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Executive Board – UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

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INFORMATION NOTE

on

UNFPA organizational culture

I. Introduction

1. This information note, prepared in response to Executive Board decision 2024/1, provides an update on the significant investments UNFPA has made in promoting a healthy and inclusive workplace culture.

2. In line with this commitment, UNFPA, along with UNDP and UNOPS, has adopted a ‘leave no one behind’ approach for joint efforts, guided by a unified vision of the United Nations system of organizations as fair, diverse and inclusive. This information note includes updates on a wide range of approaches, interventions and frameworks, which each serve to catalyse progress on equity, inclusion, anti-racism, gender parity and non-discrimination at critical inflection points within the organization.

II. The overall UNFPA approach to strengthening organizational culture

3. The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 is a call to action. It promises to accelerate and scale up the delivery of the three transformative results of UNFPA by 2030: to end preventable maternal deaths, end unmet need for family planning, and end gender-based violence and harmful practices.

4. UNFPA has taken a range of strategic actions to align its organizational culture and values with programme delivery. These include, among others, co-creating a UNFPA-specific values framework aligned with its compelling mandate; sharing these values to support the journey of unifying and transforming its culture; integrating the UNFPA culture and values into expected behaviours, systems and work processes; supporting collaboration and cross-unit teamwork in organizational enhancements, management processes and incentives; building trust by ensuring fair outcomes and enhanced transparency in the implementation of policies and processes; and ensuring that UNFPA personnel are able to advocate for and embody these values authentically so that UNFPA may hold itself accountable for creating and maintaining the workplace reflecting these values.

5. The UNFPA Executive Committee leadership and senior management have demonstrated a commitment to a “tone at the top” by communicating commitments to psychological safety and supporting a clear vision and strategic direction for the organization while supporting a speak-up culture, establishing high expectations for staff conduct for all UNFPA personnel and creating an enabling environment aligned to United Nations values, with the goal of creating a positive workplace culture.

6. In 2019, UNFPA launched the ‘Culture Initiative,’ an organization-wide exercise, championed by the Executive Director, to promote culture change and ensure stronger alignment with United Nations values, and to establish and expand the desired organizational culture. UNFPA undertook a comprehensive mapping and consultation on the current situation versus the aspirational culture, across all personnel categories, functions, regions and countries. In this endeavour, the goal was to reaffirm UNFPA strengths, including a passion for the mandate, as expressed by many of its staff, and a clear linkage between the strategic goals, the work performed, and how it is performed. UNFPA also identified opportunities for growth and change, including the need to disrupt certain siloes in its ways of working, and to respond to a perceived aversion to risk-taking.

7. Under the auspices of the Culture Initiative and following comprehensive consultations, UNFPA identified five key principles as the pillars of its aspirational culture.

8. These five culture principles are:

- (a) *Trust and respect*: be inclusive, approachable and civil to everyone and maintain a zero-tolerance policy on wrongdoing, discrimination, harassment and abuse;
- (b) *Belonging*: believe in what UNFPA stands for and remember that all staff are pulling in the same direction, within UNFPA and as part of the United Nations system;
- (c) *Commitment and accountability*: combine commitment to and passion for the organization’s mandate, with accountability to all stakeholders;
- (d) *Team spirit*: support each other and value everyone’s contribution;
- (e) *Innovation*: have the courage to take calculated risks, learn from mistakes and pioneer fresh solutions and approaches.

9. Accordingly, several activities and products have been designed and implemented under the umbrella of the Culture Initiative to promote culture change and ensure that personnel, across all organizational levels, internalize the five culture principles. These include a communications campaign to raise awareness of the five principles, a first-of-its-kind UNFPA Culture Awards programme to recognize teams for their efforts and initiatives taken to promote the principles, a continuous series of change dialogues for all staff, focused on different topics related to organizational culture – such as ‘Change and protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH)’; ‘The strategic importance of UN 2.0 and the quintet of change’; ‘Leveraging data for scaling up innovations’ – and various scenario-based, e-learning courses to help personnel further familiarize themselves with the culture principles. Additionally, UNFPA has launched various toolkits on culture with relevant theory, case studies and activity sheets available to both individuals and teams for their development.

