ethics Office, Ombudsman and Internal Oversight Services.

The statement below is based on the discussions and outputs of a two-day meeting of a working group established to advise and support implementation of the five-point+ plan convened by UNAIDS. The group—subsequently renamed the Dignity at Work Task Force, based on the broader agenda that was articulated at the meeting—comprises staff members representative of all levels and diverse regions of the UNAIDS Secretariat, as well as key internal stakeholders, including the USSA, with a mandate to provide a dynamic, inclusive and holistic approach to taking forward the change agenda.

Vision: a healthy, equitable and enabling workplace for all UNAIDS staff

UNAIDS aspires to be an employer of choice, where staff members are passionately working towards ending the AIDS epidemic and are professionally fulfilled by the results of their efforts. UNAIDS is resolute in leading by example and creating an enabling environment for everyone to contribute to their full potential. UNAIDS' workforce is accountable, transparent, respectful and diverse. All staff members, including managers, share their skills and experience to strengthen the organization and further its transformational impact, working hand in hand with the communities we serve and ensuring the greater involvement of people living with or affected by HIV.

Ensuring accountability

Accountability is a key principle at UNAIDS, and staff members at all levels, and consultants and interns, are accountable to the people we serve and for results and resources while upholding the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service and UNAIDS' core values. UNAIDS champions zero tolerance for abuse of authority, harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying, and has no place for impunity. UNAIDS actively works towards improving existing mechanisms for investigating allegations of misconduct of any kind and applying proportionate disciplinary measures in a timely manner. UNAIDS will be a place where no one faces discrimination or exclusion from opportunity and where staff, consultants and interns feel protected from retaliation.

Enhancing transparency

Transparency is important to build and maintain staff members' trust in decision-making processes. All decisions will be taken based on clear and transparent criteria that ensure fairness. Consistent, regular and honest communication of decisions affecting staff members, and UNAIDS overall, are critical to drive higher staff engagement. The organization honours confidentiality and discourages gossip. Proven cases of unethical behaviour and the corresponding management response are communicated to all staff while respecting confidentiality.

Championing respect

Respectful behaviour will be the norm in all UNAIDS offices, and everyone has the responsibility to challenge biases, call out sexist and other unacceptable behaviours and offer support to anyone subject to such behaviours. All staff members are aware of how their work contributes to achieving UNAIDS' mission and recognize each other's contributions and successes. Work is planned collaboratively with staff members, normalizing reasonable flexibility and maximizing performance and job satisfaction. Staff members are supported in taking care of their health and well-being and attending to personal and family needs. All managers are expected to understand their responsibilities towards the people they manage and to be committed and empowered to lead staff, consultants and interns to thrive and grow in their contribution to UNAIDS.

Embracing gender equality and diversity

Staff members are mindful of and challenge unequal power relations, aiming at transforming gender norms so that equality, respect for human rights and dignity for people of all genders is apparent in all we do. Work will be conducted in an inclusive manner, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and equally valued. Images and stories will portray the diversity of our world and challenge stereotypes and power inequalities. UNAIDS is committed to achieving gender balance at all levels, including with regard to staffing, partner engagement and participation in consultative and decision-making bodies. Its efforts to maintain and enhance a workforce of excellence go hand in hand with hiring for diversity and closing gaps.

Building blocks

Continued implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, as well as the updated UNAIDS Gender Action Plan

On gender equality, UNAIDS is committed to building an organization in which the equal and active participation of women and men is at the centre of how we operate and in which we fully benefit from the skills, experience and commitment of all staff. Our participation in the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) has helped us focus efforts in relation to a set of benchmarks, notably achieving gender parity among heads of country offices, and within the professional and higher category generally. While there is more work to be done, UNAIDS has been recognized for meeting or exceeding all UN-SWAP performance indicators.

The UNAIDS Secretariat Gender Action Plan 2018–2023—A Framework for Accountability was launched in June 2018. It builds on the progress made under the UNAIDS Secretariat's first Action Plan (2013–2018) and sets new, further-reaching targets. It was developed through extensive consultation with staff, including through an all-staff survey, focus group discussions, as well as interviews with key informants and innovators. A comprehensive desk review was conducted, aligned to the ILO's gender audit. To help drive progress, a Challenge Group was created with members elected by all staff, tasked with holding UNAIDS' leadership accountable for successful implementation of the Action Plan.

In 2018, UNAIDS implemented a new, unified parental leave policy to better support staff in their caregiving responsibilities and to send a signal overall about how UNAIDS views and supports women and men in their family roles. The policy is in line with the United Nations System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity, as well as UNAIDS' Gender Action Plan 2018–2023, granting four months' leave for all new parents, plus two more months for the birth parent. [1]

Contributing to and taking forward a United Nations System-Wide Strategy on Staff Mental Health and Well-Being

UNAIDS, through the USSA, has contributed to the development of the United Nations System-Wide Strategy on Staff Mental Health and Well-Being. The strategy, which was recently launched by the Secretary-General, proposes to establish a workplace well-being programme that enables the achievement of "respectful, resilient, psychologically safe and healthy United Nations workplaces over a five-year timescale." The strategy notes the association between perceived incivility and conflict in the workplace, and poor mental health, and outlines several factors associated with the development of mental health problems in the workplace, including lack of recognition at work; poor interpersonal relationships; poor leadership and communication; lack of participation and control in the workplace; role ambiguity or conflict; and inequity.[2]

UNAIDS' management has shared information with all staff about the launch of the mental health strategy and has begun discussions with the USSA on priority next steps for implementation in UNAIDS. UNAIDS has advocated that peer-led approaches from UN Cares, the United Nations' HIV workplace programme, be adapted and used in the implementation of the strategy—for example, breaking the silence on mental health-related stigma and helping United Nations personnel connect to a broad range of support services, including those that address workplace drivers of poor mental health.

Strengthening a culture of inclusion and accountability: Dignity at Work Advisers programme

UNAIDS has put in place a Dignity at Work Advisers programme as an important step towards shifting the culture of the organization and ensuring that staff are at the centre of the change agenda. The programme draws upon experience in the respectful workplace adviser programme at UNHCR, as well as similar initiatives elsewhere in the United Nations system. The Dignity at Work Advisers will be a resource to inform and refer staff to support services and will animate a

[1] UNAIDS revises its policy on adoption, paternity and surrogacy leave, Available online at: http://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2018/october/adoption_paternity_surrogacy_leave

[2] *A healthy workforce for a better world: United Nations mental health and well-being strategy* (2018), page 34. Available online at https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/Mental%20Health%20Well%20Being%20Strategy_FINAL_2018_ENGLISH_0.pdf

larger conversation across UNAIDS, based on the four pillars of the dignity at work agenda:

1. Promoting gender equality and diversity, inclusion and non-discrimination.
2. Eliminating conflict, bullying, harassment and abuse of authority.
3. Protecting mental health and well-being.
4. Knowing your rights at work—policies and procedures, the internal justice system and support services.

As a network, Dignity at Work Advisers will:

- Act as a confidential and neutral point of contact and a source of knowledge and support for UNAIDS colleagues who have concerns about their working environment.
- Listen to colleagues who experience workplace conflict and act as a sounding board.
- Actively signpost options for colleagues to formal and informal dispute resolution services available to UNAIDS staff, consultants and interns and help them feel more confident about choices for further action.
- Share knowledge about mental health and well-being services available to staff.

Working in partnership with the USSA, UNAIDS convened a four-day induction workshop for an initial cohort of 20 Dignity at Work Advisers to finalize the objectives of the programme and working methods, as well as to build the skills and knowledge necessary for taking forward activities to engage staff. In follow-up to the induction workshop, the Dignity at Work Advisers will facilitate virtual and face-to-face discussions with staff about the four pillars of the agenda. This approach will enable the organization to reach many of its staff members in a relatively short period, ensuring that the same set of core values is understood, shared and acted upon. Based on positive experience in other organizations, with additional skills and information, potential conflicts are more likely to be addressed early on, and there is an increased probability of prevention or de-escalation. UNAIDS is committed to continue learning from the experience of other entities, both within and beyond the United Nations system, and reflecting on this experience as it puts in place new actions to expand engagement and ownership for the dignity at work agenda more generally.

