General Assembly

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Proposed programme budget for 2022

Progress in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

 The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 73/279 B, in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, no later than at the first part of its resumed seventy-sixth session, a progress report on the implementation of the organizational resilience management system.

 The present report provides an update on the implementation of the organizational resilience management system within Secretariat entities and a summary of progress made by agencies, funds and programmes, specialized agencies and international financial institutions represented in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. In the report, the Secretary-General discusses the impact of his management reform on the organizational resilience management system and the strengthening of coordination and planning for the system by United Nations country teams. In addition, he describes lessons learned and best practices from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

 At the request of the General Assembly, the report also provides information on the staff time and operational resources invested by Secretariat entities in awareness-raising, training and coordination of the key elements of the organizational resilience management system.

 The report concludes with next steps for the further implementation of the organizational resilience management system.

 The General Assembly is requested to take note of the report.

I. Background

1. In June 2013, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/254 A, approved the United Nations organizational resilience management system for the Secretariat. Subsequently, in November 2014, the organizational resilience management system was approved by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) as the emergency management framework[1] for the member organizations of the United Nations system represented in CEB. The CEB policy on the organizational resilience management system was revised in January 2021, as described in section II below.

2. During the time frame covered by the present report (the calendar years 2019–2021), organizational resilience management systems across the United Nations system were tested and strengthened as never before by the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. While most entities had established plans for maintaining business continuity during short-term emergencies, the prolonged COVID-19 emergency and related uncertainty posed unforeseen, complex challenges.

3. The United Nations system's integrated and collaborative approach to the organizational resilience management system, which provides a framework through which those responsible for core elements of the organizational resilience management system plan, coordinate and take decisions jointly, proved fit for purpose and enabled the United Nations system to maintain its operations, apply lessons learned and continue to deliver on its mandates.

II. Revision of the organizational resilience management system policy

4. In January 2021, the High-level Committee on Management of CEB approved a revision of the organizational resilience management system policy for member organizations of the United Nations system represented in CEB. The revisions define the organizational resilience management system and explain that it supports individual organizations as well as the United Nations system as a whole at any given duty station and, where applicable, at the regional and global levels.

5. It is noted in the policy that resilient organizations continually adapt to changing environments to deliver on their objectives and to thrive. They "anticipate and respond to threats and opportunities arising from sudden or gradual changes in their internal and external context".[2] Building a resilient organization is a cross-disciplinary and cross-functional endeavour and should be considered an integral and crucial component of the overall business management strategy of an organization.

6. The policy revision updated the seven core elements of the organizational resilience management system:

(a) Crisis management;[3]

(b) Safety and security of personnel (including visiting individuals), premises and assets;[4]

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[1] This reference to an emergency management framework should not be confused with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee emergency management framework, which is the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises.

[2] International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 22316:2017, "Security and resilience – organizational resilience – principles and attributes".

[3] The principles and procedures of crisis management are reflected in the United Nations Crisis Management Policy of 19 March 2018.

[4] This is in line with the principles of the United Nations security management system.

(c)   Crisis communications;

(d)   Emergency medical support;

(e)   Information and communications technology (ICT) resilience;

(f)   Business continuity;

(g)   Support to United Nations personnel and eligible family members.

7.   These core elements encompass the functional areas to be implemented, integrated and harmonized for the effective application of the policy. Each organization of the United Nations system may organize the elements in a way that best meets its needs and may add elements to better reflect its unique characteristics and mandates.

8.   The revised policy makes it clear that United Nations system organizations are responsible for building their resilience at field and non-field duty stations. In addition, to avoid duplication and maximize the use of resources, United Nations system organizations are encouraged to collaborate and share resources where they are effective at the duty station and/or country level. Coordination of the application of the policy for the entire United Nations system at the country level occurs through the United Nations country team (where it is present) or through the relevant United Nations system-wide coordination forum.

Update of key performance indicators on the organizational resilience management system

9.   Following the approval of the revised organizational resilience management system policy by the High-level Committee on Management, a sub-working group of the global working group on the organizational resilience management system was established in February 2021 to update the key performance indicators and the maintenance, exercise and review regime related to the policy. The sub-working group clarified the key performance indicators and aligned them with the terminology and definitions used in the revised organizational resilience management system policy. It also reviewed the rating scale for measuring progress against the indicators to ensure consistency and coherence in implementation and recommended a maturity model that provides a framework for assessing the advancement of the organizational resilience management system and encouraging continuous improvement. The Committee approved the proposed model for the key performance indicators of the organizational resilience management system in December 2021. The revised key performance indicators, the maintenance, exercise and review regime and the maturity model are all available on the CEB web page for the organizational resilience management system.[5]

III.   Impact of the Secretary-General's management reform on the organizational resilience management system in the Secretariat

10.   The Secretary-General's management reform has had a positive impact on the organizational resilience management system in the Secretariat, as demonstrated by the Secretariat's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, the division of responsibilities between the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and the Department of Operational Support has allowed both policy and operational guidance underpinning decision-making to receive the necessary attention.

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[5] See https://unsceb.org/organizational-resilience-management-system-orms.

Under the pre-reform architecture, both entities would have been consumed with operational matters. Under the new structure, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance was able to quickly issue new and revised policies related to administrative arrangements applicable during the pandemic. At the same time, the Department of Operational Support efficiently provided advisory support to client entities as well as tailored guidance and dedicated operational support to field operations and Secretariat entities located in particularly challenging locations. Feedback from surveys indicates a high level of client satisfaction with the support provided.

11. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major test for the new integrated approach to ICT. Management reform better facilitated a holistic approach to introducing new initiatives and technologies. The strategic decisions and investments made by the Secretariat, including the move to cloud computing and the adoption of standardized ICT platforms, were critical to enabling business continuity during this period, as was the strengthened capacity of the Office of Information and Communications Technology to deliver enterprise projects across the Secretariat.

12. The response to the pandemic has also validated the new supply chain approach. The Secretariat's supply chain proved to be resilient and enabled the rapid deployment of unplanned aviation, health-care and ICT requirements to field locations. These proactive actions were made possible by the establishment of the integrated supply chain structure established as part of the management reform. It was instrumental in the timely and cost-effective response to the critical needs of field missions during the crisis.

IV. Strengthening coordination and planning for the organizational resilience management system by United Nations country teams

13. The COVID-19 pandemic has galvanized United Nations country teams into further strengthening their emergency management coordination and planning functions across the United Nations system. Country teams at field duty stations have been at the forefront of assisting Member States in dealing with the effects of the pandemic. In doing so, United Nations entities on the ground have felt the impact on the health and safety of their personnel and have created new mechanisms to manage risks and ensure organizational resilience. For example, to strengthen the occupational safety and health of United Nations personnel and dependants at all duty stations, 14 entities came together and centrally cost-shared a $19.3 million emergency fund for a system-wide first line of defence mechanism aimed at supporting the ability of the United Nations to stay and deliver.

14. An inter-agency First Line of Defence Task Force was established in September 2020, chaired by the Development Coordination Office. The first line of defence mechanism has coordinated the technical review and decision-making of United Nations entities to strengthen the COVID-19 testing of United Nations personnel and the appropriate medical case management of 43 United Nations country teams. The Task Force, leveraging the United Nations Medical Directors' Network and the regional medical officers of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, has also completed first line of defence risk assessments for United Nations presences in 151 countries and territories and has provided tailored technical advice to countries rated with higher first line of defence risks.

15. In response to increasing demand from United Nations country teams for a United Nations-led vaccination process, the inter-agency first line of defence mechanism transferred the $2.16 million balance of the first line of defence fund to the Department of Operational Support in the first quarter of 2021 to support the

system-wide vaccination effort focusing on United Nations personnel, dependants and international non-governmental organization partners who support delivery of the Organization's mandates. In addition to the immediate benefits of vaccinating United Nations personnel in field duty stations, the local coordination structures and communications strategies that have been established at the country level will have a long-lasting and sustaining impact on improving organizational resilience management in United Nations country teams.

V. Lessons learned and best practices from the coronavirus disease pandemic

16. Prior to the pandemic, the ICT strategies of many United Nations system organizations had a strong focus on leveraging cloud computing technologies. That approach proved its value in contributing to ICT resilience and business continuity during the pandemic, in particular by making critical systems accessible to personnel regardless of their work location. It also allowed those services to be scaled up as needed and be provided remotely to Member States and personnel, maximizing availability and reliability.

17. Similarly, many organizations had moved to now industry-standard videoconferencing solutions prior to the pandemic. Organizations have discovered that they are capable of successfully conducting business in remote and hybrid scenarios, provided that their systems are accessible remotely. This experience will provide a significant resilience and agility advantage in future emergencies and will also likely influence post-pandemic work modalities.

18. The decision by many organizations to provide personnel with laptops instead of desktop computers over the past few years also played an important role in ensuring resilience and allowing personnel to work remotely. For personnel it meant that they could continue to work without disruption, and for organizations it meant that they did not need to engage in a complex procurement process during a time when global supply chains were disrupted and the supply of electronic devices was historically low.

19. Crisis communication practices were further developed and refined in response to the pandemic, emphasizing the importance of timely, clear and consistent communications with personnel.

20. Organizations realized that institutional resilience depends on an agile and resilient workforce. Providing up-to-date tools, systems, learning resources and policies is essential. Occupational safety and health, including mental health and well-being, is a top priority.

21. Another key lesson is the importance of a multilayered crisis governance structure in ensuring integration across functions, in particular those that are responsible for the core elements of the organizational resilience management system.

VI. Update on emergency notification systems used by United Nations system entities

22. Emergency notification systems are an important element of an effective organizational resilience management system, and most entities now have such a system in place. To further strengthen integration and coherence, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, assessed the feasibility of establishing a platform for interoperability

among the emergency notification systems of entities and is moving forward with the implementation of a common platform.

VII. Costs of implementing the organizational resilience management system in the Secretariat

23. The table below present the costs and staff time spent on implementing the organizational resilience management system in the Secretariat.

Table
Total costs of awareness-raising, training and coordination of the key areas

(Thousands of United States dollars)

