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# FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Hundred and Eightieth Session**

**Rome, 18 - 22 May 2020**

**Human Resources Management**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee is presented with an update on human resources management since its last meeting together with elements towards strengthening and further developing an efficient and effective work force in FAO, for information.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Members of the Finance Committee are invited to take note of the content of this document and, in particular, the Organization's envisaged plans for human resources management.

**Draft Advice**

- The Committee welcomed information on human resources management presented by FAO and looks forward to receiving further details on the Organization's vision and plans in the area of human resources as these are developed over the course of the next few months.

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## Introduction

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1. FAO needs to further build up its strength as a specialized knowledge-based organization, enhance its capacity to remain a dependable UN system organization that brings benefit to all and stays relevant and fit to address the challenges of its membership as it looks to the future. In order to achieve this, an efficient, objective and forward looking management of the Organization's most valuable resource – its employees- will have to be ensured, noting in particular that 75 percent of the Organization's Regular Programme Resources are devoted to human resources and there is a large segment of FAO employees who are serving the Organization beyond the purview of its Regular Programme Resources.
2. The continued success of FAO will depend on an inclusive workplace that attracts, develops, and engages people of the highest calibre, with diverse backgrounds and experience, who are engaged, and empowered to perform to the best of their abilities to deliver the Organization's mandate and objectives
3. To that end, FAO requires people-centred HR strategies and policies that drive a culture of integrity, collaboration, innovation and excellence. FAO will seek to develop enhanced management systems and processes to improve responsiveness and secure operational effectiveness of the different streams in Human Resources, and also provide reliable, transparent and robust information regarding the Organization's workforce, trends and issues to ensure informed decision making.
4. A new HR Director took up her functions on 2 March 2019. In accordance with the Director-General's vision and Council's recommendation (CL 163/5), one of the main priorities is the development of an HR strategic plan with the goal to ensure that FAO has the right staff in the right place at the right time, engaged and performing at the highest level of effectiveness to achieve its mandate.
5. The HR strategic plan is intended to be anchored on the goal of promoting an efficient, proactive and value-adding human resources function that acts as a business partner and change agent. The plan will contain a clear roadmap articulating expected results with timelines and milestones, as well as indicators enabling the measurement of performance in terms of progress and potential gaps, to be communicated to stakeholders. This is in accordance with the Director-General's guidance to senior management in January 2020 regarding the submission of new work plans with clear performance indicators to ensure accountability. In order to ensure an integrated and holistic approach and to fully align the HR strategic plan with FAO's organizational and operational priorities, the plan will be guided by new priorities and directions resulting from the development of FAO's new Strategic Framework<sup>1</sup> and further elaborated in FAO's medium term and biennial planning documents. The process will also include other reviews and analyses, in particular (1) a review of relevant documents and recommendations; (2) an inclusive consultation process; and (3) an assessment of the capacity of HR to deliver on the HR strategic plan. These points are detailed below.
6. The desk review is expected to include, inter alia, the following elements, FAO's workforce demographics and trends, FAO's Risk Register, recommendations from the FAO Council and Finance Committee and Internal and External Audits such as the recent audits on the Geographic Mobility Program, Non-staff Human Resources and the Recruitment and on-boarding of professional staff. In addition, the strategic plan will integrate priorities formulated in a number of FAO's Action Plans on important areas such as the achievement of equitable geographic distribution and gender parity of FAO staff, Anti-fraud Action Plan and measures on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority. Continued priority will be given to advancing and improving victim-centred policies and measures to achieve FAO's zero-tolerance vision and enhanced well-being for staff.