Building on the existing strong partnership with the USSA; taking steps towards enhancing data-driven staff engagement approaches

UNAIDS' management recognizes that the organization's track record of strong and constructive staff–management relations, and the high level of staff engagement and commitment, is an important asset in formulating and taking forward an inclusive change agenda. The change agenda outlined in this paper, with the benefit of the Panel's recommendations and additional resources, and learning from best practice, will position the organization for results.

ACTION AREA 2

Strengthening compliance and standards

ACTION AREA 2

Strengthening compliance and standards

UNAIDS is committed to increasing the visibility of management action to uphold standards of conduct and to put in place strengthened policies and internal justice systems that reflect best practice and the general principles of law.

The UNAIDS Secretariat will pursue an external and independent investigation, disciplinary and redressal system, and in parallel will seek more immediate improvements to the current policies and mechanisms. UNAIDS' management is deeply concerned about the Panel's references to "a culture of impunity becoming prevalent in the organization" and "a systemic lack of trust in the informal and formal processes available for complaint handling."

UNAIDS will also seek opportunities to achieve reforms and strengthened mechanisms in partnership with other United Nations entities, with a view to influencing wider change, better meeting the organization's duty of care to staff and promoting an effective use of resources.

The UNAIDS Secretariat has reinforced its communication to staff on zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and abuse of authority and has provided information about policies and processes for reporting harassment and misconduct, as well as where to go to seek advice and support. This has been followed up by senior managers in Geneva and field and liaison offices, who have led discussions with their staff on ethics and integrity with the aim of ensuring that staff in their offices are familiar with the organization's standards of conduct and the related policy framework. UNAIDS thanks the Panel for outlining substantive ways in which it can incorporate principles of gender justice into investigations of sexual harassment. UNAIDS commits itself to carefully considering these items as it pursues a strengthened policy framework to prevent, investigate and provide redress for sexual harassment.

UNAIDS agrees with the Panel that the standard of proof in disciplinary cases, particularly those relating to power and gender inequality, harassment and sexual harassment, is too high. This standard of proof is not unique to UNAIDS; other United Nations entities have similarly faced challenges in successfully mounting disciplinary charges owing to the very high standard of proof applied by the ILO Administrative Tribunal.

Key actions

- UNAIDS welcomes the recommendation to establish an external and independent investigation, disciplinary and redressal system and will work with key stakeholders, including survivors, to examine options to

establish such a mechanism. Investigators should have specific expertise in harassment and sexual harassment and follow survivor-centred procedures.

- UNAIDS will proactively refer for investigation cases of suspected sexual harassment, harassment, bullying and abuse of power and will review procedures regarding cause to suspect and burden of proof in the investigative process.
- UNAIDS will publish anonymized summaries for all staff describing disciplinary action and other accountability actions taken by management, building upon information published in public reports to the PCB.
- UNAIDS will work with WHO to adopt a modern policy that protects all WHO and UNAIDS staff, consultants and interns from all forms of harassment, abuse and discrimination, taking forward the Panel's recommendations and building upon minimum standards in the United Nations' new model policy on preventing and addressing sexual harassment.[3]
- UNAIDS will work with other United Nations entities to propose updated guidelines on burden and standard of proof in harassment investigations, drawing upon best practices in national jurisdictions and in line with the general principles of law.
- UNAIDS commits to amending its Whistleblowing and Protection against Retaliation Policy and Procedures to explicitly state their obligation to provide protection against retaliation for anyone who in good faith reports sexual harassment, or any other form of misconduct, including misuse of resources and abuse of authority.

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[3] The model policy introduces the following improvements:

- Providing separate consideration for sexual harassment, as opposed to automatically considering it under a policy addressing abuse of power, harassment and bullying.
- Making clear to people who have experienced sexual harassment that there is no requirement to directly confront their harasser, particularly where disparity in power or status may lead to vulnerability or retaliation.
- Removing the emphasis on an informal process as the primary resolution method for sexual harassment, a concern the Panel highlighted about Clause 6.1 of the current WHO policy.
- Improved procedures for raising grievances formally and informally.
- Improved definitions for prohibited behaviours constituting sexual harassment and consideration of whether they can be considered as aggravating conduct in a disciplinary case.
- Removal of deadlines to file allegations of sexual harassment that serve as a bar for examining a sexual harassment complaint.
- Enabling the examination of anonymous complaints of sexual harassment.
- Improved screening of complaints to ensure that none are improperly rejected owing to incomplete information, without comprehensive and sincere efforts being taken to secure relevant information.
- Improved protective measures that may be implemented on an interim basis to support a target of sexual harassment, to ensure the integrity of an investigation and to prevent the occurrence of additional incidences of inappropriate behaviour.
- Enhanced confidential guidance and advice mechanisms for targets of sexual harassment and affected individuals.

Indicators for success

- Adoption of a new policy on the prevention of and redress for harassment, building on minimum standards in the recently adopted United Nations model policy and recommendations of the Panel.
- Staff survey indicating increased confidence that: (1) UNAIDS rules and policies are consistently upheld; and (2) performance management is supporting high performers to grow in their careers, while leading to consequences where there is substantiated substandard performance or inappropriate conduct.
- Progress towards the establishment of an external, independent investigation, disciplinary and redressal system, in collaboration with others, with sufficient resources, capable of completing investigations within a maximum six-month timeline, and expedited 90-day timelines where indicated, while upholding quality, completeness and due process.

Building blocks

Enhancing compliance with policies and standards

UNAIDS has a strong policy framework and several sources of guidance on conduct and integrity that directly impact the working environment, setting out the obligations and expected behaviours of UNAIDS staff. Organizational norms and culture are shaped by several sources of standards, rules, policies and guidance, including the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service (International Civil Service Commission) and WHO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules (WHO, February 2018).

UNAIDS' broad regulatory framework is implemented with the support of a range of mechanisms and functions across the organization, including the Ombudsman, Ethics Officer, USSA, Integrity Hotline, Staff Counsellor and Psychologist, Human Resources Management Department and the WHO Global Board of Appeal. Line managers are expected to play an important role through their day-to-day supervisory responsibilities and use of the Performance and Learning Management platform. UNAIDS agrees with the observations of the Panel regarding the confusion that can result from having a broad spectrum of entry points for advice and support and the need for greater clarity and coordination across these various mechanisms and offices.

To facilitate the reporting of concerns, the Integrity Hotline was launched in November 2017 as an additional channel available to staff and stakeholders to anonymously report concerns or possible instances of wrongdoing at UNAIDS to a confidential channel managed by a professional independent service provider.

By mid-November 2018, 13 cases had been received through the hotline. Twelve out of the 13 cases were filed anonymously; every case is being actively addressed. The hotline has provided an opportunity for people who may have otherwise been unlikely to file reports to do so, as well as to enable them to raise more complex and sensitive issues. Efforts are being made to further publicize the hotline, however, in order to ensure that all staff are aware of it and would feel comfortable using it.

While there has been a focus on more systematic knowledge about and use of formal mechanisms, UNAIDS continues to deploy internal resources in response to issues of concern coming to the attention of management, for example before conflict escalates in an office or becomes a misconduct issue. A number of support missions have been initiated and led by headquarters and regional support teams. Going forward, and informed by previous experiences, UNAIDS will design and implement a model of proximity support to offices outside Geneva, covering a spectrum of duty of care and practical support issues, including staff well-being, assets and facilities, IT, security, occupational health and safety, and compliance with human resources, finance and other policies.

