High Level Committee on Management

Strategic Results
2013-2016

Looking ahead to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

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This report is to highlight the achievements made by the Chief Executive Board’s High Level Committee on Management (HLCM).

In the course of the past three years, HLCM has set the directions for the re-design and operationalization of the management functions of the UN System.

The work of the Committee has proceeded along the five strategic priorities set out in the Strategic Plan for 2013-2016:

1. Attracting and retaining talent
2. Redesigning and innovating the UN business models
3. Supporting the second generation of Delivering as One
4. Strengthening the risk management and oversight architecture
5. Measuring and communicating results

The content of this Report is structured around those five priorities, providing stakeholders with a concise overview of the work and benefits realized in management and business operations since 2013. Each of the five priorities captures a number of activities that work towards yielding a more collaborative UN system at global, regional and country levels.

Significant progress has been made towards addressing many operational challenges.

Organizations have progressively developed global service delivery approaches, and several policy platforms for joint and more efficient service provision have been designed and put in place, especially in the area of procurement, banking, treasury, harmonization of financial management practices and definitions. This work has fundamentally changed how the United Nations, as a common system, can effectively put in place collaborative approaches with very limited or even no investment, generating considerable savings that translate into immediate additional cash for programmatic activities.

The United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and benefits has been profoundly modernized. Its new unified salary structure is more transparent and equitable, and properly reflects pay for work performed rather than for dependency status. The introduction of more lump-sum options and the rationalization of certain allowances contribute to simplicity and provide cost-containment and predictability. Concurrently, the new compensation package improves the incentives available to organizations to assign staff to hardship duty stations, supports geographic and inter-organizational mobility, and recognizes the need for provision of support to single parents to further promote the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly female staff.

Progress has been made on multiple fronts towards the objective of preserving the System’s ability to deliver on its programmatic mandates – the UN’s raison d’être – while at the same time ensuring that staff remain safe, physically and psychologically, so to best contribute to the objectives of organizations.
The Delivering as One approach has become the reference modality for country level operations. Acting on its strategic responsibility to ensure that inter-agency policies, procedures and guidance are in place to enable UN Country Teams to work together, HLCM, in coordination with UNDG, has supported the design and implementation of the “Operating as One” section of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the related Headquarters Plan of Action for their implementation. HLCM is proud to report that it has delivered on all of the actions required by its technical Networks to remove obstacles for the successful implementation of the SOPs. Human resource policies in the area of recruitment in the field have been harmonized, towards increased workforce integration and staff mobility at the country level.

HLCM recognizes the strategic value of collective engagement to devise effective and coordinated approaches to the management and mitigation of risks. These include threats of all kinds including programmatic, strategic, business disruption, security threats, cyber security and reputational. The Committee has also focused on ensuring the provision of consistent, accurate, and timely quality of controls. A series of tools have been developed and put in place, including the common Reference Risk Management, Oversight & Accountability Model for the UN system, and the Organizational Resilience Management System. Accountability and transparency have been increased through the adoption of authoritative international standards such as IPSAS, Institute of Internal Auditors’ Three Lines of Defense; IATI, etc.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda commits “to addressing the gap in data collection so as to better inform the measurement of progress” and stresses that “quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. Such data is key to decision-making.” Data availability and knowledge sharing have been the focus of intense and still continuing investments by HLCM, leading to adoption by CEB of a programme of work for a Data Revolution, currently informing the development of a UN system Data Catalog.

With the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda demanding that the United Nations system moves from silos to synergy, and from fragmentation to partnership, the system must pool its strengths and foster its integration on all fronts, including operations. The operational infrastructure of our organizations is the key enabler in the pursuit of such integrated approach.

As the top management coordination mechanism for the UN system, a crucial nexus of expertise and leadership, the High Level Committee on Management renews its commitment to a UN system that is innovative, agile, inclusive, and results-oriented, building on the comparative advantages of its diversity and specialization to work collaboratively and deliver together.

HLCM has an important contribution to make to the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, by further advancing and accelerating the harmonization and integration agenda that has been at the core of its 2013-2016 Strategic Plan.
Moving forward, HCLM will also work to improve its communication throughout the ‘delivery chain’ of its decisions. Executive decisions need to be supported by strong communication, to ensure that the decisions at the top trickle down those who actionize them day to day. Such an approach will require a continuation of the strong relationship and coordination with the UN Development Group, to clearly define roles in communication and roles in the follow-up on implementation of new policies, procedures and tools.

The integrated humanitarian, peace and development agenda will be better served by the new approaches to business models and workforce that we, together, are engaging to deliver.
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INTRODUCTION

The ‘Big Picture’: looking towards the Sustainable Development Goals

With the 2030 Agenda demanding that the United Nations system moves from silos to synergy, and from fragmentation to partnership, the system must pool its strengths and foster its integration on all fronts, including operations. At its Retreat in November 2015, the Chief Executives Board acknowledged that system-wide integration requires greater harmonization of operational practices and cross-fertilization of human resource practices across the UN system. The operational infrastructure of our organizations is the key enabler in the pursuit of such integrated approach.

To support a universal agenda, the UN system must put in place innovative and sustainable business solutions to deliver high-quality, efficient and cost-effective operational services. At the core of this effort will be the mainstreaming of global service delivery approaches and policy platforms for joint and more efficient service provision in the area of procurement, financial management, ICT and human resources that have already been developed and successfully piloted.

Value for money, lower administrative costs, transparency and accountability for results, are the guiding principles for the operational infrastructures that will enable the implementation of the new Agenda. Global and joint service delivery models can support this integrated programmatic action.

HLCM has, therefore, an important contribution to make by further advancing and accelerating the harmonization and integration agenda that has been at the core of its 2013-2016 Strategic Plan. The Committee’s position as the highest inter-agency body on management in the UN system means that it can implement far-reaching and strategic shifts in policies and practices, in adherence to the mandates provided by member states. This work will have to proceed concurrently and in full coordination with UNDG’s effort to advance harmonized business operations at the country level, feeding its reflections into the ECOSOC Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) discussions in 2016, and ultimately being guided by its outcome.

The importance of quality management will only continue to grow as member states and the UN system look to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and create transparency. Striving for the SDGs, the UN system cannot look at management as a ‘secondary’ issue which is only approached from a cost-savings perspective; rather, management and governance are increasingly proving to be the fundamental blocks which shape the success and effectiveness of programming.

There is broad variance in the maturity and complexity of management systems in the UN system. This reflects the diversity of outputs and delivery models within various UN entities. It is important to ensure that the principles of inter-agency collaboration are centered on improved effectiveness, cost-savings and programme delivery. A stronger and more collaborative UN system at global, regional and country levels can take a range of forms, from knowledge sharing to simplification to harmonization to interoperability. The level of cooperation is best set between executive management and technical experts. This nexus of expertise and leadership is why the HLCM is such a crucial actor in the UN system.
Reflecting on its Strategic Plan, HLCM continues to serve its role in placing management issues at the forefront of inter-agency collaboration. The initiatives in this document should be seen as ‘living works’, which are still evolving, expanding, and being tested. Some of these actions may need support by individual governing bodies, while others can be implemented entirely through management action. Going forward and building on the achievements made, HLCM is looking to develop and expand its role as the forum that will enable the UN system to define the operational platform to deliver on the SDGs, and the managerial tools that will allow it to do so.