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<sup>1</sup> To be presented to Conference in June 2021

7. In addition, the HR strategic plan will consider UN-system wide drivers and priorities, including recommendations of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)/High Level Committee for Management (HLCM), such as the UN Disability Inclusion and Mental Health strategies, UN Reform elements, recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and best practices in the UN and beyond, including the Rome-based agencies (RBAs).
8. The global impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) is significant, and HR has worked very closely with the Crisis Management Team to respond strategically to the threat and navigate the changes in the workplace. In this highly complex, unprecedented situation, with no clear template for action, HR's contributions in this first phase (March) of the pandemic focused on staff engagement and the development of COVID 19 HR Administrative guidelines, introducing special measures to address issues arising from the increase in government-directed "lockdown" regulations, ensuring business continuity and safety of employees.
9. Looking ahead, as long as there is no vaccine or therapy, HR will take steps to institutionalize some of the new ways of working, and integrate lessons learned around flexibility and agility in its HR strategic plan.
10. Over the coming months, consultations will take place with stakeholders including senior management in both headquarters and Decentralized Offices to ensure buy in and ownership of the HR strategic plan and its defined results. The development of the people-centred HR strategic plan and initiatives will be done in consultation with managers and employees, ensuring that the diverse needs of FAO's workforce are taken into consideration. The results of the employee satisfaction survey will be an important input, as will the feedback received from the Office of Inspector-General (OIG), Ethics Officer and Ombudsman on workplace trends and issues. FAO continues to strengthen staff-management relations through consultations with the Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs). Inclusive dialogue is pursued with staff to provide feedback and ideas to support strategic actions and, in particular on working conditions and staff well-being.
11. Due consideration is expected to be given to the capacity of FAO and HR teams to deliver on the HR strategic plan, in terms of staffing (headquarters, Shared Services Centre (SSC) and Decentralized Offices), accountability, roles and responsibilities, delegation of authority, and various tools and IT systems to enhance further effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization.
12. The structure of the report 'Update on HR Management' generally follows the outline of previous reports. However, as part of the development of the HR strategic plan and reporting mechanisms mentioned above, a full review of the reports, both narrative and data, is expected to be carried out in the coming months to ensure that the information provided to the Finance Committee is relevant, based on best practices found in other international organizations, and taking into account the availability of data and data privacy guidelines.<sup>2</sup>
13. This document presents information based on the following broad criteria: (i) diversity recruitment, development and management of high calibre workforce; (ii) alignment of core values and objectives of the Organization in HR management; (iii) reflection of FAO's nature as a UN system specialized agency; and (iv) continuous improvement of administrative efficiency and productivity by harmonizing and standardizing HR processes and procedures and improvement in compliance.
14. In this document, the Organization is reporting on developments in the area of human resources policy and management since the last report to the Finance Committee at its 178th Session in November 2019.

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<sup>2</sup> External Auditor on support reported methodologies, strategies and accomplishments to improve information integrity in its reports (Paragraph 133).

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## Update on Human Resources Management (31 March 2020)

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### *Diversity Recruitment, Development and Management of High Calibre Workforce*

#### A) Professional and above level

15. As reported to the Finance Committee in 2018, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of FAO's policies and procedures for the recruitment and on-boarding of Professional staff to Regular Programme (RP) positions. The Audit review, submitted in November 2018, focused primarily on recruitment actions undertaken between September 2016 and August 2017, and identified good practices and improvements since OIG's last audit review in 2011. The review found that most recruitment actions run smoothly and result in hiring competent candidates, in line with recruitment objectives and guiding principles, such as geographic diversity and gender balance. The report also identified that there is a scope for improving efficiency in some phases of the recruitment and on-boarding processes, including the employment roster and the reference check mechanism.

16. The Audit report included twenty (20) agreed actions to introduce improvements in specific areas of the recruitment process. The Organization took necessary measures to implement these recommendations, introducing improvements in different phases of the recruitment process. Two (2) of these recommendations concerned the employment roster. The Organization suspended the use of employment rosters at this stage.

17. The Organization is currently working to implement the remaining three (3) audit recommendations related to the following areas: pre-employment reference checks, informative documentation on selection criteria and enhanced communication through Taleo functions.

18. The Office of Human Resources is in the process of conducting a review of the recruitment and selection procedures aimed at improving transparency and efficiency, as well as supporting strategic partnerships and the needs of both technical and non-technical divisions and offices.

19. The Organization is continuously reviewing the existing Professional General Job profiles (GJPs), as well as developing new ones to meet business requirements and support structural changes, along with vacancy announcement processes.

20. 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.