Strengthening the Whistleblowing and Protection against Retaliation Policy and Procedures

The UNAIDS Whistleblowing and Protection against Retaliation Policy and Procedures provide protection for staff members who in good faith report suspected wrongdoing and may be subjected to retaliation. Its framework is adapted from policies in place at WHO. It underscores that UNAIDS staff members have a duty to report suspicions of wrongdoing and that those who do are entitled to protection. The policy protects those who report wrongdoing, including but not limited to fraud, corruption, waste of resources, sabotage, public health or safety dangers and sexual exploitation and abuse. We see these examples as symptoms of a less than inclusive culture. As we build our culture of inclusion, we expect that staff will feel more comfortable identifying the behaviours that keep us from our desired culture and know that those reports will be productively addressed in the pursuit of greater inclusion and organizational effectiveness. UNAIDS also provides protection against retaliation for those who report sexual harassment.

ACTION AREA 3

Galvanizing leadership, governance and oversight

ACTION AREA 3

Galvanizing leadership, governance and oversight

To date, the UNAIDS Executive Director has been proactive in addressing the problems identified within the organization—including the recommendation that the PCB constitute the Independent Expert Panel—and will continue to advance the agenda, now more effectively with the benefit of the Panel's insights and recommendations. The UNAIDS Executive Director has studied and taken on board the personal criticism set out by the Panel. The Executive Director and current senior leadership look forward to implementing the agenda for change and developing and implementing the management action plan. UNAIDS welcomes an evaluation of progress with respect to its senior leadership in one year, consistent with the Panel's governance recommendation.

Senior managers in all parts of UNAIDS, in their day-to-day interactions with staff and partners, set the tone for what we expect from each other—commitment, performance and collaboration, valuing the skills and contributions of everyone in achievement of our common goal to end AIDS. Trust is reinforced when there is transparency and predictability in the application of the policies and procedures of the organization, upholding the strategic interests of UNAIDS and the well-being of its staff. Senior leaders must embrace a continuous improvement mindset, being candid and open to discussing problems and areas for improvement and engaging staff in advancing the solutions. As noted by the Panel, "leadership plays a critical role in embedding the ethical and respectful culture of an organisation."

UNAIDS has gained important experience in driving organizational change and has achieved significant results vis-à-vis its Gender Action Plan, which was a product of staff engagement and leadership exerted at all levels of the organization for gender equality and diversity. UNAIDS has performed consistently well within UN-SWAP and is recognized as the only United Nations entity to have achieved full compliance with all 15 performance indicators during the first phase of UN-SWAP. UNAIDS agrees with the Panel's observation that, while progress towards gender parity is important, it is not sufficient for establishing a culture of equality. This highlights the difference between diversity and inclusion. Inclusion is what translates diversity into an advantage. Diversity without inclusion can undermine a team's effectiveness.

As part of taking forward the five-point+ plan and the emerging dignity at work agenda, the UNAIDS Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director, Management and Governance, are increasing engagement of senior managers on these themes and their individual and collective

accountability. UNAIDS' management is deeply concerned by the Panel's observation, based on the interviews they conducted, that there is a tone in the organization of "favouritism, preferment, opaqueness, license for wrongdoing, and retaliation against those who speak up against such practices." The intention of management to create a culture where everyone feels valued has not translated into the impact we desire; we are committed to understanding what is getting in the way of our intention of an equitable culture, including learning more about how our unconscious bias may impact individuals as well as the organization.

UNAIDS' management is increasing transparency and communicating management decisions more consistently to all staff, including in the context of mobility. The UNAIDS Insight Dashboard was launched in November to increase transparency in internal planning, monitoring and reporting, and is accessible to staff via the UNAIDS Intranet.

UNAIDS looks forward to further supporting the PCB in exercising its oversight on strategic human resources issues, notably by strengthening reporting in a way that is deemed effective by members of the PCB in carrying out this function. The concern of the Panel of the infrequency of reporting of human resources management issues to the PCB could also be addressed through an additional update at the December meetings of the PCB, combined with the possibility of the USSA reporting to the PCB at all its sessions. This would allow the PCB to follow human resources management issues more closely and with greater frequency.

Key actions

- UNAIDS will drive implementation of UN-SWAP, as well as the updated UNAIDS Gender Action Plan, to build on achievements and progress towards targets.
- A management action plan will be launched in early 2019, with timelines for reporting activities and results, ensuring progress in implementing the organization's change agenda. UNAIDS will report on progress at next meeting of the PCB.
- To address concerns about over-centralized decision-making, UNAIDS will establish a framework for delegation of authority as part of the management action plan, optimizing where decision-making takes place, with enhanced transparency and internal controls for compliance with policies and other standards.
- UNAIDS will work with the PCB to ensure that its members are provided with sufficient information for exercising oversight on strategic human resources issues, promoting accountability for the health of the UNAIDS Secretariat as a workplace and compliance with Staff Regulations and Rules and related policies.

- In 2019, UNAIDS will deploy an enhanced assessment centre approach for UNAIDS Country Director positions. The process will use new methods and tools that focus on UNAIDS' values and technical and managerial competencies.
- The UNAIDS Secretariat will implement a 360-degree feedback mechanism in management appraisals for director-level staff to assess competency in manging people and resources. The organization will develop a system to address findings.
- UNAIDS requests the PCB to ensure that sufficient resources be available to carry out reforms outlined in this paper.

Indicators for success

- Further progress towards UNAIDS Gender Action Plan targets and implementation of UN-SWAP.
- Establishment of a management action plan for implementing the Panel's recommendations, including establishment of a framework for delegation of authority.
- Staff report increased confidence in the fairness and transparency of management decision-making with regard to staffing.
- Staff report in surveys that their immediate supervisors, members of the UNAIDS Senior Management Team and Cabinet leadership are role models for dignity at work and active bystander approaches.

UNAIDS Senior Management Team Leadership Charter

The charter below was developed by the members of the Senior Management Team following its October 2018 retreat, which included a mini-retreat focused on dignity at work and the five-point+ plan. A training session on harassment and abuse of authority, helped Senior Management Team members learn to recognize inappropriate behaviour, encourage difficult conversations about marginalizing, exclusionary and unwelcome behaviours, prevent harassment, and empower each staff member to rapidly report any cases of abuse they may encounter or witness. Their second session reviewed the five-point+ plan, taking stock of progress and challenges in 2018 and beginning to assess needs for 2019.

As leaders within UNAIDS, the Senior Management Team agreed to deliberately, visibly and consistently role-model desired behaviours. The discussion confirmed that the UNAIDS leadership is committed to live up to the expectation that the organization will be a leader in addressing incivility, harassment, exclusion, sexual harassment and abuse of authority.

We take responsibility for:

1. **UNAIDS** delivering a bold new dignity at work agenda, building a corporate culture of responsibility, accountability and inclusion and overall strengthening our work together to deliver on our mission. In doing so, we lead and unite staff behind the UNAIDS Joint Programme innovative partnership and our vital work to support countries to advance their shared vision of zero new HIV Infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. We will begin this change process with ourselves, measuring and holding ourselves accountable for the impact we make in the lives of the people we serve and work with.
2. **The staff**, who are the most important asset of the organization. We are accountable for managing effectively, transparently and ethically, in full exercise of our duty of care.
3. **Promoting** a healthy, flexible and productive working environment that encourages trust, responsibility and mutual respect, empowers all staff at all levels to challenge unprofessional behaviours and actions, and enables open communication.
4. **Living** up to the expectation that the organization will be a leader for:

- Maximizing inclusion, diversity and engagement across the UNAIDS workforce.
- Establishing an active bystander culture where everyone feels equipped and supported to call out undesirable and unacceptable behaviours and is willing to equally listen, self-reflect and change their behaviours.
- Reducing stress and promoting well-being and good mental health in the workplace.
- Strengthening and applying protective policies, procedures and management systems related to standards of conduct and visible justice, including ensuring that timely and speedy response mechanisms are in place for people using the justice system.
- Continuing to invest in positive staff–management relations and partnership with the USSA, as

well as other constituencies, such as UN Plus, Young UN and UN Cares.