**Reflecting on the Work of the HLCM**

Before setting the agenda for future collaboration, HLCM is reflecting on its past achievements, and sharing them with stakeholders. Over the past three years, HLCM has worked to achieve the goals set out in its Strategic Plan 2013-2016. The Strategic Plan is concentrated on five priorities:

1. Attracting and retaining talent
2. Redesigning and innovating the UN business models
3. Supporting the second generation of Delivering as One (DaO)
4. Strengthening the risk management and oversight architecture
5. Measuring and communicating results

The content of this Report is structured around those five priorities. This document will provide stakeholders with a concise overview of the work and benefits realized in management and business operations since 2013. Each of the five priorities captures a number of activities that work towards yielding a more collaborative UN system at global, regional and country levels.

- **Coordinating**: the sharing, discussing, and aligning of actions, processes, and tools to improve knowledge and awareness of other operational models. This is the first step to improving inter-agency cooperation.
- **Reciprocating**: Reciprocity refers to agencies opening up practices or exchanging services with others for mutual benefit, while maintaining separate and individual processes, rules, and regulations.
- **Simplifying**: Reducing complexity of processes, rules and/or regulations to improve efficiency and enhance comparability.
- **Harmonizing**: Unifying activities to be carried out in a singular manner, through a common set of rules and regulations, or through a singular platform or tool.
- **Developing**: In many cases, HLCM members actively develop or build new systems, platforms, or standards to facilitate greater cooperation (ex. procurement platforms).
- **Informing decision making**: the HLCM works to inform decision making through expert and senior consultation, as well as through the collection and utilization of system-wide data.
**ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TALENT**

The UN workforce is the major asset and investment of the system. HLCM’s human resources management agenda has, as its overarching goal, the continued development of the international civil service as an independent, neutral and engaged resource to meet the requirements of the international community, a workforce that is agile and flexible to operate with diverse partners in cross-disciplinary and multi-sectoral environments.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which incorporates a comprehensive, integrated and universal approach to sustainable development, has significant implications for human resources management in the organizations of the system.

Over the course of the past three years, HLCM has intensified its commitment to strengthening the UN workforce as one of the foundations through which the new Agenda will have to be implemented. This work has proceeded along different streams.

**Conditions of Service**

HLCM recognizes the delicate balance between staff conditions remaining competitive and attractive, and the need to simplify processes and reduce transaction costs. The efforts of the Human Resources Network (HRN) in this area have therefore been informed by a concurrent set of objectives: improve and strengthen the conditions of service for staff while also driving cost effectiveness, simplification and transparency.

1. **Review of the UN common system compensation package for International Staff**

In 2012, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) received a mandate from the General Assembly to undertake a comprehensive review of the UN common system compensation package.

HLCM engaged in this Review very actively and from the very outset. In the CEB statement of 2013 on the ICSC Review, prepared and endorsed by HLCM, Executive Heads emphasized that, through the ICSC Review, organizations aimed to develop a competitive and simplified compensation package that would enable them to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre, in the context of strategic workforce planning.

Executive Heads expressed the view that such a package should be informed by the following principles: competitiveness; cost effectiveness and predictability; equity and transparency; simplification and ease of administration. It should support the attraction and retention of a diverse workforce, and incentivize staff performance, mobility, and service in hazardous and hardship duty stations.

Throughout the Review, the HRN has served as an ‘interlocutor’ between the UN system and the ICSC. This included participating actively in all working groups established by the Commission, submitting proposals on different elements of the package, providing systemic data on human resources and expert guidance on proposals, including the applicability and effects of possible policy impacts. Additionally, HLCM convened a ‘Steering Group for the ICSC Compensation Package Review’, which assisted in providing systemic high-level positions on proposals from the Commission.
Following the submission to the General Assembly by ICSC of their proposed new package, CEB issued a new statement in November 2015, whereby organizations welcomed the recommendations of the ICSC’s compensation review that achieved streamlining, simplification, transparency and cost efficiencies. CEB underlined that the proposed unified salary structure was more modern, transparent and equitable, and properly reflected pay for work performed rather than for dependency status. Concurrently, the introduction of more lump-sum options and the rationalization of certain allowances contributed to simplicity and provided cost-containment and predictability.

Executive Heads also noted that, while certain aspects of the proposed system were more transparent, equitable, simplified and easier to administer, there were some areas of importance to them where the proposed package could be further improved.

In approving the new compensation package for international staff in December 2015, the General Assembly took on board all the suggestions formulated by Executive Heads, and delivered a package that emphasized the importance of avoiding a negative impact on the ability of organizations to assign staff to hardship duty stations, the need to support geographic and inter-organizational mobility, and that recognized the need for provision of support to single parents to further promote the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly female staff.

**Impact:** Modern, competitive and simplified compensation package that enables organizations to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, informing decision-making, simplifying

### Managing Staff

Effective management of staff is a crucial part of ensuring an effective UN system. An effective UN system is one with a culture of recognizing good performance, and sanctioning poor conduct or performance. Though staff management is usually viewed through a human resources lens, the issue has far reaching benefits throughout individual organizations. Better management of staff skills and knowledge means higher performance, better value for money, and more informed decision-making.

The HLCM Strategic Plan recognizes the criticality of not only recruiting talent, but also retaining and developing it. As part of this cultural shift necessary for the SDGs, staff development and mobility will play a critical role in ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’. HLCM is doing its part by helping promote a holistic approach to skills and expertise in organizations, recognizing the benefit of strengthening linkages between performance and career development. The HR Network is also working to institute best-practices and skill sets throughout the UN system, while promoting a ‘cross fertilization’ of approaches, ideas, and projects.

The HR Network is also supporting the UNDG to strengthen capacity where it matters most, within UN country teams by providing tools and guidance to improve HR processes in the field. This has helped reduce agency silos in country teams, and has strengthened the consistency of HR services provided throughout the UN system.
1. **Comparative analysis and review of the staff regulations**

The HR Network carried out a comparative analysis of staff regulations and rules, practices, and procedures particularly for field duty stations. This work provided a knowledge base that has been used to identify priorities for harmonization and consistency of HR management across the UN system, both at the Headquarters and at the field level. As a result of the analysis, the UN System has also developed a significantly better understanding of different HR policies and practices, and their rationale than before. This knowledge has informed, for example, the development of the Standard Operating Procedures and the Business Operations Strategy with respect to HR management, and the design and implementation of the relevant components of the Joint Operations Facility in Brazil.

**Impact:** Ensuring common knowledge of HR practices in the UN system and enabling coordinated harmonization efforts

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, informing decision-making, simplifying

2. **Rewards and recognition pilot projects & performance management best practices**

Building on the successful experiences of some of its member organizations, HLCM has worked towards strengthened performance management systems. Pilot reward and recognition schemes implemented with the support of the ICSC, as well as new approaches to sanctioning poor performance, have been presented to the Committee and the HR Network is following up on these experiences.

An online documents repository has been established, which includes policy documents, good practices and other documents related to Performance Management from various UN organizations and functions as a platform for knowledge and experience sharing. A two-day workshop was organized to kick-off the collection and exchange of good practices.

Next steps will be to consolidate the collected information from various sources in the form of Good Practice Guidance documents, and to develop a framework of indicators to monitor the quality of Performance Management schemes throughout the UN System. In addition, work continues on preparation of informal background papers on inter-cultural aspects of Performance Management and Performance Management for Senior Managers.

The end objective is to recognize good performance, strengthen linkages to career development, recognize contribution toward common endeavours and encourage integrated approaches in work plans and performance appraisals, recognizing that integrated approaches cannot be an add-on.