#### *Ethics Officer and Ombudsman*

21. The FAO Ethics Office was established in FAO, pursuant to Resolution 1/2008 of the 35th (Special) Session of the Conference, in November 2018. From 2012 to 2015, an Ethics Committee acted as an advisory panel on ethics matters. In 2014, a joint position of the Ombudsman/Ethics Officer was created. This Officer was located, for administrative purposes, in the Legal Office, and the Ombudsman/Ethics Officer was appointed for a non-renewable five-year term in April 2014. In April 2019, the 161st Council endorsed the Finance Committee's support at its 175th Session in March 2019 for the proposal in the Programme of Work and Budget 2020-21 to separate and enhance the Ombudsman and Ethics functions. From 2020, these two independent positions have a direct reporting line to the Director-General. The Ethics Officer was appointed on 1 March 2020, for an initial period of two years, with a term of up to seven years. The competitive and merit-based selection

process for the position of the Ombudsman has been concluded, and the Ombudsman will be appointed as soon as possible. The appointment is limited to a five-year term, renewable for a further five years. The Ethics Office's mandate is to provide confidential advice and promote high standards of ethical conduct, including conflicts of interest and a respectful working environment, in accordance with the International Civil Service (ICSC), and the principles of integrity, impartiality and independence. Under the Whistleblower Protection Policy, which supports a culture in which staff feel empowered to speak openly about concerns, the Ethics Officer receives complaints of retaliation and ensures protection of individuals who, in good faith, report possible wrongdoing.

22. The Ombudsman is a resource for employees who have work-related problems or conflicts, providing confidential and impartial advice and mediation services for informal conflict resolution. The Ombudsman also assists the Organization by identifying systemic issues and the root causes of conflicts, without breaching confidentiality.

### **B) Associate Professional Officers Programme**

23. Since the start of the Associate Professional Officers (APO) Programme in 1954, the Organization continues to host qualified and motivated young talent. This programme offers a structured learning experience to nationals from different countries through exposure to international cooperation activities, while enabling them to apply their technical specialization under the supervision of an experienced FAO staff member and preparing the young talent for future career opportunities.

24. Table 1 presents the number of donor partners and number of APOs in 2018, 2019 and 2020. In addition to the 36 APOs indicated in Table 1 (in 2020), FAO is in the process of recruiting one (1) additional APO funded by Sweden, and two (2) APOs funded by the United States are expected to be recruited in due course.

*Table 1. APO Recruitment Status in 2018, 2019 and 2020*

Year	Number of donor partners	Number of APOs
2018	14	43
2019	12	43
2020	10	36 (*)

(\*) as of 31 March 2020

### **C) Junior Professional Officers Programme**

25. The Junior Professional Officers (JPO) Programme introduced in 2011 is centrally coordinated and structured, involving a streamlined recruitment process, which enables the Organization to recruit young, motivated and talented professionals on a fixed-term basis and benefit from their competencies and skills for the duration of the assignment. The JPO Programme is an active recruiting mechanism of entry-level professionals (at P-1 level) that assists FAO in rejuvenating its workforce through the development of a pipeline of young professionals suitable for future employment. Currently, there are 15 JPOs employed in eight (8) duty stations, representing 14 nationalities.

26. The JPO Programme aims to retain a proportion of high performing JPOs, although it is acknowledged that some participants may not be found suitable for service in the Organization or may

not wish to compete for regular Programme funded or Project positions. Table 2 presents an overview of JPO retention.

**Table 2 JPO Programme 2011-2020**

Period 2011-2020 (Q1)	Total Participants in JPO Programme (current + former)		Former JPOs		Former JPOs retained	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total:	84 (*)	-	69	-	38	55
of which female	51	61.0	41	59.5	19	46
of which male	33	39.0	28	40.5	19	68

(\*) 58 nationalities

27. The participation rate of 61 percent female staff meets the participation targets of at least 50 percent women. Sixty-nine (69) JPOs completed the Programme during the period 2011-2020 (Q1). Among these 69 JPOs, 38 were retained under different contractual modalities. As a result, the overall retention rate is 55 percent.

#### **D) General Service Staff**

28. In February 2020, the Organization introduced a revised General Service (GS) recruitment process. The Global Calls for Expression of Interest were replaced by the advertisement of vacancy announcements at headquarters and Decentralized Offices. The objective was to enhance recruitment based on merit, streamline and improve the process, as well as increase transparency. The revised process presents an opportunity to internal staff members across the Organization to apply to specific vacancy announcements enhancing the opportunities for career progression and development.

