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FINANCE COMMITTEE

Hundred and Eighty-third Session

Rome, 9 - 13 November 2020

**Progress Report on Implementation of Recommendations of the FAO
Oversight Advisory Committee**

Queries on the substantive document may be addressed to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report outlines the progress by the Secretariat on implementation of recommendations made by the Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC)
- This report provides an update on advice from the Oversight Advisory Committee as included in *Annex 2* of document [FC 180/9](#) *FAO Audit Committee - 2019 Annual Report*.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- The Finance Committee is invited to review the document, and provide its guidance as deemed appropriate.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **noted the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Oversight Advisory Committee;**
- **welcomed the steady progress made in closing recommendations of the Oversight Advisory Committee; and**
- **urged the Secretariat to continue efforts to close outstanding recommendations.**

1. The Secretariat reported in the Audit Committee's¹ Annual Report for 2019² that all recommendations issued prior to 2019 had been implemented and their implementation status had been validated by the OAC. The status of Audit Committee recommendations presented in the Committee's Annual Report for 2019 was as follows:

FC 180/9 Figure 3: Number of 2019 Audit Committee recommendations



2. This document provides a summary of the status of implementation of the Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) recommendations at the time of writing this report as shown in *Table 1* and *Figure 1*.

3. Given that the 56th virtual meeting of the Oversight Advisory Committee will take place from 18 to 20 November 2020, at a date later than the 183rd Session of the Finance Committee, a number of recommendations have not yet been validated by the OAC at the time of writing this report. Recommendations not yet validated are marked in amber in *Table 2* and the OAC's validation will be included in the Committee's Annual Report for 2020.

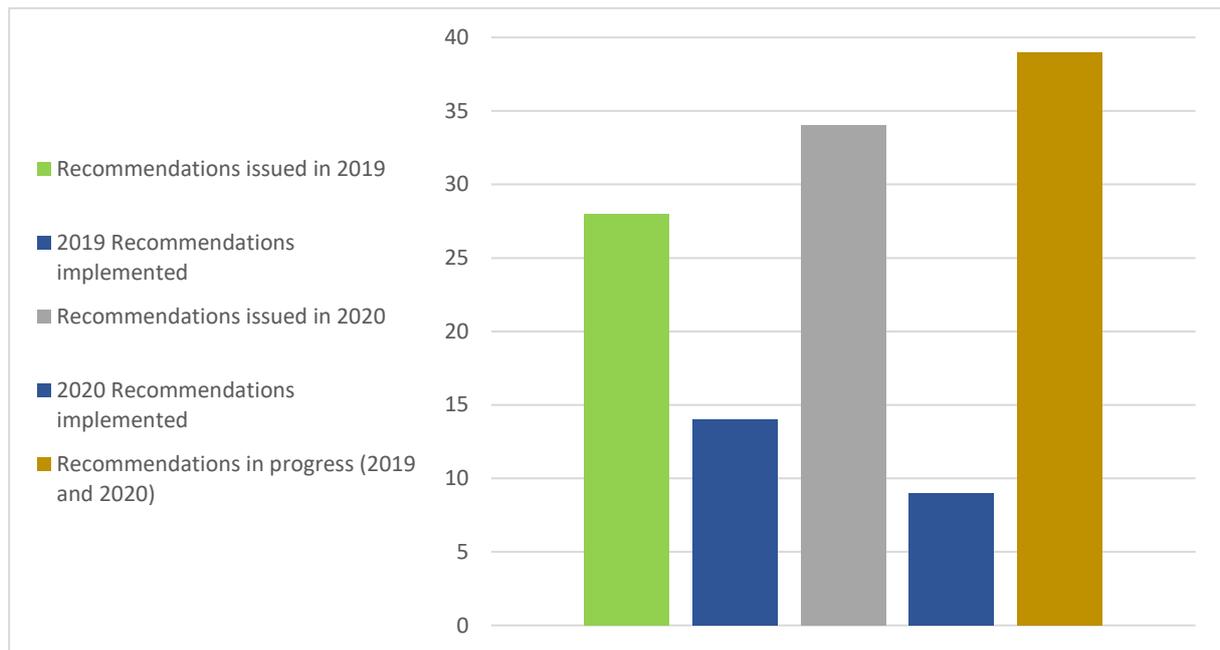
Table 1. Status of implementation of Oversight Advisory Committee recommendations

Year	Active recommendations	Recommendations Implemented	Recommendations In progress
2019	22	8 ⁽ⁱ⁾	14
2020 (AC 54th and OAC 55th meetings)	34	9 ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾	25
Total recommendations	56	17	39
⁽ⁱ⁾ Of which 3 require validation by the OAC			
⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ Of which 5 require validation by the OAC			

¹ It is recalled that the denomination of the Committee prior to its 55th meeting (July 2020) was "Audit Committee".