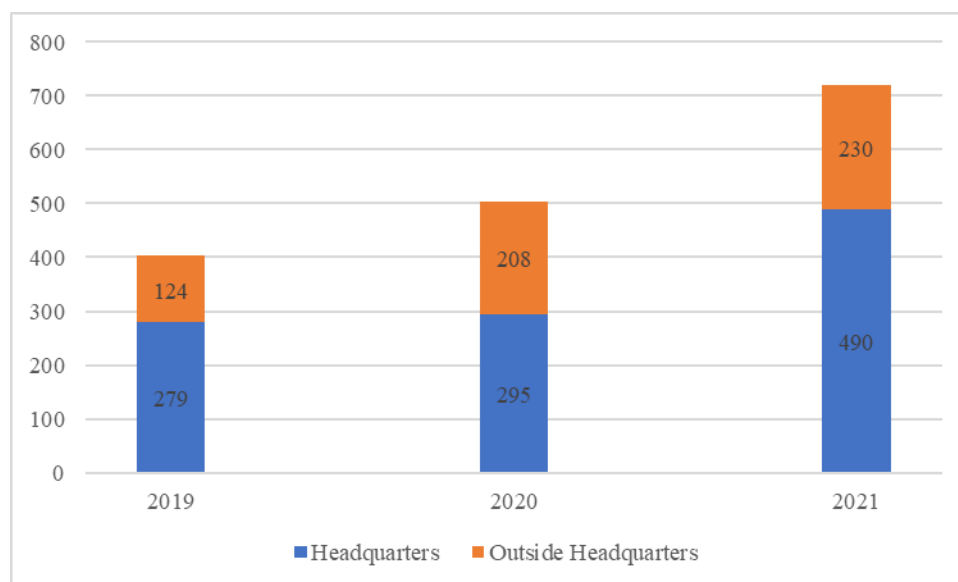| Cost	2019			2020			2021			Total
	Headquarters	Offices away from Headquarters	Regional commissions	Headquarters	Offices away from Headquarters	Regional commissions	Headquarters	Offices away from Headquarters	Regional commissions	
Staff time (standard costs)	283	75	24	291	145	33	467	139	48	1 505
Travel cost	4	–	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	14
Consultants	5[a]	–	58	–	–	78	5[a]	–	66	212
All other costs[b]	3	1	–	3	2	–	5	2	1	17
Total	**295**	**76**	**92**	**294**	**147**	**111**	**477**	**141**	**115**	**1 748**

[a] Extrabudgetary funding.
[b] Includes general operating expenses and supplies/materials.

24. The costs shown in the table were incurred in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system in the Secretariat, further strengthening and integrating its key components, and in meeting the related key performance indicators. The increase in costs noted for United Nations Headquarters in 2021 was largely due to the creation of dedicated staff capacity for the organizational resilience management system in the Department of Peace Operations. The increase in staff time noted for offices away from Headquarters was due to activities related to the integration of lessons learned from the pandemic, in collaboration with all stakeholders (internal and hosted entities) in adjusting and strengthening components of the organizational resilience management system and coordination mechanisms. The increase in the regional commissions was largely due to training and awareness-raising on the organizational resilience management system.

25. The figure below is based on estimates made by the Secretariat entities. The estimates include staff time invested in awareness-raising, training and coordination of the different key elements of the organizational resilience management system from 2019 to 2021.

Figure
Total staff time spent in the Secretariat for awareness-raising, training and coordination of key elements

(Working days)

Note: "Outside Headquarters" includes offices away from Headquarters and regional commissions.

26.   It is important to note that most of the staff time spent at Headquarters was in support of the application of the organizational resilience management system in the field (1,064 days out of a total of 1,626 days over the period). That support was provided by the programme officer responsible for the organizational resilience management system in the Department of Peace Operations, the focal point in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and staff of the Development Coordination Office and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

Operational costs

27.   From 2019 to 2021, a total of $226,000 was spent on consultancies ($212,000) and staff travel ($14,000). The consultancies were focused on updating and exercising business continuity plans and related training as well as training on the organizational resilience management system for mission staff. Travel was primarily related to the participation of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in a workshop on enterprise risk management in 2019.

VIII.   Progress in the application of the integrated approach of the organizational resilience management system

28.   The present section provides a summary of the progress made by United Nations organizations in applying the integrated approach of the organizational resilience management system during the period from 2019 to 2021, with a focus on the Secretariat.

A. Implementation in the Secretariat

United Nations Headquarters

29. The United Nations Headquarters in New York has made further progress in implementing the organizational resilience management system, building on the experience gained from its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the organizational resilience management system continues to mature at Headquarters, those responsible for its core elements are developing guidance and offering training to personnel. For example, guidelines for business continuity management at Headquarters were issued in February 2020. Guidance on the staff emergency preparedness support plan and a guide on crisis preparedness for staff and families were issued in April 2020. Training on personal preparedness and financial readiness was provided to over 1,100 United Nations staff globally in 2019 and 2020.

30. The Crisis Operations Group and the Senior Emergency Policy Team, which together comprise the Headquarters governance structure for the organizational resilience management system, met frequently during the reporting period to coordinate and manage the integrated Headquarters response to the pandemic. In addition, an Occupational Safety and Health Committee was established to advise the Crisis Operations Group and the Senior Emergency Policy Team, with membership and a rotating chair from the Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes at Headquarters. The Crisis Operations Group and the Senior Emergency Policy Team held a crisis simulation exercise in July 2019 and strengthened the organizational resilience management system on the basis of lessons learned, including by clarifying roles and responsibilities related to crisis communications.

31. In 2019, a new Secretariat-wide risk assessment was conducted. Following the onset of the pandemic, the Secretariat-wide risk register was further reviewed to ensure that it provided an adequate guide to action for the corporate risk owners. From 2019 to 2021, the Department of Safety and Security maintained and updated security risk assessments for Headquarters locations annually. The Crisis Operations Group updated the Crisis Management Operational Plan for Headquarters in 2021 as part of the annual review to include elements relating to the pandemic.

Department of Peace Operations

32. The Department of Peace Operations accelerated the implementation of the organizational resilience management system and its component plans as peacekeeping environments remained volatile, with myriad risks ranging from extremist attacks to natural disasters. The role of the organizational resilience management system in ensuring strategic and operational preparedness and response thus remains critical, in line with the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, extended as Action for Peacekeeping Plus for the period from 2021 to 2023.