- Reinforcing staff and managerial capacity related to training, performance management, standards of conduct, leadership and upholding the organization's duty of care.
- Contributing to United Nations system-wide policy and management discussions on standards of conduct, gender parity, accountability and support to staff in the context of United Nations reform.

5. **Ensuring** we measure and hold ourselves accountable for a successful transformation, accompanied by a process addressing broader issues relevant to inclusion, staff engagement, gender parity and job satisfaction.
6. **Advocating** for and visibly modelling the desired professional behaviours consistently, empowering all staff to challenge unacceptable behaviours, as well as raising awareness and training staff to identify and address their own unconscious biases.
7. **Reviewing** and updating this charter to ensure that we are informed by feedback and best practices

Values and behaviours that will guide how we work together:

8. **Lead by example**. Our conduct is consistent with the standards of international civil servants, as outlined in the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of WHO, and the Standards of Conduct of the International Civil Service, published by the International Civil Service Commission.
9. **Walk the talk.** We are aware of the impact that our behaviours, attitudes and actions have on the climate of the office, staff behaviour and the impact on the mental health and well-being of staff. We actively demonstrate by our actions our commitment to the values we seek to uphold, including by demonstrating zero tolerance for harassment and abuse of authority and calling it out when we see it.
10. **Dignity and respect.** We uphold our respect for diversity and inclusion, and value our differences by upholding the dignity and worth of the human person, and the equal rights of people in all their diversity, which is at the core of the United Nations Charter.
11. **Trust.** We support and feel comfortable challenging each other. We are open to others challenging our behaviour, actions or approaches if they find them inappropriate based on shared values, promoting a healthy working environment. We will create a climate of trust within our teams, where direct reports know that we support them as individuals, and we are committed to their personal effectiveness as well as our organizational effectiveness.
12. **Service, impact focus.** We always put the needs of the people we serve first and above our individual interests, while ensuring that we take care of our own health and well-being, and are mindful of the well-being of those around us.
13. **Accountable.** We are relentlessly focused on and hold each other accountable for delivering—individually and together.
14. **Courage.** We embrace new ideas and take risks. We celebrate successes and talk about and learn from our mistakes and failures to continuously improve.
15. **Transparency.** We proactively share information about our work to ensure more effective collaboration and coordination within headquarters and among headquarters, regions and countries.
16. **Culture.** We create an environment of trust so that staff can be active bystanders and ensure that dignity in the workplace is part of our daily lives.

Building blocks

Introduction of enhanced recruitment processes for UNAIDS Country Director positions

Following a decision of the UNAIDS Executive Director, UNAIDS is planning for the deployment of an enhanced assessment centre approach for UNAIDS Country Director (UCD) positions. The process will use methods and tools that focus on UNAIDS' values, and core and managerial competencies listed in the UCD job description, providing the Mobility and Reassignment Committee and the UNAIDS Executive Director with additional insights into the leadership and management capabilities of candidates. Candidates will also be reviewed against the new United Nations system-wide ClearCheck database on sexual harassment. In response to staff interest in having more individualized feedback on their professional strengths and areas for development, including through the recruitment process, the Human Resources Management Department will be sharing assessment reports with candidates to inform their future learning objectives and professional development planning.

Introduction of 360-degree feedback for director-level performance reviews

On performance management, UNAIDS is planning for the deployment of a 360-degree anonymous feedback mechanism in management appraisals for director-level staff. Upward feedback for managers on their competency in managing people and resources is critical for managers themselves to take charge of their professional development and for the UNAIDS Secretariat overall to detect signs of mismanagement and unacceptable behaviour. UNAIDS is assessing 24 behavioural indicators covering managerial accountability, adherence to financial guidelines, demonstration of the highest standards of integrity and ethical behaviour and effective financial and people management. These ratings feed into overall ratings at the end of the appraisal period. Participants in the recent UCD orientation programme had an opportunity to participate in the first phase of rolling out this enhanced performance management system.

Contributing to the United Nations system and WHO policy dialogue on preventing and addressing harassment

UNAIDS has actively contributed to United Nations management discussions on strengthening policies and institutions for preventing and addressing harassment. Notable among these efforts is UNAIDS' engagement with the United Nations Chief Executives Board Task Force on sexual harassment in the United Nations system and our routine participation in the WHO Global Staff–Management Council (GSMC).

The United Nations Chief Executives Board task force on addressing sexual harassment in the organizations of the United Nations system was established by the Secretary-General in November 2017. The Secretary-General and United Nations Chief Executives Board members committed to: (1) upholding a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment; (2) strengthening victim-centred prevention and response efforts; and (3) fostering a safe and inclusive working environment across the United Nations system. Key developments and deliverables to date include:

- A system-wide model policy on sexual harassment.
- A system-wide screening database (ClearCheck) to prevent the rehire of perpetrators of sexual harassment.
- A harmonized mechanism for system-wide collection and analysis of data.
- A draft code of conduct for United Nations organized events.
- Preparation for next phase of work in collaboration with the United Nations network of investigators to strengthen investigative capacity and processes.

UNAIDS is pleased to participate in a system-wide discussion on what it takes to prevent and address harassment, ensuring that all staff, consultants and interns are protected by strong policies and appropriate standards to guide the investigation and adjudication of complaints. We see merit to exploring options for a system-wide, state-of-the-art mechanism for investigation and adjudication of harassment complaints, delivering timely outcomes and with due

process, with support for complainants. We believe that such an approach will send a strong message that the United Nations has a unified, clear, high standard and that the institution will protect everyone—including consultants and interns—from headquarters stations to field locations.

UNAIDS' management and the USSA have actively contributed to ongoing discussions with WHO, through the GSMC, of which UNAIDS is a member, on strengthening harassment policy and investigation services. At the most recent GSMC meeting (Manila, October 2018), the GSMC recommended that steps to finalize the revised harassment policy take into account developments at the United Nations system level as well as the recommendations of the Panel.

Inclusive leadership and management structures

The **Cabinet** is comprised of the UNAIDS Executive Director; the Deputy Executive Director, Management and Governance; and the Deputy Executive Director, Programme. The Chief of Staff serves as Secretary. The Cabinet is a decision-making body that sets the strategic direction of the organization.

The **Senior Management Team** is comprised of all directors of departments and chiefs of offices in headquarters, directors of regional offices and liaison offices, as well as the Deputy Executive Directors and the Executive Director. The Chair of the USSA is also a member of the Senior Management Team and participates in all meetings and retreats. The Senior Management Team advises the Cabinet on setting the strategic direction and annual priorities of the organization and conducts semi-annual retreats for work planning, knowledge-sharing and accountability review sessions. The Senior Management Team also holds information-sharing meetings throughout the year.

The **Mobility and Reassignment Committee** is the principal mechanism for considering the suitability of candidates for positions in the UNAIDS Secretariat. The Mobility and Reassignment Committee facilitates the efficient placement of staff through mobility exercises, the reassignment process, the appointment of staff following a competitive selection process and the promotion of eligible staff following the reclassification of their existing position. Operating as an advisory body, it examines proposals to select or reassign staff and ensures compliance with procedures and due process and provides recommendations to the UNAIDS Executive Director. In doing so, the Mobility and Reassignment Committee focuses on ensuring that the staff of the Secretariat meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, that there is a reasonable balance of hardship postings for staff, that there is cross-regional diversity of staff and that to the extent possible the preferences of staff and their goals for professional development are taken into account.