10. With the approval of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2020-2025, and in line with the five culture principles, UNFPA co-created the UNFPA 2030 People Strategy. The three key pillars of the UNFPA 2030 People Strategy reinforce and prioritize the organization’s efforts to construct an organizational culture and work environment that contributes to the achievement of the Strategic Plan:

- (a) Building our workplace of the future;
- (b) Empowering our people; and
- (c) Improving our efficiency and effectiveness.

11. In building its workplace of the future, UNFPA is striving to: (a) place an emphasis on equitable representation, fair treatment and equal opportunity and foster a sense of belonging for all UNFPA staff; (b) ensure a healthy, respectful and inclusive working and collaboration environment for all to promote mental health and well-being; (c) create a vibrant, inclusive and power-equitable collaboration culture underpinned by the organization’s compelling mandate and its strong value system grounded in United Nations principles, shared and embraced by all; and (d) develop impactful people managers, leaders at all levels and technical experts in all areas of the UNFPA mandate and provide adequate flexibility and recognition of expanded definitions of parenting, allowing all to balance work and personal lives. This ambition involves continuous culture change, and UNFPA is committed to creating a safe, caring and inclusive workplace where all can thrive and no one is left behind.

12. To sustain this effort, UNFPA established an integrity group, a team of interconnected offices in UNFPA that deal with internal accountability matters and staff welfare. UNFPA formed the integrity group to strengthen a “speak-up” culture through improved prevention and early resolution of workplace conflicts; increased trust in existing reporting, accountability and response mechanisms; and enhanced support to survivors and affected individuals. The group comprises the Office for Audit and Investigation Services (OAIS), the Ethics Office, the Legal Unit, the Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH) Coordinator and the Division for Human Resources, in coordination with the Office of the Ombudsman.

13. In May 2023, UNFPA leaders met in Almaty, Kazakhstan, for a global leadership meeting and agreed to embrace uncertainty, be open-minded and open-eyed and work towards building a more future-informed and future-ready organization that is able to deliver under all circumstances and in different development and humanitarian settings. Leaders pledged to actively work towards creating an inclusive, ethical environment in workplaces by advocating diversity, listening to

marginalized voices, ensuring a psychologically safe work environment and promoting equity and fairness. Leaders further acknowledged the need to take care of self and pledged to be mindful; to better lead and serve others; to foster a culture of accountability that values and nurtures talent, thereby building effective and high-performing teams.

14. UNFPA senior management and leadership consistently engage the Staff Council to promote better understanding between management and personnel; the Staff Council’s active participation and presence has been integrated into ongoing organization-wide townhalls, change management initiatives and decision-making processes. These offices play important and complementary roles in preventing and responding to wrongdoing, retaliation and staff welfare needs. They provide access to formal and informal paths to conflict resolution and foster a cooperative culture aimed at strengthening an open and transparent communication culture within the UNFPA workplace, which, in turn, leads to a healthier, more productive work environment.

15. The annual Global Staff Survey is a great opportunity for UNFPA personnel to be heard and to shape how the organization will develop over the coming years. In 2024, UNFPA completed the Global Staff Survey as part of its ongoing commitment to fostering open and transparent communication and to providing personnel with opportunities to evaluate and share feedback and reflection on the UNFPA organizational culture and workplace. With over 4,000 staff members and personnel providing responses, UNFPA achieved a 74 per cent response rate. As in previous years (most recently in 2021 and 2018), colleagues responded to a carefully designed, anonymous and inclusive questionnaire on topics that included leadership, communication and change, culture and values, staff well-being, protection from retaliation, and existing services for reporting and preventing misconduct, all forms of harassment and any abuse of authority, as well as various aspects of human resource management. The results of this collective and anonymous evaluation inform organization-wide and country- or team-specific action plans to address any areas or opportunities to improve or commend workplace conditions.

III. The UNFPA approach to ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion

16. At UNFPA, diversity is a strength. UNFPA strives to be an anti-racist organization, placing women and girls at the centre both in its work and in the workplace, and offering innovative solutions by bringing together different opinions, viewpoints, experiences and approaches to achieve the UNFPA mandate and improve the collective impact on “the 10-year-old girl” that reflects its strategic vision. The organization’s internal strategic approach on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) centres on justice and humanity and aligns its internal community with those UNFPA seeks to reach.

17. In 2021, to track and monitor diversity data and foster a more inclusive organization, UNFPA embarked on the ‘EDGE’ and ‘EDGEplus’ certification process. EDGE, or Economic Dividend for Gender Equality, is the leading global business certification standard for gender equality, while EDGEplus goes beyond gender equity to assess intersectional equity. EDGEplus is awarded to organizations that have proven, through a thorough assessment, which includes an independent audit, a review of policies and practices and a personnel survey, to meet the standards for gender equality and intersectional equity.