29. In line with the revised GS recruitment process, the Organization subsequently issued eleven (11) vacancy announcements up to 31 March 2020; a total of sixteen (16) positions, eight (8) at headquarters and eight (8) in Decentralized Offices.

30. Table 3 below shows the number of candidates appointed to specific grades in the General Service category from September 2019 up to 31 March 2020.

**Table 3 GS Recruitment Status as of 31 March 2020**

Grade	N. of Candidates Appointed
G-3	5
G-4	7
G-5	6
TOTAL	18

## **E) Internship, Volunteers and Fellows (IVF) Programme**

31. Following the revamp of the FAO Global Internship, Volunteers and Fellows (IVF) Programme in July 2017, the Organization continues to broaden and diversify participation in the Programme, especially from the Global South, under- and non-represented member countries and indigenous communities. Since September 2019 and as of 31 March 2020, more than 14 000 applications were received in response to the Global Calls of Expression of Interest for the IVF Programme.

32. Internship Programme: Since September 2019 and as of 31 March 2020, 150 interns (70 percent female) from 48 member countries were assigned to 28 duty stations. The increasing number of participants were recruited from the Global South (55 percent, compared with 51 percent in 2019). Efforts are pursued to improve participation of non- and under- represented member countries and interns assigned to Decentralized Offices. It may also be noted that 31 percent of interns were externally sponsored.

33. Volunteers Programme: Since September 2019 and as of 31 March 2020, 23 Regular Volunteers and 15 UN Volunteers (recruited through UNV) from 25 member countries were assigned to 25 duty stations. More volunteers (66 percent female) were recruited from non- and under-represented member countries (21 percent, compared with 18 percent in 2019). Assignments to Decentralized Offices show a significant increase (82 percent, compared with 64 percent in 2019). Efforts are pursued to recruit more volunteers from the Global South. It may also be noted that 18 percent of volunteers were externally sponsored.

34. Fellows Programme: Since September 2019 and as of 31 March 2020, 5 fellows (80 percent female) from 5 member countries were assigned to 4 duty stations. In 2019, 72 percent of fellows were recruited from the Global South and 64 percent from non- and under-represented member countries. Efforts are pursued to recruit more fellows from the Global South and from non- and under-represented member countries. In contrast, assignments to Decentralized Offices show a significant increase (60 percent, compared with 45 percent in 2019). It may also be noted that all fellows are externally funded.

35. Since September 2019, 14 new sponsorship agreements for internship, volunteer and fellow assignments were signed with governments, academic institutions and a civil society organization. The Organization continues to conduct outreach activities and strategic partnerships building to reinforce a more cohesive and global IVF Programme. Several measures are expected to be pursued to engage the global network of FAO's Decentralized and Liaison Offices.

36. Global Presentations Day, held in November 2019, was the first global event aimed at connecting all Interns, Volunteers and Fellows (IVFs) worldwide. The aim was to encourage engagement of youth around the world in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the IVF Programme which harnesses young talent and new ideas in the Organization.

## **F) Geographic Mobility Programme**

37. The main objective of the FAO Geographic Mobility Programme was to share knowledge and experience across the Organization, to mobilize and retain a dynamic, adaptable and global workforce that will effectively meet current and future mandates, and evolving operational needs, in particular between headquarters and Decentralized Offices. In addition, the Programme aimed at providing opportunities for varied experience, career development and professional advancement.

38. In the biennium 2018-2019, a total of 116 mobility transfers were approved and, up to 31 March 2020, a total of 90 transfers have already been completed. Table 4 below shows the number of staff transferred in the 2018 and 2019 programmes broken down by technical area (as of 31 March 2020).



**Table 4 - Staff Transferred in 2018 and 2019**

Technical Department	N. of transfers
AG	13
APEX	7
DDO (including OSD, CIO, CS)	13
DDN	6
DDP (including PS and SP teams)	18
ES	18
FI	8
FO	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>

39. The Geographic Mobility Programme 2020 was suspended, in line with the request from the Finance Committee, and pending the outcome of the 2019 Internal Mobility Audit. Management is currently reviewing the recommendations of the review and will consider these recommendations in developing future programmes of the Organization, in particular a job rotation policy.