² FC 180/9

Figure 1: Number of Oversight Advisory Committee recommendations



4. *Table 2* presents details of the latest status of implementation of Oversight Advisory Committee recommendations.

Table 2: Status of implementation of Oversight Advisory Committee recommendations

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
OVERSIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE OPERATIONS					
1.	OAC Secretariat	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 18. <u>Deemed it opportune</u> to consider an independent review of the Committee's self-assessment exercise.	Discussed at the 55th meeting (July 2020) and agreed to further discuss at its 56th meeting (November 2020). This Action Item 18 is closed for this report and opened as new OAC 55 Action Item 1.	Closed
2.	OAC Secretariat and Members	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 19. <u>Agreed</u> to propose to the Finance Committee the renaming of the Committee to "Oversight Advisory Committee" to take account of its expanded role and advisory nature.	The Secretariat included the proposal in the "draft Advice" - Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2019. The Council at its 164h Session (July 2020) endorsed the proposed change of denomination (cf. CL 164/REP paragraph 19.k).	Implemented
3.	OAC Secretariat and Members	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 1. <u>Agreed</u> to discuss at its next meeting a self-assessment and external stakeholders' assessment.	Discussed at the 54 th meeting (February 2020). Proposal supported by the Finance Committee (June 2020). The Committee will undertake its self-assessment for the year 2020 during January 2021 and discuss the modalities for an external assessment.	In progress
ORGANIZATIONAL REFORMS AND NEW INITIATIVES					
4.	OSP	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 3. <u>Looked forward</u> to a preliminary analysis of the intended results and impact achieved of the reforms in due course.	To be reviewed in line with FAO's corporate reporting.	In progress
5.	OSP	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 4. <u>Looked forward</u> to receiving an update on how the new Strategic Framework would be developed around the SDGs.	The document Outline of the Strategic Framework 2022-31 and Outline of the Medium Term Plan 2022-25 will be shared with the Committee for discussion at its 56th meeting. Further	In progress

³ Cells amber provide the current status update to be validated by the OAC at its 56th meeting (18-20 November 2020).

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
				developments of the new Strategic Framework will be provided to the Committee in due course.	
6.	Chief Economist	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 5. Noted with interest the Hand-in-Hand Initiative and <u>requested</u> to receive further information on various aspects of the programme, including the technical thinking for data analytics and data mining; and <u>cautioned</u> on the need to protect this wealth of data from cybersecurity attacks.	Additional information was provided to the Committee.	Implemented
INTERNAL CONTROL, RISK MANAGEMENT, AND OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS					
7.	OSP	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 8. <u>Recommended</u> the addition of a dedicated risk strictly related to financial integrity, i.e. bribery, fraud, legitimacy of purpose, independent oversight, as well as assets management in the Corporate Risk Log.	The Corporate Risk Log will be reviewed on an annual basis. The aspects suggested for addition by the Oversight Advisory Committee will be considered as part of the next update, in the first half of 2020.	In progress
8.	OSP	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 13. <u>Agreed</u> on the need to identify the top organizational risks noting FAO currently has eight, and to analyse them, also drawing on conclusions of the JIU study on ERM, to feed into the corporate risk log and <u>concurred</u> the next step in the maturity model was to build on a process of cultural consistency where people are confronted with the risk and there is a systematic process for escalation.	FAO has reviewed the draft JIU report, noting that recommendations are in line with the UN Task Force Maturity Model. A risk event escalation process will be drafted during 2020.	In progress
9.	DDG-Thomas	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 15. In the area of fraud prevention, <u>suggested</u> measures to increase the rate of uptake of mandatory trainings by NSHR, including <i>inter alia</i> , enforcing training within the first week of employment; contract renewals and approval of travel authorization	To reinforce the uptake of mandatory trainings, in particular that of fraud, training focal points for offices at headquarters and in decentralized offices have been granted access to customized monitoring reports. For NSHR (non-staff human resources), the Quality Assessment Report (QAR)	Implemented

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
			<p>depending on completion of mandatory training requirement.</p>	<p>now includes compliance with mandatory training.</p> <p>Starting in 2020, as recommended, measures have been taken to increase the rate of uptake of mandatory training by NSHR by including an update to the Taleo notification, which informs all new hires of the obligation to complete mandatory training within the first week of employment. New employees are also dynamically assigned mandatory training through you@fao and requested to complete it within this one-week timeframe. Overall, the compliance rate, within the first quarter 2020, substantially increased, with 64 percent of NSHR completing the course (in comparison to 20 percent in November 2019); and 81 percent of staff (in comparison to 40 percent in November 2019). Training compliance is also monitored and recorded through the QAR before the assignment’s NTE (task executed by the NSHR’s supervisor).</p> <p>In addition, a comprehensive mapping of training requirements (whether mandatory or recommended) was initiated encompassing all employees. It covers both specific corporate requirements (e.g. fraud prevention, SEA) and function/role-related training (e.g. budget holder). It is intended to enable FAO to assign specific training requirement by employee, and to put in place a compliance/ certification process, along with a completion timeline (e.g. as part of onboarding).</p>	