18. As a result of this process, UNFPA received in 2022 the first level of certification, ‘Assess’, and in 2024 renewed its commitment to gender equality by obtaining ‘EDGE Move’, the second level of EDGE certification. EDGE recognizes that UNFPA has a strong framework of policies and practices that foster a more inclusive and equitable workplace culture, including in terms of recruitment and promotion, and organizational culture.

19. Following the EDGE recommendations, UNFPA has intentionally recruited more women, to ensure a more balanced gender distribution across grades and regions. As a result, 51 per cent of leadership positions at UNFPA are now held by women (based on 2023 data). UNFPA will also conduct a gender pay-gap analysis every year to dispel perceptions on pay inequity across the organization and engage in candid conversations on outcomes of the analysis.

20. With support from senior and mid-level management, teams across the organization has taken significant steps to establish its EDGE DEI commitments and action plans. UNFPA has found success in giving local staff in the regions an opportunity to organize and initiate their own events. Over 50 webinars and workshops have been delivered for all personnel in all regions. With this increased awareness of DEI, colleagues from different parts of the world have reached out, asking for team-specific training or advice on how to launch regional DEI initiatives addressing inclusion, belonging and psychological safety.

21. In 2022, UNFPA joined a timebound multidisciplinary working group of focal points on DEI comprising diversity experts, led by the High-Level Committee on Management, to work on: (a) a United Nations system DEI glossary; (b) a DEI vision and set of principles; and (c) a collection of DEI best practices.

22. The working group agreed on guiding principles to help each organization adapt while maintaining a shared vision. The principles below constitute a guiding framework intended to support the realization of the shared vision, allowing each organization to adapt them to their respective mandate and operational context:

- (a) Leave no one behind;
- (b) Intentional inclusion and dignity for all;
- (c) Equitable representation;
- (d) Intersectionality;
- (e) Developmental approach to DEI;
- (f) Evidence-based and ethically collected data;
- (g) Leadership and accountability.

23. UNFPA has since concentrated its DEI work on three focus points – (a) *awareness*: enhance employee experience throughout UNFPA systems and processes and raise awareness on all DEI priorities to engage individuals and improve UNFPA systems; (b) *accountability*: develop capacity-building initiatives and training to support inclusive culture, anti-discriminatory mindsets and behaviours; and (c) *‘allyship’*:¹ to make DEI everyone’s business and encourage innovative

¹ ‘Allyship’, an English-language neologism, is used in contemporary social justice activism to describe efforts by groups of people to advance the interests of marginalized groups, both in society at large and in particular social contexts, for example, in the workplace.

participation from all staff on all DEI priorities, engage individuals, improve UNFPA systems and build ‘allyship’ – and five dimensions – racial discrimination; disability; LGBTIQ+; gender; and generations – which rest on an intersectional approach.

24. In 2024, UNFPA signed onto the UN Secretariat [Strategy](#) on the Protection from Violence and Discrimination of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) Persons. Protection, support and ‘allyship’ for LGBTIQ+ colleagues and their families are critical to UNFPA as an organization that values and respects all colleagues everywhere, and to the UNFPA mission to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and to realize the rights of all people. UNFPA stands ready to support and assist Member States and other stakeholders as they work to address the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ persons, through constitutional, legislative and policy changes, strengthening of national institutions, and education, training, and other initiatives to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the human rights of all LGBTIQ+ persons.

25. UNFPA has engaged many groups, teams and individuals across the organization to both amplify and expand DEI-related initiatives. These include workshops, training sessions, webinars and events, as well as the implementation of guiding accountability frameworks, such as the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

26. To attract talent, UNFPA offers, in addition to monetary remuneration, a wide range of [flexible working arrangements](#) that promote wellness, balance and equity as well as a comprehensive [well-being package](#) that includes policies on [part-time employment](#), [time off for lactating parents](#) and [parental leave](#), as well as funds within the Division of Human Resources allocated for reasonable accommodations for disability. It is worth noting that UNFPA has been conducting a thorough review to ensure that human resource policies are inclusive; for example, in the policy on time off for lactating mothers, UNFPA intentionally used a neutral language in a way to make everyone feel welcome. By the same token, the policy on parental leave grants the same entitlement to all parents and does not differentiate between ‘mother’ and ‘father’; rather, it refers to “gestational” and “non-gestational” parents.