#### **G) Status of Professional Vacancies**

40. As indicated to the governing bodies in the past, the Organization aimed at maintaining a degree of flexibility in the vacancy rate of professional positions, in order to allow for a flexible structure and facilitate adaptation to emerging priorities. As of 31 March 2020, the corporate vacancy rate is 19 percent: 18 percent at headquarters and 20 percent in the Decentralized Offices, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5 – Professional Vacancy Rates (as of 31 March 2020)**

	P-level Posts PWB 2019-2020	Total P-level posts occupied	Total P-level vacant posts	Vacancy Rate at P-level
Total Headquarters	883	721	162	18%
Total Decentralized Offices (excluding FAOR)	261	210	51	20%
Total Decentralized Offices (including FAOR)	328	264	64	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1211</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>19%</b>

## H) Non-staff Human Resources

41. In January 2020, improved procedures for Non-staff Human Resources (NSHR) were introduced to better support a smooth, timely and efficient recruitment of qualified NSHR by decentralizing delegation of authority and accountability. These enhanced procedures outline the responsibilities of the concerned Hiring Managers who are accountable for the recruitment of qualified consultants (COF.REG) and Subscribers to Personnel Services Agreement (PSA.SBS). According to the Administrative Circular issued in February 2020, the Assistant Directors-General were expected to be accountable for the geographical balance of consultants within their purview and the Regional Representatives to grant clearance for NPP travel, as well as the recruitment of a spouse of a staff member or other personnel of the Organization as NSHR in a Decentralized Office. However, currently the DDGs are exercising ADG functions on a basis of a special delegation of authority from the Director-General. The clearance authority to the recruitment of UN retirees has been delegated to the Head of the respective Administrative Stream at Headquarters and to the Regional Representatives for DOs. In addition, the submission of a language certificate to demonstrate the relevant language is no longer required, and the university degree is set as the minimum requirement in terms of educational qualification for Consultants.

42. Taking into consideration the FAO Council guidance, the above changes were introduced to improve geographic balance of consultants and the need for a flexible approach in the selection process, including cost implications and retaining merit as the primary criterion for recruitment.

43. Table 6 compares the number of consultants (COF.REGs) funded by the General Fund (GF) and number of countries represented by COF.REGs during 2019 and 2020.

**Table 6 (a)– Number of consultants (COF.REGs) funded by GF and number of countries represented – Actual Hire in Headquarters**

		August 2019		March 2020	
Group	Division/Unit	N. of consultants hired	N. of countries represented	N. of consultants hired	N. of countries represented
APEX	Office of the Director-General (ODG)	0	0	2	2
	LEG	6	6	8	8
	OCC	12	10	21	11
	OED	3	3	9	9
	OIG	2	2	5	5
	OSP	3	3	5	5
	OHR*	6	6	-	-
Total APEX		32	24	50	25
	Office of the DDG	1	1	1	1
	CIO	16	10	12	7

	CPA	5	5	15	9
	CS	22	14	41	19
	OSD	2	2	6	5
Total DDG		46	24	75	29
	Office of the DDG	0	0	0	0
	DPI	34	22	107	41
	OCS	3	2	3	3
	PS	28	18	73	31
	SP Teams	3	3	8	6
Total DDG		68	34	191	59
	Office of the DDG	2	2	2	2
	AG	27	18	44	20
	CB	10	9	32	21
	FI	24	20	43	20
	FO	15	11	13	6
Total DDG		78	39	134	40
ES	ESD	0	0	3	3
	ESA	20	16	26	16
	ESN	7	4	16	8
	ESP	17	15	20	16
	ESS	18	13	33	18
	EST	10	8	23	15
Total ES		72	36	121	46
TOTAL HQ		296	83	571	94

(\* ) As noted in the document of the 163rd session of the Council (CL 163/3) [Council held on 2-6 December 2019], OHR was moved to the Corporate Services Department (CS) in 2020

**Table 6 (b) – Number of consultants (COF.REGs) funded by GF and number of countries represented – Actual Hire - Decentralized Office**