The **Programme Review Committee** is an interdepartmental body that ensures the efficiency and accountability of programme implementation in conformity with UNAIDS' mandate and established rules, regulations and procedures. In accordance with the UNAIDS Procurement Manual, all procurement activities are subject to review before the award of a contract to ensure compliance with UNAIDS' policies and procedures. The Programme Review Committee examines and determines whether to approve the award of contracts greater than or equal to US$ 100 000 but less than US$ 200 000. The Programme Review Committee includes representatives appointed by the UNAIDS Executive Director, a Procurement and Programme Review Committee Coordinator and representatives of each department in UNAIDS headquarters nominated by the respective Deputy Executive Director.

The **Insight Dashboard Steering Group** is comprised of the Directors of Evaluation, Planning, Finance and Accountability, and Human Resources Management; the Chief of Staff; the Chief, ICT, Innovation and Development Division; and the Project Manager. The Steering Group is responsible for the sustainable functionality of the Insight Dashboard project, which aims to bring greater transparency for staff on data, work planning and accountability, with regular updates to the Senior Management Team.

ACTION AREA 4

Investing in management systems and activities

ACTION AREA 4

Investing in management systems and activities

Strong management systems are critical to facilitating the work of the organization, with accountability for results, and ensuring that senior management is meeting its duty of care to all staff, in all their diversity. UNAIDS has valued and acted upon the various sources of external feedback received from bilateral and multilateral aid review exercises over the years, and UNAIDS will closely review its system of support to staff across its country offices, as well as its decision-making processes and delegation of authority.

UNAIDS' management is deeply concerned about the Panel finding that the "unsafe culture created within UNAIDS has a magnified effect in isolated Country Offices where directors all too often do not demonstrate the necessary management skills or ethical compass to guide their behaviour toward staff members." It is also noted that, in the context of raising concerns and grievances, the Panel finds that "the multiplicity of alternative offices that may be approached simultaneously under the informal process has enhanced a sense of unfairness and ineffectiveness," saying that the wide range of options "has generated confusion and uncertainty."

Internal UNAIDS policies and practices related to human resources are being reviewed from the perspective of dignity at work, with a view to ensuring that these advance diversity, inclusion and staff engagement and uphold ethics and integrity in how staff are supported in carrying out their work.

Key actions

- UNAIDS will establish an internal case management system to enhance follow-up to all reports of harassment and abuse of authority received by the Human Resources Management Department, the Ethics Office and other relevant offices, enabling a coordinated and systematic management response that meets the organization's duty of care and upholds accountability in cases of misconduct.
- The UCD assessment centre approach will be reviewed for potential expansion to include all Senior Management Team posts within UNAIDS, ensuring leaders have the right mix of skills and experience managing staff as well as in relation to technical areas of responsibility.
- UNAIDS will implement a new model of proximity support and routine audit to offices outside Geneva, covering a spectrum of duty of care and practical support issues, including staff well-being, assets and facilities management, information technology, security and occupational health and safety, and compliance with human resources, finance and other policies.

- UNAIDS' management and the USSA will assess progress and plan next steps in implementation of the dignity at work strategy, as well as review USSA survey data related to incivility, harassment, exclusion and discrimination in the workplace.
- UNAIDS will ensure that sufficient capacity is in place to take forward the management action plan and that these activities will be a management priority.

Indicators for success

- Staff report increased confidence that supervisors consistently take action when they observe substandard performance, incivility or misconduct.
- Staff report high levels of both physical and psychological safety in the workplace.
- Staff report high job satisfaction—they feel that their skills and contributions are valued, their work contributes to the attainment of the organization's goals and management takes decisions based on the best interests of the organization and its staff.

Building blocks

Reinforcing management capacity to support the change agenda

UNAIDS has put in place dedicated capacity in the Office of the Deputy Executive Director, Management and Governance, to take forward the organization's change management and dignity at work agenda, including recommendations of the Panel. This includes legal capacity that will enable the more active referral of possible cases for investigation and ensure management is systematically making all relevant information available to investigators. This additional capacity is also used to provide more thorough support to managers who have concerns about substandard performance or inappropriate conduct, guiding them on their responsibilities to document issues and initiate action that could lead to disciplinary measures, up to dismissal, in line with existing rules and policy provisions. UNAIDS' senior management has issued communications to all staff, reinforcing its message that all reports of potential misconduct are taken seriously and referred for investigation.

Strengthening organizational performance and systems through routine engagement with multilateral aid review exercises

UNAIDS is subject to several regular external reviews, including the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network and the United Kingdom Department for International Development Multilateral Development Review. The reviews examine how key partners and donors perceive UNAIDS' performance. As a result of the recommendations contained in these external reviews, UNAIDS has strengthened, among other areas, its risk management, results-based planning and reporting, transparency and evaluation. In 2018, UNAIDS launched its publicly available Transparency Portal to increase accountability and to better communicate UNAIDS' country, regional and global results against the Joint Programme's priorities, as well as to provide information on funding trends and how UNAIDS raises and spends resources. UNAIDS has also developed an evaluation policy and presents its evaluation plan annually to the PCB. In early 2018, UNAIDS established an Evaluation Office and is continuing to elaborate on ways in which to best position the evaluation function within its institutional framework to promote operational learning and improve performance and accountability.

External audits

UNAIDS annually submits its financial statements to an external auditor for review. The report of an external auditor is presented to the PCB alongside UNAIDS' financial statements. UNAIDS has consistently received unqualified audit opinions on its financial statements, indicating that the statements are reliable and presented fairly in all material respects and demonstrating that internal controls are fully functional and satisfactory. In 2012, UNAIDS became compliant with International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Increasing transparency in planning, monitoring and reporting: UNAIDS Insight Dashboard

In November 2018, the UNAIDS Insight Dashboard was launched to all staff on the Intranet to increase transparency in planning, monitoring and reporting. The Insight Dashboard provides instant access to key performance indicators at the global, regional, headquarters and office/departmental levels. It is intended to help ensure that every UNAIDS staff member can be more effective and efficient in their work. The Insight Dashboard also will facilitate quarterly and annual reporting at an aggregated and management level and will be tailored based on user feedback.

ACTION AREA 5

Enhancing capacity

ACTION AREA 5

Enhancing capacity

UNAIDS believes in developing leadership at all levels of the organization, whereby staff grow in their knowledge and skills for collaboration and results, upholding policies and standards and living out the values of the organization. Capacity-building and dialogue among staff should reinforce trust, responsibility, accountability, mutual respect and open communication. The Panel has called for the development and implementation of training "designed to allow managers and staff to clearly understand unacceptable behaviours, to build an inclusive and respectful culture, and to empower staff to speak up about concerns."

Key actions

- Staff with supervisory responsibilities will receive training on managing performance in a dignity framework, with a view to ensuring that all staff feel valued, which translates into increased staff motivation, engagement and results, and that managers will take action to address substandard performance, exclusionary behaviour or inappropriate conduct. Such trainings will be designed to enable managers and staff to clearly understand unacceptable behaviours, to build an inclusive and respectful culture and to empower staff to speak up about concerns.
- Staff with supervisory responsibilities will receive dedicated training on mental health at work and the impacts of stress, including on enhancing staff engagement, achievement and recognition, implementing accommodation measures for people managing mental health challenges and eliminating/mitigating sources of distress that can provoke or worsen a person's health and well-being.
- All staff will have the opportunity to build their skills on preventing and addressing harassment, ethics and integrity, knowing your rights at work, unconscious bias and diversity and inclusion.
- The orientation programme for new and recently reassigned UCDs will strengthen the focus on accountability related to managing people and resources.

Indicators for success

- Staff report that they feel knowledgeable about their rights at work and where to go for support or to raise concerns.
- Staff report they can have open and respectful dialogues on workplace stressors and how to mitigate them.
- Managers report that they feel they have sufficient skills and support to deliver the organization's duty of care, within their delegation of authority.
- Managers take action on concerns about substandard performance or inappropriate conduct.