**Impact:** Ensuring common knowledge of performance management best practices in the UN system, enabling harmonization efforts and avoiding research and development duplication

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, informing decision-making and developing
Duty of Care for UN personnel

The overarching principle that informs HLCM’s action is to preserve and foster the safety and security of UN staff. In recent years, HLCM has been very active in this area of work.

Never before has the UN remained operational in such a large and sustained manner in areas or countries of armed conflict. Where crises involving the safety and security of UN staff were once isolated events, the UN now routinely faces multiple crises simultaneously across the globe.

HLCM is committing with a renewed sense of urgency and a strong sense of resolve and determination to build on the experience of increasing tragic events to do everything in the power of management to strengthen organizations, each in their own way, to contribute to a more peaceful, equitable, people-centered world.

This duty imperative has been further magnified by the adoption of the “Rights up Front” approach. Formerly, as violence increased in a country, human rights workers could have been among the first to leave. Now they are among the first deployed to a crisis.

The objective is to preserve the System’s ability to deliver on its programmatic mandates – the UN’s raison d’être – while at the same time ensuring that staff remain safe, physically and psychologically, so to best contribute to the objectives of organizations.

1. Reconciling ‘Duty of Care’ with the need to ‘stay and deliver’

Six years have passed since HLCM re-designed the current United Nations Security Management System and the “How to Stay” approach was endorsed by CEB. Since then, UN Security Systems have been reoriented from a risk avoidance to a risk management approach.

In 2014 HLCM therefore launched a holistic examination of the programmatic need to stay and deliver, to assess how to achieve an appropriate balance between carrying out the essential work of the system in high risk environments, while at the same time preserving the safety and security of staff delivering in those environments.

The scope of the analysis was limited to high-risk environments, where organizations, managers, personnel, and their family members face the widest range of duty of care concerns. In Phase One, five high-risk environments (Afghanistan, Ebola-affected countries, Haiti, Mali-Somalia, and Syria) were analyzed, with the aim of identifying duty of care issues impacting organizations, managers, personnel, and their family members.

In Phase Two, recommendations on how to address the issues identified in Phase One in a comprehensive manner have been developed, for consideration and decision by HLCM at its March 2016 session. This work will lead to reframing the UN system approach to safety and security of staff, moving from “How to stay” to “How to deliver”, which is also linked to HLCM’s work on new business models.

Impact: Moving from “how to stay” to “how to deliver”; Improving staff wellness in an effort to scale up preventative techniques to reduce the rate of danger, burn out, and medical costs

Areas of action: Coordinating, developing and informing decision-making
2. **Occupational Health and Safety Framework**

HLCM approved an Occupational Health and Safety Framework developed by its Medical Directors Working Group. The objective of the Framework is to keep UN System staff ‘fit for purpose’ and ensure the UN system, as an employer, discharges its duty of care to staff.

Noting the diversity in work environments among UN agencies, HLCM agreed to a phased implementation plan with security and risk management strategies and tools, with a suggested completion date of the last phase in December 2018.

The new Framework emphasizes the linkages with the security and risk management strategies and tools.

**Impact:** Improved productivity in the workplace, reduced sick leave and disability, reduced medical costs, improved staff well-being

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, developing and informing decision-making

3. **UN system-wide Strategy on Mental Health and Well-being**

UN medical and counselling services in collaboration with other UN entities have initiated a survey tool for the assessment of the psychological health of UN staff with the aim of informing the development of a comprehensive UN mental health and well-being strategy.

To date, more than 20,000 UN system personnel have completed the survey. A memorandum of understanding with an academic partner to undertake analysis of the global survey data is being finalized, and results will be available by the end of 2016.

A multidisciplinary (medical, counselling and HR), interagency working group has been established to develop a proposal for a UN mental health strategy with the aim of reducing stigma; fostering recovery; prevention of mental illness; and promotion of well-being of staff and their dependents.

**Impact:** Improved productivity in the workplace, reduced sick leave and disability, reduced medical costs, improved staff well-being

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, developing and informing decision-making

4. **UN Cares**

UN Cares is an ongoing program to improve awareness and management of HIV in the workplace. It is managed by the HR Network and cost shared by twenty eight agencies. In the coming year, the program will look to shift its approach towards incorporating the HIV discussion in a more holistic understanding of staff well-being, leveraging the solid project infrastructure and network of the current programme.
REDESIGNING AND INNOVATING UN BUSINESS MODELS

Today the world changes at unprecedented speed on all fronts - technology, communications, transport, and trade. Recognizing the need to re-shape the operational model of the UN system, HLCM is exploring new technologies and embracing new approaches to its business. This ranges from adopting new technological platforms to embracing ‘green’ solutions. The work under this priority area of the Strategic Plan has led to a significant shift in how the UN system works. Inter-agency collaboration, capitalizing on economies of scale and reduction in transaction cost has become a core component of back office functions in the UN system. To fully capitalize on opportunities, a clear understanding of the different business models in the system and how these relate to mandate delivery is also needed. Hence, better understanding of operational realities helps to recognize the comparative advantage of organizations not only related to program delivery expertise, but also with respect to management and administrative processes.

Strengthening Common Functions

UN system organizations operate through an array of different business models. However, at the foundation of all programmatic activities is a set of core functions that are common to all organizations, including budget and accounting, human resources, procurement, and ICT. Strengthening the inter-linkages between the common functions of the UN system is a delicate process. Where there are strong business cases, HLCM is committed to strengthening such linkages through harmonization, joint approaches, and mutual recognition, in order to preserve the ability of each individual entity to deliver on its programming. This includes investing in vertical (streamlining processes within an agency) and horizontal (strengthening between agencies) improvements.

1. Procurement Process Harmonization

This project has successfully facilitated the implementation of common UN procurement at the country level, which has led to a complete change in how UN Country Teams (UNCTs) can collaborate in procurement. Guidelines that have been revised and translated into French and Spanish have led to the removal of all obstacles to collaboration. The tools that have been created are available to all UNCTs. Numerous Country Teams were given support to set up common procurement teams, through intense training activities jointly funded by HLCM and UNDG and conducted mostly by the UN System Staff College.

The first six duty stations that reported back on their use of collaborative procurement approaches had put in place over 50 Long Term Agreements, generating over US$5 million in savings. The approach developed by this project has also been the center piece of the UNDG initiative on the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) which, according to its mid-term evaluation, has led to a return on investment of $28 per $1 spent, or US$5.6 million in the five countries analyzed. Collaborative procurement frameworks are now also in place also at the Headquarters level. Geneva-based organizations report annual cost avoidance of approximately $30 million, while Rome-based organizations report annual savings of $3 million and are in the process of reviewing their collaboration modalities. Progress is being made in Copenhagen and New York in this area as well.
Part of this initiative was also the revision of the Procurement Practitioners Handbook, which provides guidance and best practices for the UN system in the area of procurement. The Handbook can be used by procurement staff of all organizations as general guidance. Furthermore, some smaller entities that do not carry out large volume of procurement have expressed an interest in using it as the foundation for their procurement procedures, thereby saving significant time and resources.

As part of HLCM’s work on collaborative procurement, in 2014, UNICEF and WFP established the Interagency Engineering Initiative (IEI) to capitalize on the combined expertise and experience, and to strengthen technical and management support to humanitarian and development operations related to construction which is open and available for use by other agencies. The IEI identified a common need to engage engineering consultancy firms at global and regional level to leverage combined capacity to maximum effect. To that aim, in 2015, the IEI embarked on a major exercise to establish global and regional Long Term Arrangements (LTAS) that would respond to UNICEF and WFP’s growing demands for construction consultancy services.