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
10.	OSP	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 4. <u>Agreed</u> to further review ERM following issuance of the JIU report on ERM.	The final JIU report was issued on 20/10/2020 and is currently being reviewed in order to ensure advice and recommendations are taken into consideration in the ERM workplan.	In progress
11.	OIG	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 5. <u>Agreed</u> to discuss at the next meeting OIG's role on spot checks for self-assessment and the internal control questionnaire.	At the 56 th meeting of the Committee OIG will brief the Committee on how the audit team conducts an assessment of ICQ ratings by decentralized offices.	In progress
12.	OSP	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 6. <u>Suggested</u> all inputs from the internal control questionnaires at corporate, country offices and regional offices be consolidated to guide FAO's next steps, and <u>recommended</u> to adapt guidance according to the issues that have arisen to be targeted in the next exercise.	A lessons learned exercise will be undertaken in 2020 and used to adapt guidance and processes.	In progress
13.	DDG-Thomas	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 6. In the area of fraud prevention, <u>was concerned</u> with under-reporting in the entire UN system; <u>emphasised</u> the need to invest in capacity building for fraud prevention and due diligence with partnerships; <u>requested</u> to review the application of technology in FAO's ERP systems to prevent fraud risks, as well as cybersecurity at its next meeting.	6.1) <u>Capacity for fraud prevention:</u> FAO continues actions to further strengthen employees' awareness of key fraud-related concepts and policies, as well as understanding of their role and capacities to manage fraud risks as part of day-to-day work. This is done by (i) ensuring completion by employees of two mandatory e-learning courses; (ii) delivery of targeted briefings at headquarters and decentralized offices on FAO's approach in managing fraud risks/role of internal controls and ethics; (iii) introduction of online training compendiums for administrative/operational functions and related monitoring mechanism (work ongoing); and (iv) build capacity of the members of the fraud prevention support network, particularly at regional level, including	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
				<p>through enrolment in the fraud examiners training (ACFE).</p> <p>6.2) <u>Due diligence</u>: FAO continues to invest in the due diligence with partnerships. In early 2020, a new Unit (as part of the Project Support division) for supporting due diligence and risk assessment with non-state actors was established; and a corporate framework for risk/assessment on engagements with non-state actors was drafted and is currently under review). Furthermore, clauses and mechanisms aiming at fraud prevention have been strengthened in operational partnership agreements.</p> <p>6.3) <u>Use of technology</u>:</p> <p>(i) ERP systems - FAO continues to work on strengthening internal control through improved monitoring capacity through the development of dashboards (e.g. procurement, travel); and the introduction of/expanding the use of targeted tools (e.g. electronic tendering and use of Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT)/Automatic Bank Reconciliation (ABR) capacities). FAO is also undertaking actions for implementing additional functionalities/tools for Sourcing, contracts, vendors and inventory management which will, in addition to improving business process efficiencies and effectiveness, also help mitigate related fraud risks.</p> <p>(ii) Cybersecurity: The IT Services division (CSI) continues to focus on improving security so as to achieve adequate confidentiality, integrity and availability of the Organization’s IT assets,</p>	

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				products and services. Efforts include measures for the COVID-19 pandemic-boosted “new normal” ways of working (calling for a different paradigm in the protection of resources), and a risk-based IT security roadmap to prioritize IT security improvements through a solid Information Security Management Systems (ISMS).	
14.	OSP	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 7. Noted Internal Control Framework and Accountability Policy were in the process of being revised to take into consideration organizational changes, and <u>welcomed</u> it would take account of recommendations provided in the JIU report on change management, and <u>looked forward</u> to receiving at a future date a flowchart illustrating individuals’ responsibilities in terms of policies and risk management.	The revised documents are currently undergoing senior management review. Included in Agenda for the 56 th meeting of the Committee.	In progress
INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATIONS					
15.	CSH	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 2.1. <u>Recommended</u> to consider increased delegation of authority for decision-taking in the recruitment of staff for independent oversight units, including for OIG staff, within the staff regulations and rules and HR procedures.	Since December 2019, in light of the special nature of the Office of the Inspector-General (OIG), reports of the Professional Staff Selection Committee (PSSC) for OIG posts are routed through OIG inviting the Inspector-General to propose, for consideration by the Director-General, at least two candidates from the PSSC shortlist. The Director-General will consider the Inspector-General’s proposal in taking the final selection decision. Should the Director-General have reservations in selecting either of the two candidates proposed by the Inspector-General,	Implemented