33. Peacekeeping missions have adapted to the unprecedented challenge of continued mandate delivery, while ensuring the safety of their personnel and local interlocutors and supporting national health responses. During the reporting period, missions activated their business continuity plans and/or crisis management structures. Internal communications were enhanced by senior mission leadership, virtual town hall meetings and peer-to-peer support networks and welfare initiatives. Missions adjusted access to facilities, ensured the delivery of food and other essential items and provided stress counselling and other psychosocial support opportunities for personnel. While flexible and alternate working arrangements provided some relief in terms of on-site staff support, inconsistency in Internet availability and reliability complicated telecommuting in many mission environments.

34.   In 2019, the Department established a policy on authority, command and control in United Nations peacekeeping operations, which clarified, inter alia, crisis management structures and procedures and streamlined mission-wide efforts relating to contingency planning under chiefs of staff. To further strengthen mission capacity for crisis management as a critical element of the organizational resilience management system, the Department launched a field crisis management course for chiefs of staff in 2021.

35.   The Department has taken steps to follow up on the 2017 report by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz on the causes of increased fatalities among peacekeeping troops. Building on the policy on casualty evacuation in the field of March 2018 (revised in March 2020), each peacekeeping mission established its own standard operating procedure for mass casualty incidents. The Department conducted stress tests to verify the application of the standard operating procedure in the four largest missions in 2019; other missions have also updated medical response plans and capabilities. Since then, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has established a robust internal evacuation system from its regional camps to United Nations and other medical facilities in Bamako and Accra, and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is currently engaged in efforts to augment its medical facility in conflict-prone Beni. Considering the need to strengthen preparedness and response at team sites and regional offices, starting in 2021 simulation exercises will include conflict hotspots away from mission headquarters in order to improve within-mission coordination over wider geographical areas.

36.   The Department, with dedicated support for the organizational resilience management system in the field, has assisted missions in updating their business continuity plans, adjusting emergency medical support plans and developing COVID-19 response plans. The escalation of the pandemic in 2020 led to the postponement of the annual training course on the organizational resilience management system, which was held virtually in October 2021.

Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

37.   The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs made progress in the application of the organizational resilience management system, including by strengthening crisis management capabilities in special political missions. It participated in the revision of the organizational resilience management system policy and key performance indicators and their applicability to field missions. In cooperation with the Department of Peace Operations and other stakeholders, an interim addendum to the standard operating procedures on crisis management in the field was developed and disseminated during the second part of 2020. Senior managers are continually apprised of the crisis architecture of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs at Headquarters and their roles and responsibilities regarding support for crises in the field.

38.   Through the Assistance Team of the COVID-19 Field Support Group and in close coordination with the Department of Peace Operations, field missions received assistance through the facilitation of tabletop exercises aimed at streamlining and validating their crisis management architecture in the context of the pandemic. At Headquarters, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs tests its emergency notification system quarterly and is fully integrated with the Secretariat's risk management framework. Special political missions are developing risk management frameworks that are aligned with the provisions of the organizational resilience management system.

39.   The implementation of the organizational resilience management system across all special political missions continues to improve, despite challenges posed by the nature

of the missions and variations in the geographic footprint. The focal points for the organizational resilience management system continue to play an important role as liaisons with key stakeholders in developing, operationalizing and maintaining contingency plans. To enhance field missions' capacity, 24 focal points from 12 special political missions participated in the annual training course on the organizational resilience management system for peace operations, held virtually in October 2021.

Development Coordination Office

40. The Development Coordination Office, which supports all 132 resident coordinator offices as part of the resident coordinator system, advanced in the implementation of the organizational resilience management system within the resident coordinator system and created opportunities for synergies between the Secretariat and United Nations country teams.

41. In 2020, the Office issued guidance to all resident coordinator offices on the implementation of the organizational resilience management system, including resident coordinator office contingency planning templates, model phone-tree pocket cards and other materials to be adapted to the specific configuration of resident coordinator offices. The Office maintains a central repository of resident coordinator office contingency plans and provides support to ensure that they are in line with the organizational resilience management system policy and up to date. Moreover, with support from the Office, including through weekly policy and programming teleconferences with United Nations leadership from across CEB entities and United Nations country teams on COVID-19 throughout most of 2020 and 2021, as well as regular updates by the Assistant Secretary-General for Development Coordination to the country teams, the Office facilitated information flow on relevant COVID-19 preparedness and response initiatives with an impact on the implementation of the organizational resilience management system across the United Nations system.

42. Moreover, through the efficiency agenda and the Office's support to the Business Innovations Group of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the Office provided direct support and advice to operations management teams at the country level to develop business operations strategies aligned with core elements of the organizational resilience management system, including the creation of inter-agency contingency plans encompassing components such as ICT resilience, support to staff members and dependants, crisis management and collaboration on medical support. In addition, resident coordinator offices supported inter-agency communications groups at the country level to develop crisis communications strategies in the context of COVID-19. In partnership with the Department of Operational Support, resident coordinator offices in select locations facilitated negotiations with Governments and hospitals to create agreements on regional medical evacuation hubs to receive patients with COVID-19 from across the United Nations system, as part of the United Nations System-Wide Task Force on Medical Evacuations in Response to COVID-19.

Offices away from Headquarters

United Nations Office at Geneva

43. The United Nations Office at Geneva [6] has made significant progress in implementing the organizational resilience management system. It adopted the policy as endorsed by the High-level Committee on Management and made the policy

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[6] The update also covers the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which are serviced by the United Nations Office at Geneva in the area of crisis management.

document widely available to organizational resilience focal points of the wider United Nations in Geneva through the intranet and an online collaboration platform used by the Crisis Management Team.