27. As a commitment to promoting safe practices and supporting diverse groups, UNFPA leadership has endorsed several staff-led employee resource groups (also known as “diversity spaces”), for colleagues to encourage ‘allyship’ and provide resources. UNFPA will continue to endorse the creation of staff-led groups. These groups include:

- (a) *Tangerines*: a community of young professionals working at UNFPA. It is a space to collaborate, identify and implement ideas that contribute to achieving the UNFPA mandate;
- (b) *Women@UNFPA*: a community of female personnel with a wide variety of expertise and a strong interest in women’s rights and gender equality;
- (c) *PRIDE@UNFPA*: a community of LGBTIQ+ colleagues and allies with a mission to foster safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ colleagues and their families, ensure safety and well-being for LGBTIQ+ personnel, and offer peer feedback on initiatives and communications undertaken by UNFPA to promote the dignity and rights for LGBTIQ+ persons.
- (d) *Disability Diversity Space*: a community of colleagues with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, spouses of persons with disabilities and allies aiming at establishing a

welcoming and inclusive workplace where people with disabilities can thrive while providing resources, raising awareness on disability issues and promoting accessibility.

IV. The UNFPA approach to preventing and responding to discrimination, including racism and racial discrimination

28. In 2019, UNFPA initiated a range of programmes specifically geared to combat racism and racial discrimination. These programmes seek to dismantle systemic biases, promote equality and empower marginalized communities. As part of this effort, UNFPA established the ‘People of African Descent Initiative’. Using a human rights-based approach, and aligned with the objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Montevideo Consensus and the International Decade for People of African Descent, the UNFPA People of African Descent initiative seeks to advance rights, justice and development for people of African descent. This initiative also responds to structural inequalities, limited rights and inadequate access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health services, the right to bodily autonomy, intersectional forms of discrimination and the need for more disaggregated data and evidence.

29. At the individual and systemic level, UNFPA recognizes that intentional, informed and dedicated work must continue to take place to address racism and racial discrimination in the workplace and in the work carried out by UNFPA. This is a human rights issue, in line with the organization’s imperative commitment to ‘leaving no one behind’. It requires that everyone, everywhere, helps to affect a culture change regarding racism and racial discrimination.

30. The principle of non-discrimination for UNFPA personnel is reinforced by the [United Nations Charter](#), the [UN Staff Regulations and Rules](#), the [Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service](#) and the UNFPA [Policy on Prohibition of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Authority and Discrimination](#). The principles of fairness, equity and transparency will always apply alongside the organization’s ‘zero-tolerance’ policy stance to all forms of wrongdoing, discrimination, harassment and abuse.

31. Any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person’s sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other personal characteristics is considered prohibited conduct, in accordance with the UNFPA legal framework.

32. The UNFPA 2030 People Strategy highlights the importance of being an anti-racist organization that upholds a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of discrimination, including racism and racial discrimination. UNFPA has organized several events and initiatives to increase awareness on anti-racism, for example, inviting external speakers to participate in discussions such as “Calling in the calling out” or “Black health matters: national and transnational COVID-19 impact, resistance and intervention strategies”; organizing leadership dialogues with UNFPA senior leaders on power equity; health equity; and conducting, in partnership with the Office of the Executive Director, a discussion on human rights and intersectional racism. UNFPA has taken steps to monitor and evaluate its organizational progress towards its goal to becoming an anti-racist organization. UNFPA is preparing to further reach and engage its global personnel in 2025 through the implementation of an anti-racist and decolonial accountability framework that will further integrate UNFPA commitment to this priority across the organization, as articulated in the 2030 People Strategy, and to provide a roadmap for years to come.

V. The UNFPA approach to promoting geographical representation

33. UNFPA is clear in its commitment to develop an equitable and inclusive workplace. As a result, the organization’s workforce comprises individuals representing 166 countries, with 5 per cent self-identifying as belonging to a minority ethnic group, 6 per cent to a minority religious group and 8 per cent to indigenous or native peoples. While UNFPA does not maintain geographical quotas, the organization has always intentionally recruited in a broad and wide manner to reflect the diversity of the populations it serves. For example, the following statement is included in all job vacancies: “UNFPA provides a work environment that reflects the values of gender equality, diversity, integrity and a healthy work-life balance. UNFPA is committed to ensuring gender parity in the organization and therefore encourages women to apply. Individuals from the LGBTQI+ community, minority ethnic groups, Indigenous populations, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups are highly encouraged to apply. UNFPA promotes equal opportunities in terms of appointment, training, compensation and selection for all, regardless of personal characteristics and dimensions of diversity. Diversity, equity and inclusion is at the heart of UNFPA’s workforce – click [here](#) to learn more.”