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
				the Director CSH would address the issue with the Inspector-General to resolve it.	
16.	CSH	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 2.2. Discussed also the need for further delegation of authority for recruitment of staff and consultants for OIG, noted OED had more independence for the recruitment of consultants and <u>looks forward</u> to an update on this matter.	The recruitment of NSHR has been delegated to hiring managers, including OIG, as of December 2019. CSH will liaise with the new Inspector-General to ascertain if there are any further concerns so that these can be addressed appropriately.	Implemented
17.	OIG	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 6. <u>Emphasized</u> the need for OIG to capitalize on the use of modern audit techniques and automated tools to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, and welcomed a pilot remote audit in Algeria to be replicated in other offices, as needed.	OIG has developed 18 audit analyses and 3 audit questionnaires as part of the tools and techniques that have proved to be useful in conducting remote audits. In August 2020, OIG issued the audit report on FAO Representation in Algeria, which was the first audit that was conducted solely using remote audit techniques. OIG will brief the Committee at its 56 th session in November 2020 on the experience, challenges and lessons learned in conducting remote audits. Will be discussed at the 56 th meeting of the Committee.	In progress
18.	OIG	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 7. <u>Recommended</u> OIG “just-in-time” training programmes which provide practical and timely guidance to both internal auditors and staff at large on emerging issues and <u>enhance</u> its communication strategy in collaboration with OCC and CIO, including on the Intranet.	“Just-in-Time” training is one of the options used by OIG. When assigning staff to specific audit engagements, OIG takes into account their specific skills and experience. If OIG has to carry out an audit for which it lacks expertise, OIG may resort to outsourcing, co-sourcing and/or targeted “just-in-time” training. For DO audits, auditors generally will immediately apply the new skills acquired through training. Revamping of the OIG Intranet page is considered for the third quarter of 2020. OIG	Implemented