Building blocks

Capacity-building for dignity at work

UNAIDS began revamping its training and development programmes with a view to increasing the focus on management excellence and the accountability of staff who manage people and resources. The recent orientation workshop for UCDs included a dedicated session on dignity at work, focusing on the important role of heads of country offices, as well as how the organization can best support them in carrying out their duties and in turn supporting the staff under their supervision. In 2019, regional management meetings will include further dialogue and workshops on these issues, promoting common approaches and reinforcing positive behaviours across the organization's senior staff. Workshops will also be conducted for Geneva staff, recognizing that they can play a critical role in shaping a positive organizational culture in their routine support to regional and country offices on technical and operational issues.

Investing in women's leadership

The UNAIDS Secretariat has expanded its Women's Leadership Programme. Four cohorts of staff have participated to date, and in 2018, 34 women across categories, grades and locations participated in a leadership training workshop convened in partnership with the United Nations System Staff College. The women's mentoring programme has also been expanded and is now open to all staff in UNAIDS, while retaining a focus on gender and diversity. These investments in capacity are key elements of advancing the UNAIDS Gender Action Plan, and the broader vision of a UNAIDS workplace with equal and active participation of staff in all their diversity, while recognizing that women continue to be most left behind, and are more likely to face harassment, discrimination, and slower career progression. UNAIDS is committed to mitigating gender bias and maximizing the positive power of equality and diversity, creating an enabling work environment where all staff are empowered to pursue a fulfilling career with the flexibility to meet their diverse responsibilities outside of the workplace.

Engaging the commitment and leadership of young professionals

Just as the AIDS response needs to engage and develop a new generation of leaders, particularly within communities and among the populations most affected by the epidemic, UNAIDS needs to recruit and engage a new generation of young professionals. UNAIDS has supported and incubated Young UN: Agents for Change to develop and grow. Young UN is a global network of more than 850 members in more than 80 duty stations, membership spanning the UN system, with UNAIDS staff among its active members. Members have a vision of a United Nations that fully embodies the principles it stands for, including transparency, accountability, integrity, ethics, gender equality and justice, and see a United Nations that lives by its values as essential for credibility in the public eye, as well as to retain newly recruited staff members. The network has also noted that the precarious employment conditions that many young professionals find themselves in can also make them disproportionately vulnerable to sexual harassment and abuse of authority.

Young UN members are proactively working to shape the United Nations system and UNAIDS in line with their vision and are ready to play an active role and to take up responsibilities in driving bottom-up change around issues raised by the Panel, including raising the accountability standard and promoting and enacting needed behavioural changes.

Going forward

UNAIDS aspires to be an employer of choice, providing a working environment that is motivating and protective and that enables all staff to maximize their individual and collective contributions to the AIDS response. Management systems must be fit for purpose and additional investment is needed to appropriately support everyone in a highly decentralized workforce, with a new model for proximity support for staff and upholding the organization's duty of care, especially for women.

Based on this agenda for change, UNAIDS will develop and implement a management action plan in the first quarter of 2019. We welcome experience and views from PCB members. Recognizing that transformative change requires accountability, the action plan will include review mechanisms and timelines.

The central focus of our approach, and greatest asset in taking forward the Panel's recommendations, is the staff of UNAIDS. UNAIDS' senior management acknowledges that cultural change is needed to end harassment and abuse of power. Staff have suffered from negative behaviours and working environments and this has been harmful for the institution. However, we have tremendous assets in the form of committed and highly skilled people across the organization, at all levels, who are stepping forward and speaking out for an inclusive and supportive working environment.

UNAIDS' senior management is committed to ensuring that all staff can challenge negative behaviours freely, and formally report misconduct wherever it may be suspected, without fear of retaliation or other negative consequences. These are protections underpinned by the Standards of Conduct of the International Civil Service, the WHO Staff Regulations and Rules and the Whistleblowing and Protection against Retaliation Policy and Procedures. Taking forward a broader culture change agenda will build on our work to advance gender equality and diversity in the organization and the achievements to date under UN-SWAP.

UNAIDS' collective learning to date, with the benefit of the report of the Panel, can inform efforts in other institutions facing similar challenges within the United Nations system. The Secretary-General has expressed his personal commitment to ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment for all personnel. By eliminating harassment and promoting dignity at work, we will make the United Nations system a better employer and amplify our leadership for inclusion and equality. By ensuring that everyone can contribute according to their full skills and potential, without discrimination, we amplify the collective impact of UNAIDS staff for the people that we are here to serve.

ANNEX 1

Technical clarifications in response to the Report of the Independent Expert Panel on Prevention and Response to Harassment, including Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Abuse of Power at UNAIDS Secretariat

Introduction

This annex lists statements in the Report of the Panel and provides several technical clarifications and corrections, which may be helpful to the Board and stakeholders as they review the Panel findings and recommendations, and the subsequent action agenda outlined in this document.

Paragraph	Excerpt from the Report	Clarification by the UNAIDS Secretariat
5	"The PCB is coordinated by the PCB Bureau, and the chair rotates among the Member States. Notably, the Executive Director of UNAIDS is appointed by the UN Secretary-General, underscoring the high-level role and importance of UNAIDS within the UN system. The Executive Director has broad discretionary authority and is the voice through which the PCB hears reports on the state of the organisation."	The PCB Bureau does not formally coordinate the PCB. It has some specific roles set out in the Modus Operandi, including agreeing the agenda for PCB meetings in consultation with the Executive Director. The Chair does not rotate. The Chair is elected from among the 22-member state members of the Board. The Modus Operandi explicitly stipulates that the Vice-chair is expected to become the Chair in the following year (but also through election). Reports presented to the PCB are the responsibility of the Executive Director – except specific reports of the PCB Bureau, the PCB NGO delegation and the Committee of the Cosponsoring Organizations. The majority of the reports that are before the Board are developed by the Secretariat subject matter experts in collaboration with the Cosponsors leading in the relevant areas and with the UNAIDS governance team under the supervision of the two Deputy Executive Directors. The Executive Office also signs off on the documents or in the specific cases acknowledges UNAIDS receipt of the documents.
74	"…failed to act when a South African activist raised allegations…"	Shortly following social media posts from an activist who raised allegations against a UNAIDS staff member, outreach was made to the activist by the UNAIDS Ethics Officer to share options available to file a formal complaint. When the Executive Director subsequently received a letter from the UNAIDS Human Rights Reference Group that reported the activist had "lodged a complaint to the Independent Panel," the Executive Director placed the staff member on special leave to safeguard and facilitate the process surrounding the clarification of the allegation of misconduct and to mitigate risk of reputational harm to UNAIDS.

Paragraph	Excerpt from the Report	Clarification by the UNAIDS Secretariat
		UNAIDS then received a letter from Section 27, a public interest law centre based in South Africa, attaching a statement that calls for UNAIDS to empanel "an independent body to investigate the claims… ." The Executive Director took action, treating the letter from Section 27 and the attached statement as a complaint or an effort at whistleblowing by a third party. The details were promptly shared with the WHO Office of Internal Oversight Services, which was requested to conduct a formal investigation.
83	"None [among the leadership team] has accepted any responsibility to change the culture…"	The Executive Director has accepted responsibility to change the culture. For example, on 19 March 2018, he tweeted, "Dear @msletsike & activists, as a leader, I do not shy away from difficult challenges. It is my responsibility to stand up & ensure that our workplace is enabling for everyone, particularly women, that rapid action is taken & that no one experiences any form of abuse at UNAIDS."
85	"The mainly male UNAIDS Country Directors (78 UCDs) are perceived by staff as having close connections to the top leadership at UNAIDS Headquarters."	UNAIDS has 31 female UCDs and 32 male UCDs, and 6 female UNAIDS Country Managers (UCMs) and 5 male UCMs. This totals 63 UCDs and 11 UCMs, with 50/50 gender parity (37 female and 37 male).
92	"The overuse of administrative leave as a management tool has imposed further burdens on remaining staff who resent the fact that a person against whom complaints have been made receives full pay while the work load must be absorbed by the team."	Administrative leave is not frequently used. Administrative leave is a serious measure taken by the organization pending determination of misconduct. Staff Rule 1120.1 reads: "In a case of alleged misconduct involving a staff member, if it is considered that the staff member's continued performance of functions is likely to prejudice the interests of the Organization, the staff member may be placed on administrative leave pending a conclusion on the allegation of misconduct. Such administrative leave may be with or, exceptionally, without pay." As such, administrative leave cannot be compared to voluntary leaves such as annual leave.

