



EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT

Second session of the year 2022
21 – 23 November 2022

AGENDA ITEM 12:

Annual Report of the Activities of the UN Ethics Office, Report of the Secretary General A/77/75, published 3 May 2022, and Ethics Related Activities undertaken by UN-Habitat in 2022

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| Agenda Item 12: Annual Report of the UN Ethics Office, A/77/75, 2022

INTRODUCTION

- As part of the United Nations Secretariat, UN-Habitat implements its ethics related functions and activities with the support of the UN Ethics Office, which is mandated specifically for that function. Currently, the Legal Unit serves as the focal point for all ethics related activities and carries out these functions with the support of the Office of the Executive Director (OED), Human Resources Liaison Office and the Conduct and Discipline Focal Point.
- The 2021 Annual Report, A/77/75, published on 3 May 2022, was submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly pursuant to General Assembly resolution [60/254](#), “*Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations*,” in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually on the activities of the UN Ethics Office and implementation of ethics policies.
- This presentation summarizes the **Annual Report** and highlights the activities undertaken by UN-Habitat as a UN Secretariat agency in implementing the policies and supporting the activities of the UN Ethics Office within UN-Habitat. A copy of the report and its summary has already been shared.



| Role of the UN Ethics Office

- The role of the UN Ethics Office is to assist the Secretary-General in ensuring that staff members observe and perform their functions consistent with the highest standards of integrity required by the Charter of the United Nations by fostering a culture of ethics, transparency and accountability.
- The UN Ethics Office was established by the Secretary-General as an independent Office of the Secretariat, pursuant to **paragraph 161 (d)** of General Assembly resolution **60/1** and works closely with ethics focal points in each UN entity to handle ethics issues.
- Pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletins **ST/SGB/2005/22**, **ST/SGB/2007/11** and **ST/SGB/2007/11/Amend.1**, the functions of the UN Ethics Office, as implemented, within UN-Habitat, include:



| Role of the UN Ethics Office (cont.)

- (a) Providing **confidential advice and guidance** to staff on ethical issues, including administering an ethics helpline and the reporting and handling of prohibited conduct;
- (b) Administering the **United Nations Financial Disclosure Programme** and advising on the relevant rules and procedures;
- (c) Administering the organisation's policy on **Protection against Retaliation arising out of complaints of wrong doing and whistle blowing**;
- (d) Developing **standards, training and education activities** on ethics issues, in coordination with the Office of Human Resources and other offices, and conducting ethics-related outreach to raise awareness among staff of the ethics related issues and, how to handle them;
- (e) Supporting and **promoting ethics standard-setting, systems and ensuring policy coherence and implementation** within the Secretariat and among the Organization's separately administered organs and programmes;



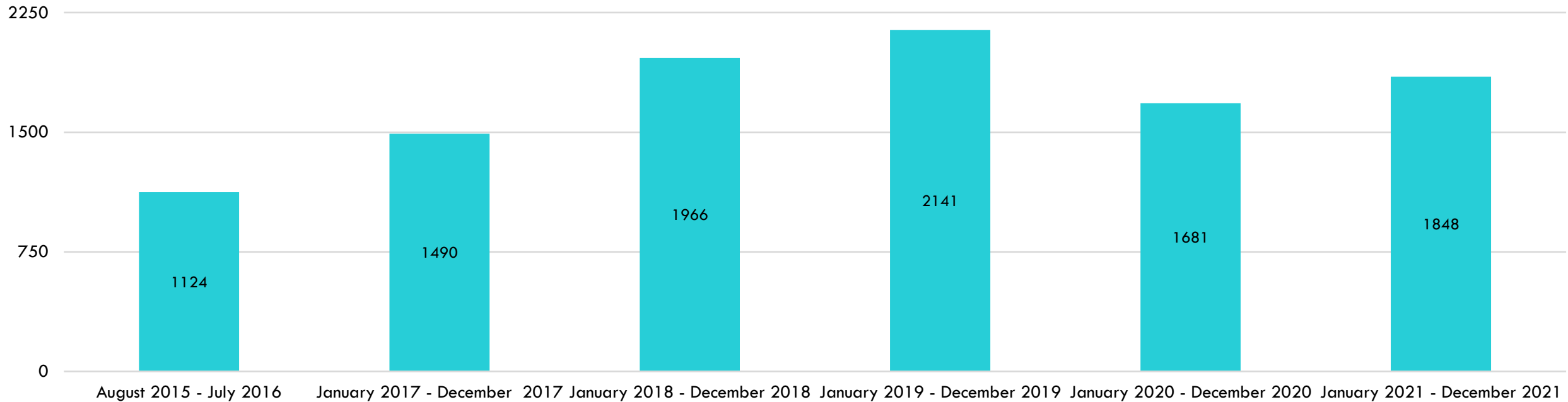
| Recommendations, to the General Assembly, for Measures to Strengthen the Independence of the UN Ethics Office