Another example in this area is the Vaccine Procurement Practitioners Exchange Forum (May 2015): UNICEF convened other buyers of vaccines and stakeholders (notably WHO and PAHO) to exchange views on vaccine markets, vaccine production and quality assurance frameworks, procurement strategies and practices, and planning and monitoring tools.

**Impact:** Transformation of the way the UN system collaborates in the area of procurement. Creation of standard documentation and improved processes, thereby reducing administrative and management costs through streamlining the workload of procurement staff. Nineteen organizations have reported that there are no longer restrictions on cooperation in procurement, and fifteen organizations report that they can accept other organizations review processes. Millions of dollars in cost reduction have been reported in the BOS mid-term review.

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, simplifying and harmonizing

2. *Treasury Services Feasibility Study*

The Treasury Services Feasibility Study was funded by HLCM and conducted by KMPG with the aim of identifying opportunities from collaboration in treasury services. The study identified areas where significant efficiency gains could be found. The key recommendations were made in relation to banking and foreign exchange, with other recommendations related to payments and risk management. The latter has led to improved information sharing, while collaboration on the use of payment cards has been initiated. However, the most significant recommendations from the study related to foreign exchange and banking, which have led to follow up projects that have fundamentally changed how the UN, as a common system, can effectively put in place collaborative platforms in the area of financial services with very limited or even no investment, generating considerable savings that translate into immediate additional cash for programmatic activities.

**Impact:** Large cost reduction potential identified, improved information sharing and increased cooperation.

**Areas of action:** Coordinating and harmonizing
3. **Common Banking**

This project was designed based on the findings of the treasury services feasibility study and has worked towards developing a coordinated approach to banking across the UN system. The project is putting in place global agreements with some of the largest banks that the UN uses. The first such umbrella agreement was put in place in January 2016, with three more expected during the year. Furthermore, the project also sought to develop joint contracts for banking services in duty stations with high volumes of transactions. To date, it has successfully negotiated banking arrangements in Cote D’Ivoire, Mali, Angola, Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, China, Central African Republic (CAR), Brazil, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Indonesia, Uganda, South Sudan and India. In 2016, the project will continue to scale-up to other large duty stations and regional hubs.

**Impact:** Harnessed economies of scale in banking services to achieve savings, reduce fees, and improve banking services.

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, simplifying and harmonizing

4. **Common platform for Foreign Exchange**

Also based on the findings of the treasury services feasibility study, a platform for joint negotiation has been built to provide UN organizations with much more favourable foreign exchange rates as compared to the UN official rate. In the four years following implementation of this initiative, the twelve participating organizations have saved more than $20 million per year, against a one-time initial investment of $700,000. The data for 2014 shows $39.6 million in savings, which are savings that translate into direct additional cash for programmatic activities.

**Impact:** Savings from better exchange rates leading to additional cash being available in local currencies for programme implementation, and improved bargaining power.

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, simplifying and harmonizing

5. **Common procurement of vehicles**

This project aims to promote consolidated and planned purchasing of vehicles and improved fleet management in the UN system. It is structured in a three-phase approach. The first phase collected data and carried out a feasibility study. The second developed a consolidated vehicle procurement framework, including agreed common specifications for all vehicle types. The last phase is to implement the framework. The project has already achieved a number of successful tenders, including a Long-term Agreement (LTA) with Nissan and Ford covering most vehicle types. In 2016, LTAs for the remaining vehicle types are expected to be in place. Furthermore, a common framework for fleet management is also expected to be put in place in 2016. Overall, the project is expected to lower costs by purchasing ex-factory rather than ex-stock vehicles, capitalizing on improved negotiating leverage through economies of scale.

**Impact:** Reduced cost of procuring vehicles through economies of scale, better standards of fleet management in the UN system, and greater bargaining power through LTAs.

**Areas of action:** Coordinating and harmonizing
6. **Improving efficiency in freight and freight insurance contracts**

Joint work in the areas of freight forwarding and warehousing and freight insurance has been one of the first areas of focus for collaborative procurement initiatives. Joint tenders established a number of years ago significantly reduced costs, and these contracts are now being re-tendered with the aim of further increasing efficiency.

The objectives of the collaborative work have been to leverage the UN system purchasing capacity to achieve cost reductions, improve efficiency of freight services, and to secure better insurance standards. The overall benefits include more streamlined and efficient freight services, reduction of contract costs, and less staff time spent on managing freight activities.

**Impact:** Cost savings through economies of scale and reduced administrative work related to freight and freight insurance contracts  
**Areas of action:** Coordinating, reciprocating and harmonizing

7. **Support to the Joint Service Facility in Brazil**

In response to the QCPR, a country-level common service center, the “joint service facility”, has been established in Brazil. As a part of its collaboration with the UNDG, HLCM and its Networks have supported the design and establishment of the joint service facility. This support has consisted of technical assistance from the Networks and provision of tools and policy advice for the implementation of the center. In particular, support from the Procurement Network enabled the design of a key part of the facility and drew upon the agreements reached under the harmonization project discussed above. Furthermore, assistance was also provided in the area of human resources to enable the facility to move forward.

**Impact:** Enabling the establishment of a common service facility, achieving cost savings through economies of scale, and reducing administrative work and duplication  
**Areas of action:** Coordinating, reciprocating and harmonizing

**Innovative Approaches to Management**

Technology is an important, and currently underutilized, enabler of sustainable development. The development of innovative and sustainable business solutions is central to the work of HLCM. New technologies have the potential to open entirely new horizons to re-shape the operational models of UN organizations. HLCM has embraced the use of ICT as an agent of change and improved knowledge management. The technical experts of HLCM Networks are working to innovate and develop new approaches to core management activities in the UN system. Innovation starts with a discussion on feasibility, including a reflection on the fact that not all innovative ideas succeed. Building on the expertise of each agency’s technical experts, HCLM is guiding a number of innovative approaches to management, and helping scale-up those which demonstrate feasibility and tangible benefits. Furthermore, as a part of innovative approaches to management, HLCM is considering opportunities for opening up the services and processes of various UN agencies to other entities in the UN family. To credibly deliver on the new Sustainable Development Agenda, the UN system needs to lead by example, and HLCM is also leading the drive to enhance environmental sustainability of UN operations.
1. **UNGM, Vendor Registration Project and Virtual Business Seminars**

The vendor registration project has simplified how companies and individuals can become vendors for the UN system. This has made it possible for the UN system to be reached by significantly more vendors, particularly from developing countries and from countries with economies in transition. It has also helped reduce the back-log of vendors to be registered. This work has been possible due to the improvements in the UN Global Marketplace, a one-stop access point for UN procurement. Prior to the reform, of a total of 37,245 registered vendors, 18,697 were from developing countries or countries with economies in transition. After the reform, of a total of more than 86,000 registered vendors (representing an increase of 132%), the number of vendors from these countries is 49,500, representing an increase of 164% (or 57% of the total).

Also related to the UNGM, the Procurement Network enhanced the platform to improve its interoperability, scope, and functionality. This included linking ERPs and e-procurement systems of various UN entities to the UNGM. Apart from being a vendor management platform, now also open to Delivering as One countries for local vendor management, the UNGM focused on developing a technical platform for innovation, harmonization, and knowledge sharing. This enhancement has captured best-practices and allowed for innovative ideas in procurement to be implemented jointly. Furthermore, the update and automation of the General Business Guide has been linked to the UNGM.