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
				Communications Strategy has been issued in February 2020.	
19.	Senior management	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 7. <u>Requested</u> to continue to be kept informed on progress on how to address the issue of allegations of misconduct against the head of the Organization, either within FAO or through coordinated guidance on this matter at the UN system-wide level.	This matter will be discussed at the 183rd Session of the Finance Committee (November 2020), as well as at the 56th meeting of the Committee.	In progress
		OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Concerning the provisions for a process and modalities for allegations of misconduct against a Director-General, noted there were no new developments within the UN system, and <u>requested</u> to continue to be informed on this matter.	This matter will be discussed at the 183rd Session of the Finance Committee (November 2020), as well as at the 56th meeting of the Committee.	In progress
20.	DDG-Bechdol	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 8. <u>Expressed concern</u> on the results of recent audit reports, in particular the five audit reports on the project cycle and urged to implement corrective action and avoid risks for the Organization's ability to attract financial resources and assure donors of the Organization's transparency.	With the COVID-19 lockdown, opportunities for follow-up on these reports that were issued at the end of 2019 have been limited. Some of the audit recommendations require far reaching structural and system-related changes. Given the complexity of the changes and the inter-relatedness of the recommendations across the five reports and across the Organization, the follow-up will require a corporate and holistic approach with senior management commitment. Efforts to address these recommendations continue and progress is regularly monitored. Some delays have been incurred, including because of the need for the Project Cycle Management Team to focus on the COVID-19 response. As a result, the majority of the	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
				completion dates of these recommendations will be postponed to 2021.	
21.	OIG	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 9. Noted audit reports for country offices presented a number of commonalities and similar problems and <u>recommended</u> that OIG make a presentation to senior managers, preferably biannually, on unsatisfactory audit reports, as a lessons learning process, especially for audit reports that are rated unsatisfactory.	OIG fully supports this recommendation. The new Inspector-General will approach senior management with the initiative.	In progress
22.	OSP	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 10. Discussed, together with OSP, resources for OIG, including the portion of Indirect Support Costs (ISC) on extrabudgetary funding 7% levied for non-operational budgets; and was reassured that mechanisms were in place to support OIG for future shortfalls, especially in the area of investigation.	Additional funding sources will continue to be explored on an as-needed basis with the full commitment of the Director-General. This recommendation Action Item 10 is closed and is opened as OAC 55 Action Item 9.	Closed
23.	OIG	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 11. <u>Suggested</u> the Inspector-General a.i. provide a handover note to the benefit of the appointed Inspector-General.	The Inspector General a.i. prepared a comprehensive handover note and held a number of handover meetings via Skype with the new Inspector-General.	Implemented
24.	DDG-Thomas/ OIG	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 8. <u>Expressed concern</u> with the outcomes of recent audits in country offices noting systematic structural capacity issues, and <u>recommended</u> <i>inter alia</i> an analysis of the optimal balance between staff and non-staff in decentralized offices.	OIG is conducting an audit of the decentralized offices' governance structure and capacity to be conducted mostly remotely between October and December 2020.	In progress
25.	OSP	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 9. <u>Welcomed</u> the establishment of a regular P4 Investigator post and <u>appreciated</u> the Director-General's commitment to facilitate <u>sufficient</u> resources on an 'as-needed basis,'	Additional funding sources will continue to be explored on an as-needed basis with the full commitment of the Director-General.	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
			while noting the shortfall in the investigation function would need a longer-term more sustainable solution.		
26.	OIG	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 10. <u>Agreed</u> to discuss at its next meeting a review of benchmarks for the investigation function across the UN system.	OIG is reviewing the documents available on various benchmarking studies hitherto conducted in the UN system and will provide a briefing note for the next meeting of the Committee. Included in Agenda for the 56 th meeting of the Committee.	In progress
EXTERNAL AUDIT, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING					
27.	EAUD	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 14. <u>Discussed</u> its role in providing comments on the Organization's financial statements in line with its Terms of Reference (Article 2.1.a.i), and in alignment with practice in other UN entities, agreed to review JIU indicators for best practice in this regard, and <u>expressed its intention</u> to liaise with the new External Auditor on this matter.	Will be discussed at the 56 th meeting of the Committee.	In progress
ETHICS					
28.	Ethics Officer	AC 51 18-19 February 2019	Action Item 3. The Ethics Officer to review the Financial Disclosure Programme (FDP) and conduct a cost benefit analysis.	Since coming on board in March 2020, the Ethics Officer has engaged with peers across the UN to assess the current best practice standards on the FDPs. Information collated is being benchmarked to design and propose changes to the current FDP. Changes to the FDP would need to be aligned with a revised FDP Policy and a new Conflict of Interest Policy.	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
				<p>It is proposed that any changes be considered in the year 2021 to allow for review of the 2020 FDP exercise, as this will be the first exercise managed by the new Ethics Officer. This will allow for a critical review and obtaining of lessons learnt to inform changes.</p> <p>For the 2020 FDP exercise, coverage was broadened to include some NSHR such as consultants on whose occupational duties include procurement duties or oversight activities (audit, investigation, evaluation). Furthermore, coverage was also extended to senior positions such as Special Advisors. These amendments are in line with best practices of corporate governance.</p>	
29.	Ethics Officer/ Ombudsman	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 18 (i). <u>Strongly recommended</u> to develop communication for all staff on the distinct functions of Ethics Officer and Ombudsman in FAO's official languages, and recommended this be a priority for the newly appointed Ethics Officer.	Action Item 18.i) The Ethics Officer and the Ombudsman have engaged and agreed to issue joint communication.	In progress
30.	Ethics Officer	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 17. <u>Recommended</u> that the FDP be extended to cover NSHR, to be defined with regard to their functions and authority.	Inclusion of Consultants (COF REG) and Special Advisors in the FDP for 2020 as applicable is embedded in Administrative Circular 2020/04 on <i>Declaration of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme</i> .	Implemented
31.	Ethics Officer	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 12. Following separation of the Ombudsman and Ethics Officer functions approved in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21 (CL 163/3 – December 2019), the Committee renewed its previous request to conduct a	A survey on satisfaction with the Ethics Office should be carried out in 2022.	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
			survey on satisfaction with the Ethics Office two years after its full establishment (2022).		
32.	Ethics Officer	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 11. Noted the <u>need to review</u> the list of mandatory and non-mandatory training and <u>recommended</u> the training on whistleblower protection policy be made mandatory.	ODG made the course mandatory on 7/9/2020. A related message to all staff was distributed on 16/9/2020.	Implemented
33.	Ethics Officer	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	<p>Action Item 12. <u>Agreed</u> on the need for FAO to further clarify the different roles of the Ethics and Ombudsman Offices and <u>requested</u> to be kept informed on a communications strategy in this regard.</p> <p><u>Recommended</u> the Ethics Office assume the responsibility for management of the gifts policy.</p> <p><u>Solicited</u> updating of FAO's corporate policy for the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment, and authority abuse to include the role of the Ethics Office.</p>	<p>A communications strategy is being drafted by Ethics Officer in coordination with the Ombudsman. A number of articles are being published on Intranet to shed light on the mandate of the Ethics Office.</p> <p>The gift policy is being reviewed and a draft is under stakeholder review.</p> <p>The <i>Annual Report on corporate policy, processes and measures on the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and authority abuse</i> will be submitted to the Finance Committee in November 2020 for further guidance.</p>	<p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p>
OMBUDSMAN					
34.	Ombudsman	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 13. <u>Inquired</u> on the possibility of sharing the ombudsman functions with other Rome-based Agencies and requested further information.	Will be discussed at the 56th meeting of the Oversight Advisory Committee (November 2020).	Not started