- **Section III** of the Annual Ethics Report contains the *recommendations for measures to strengthen the independence of the Ethics Office* of which, are as follows:
- (a) Importance of the independence of the ethics function as this is a prerequisite for effective delivery of the ethics functions' mandate.
 - (b) Direct presentation of the annual report by the Ethics Office to the General Assembly;
 - (c) Enhanced role of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee to oversee some of the work of the Ethics Office; and More effective coordination and aligning of the various ethics activities across the UN.
 - (d) Raising the rank of the Head of the Ethics Office to create more confidence in the independence of the Ethics Office and for it to be better able to deal with complaints of harassment and retaliation against very senior officials.
 - (e) The need for adequate, predictable and sustainable funding to enhance and support the Ethics functions of the UN entities such as UN-Habitat, UN-Women, UNITR etc.



| Reports Received in the UN Ethics Office, 2015 - 2021

The table below shows the number of requests for services received by the Ethics Office from August 2015 to 31 December 2021. From 1 January to 31 December 2021, the Ethics Office received 1,848 requests for services of which, represents an increase of a



| Ethics/Conduct Related Cases/Complaints Received by UN-Habitat from 2020 – to date

(i) **Ethics Related Requests Received by UN-Habitat:** For all requests received, the necessary advice was given and appropriate action taken in accordance with the relevant United Nations Regulations, Rules, Administrative Instructions applicable to the request. This shows a significant reduction in the number of cases in 2022 attributable to increased ethics awareness raising activities, training and outreach activities conducted in the preceding years.

UN-Habitat Ref	Date Reported	Type of Request	Action Taken	Status
OIOS-2022-00051	17 February 2022	Fraud	Staff member left the organisation and UN-Habitat referred the matter to OLA for action as per OIOS's recommendation	Closed
UN-Habitat-20210221-17	21 February 2021	Sexual Exploitation & Abuse	OIOS forwarded to UN-Habitat closure notice 31 August 2021 due to lack of clear and convincing evidence	Closed
UN-Habitat-20200310-16	10 March 2020	Unsatisfactory Conduct	OIOS forwarded to UN-Habitat closure notice 31 November 2020 due to lack of clear and convincing evidence	Closed
UN-Habitat-2020917-15	17 September 2020	Entitlement Fraud and unauthorised outside activity	OIOS investigation complete. Recommendation sent to OHRM for consideration	Open
UN-Habitat-20200122-10	22 January 2020	Abuse of Authority, Harassment, Discrimination	OIOS forwarded to UN-Habitat for action. UN-Habitat refereed matter to OHRM for appropriate action.	Open
UN-Habitat-20200615-12	15 June 2020	Abuse of Authority and Harassment	OIOS investigation completed. Recommendation sent to OHRM for consideration	Open



Ethics Related Activities Undertaken by UN-Habitat in 2021 – 2022

(ii) The Ethics Related Activities by UN-Habitat

- Providing **timely advice and support** to management and staff on ethics issues (**18-25 requests** in 2021 -2022).
- Collaborating with the Conduct and Discipline and Sexual Exploitation Abuse **focal points** to ensure the proper handling of cases. Incumbent appointed since January 2022.
- Promoting an **internal change process** through the **UN-Habitat Change process** aimed at transforming the organisation into an ethic compliant organisation ensuring the promotion of good conduct, dignity and civility (**workshops planned, subject to availability of resources**, for all staff).
- Establishing an enhanced **ethics framework** capable of dealing expeditiously with all ethics matters, (in consultation with UN Ethics Office).
- Ensuring compliance with all **mandatory ethics training** and **ethics leadership dialogues** training sessions.
 - Supporting the Executive Director in the exercise of her functions in achieving her Compact with the Secretary-General on Ethics.

(iii) Milestones of Ethics Related Activities in UN-Habitat

- Complainants are now fully informed of the process involved, as well as protected and accorded due process in line with the United Nations system-wide reforms on handling of **retaliation complaints** in accordance with **ST/SGB/2017/1**.
- Assisted the Office of the Executive Director in the compilation, review and finalisation of the **Annual reports to the Executive Board, the Members States and other missions** on matters pertaining to the handling of ethics in UN-Habitat.
- Enhancement of the **Executive Director's delegation of authority** to deal with unsatisfactory conduct. The ED can now issue disciplinary sanctions such as ALWP and other administrative measures without referring them to OHRM.
- Enhancement of **UN-Habitat's investigations** and **fact-finding capacity** to deal with complaints on unethical conduct in accordance with **ST/SGB/2019/8**.
 - **"Speak Up"** App devised by UN-Habitat.