The Procurement Network systematically carries out business seminars around the world to expose more vendors to UN procurement. These seminars are both information sessions and also an opportunity to provide guidance on how to access UN procurement contracts. Since 2012, twenty five such seminars have been carried out with an additional seven planned for 2016. Furthermore, The Procurement Network is looking to establish a Virtual Business Seminar (VBS) area to compliment the numerous business seminars that are carried out to attract vendors. This will widen the reach to vendors using the Internet. This will allow the UN system to capitalize technology to carry out training. Additionally, the virtual seminar area will help reduce travel, reduce duplicate trainings, and ensure a harmonized standard of knowledge throughout the UN system.

**Impact:** Simplified vendor registration leading to more vendors, particularly from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Improved business relations with vendors, more competitive business processes, and improved management of contractual relations.

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, reciprocating and harmonization

2. **Analyzing and improving the management of ASHI**

In response to the General Assembly resolution 68/224, the FB Network has completed a report analyzing the commonalities and differences in the UN system's approach to the definition, funding, and management of after-service health insurance (ASHI). The resulting Secretary-General’s report (A/70/590) was submitted to the resumed 70th session of the General Assembly and will assist in informing the UN General Assembly when making a decision on ASHI management and structure. The report included a number of recommendations including collective negotiations with third party administrators, collective negotiation with health care providers, underwriting reviews and negotiations with insurers, and encouraging the use of national health insurance schemes.
Impact: To provide a comprehensive view of the current operational arrangements of the health plans and after-service health insurance frameworks across the UN system, providing the basis for further consideration of the options for increasing efficiency and containing cost.
Areas of action: Coordinating, simplifying and harmonizing

### 3. Developing an Environmental Management System for the UN

In the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan, HLCM members sought to enhance the resource efficiency of UN operations via the implementation of Environmental Sustainability Management Systems in each organization, at a variable speed depending on the readiness of its individual members.

In 2015, the Committee adopted the UN Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality by 2020 with the goal of reaching climate neutrality by 2020 through a combination of emission reduction initiatives and the purchase of offsets. The Roadmap requires organizations to integrate these objectives into their strategic planning by measuring their environmental impacts and planning for their reduction, including via identification of baselines and targets. HLCM agreed to exchange best practices for financing of sustainable measures and to report on progress annually via the EMG and the UNEP Sustainable UN initiative.

Taking such systematic action on the organizations’ environmental footprint allowed HLCM to respond, through a common approach, to the QCPR as well as to Rio+20’s request that UN organizations integrate environmental aspects into internal operations. In this context, Environmental Management System (EMS) implementation is underway in eleven organizations. As of December 2015, twenty one organizations were climate neutral for 2014 emissions, plus the Headquarters of UN Women, covering over 30% of the UN system reported GHG footprint. By fall 2016 the UN Secretariat (representing over 50% of the system’s GHG footprint) has been requested by Member States to present an action plan to reach climate neutrality by 2020.

HLCM is supporting this progress through a UNEP-led project which will provide assistance to UN organizations in improving performance and resource efficiency of operations. The first phase, which consists of the acquisition of Environmental Management Software, is well underway. In its second phase the project will include a training course on design, construction, operation, and maintenance of sustainable facilities, energy and environmental audits. The expected benefits are efficiencies through environmentally friendly solutions, and improved data on UN system energy usage and emissions.

Impact: Improve efficiency and or lower costs through improved management and administrative practices which are environmentally friendly
Areas of action: Coordinating and developing
4. Enterprise Resource Planning System’s Inter-operability

In its resolution (67/226) on the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of the operational system of the United Nations, the General Assembly included a request to the Secretary-General to undertake a study that examines the feasibility of establishing interoperability among enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. In response, HLCM funded a study on the topic, which was conducted by an international consulting firm under the leadership of an ASG-level steering committee, led by the Chair of the ICT Network and guided by a multidisciplinary advisory group.

Based on the consultant’s study and the review by organizations and Networks, the following can be stated in response to the request by the QCPR: Only limited efficiencies would derive from technical changes towards inter-operability. Because existing ERP systems are designed as internally integrated and coherent systems, their inter-operability would not create considerable efficiency gains. Therefore, ERP interoperability may be feasible but should be seen as an enabler, rather than a goal.

Any benefits would derive from, and require, a transformation in the way organizations currently conduct administrative operations. Such a business transformation likely requires significant investment as well as strong governance and oversight, as it involves changes, and in some cases potentially extensive changes, to existing business processes.

HLCM task teams in the areas of HR, Finance, and Procurement have assessed the detailed recommendations of the study and developed recommendations regarding which ones should be, and could be, taken forward based on compelling business cases. Progress will be reported to HLCM in 2016.

**Impact:** Identification of areas of cooperation in business processes, which could result in greater comparability, efficiency, and/or cost savings

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, reciprocating, simplifying and harmonizing
SUPPORTING THE SECOND PHASE OF DELIVERING AS ONE

A paramount principle of UN system’s work is to link global policy and action to the programmatic needs of delivery in the programme country context. HLCM has the strategic responsibility to ensure that inter-agency policies, procedures and guidance are in place to enable UN Country Teams to work together. Following the request of Member States in the QCPR, and in line with the Secretary-General’s Five-year Action Plan for his second term, HLCM committed to supporting the second phase of Delivering as One. Building on the considerable efforts and resources already dedicated to assisting UN Country Teams in their efforts to ‘Deliver as One’, HLCM in coordination with UNDG has supported the design and implementation of the DaO Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the related Headquarters Plan of Action for their implementation. The SOPs provide guidance and a set of tools on particular common activities, including in the area of management, that allow agencies operating in the same field duty station to develop and put in place joint or collaborative working modalities. HLCM is proud to report that it has delivered on all of the actions required by its technical Networks to remove obstacles for the successful implementation of the SOPs (as per HQ Plan of Action – phase 1).

1. Enabling the Business Operations Strategy and the Standard Operating Procedures

In coordination with UNDG, HLCM has focused on shaping the second generation of Delivering as One, in particular by enabling the successful implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The CEB Secretariat has actively supported the inter-agency processes related to the Business Operations Strategy (BOS). The BOS is the staple approach to the ‘Business as One’ pillar of DaO, and is part of the SOPs. This work of HLCM includes participating in the activities of the UNDG, providing technical expertise, and developing projects and tools which empower both HLCM and UNDG activities. For example, the projects on harmonization of procurement processes serve as the foundation for the majority of activities under the BOS and the project on harmonization of field level policies for recruitment enables BOS activities in Human Resources. As needs are identified from field level experience, HLCM works with the UNDG to identify who should take new initiatives forward.

Impact: Reduction in duplication of inter-agency efforts, and increased coherence of policy and tools between headquarters and country-level operations
Areas of action: Coordinating and simplifying, mutual reciprocity

2. Harmonized Policy Framework for recruitment of local staff at the field level

HLCM has dedicated considerable efforts and resources to assisting UN Country Teams in their efforts to “Deliver as one”. This is also a direct response to the QCPR 140 regarding the support to programme countries that have adopted the “delivering as one” approach.