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HUMAN RESOURCES					
	CSH	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 9. <u>Requested</u> submission at its next meeting of an update on remaining action from the recommendations of the audit on recruitment. The remaining actions from recommendations of the audit on recruitment are as follows:		
35.	CSH	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 9.1. OHR to take advantage of the deployment of Taleo to develop protocols to ensure sufficient and timely communication with all applicants.	Action Item 9.1) Feedback from regional offices and internal and external applicants on the use of Taleo is encouraged and, with the support of the Shared Services Centre (SSC) and the IT Services Division, these suggestions are taken into consideration to ensure continuous refinement of the Taleo system for a better user's experience. All applicants receive an automatic notification from Taleo when a Vacancy announcement is completed (either a candidate has accepted offer, or the vacancy announcement is cancelled).	Implemented
36.	CSH	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 9.2. OHR to develop training materials concerning the established guidance on the process and criteria to follow in developing the list of candidates to be interviewed.	Action Item 9.2) CSH is in the process of conducting a review of the recruitment and selection procedures aimed at improving transparency and efficiency. CSH will prepare updated training materials based on revised processes. Training materials are expected to be completed after the new recruitment guidelines are published by Q1 2021.	In progress
37.	CSH	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 9.3. OHR to widen the scope of reference checks for prospective staff members by:	Action Item 9.3) CSH defined procedures to ensure that pre-employment checks are conducted in a thorough, systematic and timely	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
			<p>a) requesting employment certificates for all past employers (or at least the ones required to meet the position minimum requirements) in order to verify the actual duration, position and supervisor of the candidate's previous jobs. This should also include all contracts with other UN organizations;</p> <p>b) requesting references from at least the last two supervisors (or the two most relevant in terms of contract duration) based on the verified employment certificate(s);</p> <p>c) amending the reference questionnaire to request information about the candidate's position, duties and the length of employment in the related organization; and</p> <p>d) coordinating with the One HR initiative to develop guidelines for the performance of disciplinary/criminal reference checks that include: (i) checking disciplinary records with other UN organizations in all cases, and (ii) checking the UNGM database and other public databases for blacklisted vendors.</p>	<p>manner and include a combination of different types of checks (educational checks, employment records checks, qualitative verification, security checks).</p> <p>The FAO reference check process has been revised, in alignment with the audit recommendation to improve efficiency in the recruitment and selection and on-boarding process. The customized automated reference check service developed under the United Nations Clear Check Clinic, will assist in enabling FAO to streamline the pre-employment reference checking process.</p> <p>Expected to be completed after the new recruitment guidelines are published by Q1 2021.</p>	
38.	CSH	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 9.4. OHR to specify in the VAs the job families that could be filled with candidates endorsed in the specific selection process.	Action Item 9.4) Vacancy announcements for Professional posts have been updated since the use of rosters has been discontinued.	Implemented
39.	CSH	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 9.5. OHR, in collaboration with hiring units, to develop professional roster pools of PSSC candidates per job family and	Action Item 9.5) CSH is reviewing the recruitment process.	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken ³	Status of Implementation
			develop guidance on how they will be used to fill vacant positions to ensure alignment between candidate profiles and the positions they are appointed to.	The full implementation of the set of recommendations will be ensured by the new CSH Director, as part of actions on the overall review of the HR policies and procedures, so as to guarantee consistency and harmonization. Expected to be completed after the new recruitment guidelines are published by Q1 2021.	
40.	CSH	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 11. Welcomed FAO's approach for the recruitment of persons with disabilities and <u>suggested</u> this be better communicated in HR management documents.	CSH nominated focal points and is participating in the Interdepartmental Working Group meeting. Ongoing process in line with recommendations from JIU report JIU/REP/2018/6. A policy on accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings is being formulated and relevant Manual Sections are being reviewed and will be updated. An assessment of headquarters premises' conformity has been carried out for conformity with applicable Italian legislation in the field of safety and accessibility by disabled persons. The UN Disability Inclusion strategy will be reflected in the HR strategic plan. Expected to be completed by December 2020.	In progress
41.	CSH	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 17. <u>Requested</u> the CSH Director to present the new HR Strategic plan, including a review of the whole recruitment process to the Oversight Advisory Committee.	The Human Resources Strategic Action Plan 2020-2022 is submitted to the Finance Committee at its 183rd Session in November 2020 (document FC 183/4). The OAC provided input to the draft Human Resources Strategic Action Plan in October 2020.	In progress
42.	DDG-Bechdol	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 20. Took note of preliminary results of the staff satisfaction survey, and	DDG Beth Bechdol was designated by the Director-General to serve as FAO's champion to	Implemented

