

# THE STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2023

UN HABITAT



# EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN-HABITAT

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**AGENDA ITEM 10:**  
**Annual Report of the UN Ethics Office and ethics related activities undertaken by UN-Habitat in 2021**

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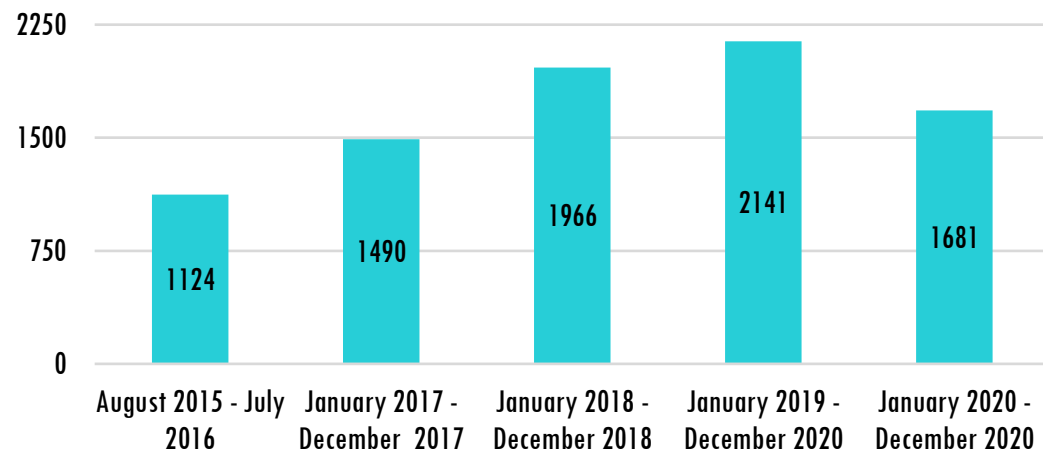
# | Agenda Item 10 – Annual Report the UN Ethics Office, A/76/76, 2020

## INTRODUCTION

- ➔ As part of the United Nations (UN) Secretariat, UN-Habitat implements its ethics related activities with the support of the UN Ethics Office. Currently, the Legal Unit serves as the focal point for ethics related activities. It 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 **2020** Annual Report, **A/76/76**, published on 30 April 2021, 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*,” 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 and milestones undertaken by UN-Habitat as a UN Secretariat agency in implementing the activities and policies of the UN Ethics Office within UN-Habitat. The Report is attached and shared.

## | Agenda Item 10 – Objective of the UN Ethics Office (cont.)

- From 1 January to 31 December 2020, the UN Ethics Office received 1,681 requests for services. As shown in the Figure below, that number represents a significant decrease compared to the steady increase in the number of requests in preceding years.



- Pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletins **ST/SGB/2005/22**, **ST/SGB/2007/11** and **ST/SGB/2007/11/Amend.1**, respectively, the functions of the UN Ethics Office, as implemented locally within UN-Habitat, include:
  - (a) Providing **confidential advice and guidance** to staff on ethical issues, including administering an ethics helpline;
  - (b) Administering the **organisation's financial disclosure programme**;
  - (c) Administering the **organisation's policy on protection against retaliation** for the responsibilities assigned to the Ethics Office;
  - (d) Developing **standards, training and education on ethics issues**, in coordination with the Office of Human Resources and other offices, and conducting ethics-related outreach; and
  - (e) **Supporting ethics standard-setting and promoting policy coherence** within the Secretariat and among the Organization's separately administered organs and programmes.



# | 10: Annual report of the UN Ethics Office, A/76/76, 2020

## Activities Undertaken by UN-Habitat in 2021

### (i) & (ii) Advisory & Financial Disclosure

- Serving as the liaison between UN-Habitat and the UN Ethics Office.
- Designating focal points for conduct and discipline, sexual assault and sexual exploitation cases.
- Providing support to the newly established and conduct and discipline function to ensure the proper handling of cases.
- 99% - of staff members attended Ethics Training Course
- 35 requests (2020-21) – Provided timely and efficient support and guidance to management and staff on ethics issues.
- 7 retreats/workshops - conducted for all staff).
- All required staff members completed their financial disclosure obligations.

#### On-going

- 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.