Human Resources is a priority area in Delivering as One countries, and a newly established recruitment framework for General Service and National Officers now allows seamless recruitment and mobility of all staff as internal candidates among all organizations of the UNCT, sweeping away one of the biggest obstacles to integration and working together at the country level, and helping boost inter-agency cooperation and implementation of the Business Operations Strategy.
The main elements of this framework, whose utilization also produces significant reductions in time and cost of recruitment, are country-level common recruitment policies composed of standardized vacancy advertisements, harmonized recruitment criteria for similar posts, and common selection tools and mechanisms. This new framework is presently being scaled up to include some fifty new Delivering as One countries.

**Impact:** Harmonized recruitment at the field level for General Service and National Officer Positions, resulting in less administrative work, country-level mobility among UN system staff, and lower transaction costs.

**Areas of action:** Developing and harmonizing

### 3. Supporting Procurement Teams within the UNCT

As part of the Standard Operating Procedures, common procurement teams should be a common function of all UN Country Teams. The Procurement Network has actively supported the development of these teams. This includes supporting the development of a work-plan to ensure that common procurement is undertaken for key commodities. In order to assist in capacity development, the BOS formed a central part of HLCM-funded training on new harmonized tools that was provided to 120 procurement staff. These staff members are available on a technical roster to support countries that want to improve collaborative procurement. The roster has been handed to UNDG for use at the implementation stage.

The objective is to increase the number and use of Long Term Agreements (LTAs) at the country level, and look to expand the number of LTAs available for use by other UN organizations. The expected benefit is to have more effective cooperation in procurement at the country and HQ level, as well as cost-savings from better economies of scale.

**Impact:** Increased use of common tools and contracts resulting in possible savings from economies of scale and improved process efficiency

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, simplifying and harmonizing, mutual recognition
STRENGTHENING THE RISK MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT ARCHITECTURE

The UN system has made considerable achievements in the past few years in the areas of controls, risk mitigation, transparency and accountability (including through the implementation of ERP systems, IPSAS, Audit Oversight Committees, Statements of Internal Controls, etc).

HLCM is striving to consolidate a ‘trust based’ relationship between Member-States and the UN system. To continue to build this relationship, the Committee focused on ensuring the provision of consistent, accurate, and timely quality of controls. In this regard, HLCM recognizes the strategic value of collective engagement to devise effective and coordinated approaches to the management and mitigation of risks.

HLCM also recognizes the need to focus more on key risks and to improve the UN system’s capacity to manage and mitigate them. These include threats of all kinds including programmatic, strategic, business disruption, security threats, cyber security and reputational.

To achieve this, HLCM has started developing a number of tools. The UN system must continue to build on them and devise a comprehensive new framework that caters for the consistent utilization of partnerships (within and across the system), for the safety and security of staff, for the mainstreaming of the human rights factor in every aspect of the UN’s work, and for the protection against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.

It is critical for the UN to continue to improve policies, operational tools and administrative procedures to enable the UN to operate in high risk situations, while meeting its duty of care for staff, without whom the implementation of those programmes would not be possible. Concepts of risk management and duty of care should be seen as two sides of the same coin, mutually reinforcing. A new approach to “how to deliver” requires the UN system to look at completely new ways to integrate risk management across all programmes.

Quality Controls

As the complexity and breadth of UN services expand, the importance of quality controls increases. Quality controls help reduce losses, maintains a set quality standard, and helps protect the reputation of the United Nations system. Developing a set standard for quality controls in the UN system is crucial to establishing a standard for oversight. However, a secondary purpose is to improve the cost controls and begin a discussion with Member States on the systemic cost of various oversight functions in the UN system. As the UN system continues to reflect on the demands for lower management costs, the system must reflect on the optimal level and combination of oversight functions.

1. Common Reference Risk Management, Oversight & Accountability Model

HLCM has worked to expand the tools available to organizations to modernize their approach to improving the level and quality of controls in place to allow for rationalized oversight, focus on key risks and better internal resource allocation. Among such tools, the Finance and Budget network completed the development of a common Reference Risk Management, Oversight & Accountability Model for the UN system, which represents a strong and defendable reference model which all organizations can adhere to, with the necessary adjustments and variations due to differences between the operations of each organization.
The consultative process that led to the finalization of the approach included all HLCM Networks as well as UN-RIAS. Overall, the model endorses the ‘Three Lines of Defense Model’, which consists of (i) functions that own and manage risks, (ii) functions that oversee risks, and (iii) functions that provide independent assurance.

This is an element that is particularly appreciable in this work - that organizations have collectively recognized the value and applicability of a model developed by a professional body, the Institute of Internal Auditors. As it is the case for IPSAS, the adoption of internationally recognized standards adds to the credibility and legitimacy of the work of the UN.

**Impact:** Boosting financial management improves oversight and reduces financial and programmatic risk, reducing the likelihood of losses

**Areas of action:** Harmonizing and informed decision making

### 2. Improving Organizational Resilience Management Systems (ORMS)

In 2014 the General Assembly mandated the development of the Organizational Resilience Management System, or “ORMS”, recognizing the need to clearly articulate the roles, responsibilities and relationships of the actors involved in emergency preparedness and response. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary General to “take steps to expand the Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) to the specialized agencies, funds and programmes.” HLCM delivered this, and there is now a UN System ORMS policy, also endorsed by CEB.

The ORMS framework has resonated throughout the UN System because it sets the fundamentals to enhance the collective ability to manage the increasingly complex operational risks all organizations face. The ORMS framework also brings organizations together around the common need to improve emergency preparedness and response and operational risk management - programmatic, strategic, business disruption, security threats, cyber security and reputational.

The UN System ORMS represents a transformative change in UN emergency risk management, consistent with the global trend to develop a comprehensive risk management approach to address the significant and diverse risks faced by the organization.

**Impact:** Developing preventative policies works towards reducing possible losses and negative impacts, while bolstering standards throughout the UN system

**Areas of action:** Coordinating and harmonizing

### 3. Costing of oversight mechanisms

In follow up to the approval of the ‘three lines of defense’ model, the Finance and Budget Network is conducting an exercise of costing the oversight and accountability functions in the UN system organizations. This exercise looks at direct and indirect costs of oversight, and is expected to be finalized in 2016. It will assist Member States and organizations in informing decision making regarding the benefits and, costs, of oversight and accountability structures throughout the UN.

**Impact:** Promotes understanding and best practices in costing, which can improve cooperation and communication with stakeholders

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, harmonizing and informed decision making
4. Aligning and scaling-up Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Human rights figures prominently in the sustainable development agenda. Here HLCM is making strides in raising awareness of staff responsibilities and deepening a culture of accountability. HLCM has strongly supported the program of action outlined by the Secretary-General in his Report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/69/799).

HLCM has adopted an inclusive, multi-stakeholders approach to deal with the subject. Coordinated interagency cooperation is required to mainstream approaches to ensure prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the work of UN system organizations. This work will also be instrumental to a more effective roll-out of the Human Rights up Front initiative, which explicitly calls for a cultural change within the UN system to ensure staff recognize prevention and protection as a core responsibility, and that they have a better understanding of how their work reinforces pillars other than their own.

Guided by the results of a survey which gauges existing measures in place in the UN system, HLCM will consider the need for coordinated or joint action on this subject in 2016.