Paragraph	Excerpt from the Report	Clarification by the UNAIDS Secretariat
		UNAIDS currently has three staff on administrative leave pending determinations on allegations that have been made. In two of the three cases, an investigation was initiated in response to information provided to WHO Internal Oversight Services (IOS) by UNAIDS' management. In these three cases, UNAIDS has backfilled the staff while they are on administrative leave. Length of administrative leave depends upon the duration of investigations and final decision-making.
95	"In the five years, there has been some improvement in the appointment of women at senior levels."	Female representation among UNAIDS Country Directors has increased from 27% in February 2013 to virtual parity in four years. UNAIDS currently has 31 female UCDs and 32 male UCDs.
97 and 98	"[T]he Human Resources Strategy presents the impression of an organisation that has no risks and no special need for attention to harassment, bullying and abuse of authority. [..] The HR Strategy does not deal with the need to develop special management skills to reduce the risks associated with 87 independent offices that supervise about 70% of UNAIDS staff."	The Human Resources Strategy (2016-2021) refers explicitly to the need for leadership to foster ethical behaviour and model it. Pillar IV of the Strategy, "Ensuring an enabling environment", underscores the objective to create a workplace free from all forms of harassment, ill-treatment and abuse of authority. UNAIDS has taken a number of actions to develop special managerial skills to reduce potential risks associated with our decentralized structure. For instance, four training/orientation programmes were delivered in recent years for UNAIDS Country Directors (UCDs), including the UCD Global Meeting in 2015. The latest such training took place in October 2018. The UCD trainings have included sessions on dignity at work, leadership and ethical behaviour. The UCD induction programmes have reached 76 new or returning UCDs. New UCDs are also provided with informal mentoring opportunities for the initial period in their new role. In the context of the 2017/2018 personal appraisal cycle, all staff were requested to set gender-sensitive individual work objectives and identify one learning objective to enhance knowledge on gender issues. Other actions taken by UNAIDS to galvanize leadership, governance and oversight are set forth in this document.

Paragraph	Excerpt from the Report	Clarification by the UNAIDS Secretariat
121	"The Policy operates so that whether or not a complaint should be investigated by the formal process is regulated by the Executive Director and the Human Resources Director."	If a complaint is sent directly to IOS, IOS will screen and conduct intake on the complaint and decide whether to investigate if the case presents prima facie case of misconduct (including harassment). The Executive Director cannot intervene in this process, although he is informed of the receipt of a complaint. IOS consults with the Department of Human Resources Management (HRM), only to ensure that interim protective measures or other necessary administrative action is put in place during the investigation. (See paras 7.1 – 7.12 of WHO Policy).
135	"If the application for review is rejected the staff member can appeal to the Global Board of Appeal, a complex and protracted procedure with terms of 90 days allowed at different stages of the proceedings."	The Global Board of Appeal is a peer review body led by a fully independent legally trained Chair and Deputy Chair. It finds facts, provides the staff member with due process and makes recommendations to the Executive Director. Once the staff member and administration have submitted their pleadings in accordance with strict timelines, the GBA meets, examines the case and finalizes its report within 90 days. The GBA has no backlog and finishes the vast majority of its cases within the 90-day deadline.
141	"Under Sec.7.11 of the Policy, it is the Director of HRM who, in consultation with Director IOS, determines whether the formal complaint should be closed without any further action […]."	IOS independently decides whether to launch an investigation. HRM plays no part in this determination. If no investigation is undertaken by IOS because it finds no prima facie evidence of misconduct, HRM decides on the consequent action to be taken in consultation with IOS.
149	"The Panel considers that the high standard of proof has been adopted in error […]."	The standard of proof has been determined by the ILO Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT). UNAIDS would need to adopt a regulatory framework with a specific standard of proof in order to override the ILOAT's determination. The ILOAT could nevertheless find that the standard is too low if it considers that the rights of the accused are not protected in accordance with general principles of law.

Paragraph	Excerpt from the Report	Clarification by the UNAIDS Secretariat
164	"Interview comments to the Panel suggested that IOS may feel pressures to deter or stop matters from becoming cases, and this raises concerns about the impartiality needed to understand the perspective of the complainant."	Matters become cases as soon as they are submitted to IOS. IOS then must decide whether the allegations set forth a prima facie case of misconduct, which would then merit a formal investigation. Thus, IOS has no possibility to deter or stop matters from becoming cases and a decision to not investigate an allegation of harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority or bullying is an administrative decision that can be challenged by the staff member who was subject to the inappropriate conduct through the formal grievance process (i.e. administrative review, GBA and ILOAT).

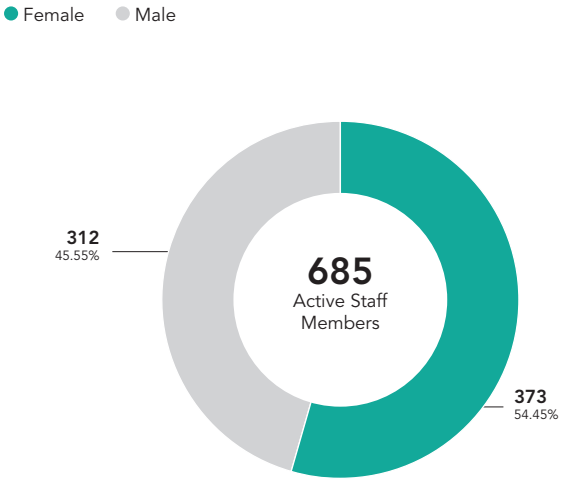
ANNEX 2

UNAIDS is a purposefully diverse organization, both in terms of gender and region of origin. UNAIDS has been at the leading edge of progress on gender in the UN. Since 2013, UNAIDS has transformed its leadership at the country level from 27% women to 49% women. And, our staff hail from all over the world.