### (iii) Administering the organisation's policy on protection against retaliation

- Unsatisfactory conduct particularly those of retaliation are now being streamlined and handled more efficiently and expeditiously.
- Complainants are now fully protected and accorded due process fit for purpose in line with the United Nations system-wide reforms on handling of retaliation complaints in accordance with ST/SGB/2017/1.
- Assisted in the compilation, review and finalisation of the UN Secretariat Annual report on matters pertaining to ethics in UN-Habitat.
- Enhancement of the Executive Director's delegation of authority to deal with unsatisfactory conduct.
- 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.
- Facilitating training and outreach activities in all offices.



## | 10 (a): Annual report of the UN Ethics Office, A/76/76, 2020 Activities Undertaken by UN-Habitat in 2021

### (iv) Developing standards, training and education on ethics issues

- UN-Habitat's **Legal Unit** conducted trainings, virtually, at Headquarters, Regional and outposted offices on matters pertaining to ethics.
- Virtual **one-on one** meetings/consultations with the UN Ethics Office, currently ongoing, 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**.
- Missions were planned for Egypt, Iraq, India, Afghanistan, Myanmar and several African countries, Belgium, New York and Panama to undertake these training and outreach activities. However, these missions were cancelled due **Covid-19 pandemic**, and ongoing crisis in Afghanistan.

### (v) Leadership Dialogues, Supporting ethics standard-setting and promoting policy coherence

- With the support of the UN Ethics Office, UN-Habitat conducts the annual **leadership dialogue sessions**, currently ongoing, on ethics related issues with a participation rate of 90% so for the year 2021. It is anticipated that the participation rate for 2021 will be 99%. The topic for this year dialogue session is: *“Accountability System with the UN Secretariat: How do we understand and make it work?”*

#### Previous years dialogues include:

- 2015 – What does it mean to be an international Civil Servant;
- 2016 – Fulfilling our Mission: Taking individual responsibility
- 2017 – Fraud awareness and prevention;
- 2018 – Standards of Conduct: What’s expected of me?;
- 2019 – Conflicts of Interest: Why Do They Matter?; and
- 2020 – Acknowledging Dignity through Civility.



**(i) Ethics Related Requests Received by UN-Habitat:**

- 8 – Total number of cases requiring investigation by OIOS;**
- 1 – Case involving sexual exploitation, which was investigated by OIOS and closed on 31 August 2021;**
- 7 – Total number of cases involving allegations of misconduct of which, two (2) have been closed with no further action;**
- 3 – Total number of cases that OIOS have recommended to be closed with no further action necessary;**
- 5 – Total number of open cases;**
- 2 – Total number of open cases that OIOS has recommended that action be taken by the Human Resource Office in New York; and**
- 3 – Total number of open cases that OIOS has recommended that action be taken by the Executive Director.**

# | 10: Annual report of the UN Ethics Office, A/76/76, 2020

## Challenges faced by UN-Habitat in 2021

1. **Inadequate** and **unpredictable funding** constrained overall results for programme delivery.
2. The **reluctance** and **lack of confidence among staff** to report cases remains a challenge.
3. The limited **capacity** of **UN-Habitat** to deal with certain queries **expeditiously** and **effectively** especially related to **outside activities** and **financial disclosure**.
4. Challenges of the **UN Ethics Office** in reaching out to **out-posted** and **remote offices** to **ethics related activities**.
5. Overlapping of functions between the UN Ethics Office and other oversight bodies within the Secretariat.

## Proposed Solutions

1. Request made by the **Executive Director** for **additional regular budget**.
- 2 & 3. The appointment of the Conduct and Discipline focal point and effective reporting and case management has improved the situation particularly those relating to retaliation and harassment.
4. Use of virtual platforms have been effective for ethics related training.
5. Currently being addressed by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).



## | CONCLUDING Remarks

- The **Legal Unit** with the support of the Executive Office, is handling all ethics related requests and queries. It is recommended, subject to availability of funds, for UN-Habitat to enhance its **ethics function**.
- The UN Ethics Office is currently undertaking outreach activities to address issues relating to **conflict of interest and Protection against retaliation**.
- The role of the **Conduct and Discipline** and **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** focal points needs to be enhanced to undertake its work through online training.
- The **‘Speak UP’ App** devised by UN-Habitat will be strongly promoted for effective reporting and detection of unsatisfactory conduct.
- The **role of the Ombudsman** in mediating conflicts and disputes needs to be enhanced to reduce complaints and allegations of unsatisfactory conduct.
- UN-Habitat **continues to support UN-wide coordination** and cooperation in the conducting/handling of ethics related activities.





# THANK YOU

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