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			<p><u>recommended</u> that its final results be made public or at least published on Intranet.</p>	<p>lead outreach and communications with staff and to address the areas that need improvement.</p> <p>During July and August, 13 facilitated action planning sessions were conducted across the Organization with each corporate work stream, regional offices, Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs), liaison offices and subject matter experts (CSH, Ethics Officer, LEG, OIG, Ombudsman, Staff Counsellor). In September, brainstorming/ listening sessions within each work stream and regional office were organized. The purpose of these sessions is to receive feedback from as many employees as realistically possible. Each stream will prioritize all the ideas and suggestions received and select the actional ones. The sessions continued until mid-October.</p> <p>The main focus areas of the corporate action plan identified through the Survey results and the aforementioned meetings are <u>Professional Development, Communication, Ethical Workplace and New Ways of Working</u>.</p> <p>In September, a Corporate Task Force composed of 15 employees, selected from across regions and offices, has been established. The role of the Task Force is to review the inputs from the workstreams and regional offices, and propose to senior management corporate actions to address some of the workplace concerns as highlighted in the Survey.</p>	
43.	CSH	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 13. Recognized the complex challenge in developing a new HR strategic plan for the Organization, taking account of a large	The Human Resources Strategic Action Plan 2020-2012 is submitted to the Finance Committee at its	In progress

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			number of recommendations and guidance received from internal and external oversight, as well as governing bodies and the JIU and <u>requested</u> to be consulted at the various stages of the development for advice and guidance, with the first submission expected to be received in September.	183rd Session in November 2020 (document FC 183/4). The OAC provided input to the draft Human Resources Strategic Action Plan in October 2020. Will be further discussed at the 56 th meeting of the Committee.	
PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE					
44.	DDG-Thomas	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 19. <u>Requested</u> to discuss at its next meeting a proposal for which unit in FAO should be best positioned to take charge of the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment, and authority abuse policies.	In August 2020, the Director-General appointed DDG Laurent Thomas as the Chairperson of the internal Task Force on Sexual Harassment (SH) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), with immediate effect. The scope of the internal Task Force was expanded to include other forms of workplace misconduct, such as harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority, which have in common the same channels for prevention, response and reporting mechanisms. The Task Force is comprised of two independent subworking groups, one on the prevention and response to Workplace Misconduct coordinated by CSH and one on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse coordinated by the Ethics Office. Included in Agenda for the 56 th meeting of the Committee.	Implemented
EVALUATION FUNCTION					
45.	OED/OIG	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 14. <u>Encouraged</u> the two functions (OED and OIG) to identify further opportunities to strengthen collaboration, including possible	OED and OIG are collaborating on:	In progress

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			piloting of a joint assignment, alignment or better sequencing of audit and evaluations – both thematic and country offices – to complement or build on each other’s work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Corporate audits on OPIM, TCP and Cash-based programmes (ii) OED is using the OIG TCP risk register and assessment tool (iii) Evaluations at country level (Yemen, Burkina Faso and Morocco) (iv) OED conducted a <i>Review of the FAO Surge Response</i> that feeds into OIG Audit in Yemen <p>In addition, OED collaborated with OIG (Decentralized Activities), in partnership with the FAO Gender team, on harmonizing the work on Gender.</p> <p>The OED evaluation on gender (PC 126/4) and OIG audits on gender mainstreaming in decentralized offices are complementary to each other.</p>	
46.	OED/OIG	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 15. <u>Recommended</u> for future documents to the Programme Committee, that the nature and impact of collaboration between OED and OIG be fully elaborated to enhance the Programme Committee’s understanding of efforts in this area.	OED presented its <i>Programme Evaluation Report</i> (C 2019/4) to the Programme Committee and the 41st Session of the Conference and during the presentation a briefing was provided on OED-OIG collaboration.	In progress
47.	OED/OIG	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 16. Discussed with the Director, OED and Inspector General a.i., and <u>suggested</u> harmonization of terminology in audit and evaluation reports.	OIG and OED are working jointly to issue a list of key oversight terms, with definitions, taking into account their context in audit and evaluation reports.	In progress
CORPORATE LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT STREAM					
48.	DDG-Thomas	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 16. <u>Encouraged</u> management to take a holistic view of the extent to which the Organization could benefit from expanding the	Management is actively considering a number of options to expand the role of the SSC, including (i) Transfer of Accounts Payable and Bank reconciliation functions (from CSF - to be	In progress

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			role of the FAO Shared Services Centre (SSC) to other areas.	completed in 2020); (ii) Transfer of procurement support/back office functions (from CSDA); (iii) Some ERP third-line functional support to capture opportunities for process improvement. The planned functional ERP Upgrade in 2020-21 will allow relevant units, including the SSC, to identify opportunities for further streamlining and possible additional transfer of functions to the SSC.	
49.	Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Board	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 8. <u>Expressed concerns</u> on the “unsatisfactory rating” and the findings of the audit report on Records and Archives (R&A) Management for a knowledge and information-based organization such as FAO, and <u>looked forward</u> to a progress report on actions agreed.	The ERP Board assigned overall leadership of the Records and Archives management function to the corporate services unit in November 2019, which consulted with LEG, OCC and the IT Services Division. In May 2020, a proposal was formulated for a phased approach to upgrade FAO’s policies, procedures and tools in the Records and Archives management. Phase 1 of this exercise foresees the utilization of consultancy expertise to assess the current Records and Archives setup at FAO, and assist in the development of a funding proposal for the implementation of a comprehensive upgrade of the Records and Archives management system. Following the approval of proposed Phase 1 by the ERP Board (in May 2020 a Vacancy Announcement was published for a Senior Records and Archives consultant). The selected consultant started work in early October 2020. Contacts with relevant units are ongoing to ensure that all stakeholders are briefed and ready to facilitate the Phase 1 consultancy.	In progress