Offices	Division/Unit	N. of consultants hired - August 2019	N. of countries represented - August 2019	N. of consultants hired - March 2020	N. of countries represented - March 2020
Regional, Subregional and Liaison Offices	Africa	8	6	12	11
	Asia and the Pacific	14	12	16	12
	Europe and Central Asia	15	13	19	14
	Latin America and the Caribbean	16	12	14	12
	Near East and North Africa	8	7	9	6
	Liaison Offices	1	1	3	3
TOTAL DOs (without FAORs)		62	41	73	47
	FAO Representative (FAOR)	17	15	22	19
TOTAL DOs (with FAORs)		79	48	95	54

TOTAL GLOBAL (Total HQ and Total DOs with FAORs)	375	91	666	103
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44. The geographic balance of consultants could also be measured by the share of the top five and top ten nationalities representing the body of consultants. Table 7 shows the share of the top countries represented by consultants funded by GF.

**Table 7 – Share of the top countries represented by consultants funded by GF**

	August 2019	March 2020
Countries represented	91	103
Share of top 5 nationalities (%)	31.73%	44.44%
Share of top 10 nationalities (%)	46.13%	56.31%

45. With respect to gender balance among consultants, an increase is observed in the percentage of female candidates in 2020 shown in Table 8. The percentage of female consultants remains higher than 50 percent in both 2019 and 2020.

**Table 8 – Percentage of hired female consultants funded by GF**

	August 2019	March 2020
% of female candidates hired as consultants (GF)	54%	55%

## ***Alignment of Core Values and Objectives of the Organization in HR Management***

### **A) Employee Engagement**

46. An anonymous Employee Satisfaction Survey was launched on 16 December 2019 to 13 549 employees. Following the closure of the Survey on 7 February 2020, the overall completion rate was 41 percent (5522 employees). Based on benchmarking with other UN agencies, this falls within the range of completion percentage for a first survey.

47. The Survey was designed in consultation with the Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs) and took into account recent employee satisfaction surveys from the other UN agencies including the UN Secretariat, WFP and UNDP, and recommendations contained in JIU reports (JIU/REP/2018/4). The Survey included specific questions on harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority. When answering the Survey questions, respondents were asked to refer to the period up until 31 July 2019.

48. FAO contracted with an external provider, CultureIQ, to support the implementation and analysis of Survey results. The Organization is currently reviewing the results with a view to identifying potential target areas for future action planning.

49. The management of FAO is determined to boost employee morale, promote employee satisfaction and strengthen employee engagement. One such initiative to recognize excellence and diversity among 100 employees and 100 young employees took place in December 2019. OHR provided continuous support to management in launching this initiative.

50. The Youth Committee was established in September 2019. The Committee has been mandated to drive youth career enrichment in FAO, and to gather innovative ideas from youth in order to concretely support FAO's mission. OHR is supporting the Committee to drive youth career enrichment within the Organization.

## **B) Capacity Building**

### *New initiatives*

51. As of 1 January 2020, a digital library of new eLearning courses was made available to all employees through you@fao. It includes over 15 000 online training courses covering a wide range of topics. Content is available in English, Chinese, French and Spanish. New courses are also being promoted through UN SDG: Learn, the main gateway for SDG learning.

52. To strengthen leadership and management skills, a new Executive Leadership Management Programme (P5 and above) will be piloted this year in collaboration with the UN Systems Staff College (UNSSC). This online tutor-led programme (focused on five key thematic modules) also includes a 360-degree assessment aligned to the UN System Leadership Framework and five individual coaching sessions. FAO will also introduce a blended programme aimed at mid-level managers.

53. In line with FAO's zero-tolerance policy towards harassment in any of its forms, the Organization continues raising awareness regarding the policies on prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority. Face-to-face information sessions on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment were rolled out to 66 senior managers (D1 and above) at headquarters. A new e-learning course on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace is currently under development. This course is designed specifically for managers and will highlight the principles to be followed by all FAO managers' relation with the prevention of sexual harassment.

54. To improve people management capabilities, FAO launched a new training programme for managers. It aims to build skills for holding impactful coaching conversations to enhance performance and accelerate professional development.