34. Qualified young professionals from developing and least-developed countries do not enjoy the same range of opportunities for recruitment and training within the multilateral international cooperation organizations as others, which limits their chances of contributing to the international cooperation programmes and reduces their chances of being subsequently recruited by other international organizations. Empowering young people and enabling them to realize their full potential is at the heart of the UNFPA mandate. Indeed, UNFPA has the twin goals of building the organization’s pipeline of young talent, developing UNFPA as an inclusive institution, and supporting inclusive growth in developing countries. To further the United Nations efforts in increasing diversity and strengthening the support to young professionals from developing and least developed countries and to ensuring a broad geographical representation, UNFPA launched in 2021 the [Young Professionals from Africa and of African Descent Programme](#), a groundbreaking initiative to bring talented young leaders from Africa and the African diaspora into the heart of international development.

35. UNFPA efforts have enabled the organization to broaden representation across regions with a share of over 45 per cent people in leadership positions (P5, P6/D1 levels) coming from sub-Saharan Africa, followed by South Asia (10 per cent) and Central and Latin America (9 per cent).

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

VI. The UNFPA approach to maintaining gender balance

37. The UNFPA mandate guides its work to promote gender equality. Externally, the organization’s global footprint has always centred on advocating for women’s and girls’ rights, promoting gender-responsive data collection and supporting initiatives to improve the quality of life for women and girls, including by living free from discrimination and gender-based violence.

38. Internally, the UNFPA mission is to mirror this work and establish the organization as an entity that prioritizes gender equality at all levels. With its Executive Director, Dr. Natalia Kanem, and several female directors and leaders, UNFPA is proud to be recognized as a women-oriented organization.

39. Going “Beyond the Numbers”, the UNFPA tagline for the dimension of gender in the internal strategic approach on DEI, means looking at the lived experiences and perceptions of personnel. It means addressing the cultural element that is at the foundation of such power dynamics and making a shift for the better. While numbers show that the organization is equal in terms of female representation (gender parity), even at the leadership level, UNFPA continues to make efforts to understand the lived experiences of female colleagues and to learn from their stories.

40. UNFPA has met or exceeded all the standards in the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which provides a common guide for the entire United Nations system on how to mainstream gender within its programmes, its human resources policies, promoting equal representation of female and male staff, as well as evaluations, communications and organizational culture, and more.

41. UNFPA in 2023 launched ‘[Agency, Choice and Access: UNFPA Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality and the Rights of Women and Adolescent Girls](#)’, which outlines the UNFPA corporate approach to promoting gender equality and women’s and adolescent girls’ rights. Additionally, the UNFPA Executive Committee endorsed in 2024 a “System-wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP)” and a Gender Equality and Inclusion Steering Committee to drive progress and learning and enhance accountability for results at the Executive Committee level.

42. UNFPA believes that building a power-equitable and inclusive organizational culture, where each voice is heard and confidently shared, starts with each of its staff. It is not simply about numbers and representation; it goes beyond this. UNFPA must strengthen inclusion practices in everyday work, especially in addressing existing biases and all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, ability and educational background.

43. At UNFPA, the importance of diverse, equitable and inclusive organizational culture, and the time and investment required to change organizational culture, are well recognized. In the Secretary-General’s ‘UN 2.0’ policy brief, culture is also highlighted as an action driver to move United Nations entities towards UN 2.0, noting that “in a rapidly evolving world, culture is the linchpin of every successful organizational adaptation” and that “grounded in a stronger organizational culture, UN 2.0 signifies our transformation towards more agile, diverse, responsive and impactful UN entities – to accelerate systemic shifts that deliver for all, including women and girls”.