44.   The implementation of the organizational resilience management system is overseen by the Crisis Management Team, chaired by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Since the start of the pandemic, the Team has been functioning as the COVID-19 response team in support of the Director-General. In early February 2020, a simulation exercise, utilizing a pandemic crisis scenario, was conducted to ensure that the Team was ready to respond accordingly.

45.   The Office's enterprise risk management register was recently updated to include pandemic risk. The Safety and Security Service maintains the security risk assessment and updates it annually. Crisis preparedness at the Office has been greatly improved as a result of the harmonization of its emergency response plans. The Team is responsible for the approval and activation of the plans, which are regularly reviewed, updated and validated.

United Nations Office at Nairobi

46.   The United Nations Office at Nairobi, including the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), has continued to maintain high levels of resilience. Since March 2020, it has implemented COVID-19 mitigation strategies, such as establishing the United Nations COVID-19 treatment facility for United Nations personnel and regional inbound medical evacuations, in partnership with The Nairobi Hospital.

47.   The organizational resilience management system at both the intra- and inter-agency levels established at the Office since 2014 is still valid and operates in compliance with the recently revised organizational resilience management system policy approved by CEB and the related key performance indicators. The governance mechanism integrates the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme and UN-Habitat, all hosted United Nations entities as well as the Office of the Resident Coordinator for Kenya. The crisis management infrastructure has traditionally been aligned with the United Nations security management system, which maintains a staff emergency notification system as well as regular engagement with the host country security apparatus through the Department of Safety and Security and the national disaster management structure through the United Nations country team.

48.   The annual tabletop simulation and after-action reviews have led to improvements in the Office's capabilities to address a health and safety crisis and to further integrating World Health Organization (WHO) experts and aligning plans with those of the Ministry of Health of Kenya. Drawing on recent experience and the risk management culture established under the organizational resilience management system, the COVID-19 contingency plan for the United Nations system in Kenya was endorsed by the Crisis Management Team for COVID-19 on 11 March 2020. The crisis management infrastructure was modified with the formation of a COVID-19 Steering Committee to review strategic options prior to submissions to the wider Crisis Management Team as well as the inclusion of the existing Common Services Management Team as the inter-agency administrative and operational mechanism. The Crisis Management Team approved a four-phase back-to-the-office plan for Nairobi. Flexibility and adaptiveness under the organizational resilience management system common approach will remain crucial.

United Nations Office at Vienna

49.   The United Nations Office at Vienna, in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, has continued to make progress in the implementation of

its emergency management framework according to the principles of the organizational resilience management system approach. Prior to March 2020 and the launch of special measures associated with the COVID-19 response, the Office had promoted the organizational resilience management system policy with managers and maintained an intranet site to disseminate it among staff. The pandemic then shifted attention to policy operationalization.

50. In August 2019, the Security and Safety Service in Vienna conducted an evacuation simulation that included representatives of the host country emergency services. In 2020, the Crisis Management Team responded to the actual COVID-19 crisis in line with guidelines from the host Government. The enterprise risk management register is in place, including a specific risk assessment for the Safety and Security Service. These, together with an analysis of operational risks, are updated regularly to strengthen the Office's resilience. All required emergency response plans are in place. An additional COVID-19 outbreak contingency plan was approved in response to the virus outbreak.

Regional commissions

Economic Commission for Africa

51. ECA has made significant progress in its emergency management efforts. It established crisis management teams (for itself and for United Nations entities in Ethiopia) with defined responsibilities and reporting lines. In line with the organizational resilience management system policy, it established and maintained plans at the entity and country levels and shared them with personnel performing time-critical and essential services, creating awareness among managers of the need to help personnel to understand their responsibilities and provide access to required resources.

52. The ECA Crisis Management Team and key staff received training on crisis leadership and response at the beginning of 2019. Component plans of the organizational resilience management system are updated on average every two years, with the exception of security-related plans, which are updated annually. The United Nations-Ethiopia business continuity plan was approved in June 2021 by the Executive Secretary of ECA and the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ethiopia following a joint exercise for business continuity and security plans, the latter including the participation of host country authorities. ECA conducted a Commission-wide risk assessment in 2020 and provided training on assessing and reporting risks to focal points and managers. In June 2021, a local risk management committee of senior-level managers was established.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

53. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) implemented an organizational resilience framework aligned with the organizational resilience management system policy during and after the COVID-19 lockdown, which contributed to enhancing the organizational resilience management system, including strategies for the continuity of essential and time-critical business services and the long-term crisis response. It assigned a designated programme manager to implement the emergency management framework. It made significant progress in harmonizing plans and documentation with local and United Nations standards and integrating various planning instruments. It also updated its business continuity plan to reflect the organizational resilience management system approach and created an annex to the business continuity plan dedicated to the COVID-19 response.

54. ECLAC performed one tabletop simulation during 2019. Owing to telework conditions, tabletop and on-site drill exercises were postponed during 2020 and 2021. In 2019, the Commission also reviewed the risk assessment included in its business

continuity management plan and tested a flood scenario. Since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, ECLAC has been focused on a holistic COVID-19 response and has made improvements in the following areas of risk management: medical and emergency management, mental health maintenance, innovation in infrastructure, digital services, virtual collaboration tools and practices for telework and virtual meetings.

55. Contingency plans for the mitigation of COVID-19 impacts and risks were assessed during 2020 and 2021. The Chief of Security and Safety maintains a close relationship with the host country by participating in monthly meetings to establish emergency management protocols, and specifically addresses possible COVID-19 outbreaks within ECLAC offices in the region, as well as the response to risks identified in the risk assessment.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

56. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) made further progress in implementing the organizational resilience management system, leveraging the experience gained from its COVID-19 response. The focus was on enabling remote office work practices; implementing occupational safety and health systems; planning for the construction phase of the ESCAP seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacement project; and strengthening conference management infrastructure to bolster the resilience of the ESCAP premises in Bangkok. In accordance with the organizational resilience management system policy, ESCAP integrated its business continuity management system into the security policy framework and enhanced its pandemic response plans.