Overall representation, as of 03 December 2018

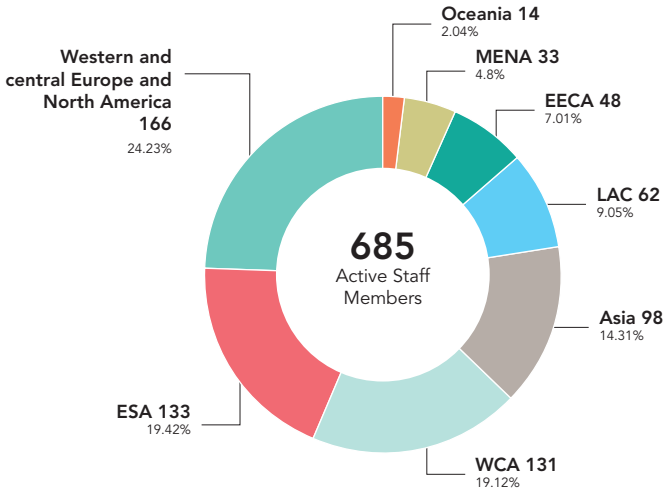
Gender, all staff (Global)

In this chart, we present all staff by gender



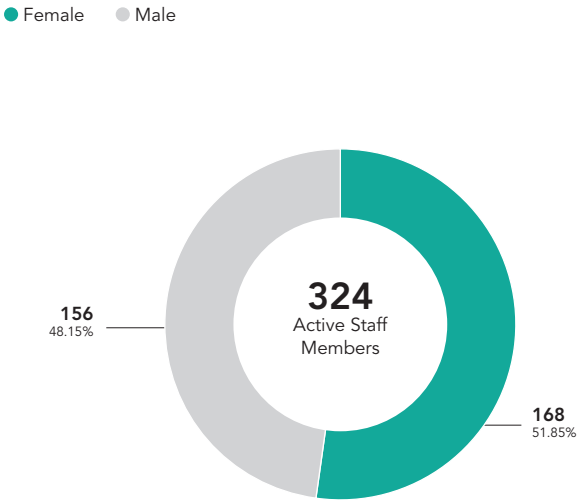
Region of origin, all staff (Global)

In this chart, we present all staff by region of origin



Gender, International professional staff only (Global)

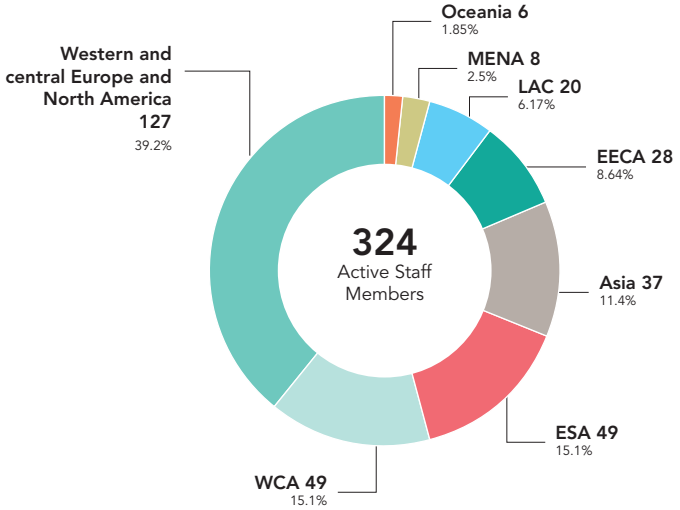
In this chart, we present international professional staff only, by gender



Note:
Staff includes those holding fixed-term and short-term contracts, including double incumbents.

Region of origin, International professional staff only (Global)

In this chart, we present international professional staff only, by region of origin

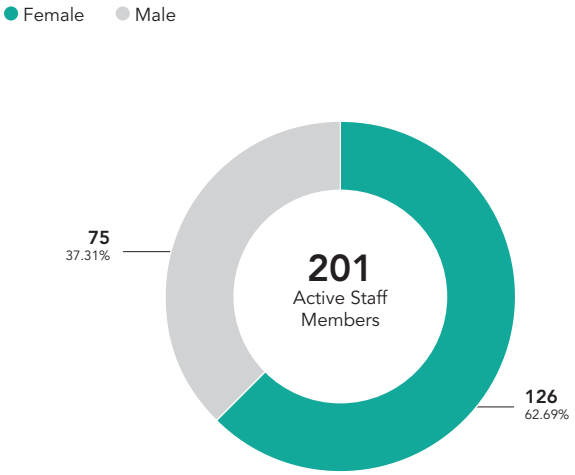


Note:
EECA: Eastern Europe and central Asia.
ESA: Eastern and southern Africa.
LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean.
MENA: Middle East and North Africa.
WCA: West and central Africa.

Headquarters (Geneva) representation, as of 03 December 2018

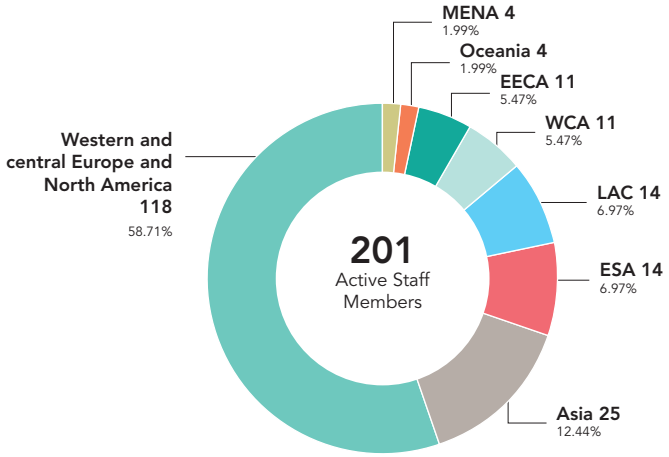
Gender, all staff (Geneva)

In this chart, for Geneva, we present all staff by gender



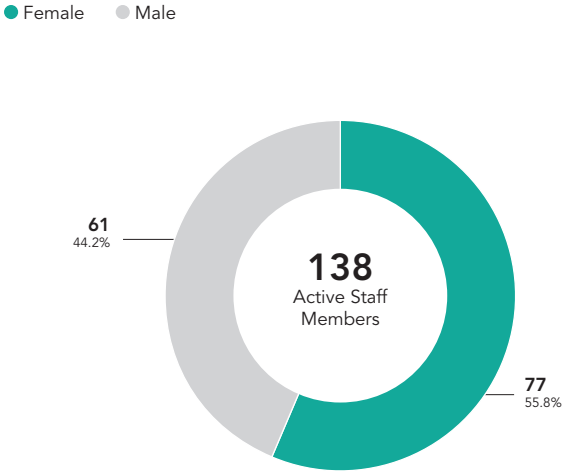
Region of origin, all staff (Geneva)

In this chart, for Geneva, we present all staff by region of origin



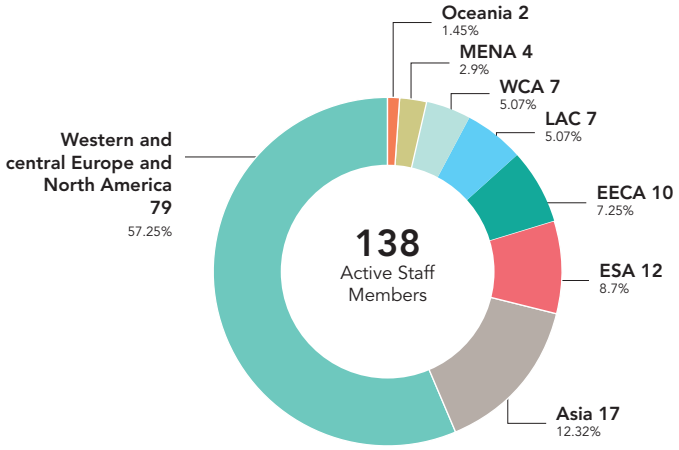
Gender, International professional staff only (Geneva)

In this chart, for Geneva, we present international professional staff only, by gender



Region of origin, International professional staff only (Geneva)

In this chart, for Geneva, we present international professional staff only, by region of origin



Note:
Staff includes those holding fixed-term and short-term contracts, including double incumbents.

Note:
EECA: Eastern Europe and central Asia.
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UNAIDS Gender Action Plan driving results

UNAIDS launched its first Gender Action Plan in 2013. It is a comprehensive framework to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the organization and integrates gender-responsive action across UNAIDS' work. This has led to progress to parity:

TARGET 1

50%
of all Secretariat staff are women

54%
Women in 2018

52%
Women in 2013

TARGET 2

50%
of UCDs are women

49%
Women in 2018

27%
Women in 2013

TARGET 3

50%
of P5-level positions and above are held by women

44%
Women in 2018

36%
Women in 2013

TARGET 4

50%
of P4-level positions and above are held by women

49%
Women in 2018

44%
Women in 2013

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