**Impact:** Advance the standards and guidelines of PSEA within the UN to reduce organizational risks, improve operational environments, and reduce reputational risks

**Areas of work:** Coordinating, and informing decision-making, with later consideration for harmonizing

5. Updating and maintaining IPSAS

Since the first organization, WFP, adopted IPSAS in 2008, all UN system organizations have now completed their IPSAS implementation successfully and obtained an unqualified audit opinion on their financial statements. The IPSAS implementation and the sustained IPSAS-compliance represent a major achievement of one of the most important reform initiatives of the UN system to promote transparency, credibility and comparability in the UN system. This was a proposal, a decision and an implementation project entirely led by HLCM.

The HLCM Accounting Standards Task Force is now working towards resolving post-implementation issues, sustaining IPSAS compliance, leveraging the benefits of IPSAS, enhancing the quality of IPSAS compliant financial statements and other financial reports, and on identifying potential areas for harmonization of financial reporting policies and practices across the UN system. The Task Force also works with the Technical Group of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, as well as the IPSAS Board.

**Impact:** Improved accounting standards ensure the UN maintains industry standards, and improved reporting and financial accountability

**Areas of action:** Coordinating, simplifying and harmonizing
Cyber Security and Risk Mitigation

Governments, every type of institution in the private and public sectors and citizens all face cyber risks. United Nations organizations confront unique challenges, as they balance the need for increased cyber security with delivering their mandates, which often calls for significant levels of transparency while also protecting privacy of at-risk populations. UN entities, therefore, benefit from collaboration across the UN system and with partners on monitoring of, and response to, cyber threats, and implementing mitigation measures.

1. UN system Internal Coordination Plan on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime

HLCM members and technical focal points participated in inter-agency negotiations on a coordinated plan on cybersecurity and cybercrime led by the ITU Secretary General. HLCM focused on the discussion for a joint capacity to strengthen the ability of the UN system to respond to threats, and training programs to raise awareness of cybersecurity amongst staff members.

Impact: Modernizing approaches to cybersecurity and cybercrime improves security, and reduces the chances of negative programmatic and financial impact from cybercrime

Areas of action: Coordinating and harmonizing

Supporting Activities

Information Security Training

Since individual computer users remain the weakest links in any information security program, staff members require training to understand agency information security policies, and to better recognize and response appropriately to threats. This project helped develop educational material, and established a review mechanism.

Platform to share cyber-incident information

Organizations require the capability to detect and respond to cyber-incidents and attacks, but many lack the capacity in this area. By working together, agencies are better positioned to recognize and respond to cyber-incidents. This project currently provides a mechanism to securely track and share the details behind cyber-incidents, allowing participating organizations to respond more quickly.

Support to physical security through identity management standards

Increasingly, the physical and cyber security services of agencies are working closely together, and this has become most apparent in the area of identity management. A project led by UN-DSS to establish standards for a “smart-card” has called upon the ICT function to agree on the technical standards for these types of badges.
MEASURING & COMMUNICATING RESULTS

Critical to ensuring that no-one is left behind, HLCM is strongly committed to supporting the requirement for quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data.

As the UN system starts working towards the implementation of the Strategic Development Goals, there is a growing need to measure, communicate, and share results. This need was also recognized in the QCPR which stated that the organizations of the UN system need to “further improve their communication to the general public on their mandates and development results...”. In relation to communicating results, HLCM is working towards developing the skills and capacity to leverage technology and adopt more direct, emphatic and compelling approaches to communication. This includes improving automation, data collection, and visualization as well as cataloguing of data.

The SDGs will herald an expansion of stakeholders and as new partnerships move forward, it becomes increasingly important to improve communication within the UN system as well as with these new partners and the general public.

Improved Data and Information Management

Data remains the medium which empowers decisions throughout the world and it is also a key component of communicating results. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda commits “to addressing the gap in data collection so as to better inform the measurement of progress” and stresses that “quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. Such data is key to decision-making.” HLCM is strongly committed to supporting organizations in this endeavour. In addition, internally, quantitative evidence helps senior management and strategic partners to engage on more solid bases of reciprocal trust. Data also supports objectivity and transparency in decision-making processes, which can be crucial in today’s complex operational environments. Furthermore, enhanced information management and improved accessibility of UN documents and information is a priority of HLCM.

1. Collecting and visualizing data for the UN system

The CEB Secretariat plays a central role in collecting and visualizing data for the UN system, particularly in management areas. The CEB website (www.unsceb.org) provides financial, human resources, and procurement statistics (collected by UNOPS) yearly. The website also helps improve the understanding of the UN system through a number of visualization techniques, including infographics and interactive maps. The statistics provide a wealth of information on the UN system including but not limited to: the financial statistics, which show the UN system as a whole, by organization or by location from both income and expenditure perspectives; the human resource statistics, that help provide relevant data on the overall number of staff, geographic distribution, classification, and gender; and the procurement statistics, that show volumes, commodities and origin as a system or by organization.

**Impact:** Boost communication and transparency with stakeholders; inform decision making on internal and inter-agency action  
**Areas of action:** Coordinating, developing and informed decision making
2. The Annual Statistics Report Automation Project

The Annual Report on UN Procurement by UNOPS, which feeds into the item above, is currently compiled on an annual basis and serves as a valuable resource to the international community with roughly 40,000 downloads per year. HLCM is currently working to improve data collection and compilation for the report. It will do this by automating the collection of data by utilizing information available in the ERP systems of participating organizations. The expected benefits of this project are faster reporting cycles, reduced administrative costs for manual entry, and increased transparency and credibility. The data is also published on the CEB website.

**Impact:** Reduced administrative burden of reporting, resulting in lower transaction costs and improved efficiency

**Areas of work:** Developing and informing decision making

3. UN system Data Catalog

The UN system-wide Data Catalog project, developed by the CEB Secretariat and by the UN Secretariat, and launched in March 2016, supports a United Nations system that is positioned to play a pivotal role in supporting the international community in monitoring and meeting progress towards global development objectives by better leveraging data. The Data Catalog aims to make UN system data open and accessible to the public and other key stakeholders; promote open data publishing among UN organizations; and, improve availability and accessibility of information so as to better inform the UN system’s analytical and decision-making process.

This project has introduced a living inventory of UN system organization open data resources, facilitating the process of awareness and data accessibility, as per the original mandate from CEB.

The Catalog has greatly benefited from volunteered expertise and collaboration with standards-driven bodies, in particular, IATI. The quality of this collaboration is helping to ensure that Catalog updates will be comprehensive in coverage, accurate and automated. The UN Data Catalog does not aggregate or host data, rather, it leverages existing platforms to provide a summary of the UN system contribution to the Data Revolution and to play a key role in effective understanding of open data and related resources as their quantity, and variety and coverage are set to increase. The platform always redirects visitors to the source platform.

**Impact:** Reinforce the data available in the UN system to promote informed decision making

**Areas of work:** Coordinating, developing and informed decision making
4. Developing a system-wide semantic framework (XML) for document management

HLCM is launching the development of a "System-wide semantic framework for UN normative and parliamentary documents". The Committee noted the potential value of an early engagement in an assessment of possible approaches for a joint initiative towards the adoption of a common documentation standard across the UN system, as part of HLCM’s strategic priority to use new technologies to re-shape the operational models of UN organizations. The adoption of a common documentation standard and related technology can lead to considerable efficiencies in document management processes. It is also strategically important for the UN system not to delay a shared approach in this area, as this may lead to a proliferation of uncoordinated organization-specific documentation standards and future digital fragmentation across the UN system. The adoption of international standards is also a driver for the United Nations system to excel as a modern, progressive organization that subscribes to best management practices, as demonstrated by the success stories of IPSAS, the Three Lines of Defense model and IATI, among others.