57. ESCAP relies on the Country Security Management Team and its Operations Management Team to govern its emergency management. In the particular context of the COVID-19 response, a newly established COVID-19 Contingency Management Team meets regularly and makes recommendations to the designated official for security for the United Nations in Thailand and the Country Security Management Team to ensure a coherent response and develop a plan to return to the office. ESCAP continues to test its business continuity plans, including pandemic response scenarios for its premises. Security phone-tree exercises are practised every quarter to account for United Nations personnel at the duty station.

58. On the basis of a thorough risk assessment, ESCAP installed flood protection barriers and improved pumping systems to mitigate potential flooding of the premises and completed fire protection systems. It is currently implementing a risk-based occupational safety and health plan for its premises. ESCAP regularly reviews its business continuity plan and is implementing a full range of tools to enable remote working. As a response to the pandemic, it has also introduced a suite of tools and technologies to support hybrid and remote conferencing in order to enhance the resilience of its intergovernmental platform.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

59. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) shared the revised organizational resilience management system policy with ESCWA staff who perform essential and time-critical functions and members of the crisis management structure. It worked in close coordination with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to offer a virtual training programme on the organizational resilience management system in January 2021.

60. ESCWA continues to harmonize and review biannually or as needed its organizational resilience management system-related plans. Its enterprise risk management now includes security risk management and other aspects of risk

management that fall under the organizational resilience management system, which has strengthened its overall risk management process and its resilience.

Cybersecurity

61.   The pandemic has underlined the dependency of the United Nations on its ICT resources. The continued availability and accessibility of these resources is essential, even under adverse conditions, whether due to the failure of systems, underlying components or supporting infrastructure or the impact of cyberattacks.

62.   The Secretariat has prioritized efforts to increase capacity for secure remote access to internally hosted systems and has continued to migrate systems to cloud-based environments, which provide built-in resilience mechanisms and improve protection for internally hosted systems against denial-of-service attacks. However, many systems continue to fall short of increased availability objectives, and additional investment will be required to increase their resilience and demonstrate their effectiveness through regular tests and exercises.

Global insurance

63.   As requested by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General has continued efforts to secure sufficient property insurance coverage at a reasonable cost for all United Nations locations and risk exposures. Following a successful pilot of the request for a proposal for broker services in January 2018, the Risk Management Unit, located within the Finance Division of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, in conjunction with the Procurement Division in the Department of Operational Support, was able to successfully finalize solicitations for broker services for all major commercial insurance policies and will keep issuing solicitations on a rolling basis to continue to optimize results and maximize savings.

B.   Implementation in the funds and programmes

64.   Eight funds and programmes of the United Nations system reported on their progress in implementing the principles of the policy.

United Nations Development Programme

65.   Under the umbrella of its enterprise risk management framework, business continuity management, which is aligned with the United Nations organizational resilience management system, continues to be the main framework that ensures the preparedness and resilience of the United Nations Development Programme. The framework includes the information technology disaster recovery plan, security plans (e.g. crisis, incident and emergency management plans) and business continuity planning. Business continuity plans for all offices are updated and tested annually. Corporate dashboards track implementation and compliance within United Nations Development Programme offices globally.

United Nations Population Fund

66.   To support its personnel and eligible family members, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) developed a comprehensive duty of care programme to strengthen its duty of care framework at each level of the organization, supported by a global duty of care coordinator. The programme provides access to counselling for all UNFPA personnel, flexible working arrangements to support staff members working from home, nominal financial support for remote work and the delivery of global well-being training and resource materials. Through this work, UNFPA is

developing a duty of care model that addresses not only the impacts on well-being of COVID-19, but a framework that will be sustainable in the long term.

67. The availability of reliable connectivity (Internet) and power (electricity) was and remains a challenge. In some of the worst affected locations, UNFPA funded the purchase of solar panels and modems, which was extremely efficient and enabled the team to continue its work.

United Nations Children's Fund

68. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has continued to implement the organizational resilience management system by enhancing the application of its core elements. In 2019, UNICEF launched its emergency notification system to strengthen crisis communications and business continuity and also launched training modules on basic personal emergency preparedness and business continuity management. With the onset of COVID-19 in 2020, UNICEF enhanced resilience by strengthening inter-agency collaboration. Crisis management and crisis communications worked hand in hand as the United Nations community sought to gather and share timely information and guidance on COVID-19 with personnel globally.

United Nations Office for Project Services

69. In 2018, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) migrated the entire organization to a fully web-based workspace platform, which enhanced its resilience and allowed it to maintain its operations during the pandemic. In addition, all personnel were trained on real-time collaborative online working. UNOPS enhanced business continuity management for prolonged disruptions by promoting the well-being of personnel through constant feedback and communication from management, prioritizing mental health and providing counselling services. In 2019, UNOPS launched an online enterprise risk management solution developed as part of its enterprise portfolio and project management system.

World Food Programme

70. During the reporting period, the World Food Programme issued revised frameworks for organizational resilience management, crisis management and business continuity management and updated existing circulars to reflect new organizational structures and lessons learned from the pandemic. The organizational resilience management framework clarifies roles and responsibilities for ensuring an integrated and effective approach to managing organizational resilience in the organization.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

71. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched an online business continuity planning application in early November 2020 to review and update previously submitted plans and store them electronically. Headquarters entities in Geneva, Budapest and Copenhagen prepared business continuity plans in 2020, which were integrated into an overall Headquarters business continuity plan through which UNHCR ensured uninterrupted execution of critical and non-critical processes during the pandemic.