### *Other activities*

55. In view of the critical role of Assistant FAO Representatives (AFAORs) in Decentralized Offices, the Organization is supporting capacity building through the AFAOR On-the-Job Training Programme launched in June 2019. With the aim of nurturing future FAORs as part of succession planning, up to ten AFAORs will be selected to participate in the 2020 cohort. This blended learning programme is composed of a 360-degree leadership assessment, executive coaching, completion of online courses and conducting practical work in a new environment while undertaking an international temporary mobility assignment for up to three months.

56. The Organization delivered three new online courses to strengthen the use of functionalities in GRMS and reinforce knowledge of FAO's internal systems and procedures including Procurement at FAO, Cash Management and Bank Reconciliation and Letters of Agreement at FAO. FAO continues to update the Mandatory Training page in you@fao and monitor completion rates. A new mandatory training on Achieving Gender Equality in FAO's Work has been launched, replacing the UN course on Gender Equality, UN Coherence and You. Following the release of the updated FAO Whistleblower Protection Policy, the Organization has finalized a new training course available in English, French and Spanish to raise awareness on this policy.

57. Efforts are underway to continue building effective communication skills through the delivery of face-to-face workshops on strategic media skills, presentation skills, effective report writing, customer service and negotiation skills through its pool of external providers. With a view to strengthening Skype for Business as a collaboration tool, new virtual training has been delivered to approximately 60 staff in headquarters and Decentralized Offices. In addition, the promotion of multilingualism continues through the delivery of online languages, targeted to staff based in decentralized duty stations with limited access to language training.

58. In 2019, FAO participated in the JIU review of “Policies, programmes and platforms in support of learning”, which aims to assess current policies, programmes and approaches, evaluate the extent to which inter-agency and system-wide collaboration responds to the needs set aside by the 2030 Agenda and examine the thematic orientation of the training courses and their relevance for the current priorities and needs of United Nations organizations. FAO awaits the results of this review, which will allow the Organization to identify good practices and approaches for enhancing learning and development.

### **C) Performance Management**

59. The Organization is increasing efforts to improve its performance management practices. FAO launched a new set of tools to support effective performance management. This includes three e-learning modules focused on writing SMART objectives, clarifying the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) process and appraising effectively. Guidelines were also developed to assist managers in addressing underperformance and assigning performance appraisal ratings. To reinforce training for staff and managers, the Organization piloted two new face-to-face workshops in February 2020. The training was delivered to over 100 participants.

60. The transition of the Probationary Performance Appraisal (PPA) from the paper-based process to the online system has been fully implemented. The Organization is now working toward automating the performance appraisal process for short-term professional staff.

61. To strengthen understanding, application and impact of PPA and PEMS policies and processes, dedicated briefings have been delivered to 120 staff and managers in 2019. In addition, information sessions for the network of 85 PEMS focal points have been organized throughout the year.

62. FAO also carried out a recent review of performance management practices in other UN agencies in order to define good practices and identify areas of improvement and simplification of FAO’s current process. Discussions took place with WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, IFAD, ILO and UN Women. The Organization is now working to introduce further measures to improve the performance evaluation practices, based on good UN practices and FAO’s evolving needs.

### **D) Relations with Staff Representative Bodies**

63. The Staff Management Consultative Committee (SMCC) is the forum for dialogue and consultation between Management and Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs) on matters pertaining to terms and conditions of employment and general welfare of staff to provide recommendations and advice to Senior Management.

64. Since November 2019, eight (8) SMCC meetings were held. The main topics of discussion were set in the SMCC work plan including: medical insurance plan, General Service (GS) recruitment process, employee satisfaction survey and teleworking. Further, weekly update meetings on the Covid-19 state of emergency were held from the second week of March 2020, where pertinent topics were discussed, in particular employee well-being at both headquarters and Decentralized Offices and strategies for communicating effectively with employees during the emergency situation.

65. FAO Management supported the SRB’s donation campaign initiative aimed at supporting the civil entities in the host country during the Covid-19 emergency. In particular, Staff Representative Bodies of the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) started a donation drive for the Italian Red Cross.

66. A representative of AP-in-FAO and a representative of UGSS were invited to participate in the selection process of the Ombudsman.

67. The administration of FAO is continually enhancing a productive and cooperative relationship with the SRBs to benefit from their own view on the important contributions of work.