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50.	CSL	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 11. It appreciated the simplification and standardization which will be introduced through the “catalogue” concept and <u>looked forward</u> to receive an update on the progress on this concept, as well as other measures.	A Working Group was established involving various stakeholders and has conducted several discussions to identify potential issues to address. In parallel, the concerned technical divisions have been working to develop a list of items suitable for the catalogue.	In progress
51.	DDG-Bechdol	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 18. <u>Recommended</u> that the subject of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation, and Abuse, be included in the “Operational Partner Assessment” questionnaire.	Recommendation rejected by Management. The OAC <u>validated</u> its agreement to the rejection at its 55th meeting (July 2020) and <u>requested</u> to close this recommendation.	Closed
52.	CSF	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 22. Noted that further use of the ERP system for bank reconciliations controls would go live with the different types of projects, and <u>requested</u> to share the plan with the Oversight Advisory Committee.	Automatic Bank Reconciliation (ABR) has been implemented across 25 bank accounts, principally in larger decentralized offices. Recent ABR logic was improved to increase the percentage of transactions that were auto-reconciled up 90%. The ERP upgrade, expected to start in the Autumn of 2020, will include further implementation of ABR in a number of additional countries, encompassing the bulk of FAO transactions.	Implemented
53.	CSL	AC 54 24-25 February 2020	Action Item 23. <u>Encouraged</u> the Finance Division to review its travel policy and streamline its processes, especially (i) the number of staff in handling travel related issues (globally) and (ii) the need to re-examine/renegotiate tariffs under the Preferred Hotel Programme to ensure the competitiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.	The process of negotiation of tariffs for PHP 2021 is underway, including the establishment of new and renewed criteria based on safety, health and sustainability considerations.	In progress
				RFP process for the 2021 Preferred Hotel Programme (PHP) sourcing activity, to renegotiate the PHP rates for next year is currently underway, The RFP was recently launched. The whole PHP RFP renegotiation and contracting process is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2020.	In progress

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54.	CSL	OAC 55 27-29 July 2020	Action Item 15. Noted developments in the review of the travel policy and work ongoing to renegotiate the Preferred Hotel Programme (PHP), and <u>recommended</u> FAO initiate an early discussion on the impact of COVID-19 and potential reduction of travel and PHP volumes.	Redefinition of the travel policy is part of the core considerations when establishing a “new-normal” way of working. Discussions are underway and will be undertaken in the broader context of delivery of the Organization’s mandate in the new environment.	In progress

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DIGITAL INNOVATION AND CYBERSECURITY					
55.	Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Board	AC 52 17-18 July 2019	Action Item 13. Reviewed progress in the area of data protection and privacy policies, and <u>stressed</u> the need for a more holistic approach (headquarters/ decentralized offices), both in terms of ownership of needs' assessment in identifying data and risks and for worldwide HR data, and <u>recommended</u> full involvement of decentralized locations.	<p>The ERP Board has requested LEG to lead the finalization of a policy on Data Protection and Privacy (DPP) in collaboration with all stakeholders.</p> <p>The draft Personal Data Protection Principles ("Principles") were submitted to the Core Leadership in early September 2020. The draft text aims at setting out the key principles for personal data protection. It will require specific implementation measures in a second stage, in consultation with management and the technical units concerned. These Principles are based on the "Personal Data Protection and Privacy Principles" of the UN High-Level Committee on Management, enriched by wider UN practice (UNDG, IOM, UNHCR, WFP). They were elaborated in collaboration with concerned units, which provided comments during the summer period. Management provided preliminary comments and required clarifications as to LEG's observation that "the draft Policy will have technical and financial implications. FAO will need to determine the adequate technical level of protection for personal data in order to prepare investment and implementation plans", in particular on the nature and magnitude of technical and investment elements before Management could release and commit to the Policy. These issues are expected to be discussed at the next meeting of the ERP Board.</p>	In progress

	Responsible Unit / Topic area	Action Items discussed at AC Meeting	Decisions/ Recommendations	Action Taken³	Status of Implementation
56.	OAC Secretariat	AC 53 25-26 November 2019	Action Item 26. Requested the Secretariat to confirm availability of funds to recruit an external independent expert in the area of cybersecurity.	The Secretariat notes that the JIU conducting a review of “Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations: a review of policies and practices” and therefore suggests postponing further action until the JIU has completed its review.	In progress