44. UNFPA is undergoing significant organizational changes to adapt to the evolving context it operates in. The successful implementation of the UNFPA mandate depends on a healthy organizational culture to support it through ongoing transformation. This will affect the programmes delivered, the way UNFPA staff deliver them, and, as a strategic vision, “the 10-year-old girl” that we work for. In order to ensure her right to a safe and healthy future, UNFPA must understand and adapt to these changes and rise to its collective potential so that the 10-year-old girl is able to achieve hers.

VII. The UNFPA approach to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

45. UNFPA holds a ‘zero-tolerance’ stance on any wrongdoing, including sexual misconduct.

46. UNFPA plays a leadership role in inter-agency efforts to address sexual exploitation. The UNFPA Executive Director personally demonstrated this leadership by assuming the role of “PSEAH Champion” in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in January 2021.

47. UNFPA has established a set of very clear and unambiguous policies prohibiting sexual exploitation and abuse and providing for the investigation and enforcement of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

48. Different types of training initiatives are carried out by UNFPA on sexual exploitation and abuse, which include mandatory training courses, in-person learning sessions run by PSEA focal points in their respective offices, and a dedicated session on sexual misconduct, part of the corporate induction for managers. The completion rate for the mandatory training course on sexual exploitation and abuse currently stands at 100 per cent.

49. UNFPA has robust systems of standards and processes as well as monitoring systems in place to ensure that implementing partners also meet the minimum standards on sexual exploitation and abuse.

50. UNFPA has an expanded network of personnel working on PSEA, which includes a dedicated team, as part of the Office of Executive Director; a network of over 250 PSEA focal points in UNFPA regional and country offices; and full-time PSEA personnel in select country offices, focused on either organizational or inter-agency PSEA coordination, funded with earmarked resources. In spite of very limited regular resources, the organization continues to strengthen its PSEA team.

51. In tackling sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, UNFPA employs a survivor-centred prevention and response approach to foster a safe, equal and inclusive working environment and culture. It believes that addressing and preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment is not only about rules and procedures but that it also demands a workplace where everyone feels empowered to speak up, where power imbalances are addressed, and where a genuine respect for the populations UNFPA serves is interwoven into the fabric of UNFPA organizational culture.

52. UNFPA will realize the commitment and vision of its leadership by cultivating an organizational culture of care that nurtures a safe, trusted and protective environment, in which UNFPA personnel and the people and communities it serves can work and live free from violence, abuse, exploitation and harm, their rights and dignity are upheld, and that those who perpetrate such violence are held accountable.

VIII. The UNFPA approach to strengthening risk management

53. A strong approach to risk management creates an enabling environment for a strong organizational culture, where every employee actively participates in identifying, communicating and addressing risks, and, therefore, is engaged towards the achievement of the organization’s objectives.

54. UNFPA has embraced a holistic and comprehensive risk management methodology, drawing inspiration from the COSO Enterprise Risk Management Framework, which entails a structured, integrated and systematic approach to identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risks across the entire organization. This holistic approach is part of the overall UNFPA’s organizational strategy and permeates all levels and functions, thereby contributing to strengthening the organizational culture of UNFPA.

55. This comprehensive approach enables UNFPA to proactively identify and address potential risks quickly and allows for a more informed and strategic decision-making process, as risks are considered and mitigated at every stage of the organization's operations, not only during the country programme design phase. Furthermore, it facilitates a more integrated and coordinated approach to risk management, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the process and that risks are addressed in a consistent and effective manner.

56. UNFPA will continue to build on the results achieved so far with the adopted risk management approach and invest, further strengthening one of the key components contributing to a robust organizational culture.

IX. Conclusion

57. UNFPA, along with UNDP and UNOPS, has made significant strides to foster an inclusive and equitable workplace culture by taking proactive steps to prevent and respond to all forms of discrimination, including racism and racial discrimination. A core focus has been on promoting behavioural change through learning, and awareness as well as enhancing data collection and analysis to better understand inclusion gaps and prioritize targeted actions. Data collection, especially regarding ethnicity-related data, will continue to be a joint focus going forward, with system-wide collaboration on developing race-related markers in progress.

58. Through targeted policies and initiatives, UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS individually and collectively are working towards achieving anti-racism practices, gender-balance and geographical representation at every level across the United Nations system by implementing deliberate initiatives to increase equity across the organizations while enhancing inter-agency discussions and collaboration to share best practice approaches and programmes.

59. Together, these actions reflect a continuous commitment to fostering an inclusive and anti-racist organizational culture where diversity is embraced, equity is practiced and inclusion is continuously improved.
