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Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions: work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice****Twenty-ninth session**

Vienna, 18–22 May 2020

Item 4 (a) of the provisional agenda**

Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions: work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**Work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime****Note by the Secretariat***Summary*

The present note has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2017/236, in which the Council renewed the mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime until the part of the sessions of the Commissions to be held in the first half of 2021, as well as Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 52/13, 54/10, 54/17, 56/11, 58/1 and 60/3 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 18/3, 20/1, 20/9, 22/2, 24/1 and 26/1. The present note covers the work of the working group between 29 October and 10 December 2019. Information on the work of the working group during the preceding period can be found in document [E/CN.7/2019/3/Add.1-E/CN.15/2019/3/Add.1](#).

* E/CN.7/2020/1.

** E/CN.15/2020/1.



I. Deliberations

1. From 29 October to 10 December 2019, the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held three informal meetings.

2. The working group continued to consider issues under the items of the agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2017/236 and by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its resolution 52/13 and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in its resolution 18/3 and in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to those resolutions, as well as with provisions contained in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 54/10, 54/17, 56/11, 58/1 and 60/3 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 20/1, 20/9, 22/2, 24/1 and 26/1.

3. At the meeting held on 29 October, the working group was briefed on the financial situation of UNODC, including the impact on the United Nations Office at Vienna/UNODC of the 2019 financial liquidity crisis affecting the regular budget, which had required measures that had an impact on meeting and documentation services. The working group was also informed of the criteria for the use of programme support cost funds in areas such as central administration, and programme services such as planning, resource mobilization, monitoring, evaluation and management, both at Headquarters and in field offices. Reference was made to the guidance for the budget formulation by Member States as set out in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 61/12 and 60/10 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 26/5 and 27/7, including on the way the Office implemented and appropriated funding sources and on the need for UNODC to use programme support cost funds more broadly both at Headquarters and in the field.

4. Also at the meeting, the working group was provided with an overview of the three pillars of the United Nations development system reform (development; peace and security; and management) and of the key milestones and timeline of the process from 2019 to 2022. With regard to the implementation of the one-off surge capacity undertaken by the Office in 2019, participants were informed that programme support cost funds had been made available under the revised 2018–2019 budget for strengthening field contexts and reform engagement in New York. The surge was important for the strategic positioning of UNODC and the Office's overall contribution to the Secretary-General's reform effort. In the field, the surge had targeted specific country contexts where there was a clear need and opportunity for UNODC to contribute to and position itself in the work of the United Nations in the country, by providing expertise that would benefit the United Nations team as a whole under the leadership of the resident coordinators. Delegations noted the successful implementation of the surge and remarked that UNODC, while participating in the reform process with a view to enhancing the efficacy and impact of its technical assistance, should be guided by its own specialized mandates. The working group was also presented with the findings of the UNODC peer review on results-based management and proposed follow-up actions.

5. The working group was provided with an overview of the assessment of the recruitment policies and practices of the Office with the goal of increasing equitable geographical representation within its staff, in line with article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. It was noted that the General Assembly had established a system of desirable ranges as a measure for assessing the appropriate level of geographical representation for each Member State for staff of the United Nations funded from the regular budget. To make progress towards equitable geographical representation, the Secretary-General had required that 50 per cent of all appointments to geographical posts be made with nationals of unrepresented and under-represented Member States. In this connection, some participants were of the view that equitable geographical representation should apply to posts within the Secretariat regardless of the source of funding. The working group was provided with an update on progress made in

implementing the Global Programme on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in the United Nations Office at Vienna/UNODC across all mandate areas of UNODC, and a presentation was made on addressing the needs of women who use drugs, as an example of the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into the practices, policies and programmes of UNODC.

6. Other matters considered at the meeting included presentations on evaluation in the context of the United Nations reform effort, including ongoing in-depth evaluations at UNODC, on UNODC activities to enhance the capacity of law enforcement, border control and other relevant agencies to counter drug trafficking through training and on UNODC initiatives relating to services for people who use stimulants and people with stimulant use disorders.

7. At the meeting held on 26 November, reference was made to a document providing additional information on the consolidated budget for the biennium 2020–2021, which had been distributed in advance of the meeting at the request of participants. Additional clarifications were requested on the way that the Office had responded to the mandates given by budget-related resolutions 60/10 and 61/12 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and 26/5 and 27/7 of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, including on the appropriation and implementation of programme support cost funds at Headquarters and in field offices, the financial situation of field offices and the relation between the consolidated budget for the biennium 2020–2021 and the UNODC draft programme budget document for 2021. Delegations reiterated the need for the Secretariat to consult with Member States prior to the publication of the draft consolidated budget. Information was also provided on ongoing work undertaken by the Office with regard to alignment with and engagement in the United Nations reform streams in several substantive areas related to UNODC mandates, including counter-terrorism, migration, anti-corruption and cybercrime, and on the participation of UNODC field offices within respective country teams. Ongoing dialogue with Member States would help the Office to define how to make key contributions to the United Nations reform effort.

8. Presentations were also made at the meeting on the work of the Independent Evaluation Section, its mandate, funding needs, structure and independence, and its contribution to the United Nations Evaluation Group. An update was provided on the UNODC Geography Action Plan regarding geographical diversity in the composition of UNODC staff, which had been distributed to participants in advance of the meeting. Reference was also made to the implementation of Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that the paramount consideration in the employment of staff is the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, while paying due regard to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. Clarifications were also provided on the role of the central review bodies in reviewing the integrity of the recruitment process.

9. Other matters considered at the meeting were UNODC initiatives on countering the threat of opiates originating in Afghanistan; gender mainstreaming in the UNODC Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime; and an update on planned UNODC research activities and publications. With regard to the latter, participants noted the good work of the Office, despite financial constraints. A presentation was also made on UNODC initiatives relating to health in the context of the criminal justice system.

10. The meeting held on 10 December was entirely devoted to the consideration of the draft resolutions contained in the report of the Executive Director on the consolidated budget for the biennium 2020–2021 for UNODC ([E/CN.7/2019/14-E/CN.15/2019/16](#), annexes V and VI), prior to their consideration by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at their joint meeting on 12 December 2019, at their reconvened sessions.

II. Organizational and administrative matters

11. Under the guidance of the Co-Chairs, the working group held three informal meetings, on 29 October, 26 November and 10 December 2019.

12. An informal meeting was held on 13 November, during which representatives of UNODC provided a briefing on the UNODC draft programme budget document for 2021 and the consolidated budget for the biennium 2020–2021 for UNODC.

13. In the period under consideration, the working group also held informal consultations, on 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and 11 December 2019, on the draft resolutions set out in annexes V and VI to document [E/CN.7/2019/14-E/CN.15/2019/16](#).

14. The Secretariat continued to provide documents and information to the working group by electronic means and in hard copy, including through a web page accessible to the public (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/FINGOV/FINGOV-index.html) and a secure web page for Member States (www.unodc.org/missions/en/wggf/index.html), which had been set up and maintained by the Secretariat for the use of the working group.