## ***Reflection of FAO's Nature as a UN System Specialized Agency***

### **A) Implement Measures and Track Progress in Achieving Corporate Geographic Representation Targets**

68. In December 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the inclusion of the workforce diversity component in the human resources management framework, following the work undertaken by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) regarding the updated human resources management framework<sup>3</sup>. The report of the ICSC for the year 2018 states: Staff composition throughout the organizations of the United Nations common system should reflect a workforce that is diverse from a variety of perspectives (including equitable geographical distribution and gender balance, as well as cultural, generational and multilingual perspectives and the perspectives of persons with disabilities), and this diversity should be embraced in decision-making to strengthen the performance of the organizations<sup>4</sup>.

69. In taking decisions on recruitment, the Organization follows the criterion of merit to ensure the selection of the best qualified candidates and, at the same time, in line with guidance provided by the Governing Bodies, give due attention to ensure an equitable geographic representation of staff from member countries. In appointing the staff, and subject to the paramount importance of securing the highest standards of efficiency and technical competence, the Organization gives attention to recruiting personnel on as wide a geographical basis as is possible, making particular efforts to recruit candidates from non- and under-represented countries

70. As of 31 March 2020, the percentage of non-represented countries was 6 percent, of under-represented countries 6 percent, and of equitably represented countries 86 percent.

### **B) Improved Gender Representation**

71. The Organization continues its efforts toward gender parity in the workforce. Due to continued expansion of recruitment outreach efforts to institutions and universities, the percentage of the number of female staff of the Organization reached 53 percent. FAO has been pursuing initiatives to further increase women in senior leadership posts.

72. The Organization has endorsed the Enabling Environment Guidelines for the UN System and is committed to maintaining and reinforcing specific measures to create an enabling working environment that recognizes diversity and flexibility as well as provides equal opportunities and recognizes that employees are also family and community members. FAO is also actively involved in the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment in the organizations of the UN system.

73. The first-ever FAO Women's Committee was launched on 15 October 2019. OHR is working in close collaboration with the Committee to promote gender parity within the Organization. Consultations with the Committee to revise the Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Parity of FAO staff took place in February 2020. The Director-General's Bulletin (DGB 2020/07) on FAO's accountability and commitment to gender equality was issued on 8 March 2020 to stress the Organization's commitment to Gender Parity and Women's Empowerment.

74. To strengthen managerial accountability, two new indicators were added to the supervisory objective as part of the 2020 Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) work plan

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<sup>3</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations, United Nations common system, Report of the Fifth Committee, A/73/676

<sup>4</sup> Annex V, Report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2018, A/73/30



aimed at promoting gender parity and creating and maintaining an inclusive and respectful work environment.

75. Gender parity will be continuously pursued as an essential element in proactive talent acquisition and management.

***Continuous Improvement of Administrative Efficiency and Productivity by  
Harmonizing and Standardizing HR Processes and Procedures and  
Improvement Compliance***

**A) Delegation of Authority**

76. A revised delegation of authority was introduced in December 2019 to speed up decision-making and increase efficiency in the Organization. Some functions were delegated to the concerned Deputy Directors-General (DDGs) and Assistant Directors-General (ADG)\* to streamline clearance and approval processes in administrative matters, in particular in the area of human resources related to issuance of vacancy announcements and appointment decision-making. Authority for the final clearance and approval processes for higher grades is retained by the Director-General. (\*) currently the DDGs are exercising ADG functions on a basis of a special delegation of authority from the Director-General.

**B) FAO Representatives**

77. In view of the pivotal role of the FAO Representatives (FAORs) in Decentralized Offices, the Organization is implementing necessary measures to upgrade some of the existing FAORs.

**C) Recruiting Platform**

78. Taleo has established its position as the corporate recruitment system through which various FAO employment opportunities are announced. It occupies the central position on the FAO employment website, which also guides candidates on how to apply for opportunities using the system.

79. Feedback from Regional Offices and internal and external applicants on the use of Taleo is encouraged and, with the support of the Shared Service Centre (SSC) and the Information Technology Division (CIO), these suggestions are taken into consideration to ensure continuous refinement of the system for a better user experience.