Ethics Related Key highlights for UN-Habitat 2022

(iv) Outreach, training and Education

- Virtual **one-on one** meetings/consultations with the UN Ethics Office, on ethics and related policies, with UN-Habitat management and staff.
- Workshops to be undertaken by the UN Ethics Office for UN-Habitat staff on: **conflict of interest** and **Protection against retaliation and Sexual offences**.
- Subject to availability of funding, missions were planned for its outposted offices in ROAf, ROAS and ROLAC to undertake ethics related training and outreach activities.

(v) Leadership Dialogues

- **With the** support of the UN Ethics Office, UN-Habitat is conducting **leadership dialogue sessions**, currently ongoing, on ethics related issues with an anticipated participation rate of 95% for this year. The topic for this year dialogue session is: ***“Living the UN Values: What this means in practice for each of us?”*** As per **GA resolution A/77/75** the new UN Values are as follows **Inclusivity, Integrity, Humility and Humanity**. UN-Habitat will undertake additional outreach training and awareness activities to promote this values within the organization.



| CONCLUDING MESSAGES: RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED OUTCOMES

- With the support of the Office of the Executive Director, the Legal Unit **continues** to handle all ethics related requests and queries. This is putting a strain on the Legal Unit in delivering its normal functions. Therefore, it is recommended, subject to availability of funds, for UN-Habitat to have an **independent ethics focal point** who will serve as a liaison with the UN Secretariat Ethics Office and the focal point for handling all ethics related requests within UN-Habitat.
- Between January 2018 and March 2020, with financial support provided by the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency**, (“**Sida**”), as part of the Sida Project Support Agreement, the Legal Unit together with the UN Ethics Office and the Office of the UN Ombudsman undertook a series of outreach and training activities on ethics related activities and the implementation of the relevant rules and policies, in several out-posted offices such as Somalia, Ethiopia, DRC, Cairo, Kabul, Fukuoka etc. With the availability of **further** funds, we will be able to embark on more of such outreach and training activities.



| CONCLUDING MESSAGES : RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED OUTCOMES

- The Legal Unit plans to undertake further outreach activities with the UN Ethics Office and the Office of The Ombudsman, with the support of its Ethics Focal point, to raise awareness of staff and other personnel on the UN ethics framework, standards of conduct, policies and procedures for reporting fraud, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, particularly for those in the field. These will be in the form of **townhalls, group** and **one-to-one consultations**.
- Ensure a more coherent system of addressing ethics related issues and complaints and the need to align with the procedures in other UN agencies.
- Working with our partners, Member States, local governments, NGOs etc., to raise awareness and promote the implementation of standards and other ethics related measures, particularly during events such as UN-Habitat's Assembly and Executive Board, World Urban Forum (WUF), World Habitat Day (WHD), etc.



| CONCLUDING MESSAGES : RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED OUTCOMES

- The roles of the **Conduct and Discipline and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** focal points need to be enhanced and more resources allocated for it to adequately undertake its work.
- We have undertaken several ethics training and leadership dialogues across the organization. These have been quite impressive with 90 to 95% of staff participating. These include the following:
 - 2021 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Accountability System in the United Nations Secretariat: how do we understand and make it work?*”;
 - 2020 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Acknowledging dignity through civility: How can I communicate for a more harmonious workplace?*”
 - 2019 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Conflicts of Interest: Why do they matter?*”;
 - 2018 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Speaking up: When does it become whistleblowing?*”
 - 2017 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Standards of conduct: What’s expected of me?*”;
 - 2016 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Fraud awareness and prevention: How do I fit in?*”
 - 2015 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Fulfilling our mission: Taking individual responsibility*”;
 - 2014 Leadership Dialogue** — “*Treating each other with respect and tolerance*”;
 - 2013-12 Leadership Dialogue** — “*What does it mean to be an international civil servant?*”



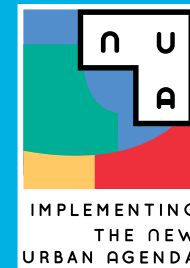
| CONCLUDING MESSAGES : RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED OUTCOMES

- The use of the **“Speak UP”** App and other tools developed for the receipt and reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse needs to be strongly encouraged and promoted to encourage its wider use, not only within UN-Habitat but across the UN system.
- There is need for adequate funding to be provided to allow for more ethics related activities across the organization and, to ensure that the function remains as independent as possible.
- Pursuant to the General Assembly resolution **A/77/75** cited previously UN-Habitat will undertake additional training and awareness raising to promote the new UN values of Humility, Inclusivity, Humanity and Integrity.
- To undertake these planned activities for the future and, the need to enhance the independence of the ethics function throughout the organization, as recommended, UN-Habitat will require **additional funding** and the **support of the Executive Board**.



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