72. Pandemic-related guidelines were issued on: (a) how personnel could protect themselves and their families; (b) mental well-being, teleworking arrangements and access to medical care; and (c) administrative aspects such as protection at work, travel and back-to-office rules. A dedicated COVID-19 crisis communications strategy was issued in June 2020 and a global reputational risk and crisis communications strategy was launched in October 2020. A comprehensive reputational risks and crisis communications training programme was started in 2020

targeting UNHCR representatives, senior managers, risk advisers and communications/external relations officers across all regions.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

73. In 2021, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) launched the global roll-out of its business continuity and crisis management application to automate and simplify the development, maintenance, use, implementation, compliance monitoring and proactive self-auditing of business continuity and crisis management plans.

74. The focus of successive ICT strategies on leveraging cloud computing technologies and having all corporate systems and databases hosted in public or community cloud services proved its value in supporting ICT resilience during the pandemic.

75. Similarly, prior to the pandemic, UN-Women had moved to industry-standard videoconferencing solutions. Having such robust and resilient tools proved critical as usage of videoconferencing solutions jumped by over 800 per cent compared with pre-pandemic levels.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

76. Over the past two years, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) focused on strengthening contingency and business continuity planning in the field. Field-based contingency plans were reviewed and updated, and table-top simulation exercises were conducted for the Lebanon and West Bank offices. During the reporting period, UNRWA also faced a severe funding shortfall that put at risk the continuity of its services. Strict crisis management plans and efficiency measures, as well as increased fundraising efforts, were implemented to maintain core operations and ensure the continued availability of essential services. In February and March 2020, UNRWA reviewed its business continuity plans and risk registers to incorporate COVID-19 pandemic-related risks and mitigate their impact on its operations, and established a dedicated COVID-19 crisis management task force.

C. Application in the specialized agencies

77. Twelve of the specialized agencies represented in CEB strengthened their emergency management by applying the coordinated organizational resilience management system approach.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

78. During the reporting period, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations focused its efforts on its crisis management structure and staff support strategies by ensuring a safe and secure working environment, especially in the context of the pandemic. It established a Crisis Management Team, chaired by the Deputy Director General, and reinforced its organizational resilience management system governance framework by assigning a special division for coordinating and streamlining its organizational resilience management system policy across the Organization. It also underpinned its organizational resilience management system by maintaining, issuing and updating instruments, guidelines and plans directly or closely related to the core elements of the organizational resilience management system, including the crisis management guidelines, the business continuity policy and the ICT disaster recovery policy and plan.

International Atomic Energy Agency

79. The International Atomic Energy Agency has significantly strengthened its organizational resilience management system, for example by conducting an organization-wide business impact analysis, offering International Organization for Standardization business continuity management training for key staff and enhancing ICT disaster recovery capabilities. It is currently building a new organizational resilience management system policy structure and is conducting a comprehensive business continuity planning review cycle to ensure that the state of the its resilience continues to be strong.

International Civil Aviation Organization

80. The corporate organizational resilience management system of the International Civil Aviation Organization was tested in 2020 as the pandemic affected all staff, global operations and the use of organizational assets. The effective deployment of the headquarters Crisis Management Team was the key to successfully managing the ongoing crisis and applying good practices in organizational resilience. Lessons learned were incorporated into the organization's risk register, and additional expert resources were secured to deliver on effective planning, emergency response, business continuity training and development and rapid recovery to normal business operations.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

81. During the reporting period, the International Fund for Agricultural Development established an Enterprise Risk Management Office with dedicated teams focused on four main risk groups. An Operational Risk and Compliance Committee was formed to address the operational risk group. It focuses on related sub-groups, including those on business continuity management and resilience-building; ICT; security; and health and welfare. The enhancement of business continuity frameworks, associated practices and planning, as well as awareness- and capacity-building by departments and divisions, both at headquarters and in the Fund's field country offices, is ongoing. Crisis communication practices have been developed and upgraded at the corporate level with lessons learned during the pandemic response.

International Labour Organization

82. The International Labour Organization has continued to implement the components of the organizational resilience management system and is an active participant in the United Nations working group on this subject. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic section of the headquarters business continuity plan was updated, and all field offices updated and implemented their business continuity plans in coordination with resident coordinator offices and participated in meetings of the local Security Management Team. Consultations and information-sharing with other United Nations entities on various aspects of crisis management and business continuity during the pandemic took place on a regular basis. The procedures for the mass casualty plan at headquarters are now planned for completion in 2022.

International Telecommunication Union

83. On 31 December 2019, the International Telecommunication Union completed a project for developing the organizational resilience management system approach for emergency management, which enabled further development of the existing security risk management policy, plans and crisis management procedures and the facilitation of a crisis management exercise for senior management. A strategic business impact analysis was formulated, leading to the overall development of a

business continuity and disaster recovery programme, including staff training, maintenance and practices. In January 2020, a dedicated organizational resilience management system post was created and filled to coordinate the maintenance, exercise and review regime. In June 2021, the governing body of the International Telecommunication Union unanimously approved the organizational resilience management system compliance framework.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

84. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has in place most of the individual components of an organizational resilience management system. For example, most UNESCO country offices have a business continuity plan, including protocols for crisis management and crisis communication. UNESCO is currently standardizing and updating those plans on the basis of lessons learned and changes in its operational modalities, so that they can address a wide variety of events or incidents. Future objectives are to create a central coordination mechanism, further develop each individual component of the organizational resilience management system and update them on a regular basis. Ultimately, the organizational resilience management system will be integrated into the UNESCO risk management framework.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

85. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization is part of the Vienna-based organizations for matters related to security and crisis management. However, it has its own organizational resilience management system. During the reporting period, it developed and issued three key guidance documents: an enterprise risk management policy; general risk management priorities, which included guidance for maintaining a rapid, high-quality response through resilient programmes; and an updated business continuity plan that took into consideration the unique features of the pandemic. It also provided mental health training and support to families during lockdown and is currently preparing policies that will support the resilience of individual staff members, including a policy for telecommuting and other flexible working arrangements. Cybersecurity continues to be an area of focus.