Impact: XML standards will help make documentation more accessible and reduce time spent on uploading and maintaining documents, improving user experiences and heightening efficiency

Areas of work: Developing, simplifying and harmonizing
**THE WAY FORWARD**

The Way Forward is based on the CEB common principles to guide the UN system’s support to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and as a response to the request by the Secretary-General at the CEB second regular session for 2015. Below is an outline of how the High Level Committee on Management will deliver on tasks assigned to it by the Board, as an integral part of the Committee’s priority work for 2016 and beyond.

**First**, to support a universal agenda, the UN system must first drive the necessary behavioral and cultural change through innovative and sustainable business solutions. The goal is to deliver a high-quality, efficient and cost-effective operational services. At the core of this effort will be the mainstreaming of the global service delivery approaches and policy platforms for joint and more efficient service provision in the area of procurement, financial management, ICT and human resources that have already been developed and successfully piloted.

This work will have to proceed concurrently and in full coordination with UNDG’s effort to advance harmonized business operations at the country level, feeding its reflections into the ECOSOC QCPR discussions in 2016, and ultimately being guided by their outcome.

**Secondly**, the UN system must be able to attract and retain a highly skilled international civil service able to address issues that are increasingly cross-disciplinary and require multi-sectoral approaches. The UN needs leaders with a One-UN mind-set who are comfortable working across the development, humanitarian, human rights and peace and security pillars, have the sensitivity and courage to lead Rights up Front, and have the skills to convene multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Building on ongoing efforts, HLCM will therefore focus on designing and putting in place the building blocks in order to achieve the goal of establishing a “global UN system workforce”, including mechanisms to support system-wide mobility and cross-fertilization of skills and to amalgamate specializations, expertise, and training opportunities across the entire system. HLCM is already considering preliminary proposal towards these ends, as developed by the HR Network.

**Thirdly**, the recurrent attacks to the UN across the world highlight the importance of organizations’ responsibility to foster the safety and security of their staff. The High-level Committee on Management is focusing on this area of work with a renewed sense of urgency, to preserve the UN system’s ability to deliver on its programmatic mandates, while at the same time ensuring that staff remains safe, physically and psychologically.

During 2016 the Committee will review the outcome of two major reviews in this area, with a view to devising appropriate implementation plans. One is the review of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This work would also be instrumental to a more effective roll-out of the Human Rights up Front initiative, which calls for a cultural change within the UN system to ensure staff recognize prevention and protection as a core responsibility and that they have a better understanding of how their work reinforces pillars other than their own.

The Committee will launch the follow-up action to the work launched in 2015 on “Reconciling the duty of care for UN personnel while operating in high risk environments”, which aims to improve policies, operational tools and administrative procedures to enable UN operations in high risk situations, while meeting the duty of care for staff. The new Duty of Care provisions will complement the programmatic ones contained in the Programme Criticality framework just recently re-affirmed by the Secretary-General’s Policy Committee.
Fourth, and critical to ensuring that no-one is left behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, HLCM is strongly committed to supporting the requirement for quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data. The Committee is leading one of the four initiatives – the UN system-wide Data Catalogue - included in the CEB programme of work for a Data Revolution adopted by the Board at its first regular session of 2015. In March 2016 the Committee launched the first release of the UN system Data Catalog, detailing all open data assets published by UN system organizations – a first, important step towards the Digital UN System that the Secretary-General advocates for.

Fifth, HLCM will work closely with UNDG and HLCP to drive forward the agenda on risk management and resilience-building, where the Committee has already accumulated considerable expertise through the development of the UN System Organizational Resilience Management System and the Reference Risk Management, Oversight & Accountability Model.

In all these endeavors, HLCM looks to serve as a leader in innovative approaches to ensure that the UN system is capable of responding to global developments, and can embrace leading technological and programmatic improvements. In this regard, the Committee will work across its Networks to develop and roll out both enabling and disruptive types of innovation. The Committee will look to incorporate best practices from a variety of actors, and to serve as a coordination point for outwardly engagement on innovation. Areas of work can include progress in ICT and procurement, as well as further alignment on emerging areas of work such as cash-based transfers.

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Moving forward, the United Nations system must strengthen the alignment of its operational infrastructure with the 2030 Agenda, recognizing and valuing the different mandates of all its parts. HLCM has started looking at harmonization along different business lines, rather than focusing on a one-size-fits-all approach, as this is likely to yield more successful results from inter-agency efforts, while reflecting the nature of individual UN entities. Such an approach grants more flexibility to pursue thematic or cross-cutting issues, and compares ‘apples to apples’ by driving similar organizations to test and scale-up approaches. Furthermore, this approach may also assist in developing and identifying the comparative advantages of individual agencies and promoting cooperation, rather than competition.

HCLM will work to improve its communications throughout the ‘delivery chain’ of its decisions. Executive decisions need to be supported by strong communications, to ensure that the decisions at the top trickle down those who actionize them day to day. Such an approach to communication will require a continuation of the strong relationship and coordination with the UN Development Group, to clearly define roles in communication and roles in the follow-up on implementation of new policies, procedures and tools. Overall, the Committee looks first and foremost to empower and promote the operations of its members. Capitalizing on the unique role of HCLM, the next Strategic Plan will look to strengthen the leadership, capacity, and partnership of executive management decisions within the UN system.

HLCM will capitalize on its role as a leading platform to improve business operations, the forum where the level of cooperation is best set between executive management and technical experts. The Sustainable Development Goals will usher in a new direction for many members of HLCM, and this will be mirrored in the work of the Committee. The High Level Committee on Management is the platform to deliver the coherent, coordinated, joint operational response that the new Agenda calls for.
Annex 1. Organizational Overview

The High Level Committee on Management serves as the highest coordination body for management processes within the United Nations. Its aim is to identify, analyze, and implement improvements and reforms to heighten efficiency and effectiveness for participating UN entities.

HLCM is a subsidiary mechanism of and reports on a semi-annual basis to the Chief Executives Board (CEB), which is the most senior inter-agency forum within the United Nations System.

HLCM is composed by more than thirty organizations of the UN system. Their direct and active engagement in all the works of the Committee represents its most valuable asset.

The Committee and its subsidiary mechanisms are supported by the CEB Secretariat, mostly from its Geneva office, which is hosted within the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG).

Currently, the Chair of the HLCM is Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General, UNESCO. The Vice-Chair is Ms. Jan Beagle, Deputy Executive Director, UNAIDS.

Five Networks report to the HLCM:
- Human Resources Network (HRN), co-chaired by Ms. Carole Wainaina (UN), Ms. Karen Farkas (UNHCR), and Mr. Mark Levin (ILO)
- Finance and Budget Network (FBN), co-chaired by Mr. Nick Jeffreys (WHO) and Mr. Darshak Shah (UNDP)
- ICT Network (ICTN), chaired by Mr. Houlin Zhao (ITU)
- Procurement Network (PN), chaired by Mr. Dominic Grace (UNDP)
- Inter-agency Security Management Network (IASMN), chaired by Mr. Peter Drennan (UN-DSS)

Networks develop and operationalize the vision of HLCM, as well as bring forward ideas and concerns to the Committee. They are comprised of the top managers of each respective function.

Some of the areas and issues addressed by the Networks require particular technical expertise, or may necessitate additional negotiations. In these cases, the Networks establish Working Groups or Task Forces, which are more fluid modes of work. The Working Groups are usually comprised of senior technical staff in their respective domain of expertise.