Universal Postal Union

86. At the Universal Postal Union, the organizational resilience management system has traditionally been treated as part of the crisis management and business continuity plan. Business continuity assessments and updates of the plan are conducted on regular basis, taking into account new developments, policies and guidance introduced across the United Nations system. Raising awareness among staff and further developing the framework while ensuring that it remains realistic for an organization of 250 employees located mostly at headquarters are key challenges.

World Health Organization

87. WHO launched global coordination mechanisms to address the pandemic internally and with the other United Nations system organizations, including through country crisis management teams. Work is ongoing to bolster the psychosocial support offered to the WHO workforce. Investments in cybersecurity preparedness have significantly increased, including the establishment of a security operations centre, the progressive roll-out across the organization of an endpoint detection and response process and the implementation of regular penetration testing and internal vulnerability scanning.

88. As a specialized agency for health, WHO has advised United Nations resident coordinators on the United Nations country team response to the pandemic. In 2019, it implemented a new risk management approach, which is fortifying its risk culture while ensuring that risk management is effectively embedded in its results framework.

World Intellectual Property Organization

89. During 2019, building on the comprehensive update of its business impact analysis, the World Intellectual Property Organization focused on the preparation of business continuity plans for each of its critical functional areas and key external offices. It also updated its policy on organizational resilience to reflect the increased maturity of its resilience planning since it was first drafted in 2015. To strengthen integration across core elements of the organizational resilience management system, a team was established to meet regularly and coordinate across each of the elements on a systematic basis. Finally, a Crisis Management Team exercise was conducted to explore responses to a sudden need for people to work remotely and in the case of a cyberattack.

World Meteorological Organization

90. The pandemic was the first real test of World Meteorological Organization business continuity systems, with most staff successfully working away from the office. Major investments and enhancements were made in the areas of remote work, including remote conferencing and interpretation. The organization is now in a stronger position, with increased resilience to major disruptions.

D. Implementation in the international financial institutions represented in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

91. While the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank actively collaborate with the United Nations system and other international financial institutions, their organizational resilience management system programmes operate independently, with their own governance structures.

International Monetary Fund

92. The International Monetary Fund began to transform its business continuity and crisis management programme into an operational resilience framework, starting with an approved policy. The Operational Resilience Programme Team includes representatives from the operational areas of the institution and the Office of Risk Management. Leveraging pandemic-related learning and change in institutional goals, the Team will update the operational resilience priorities and align the operational resilience strategy to proactively address cross-cutting and emerging risks.

World Bank Group

93. During the reporting period, significant focus at the institutional level was placed on managing the pandemic. However, other crises such as natural and human-caused disasters, civil unrest and other events continued to have an impact on offices and staff across the globe. Country office crisis management teams lead the incident response and play a key role in keeping staff and dependants safe, protecting World Bank Group assets and continuing critical operations. An incident management team supports the country teams, with experts in various risk disciplines, including continuity, security, health and safety and ICT. As part of ongoing enhancement of continuity, the World Bank is implementing an operational resilience framework that includes business

continuity and resilience in areas relating to cybersecurity, third parties and technology, reflecting the evolving operational threats that the Bank faces.

IX. Next steps in strengthening the Organization's resilience

94.   The COVID-19 pandemic has been the ultimate stress test and proof of concept to date for the organizational resilience management system in the United Nations system, in particular its integrated and harmonized approach to emergency management. The seven core elements of the organizational resilience management system have been essential to the holistic and integrated response throughout the crisis, with close coordination at each duty station and globally.

95.   In future, each organization and the United Nations system community at each duty station should mainstream the lessons learned and best practices into their management frameworks and reflect them in their post-pandemic planning. By doing so, mandate delivery and support to Member States will be strengthened. The pandemic has demonstrated that modern working practices can greatly enhance organizational resilience and agility and that they also require vigilant cybersecurity, more frequent and different types of communication and proactive support for managers and staff, including in the areas of mental health and well-being.

96.   In its 2021 report on business continuity management in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2021/6), the Joint Inspection Unit recommends that assessments be made of the continuity of business operations during the pandemic to identify gaps and enablers and adjust policy, processes and procedures, in particular in areas such as human resources, ICT and occupational safety and health, in order to better prepare for and respond to future disruptive incidents. The Unit further notes that regular and substantiative interactions between key disciplines such as enterprise risk management and business continuity management are essential for risk identification, response and management at both the strategic and operational levels and should be facilitated and encouraged by senior leaders.

97.   In his report entitled "Our Common Agenda", the Secretary-General called for the strengthening of strategic foresight, preparedness and resilience in the face of potentially catastrophic global risks. By applying lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity can be seized to better anticipate and prepare for large-scale global crises.

X. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

98.   **The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report on progress in applying the principles of the organizational resilience management system in the United Nations system.**

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