

46th UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN Staff Council

Annual Report 2019

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I. Introduction

The report is prepared in accordance to Article 8 of the Constitution and covers the period from May 2019 to 31 December 2019.¹

"All Staff of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UN WOMEN conscious of the need to work together to achieve their common ends, hereby constitute themselves as an Association which shall be known as the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Office for Project Services and UN WOMEN (hereinafter referred to as the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN Staff Association).

The purpose of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UNWOMEN Staff Association shall be to:

- (a) promote and safeguard the rights, interests and welfare of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN staff;
- (b) develop and improve effective staff participation in the decision-making process by maintaining active and open channels of communication with the Administration;
- (c) promote better understanding between the Administration and the Staff of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN WOMEN;
- (d) promote cooperation and unity among Staff Associations and Unions in the United Nations and UN Specialized Agencies within one Common System on matters governing conditions of services;
- (e) defend staff and work to improve terms and conditions of employment."

[As per the Constitution of the Staff Council]

The UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN Staff Council shall serve as the principal organ of the Staff Association and is accountable to it.

The 46th UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN Staff Council was elected to office and took up office in April 2019. The Constitution provides for 5 members for UNDP, 2 members each for UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women and two members open to any agency. Currently, one more UNOPS representatives is to be elected.

¹ This report covers the period from May 2019 to December 31st, 2019. A narrative report prepared by the Officer in Charge of the former Staff Council was submitted to the new Staff Council during its meeting on 9 July 2019.

Membership of the 46th Staff Council includes:

Abolade Sobola, 2nd Vice Chair (UNFPA Representative)
Amsale Admassu, General Secretary (UNDP Representative)
Audrey Hyatt, UNDP Representative
Devika Parbhu, UNDP Representative
Fikerte Assefa, UNDP Representative
Gulzada Bafina, UN Women Representative
Michele Parasmo, UNFPA Representative
Rohan Jones, UNOPS Representative
Sonya Thimmaiah, 1ST Vice Chair (UN Women Representative)
Sylvia Hordosch, Treasurer (UN Women Representative)
Urjasi Rudra, UN Women Representative

Secretariat: Baholy Andrianaivo and Tenagne Getahun

According to the Constitution, there shall be three standing committees in place: polling, legal and audit. The current term of the Polling Officers ends in October 2020. The establishment of the Legal and Audit Committees is under process.

The Staff Council administers together with the administrations of UNDP and UNFPA, the Paul Hoffman Assistance Fund, an emergency fund available for staff members in distress. A new Committee is being established, in compliance with the rules of procedures of the Fund.

The Council Members worked diligently and accomplished the tasks set by ensuring the adherence to established personnel policies and procedures. In addition to the routine responsibilities and functions, the Council also responded to unforeseen emergencies and problems.

This Council opted for dialogue and consensus-building as an approach and developed and delivered on its 2019 Annual Work Plan work plan accordingly.

II. Institutional and Communication Structures

i) Council members

The Staff Council Constitution stipulates the Council shall comprise eleven (11) to thirteen (13) members: five (5) seats to UNDP, two (2) seats to UNFPA, two (2) seats to UNOPS, and two seats to UN Women, and two (2) floating seats. The 46th Council has only one UNOPS representative as no other representative from the organization has come forward to assume this role. In the meantime, UN Women representatives showed unprecedented interest in participation in the Staff Council, and four representatives from the entity were elected by UN Women staff to join the Staff Council, including the two floating seats.

According to the Constitution, there shall be three standing committees in place: i) Polling Officers; ii) Legal Committee; and iii) Auditing Committee. The Polling Officers Committee was elected on October 17th, Michael Clacken, Chair (UNDP); Deidre Charles-Lucas, Vice-Chair (UNFPA); Lourdeth Ferguson (UNFPA); and Alicia Long (UN Women)

The Council meets every Tuesday from 1:00pm to 2:00pm in DC1-2488. The Executive Committee meets once a month. Council meetings are open to personnel of its constituent agencies, unless confidential issues are discussed.

For the Staff Council to successfully deliver on its mandate, regular institutional and communication structures need to be reestablished and strengthened. This requires strengthening the Council and fostering working environment in which personnel is engaged in decision-making processes, maintaining dialogue and shared accountability between personnel and management and coordination with the UN Common system.

Strengthening lines of communication with **personnel** is critical for a successful work of the Council. This includes improving colleagues' confidence in the Council and directly effects work on policies and regulations, change management processes and properly addressing individual and group concerns. Some significant progress has been recognized by personnel in regards to the timely information and engagement by the Council in those areas of work.

2019 was a year of transition with a newly elected members of the Council. The Staff Council held a retreat in New York (August 2019) as a team-building exercise and to develop its workplan.



The Staff Council organized town hall meetings with UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women personnel as an introduction of the new Council members and to learn about the priority concerns of colleagues.

- Meeting with UNDP personnel: 22 July 2019
- Meeting with UNFPA personnel: 31 July 2019
- Meetings with UN Women personnel: 6 June 2019, 2 October 2019; Staff Council representation at townhall meetings of the Executive Director/UN Women: 17 July 2019, 7 October 2019, 15 January 2020

In addition, a productive UNDP Townhall meeting on the People for 2030 Strategy, organized jointly by the Staff Council and UNDP OHR, was held on 23 October 2019. Over 450 people participated. During the Townhall, feedback, comments and concerns were received from all duty stations which enabled Staff Council to work on shared accountability for translating the Strategy into concrete action as well as across all contractual modalities.

A town hall meeting was held on 22 July 2019 with all UNDP staff to introduce the new Council members and shared and discussed the staff concerns.

A UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) information session was organized in NYC on 26th September 2019 and over 50 people participated. The UNJSPF Acting COE and UNJSPF Chief of Operations presented the Fund.

Thank you so much for making the staff council accessible. The regular communication and guidance from staff council on various process e.g salary survey are very useful. The collaboration on realignment processes, diligent follow up and engagement in the staff 2030 strategy all helps boost our confidence in the council. Thank you for raising issues of diversity and inclusion".

UNDP staff



The United Nations Staff Day is the personnel's largest annual event and the Staff Council participated in the preparation of the 2019 Staff Day held on 6 September 2019 by supporting the UN Staff Association with different activities dedicated to honoring and celebrating United Nations Staff Day through sports, music, culture and food. The Staff Council disseminated the information about UN Staff Day to UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UN WOMEN personnel, encouraging them to join the celebration.



UNFPA launched a culture initiative in 2019 with funding from Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. The 'Culture Initiative' was envisioned to enable UNFPA to assess, through the active engagement of different parts of the organization, key components of existing culture and to identify key cultural traits that will enable UNFPA best deliver its mandate. As part of this process, two inter-regional workshops on organizational culture took place in November 2019, bringing together East and Southern Africa and Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Nairobi, as well as Arab States and Asia and the Pacific in Dubai. Both workshops benefited from participants from over 40 different country offices from all four regions. The Staff Council actively contributed to a powerful and engaging experience to assess the existing organizational culture(s) and reflect on the desired culture "to be" at UNFPA.

ii) Local Staff Associations

Council members met with the Local Staff Association in Accra, Ghana, which pointed out the need for more and improved communication on the mandate of the Staff Council and how it relates to them in the local context. As a result, quarterly meetings of Local Staff Associations within the region was recommended, using available technology to enable online participation of personnel from different countries and to promote south-south exchange of knowledge and lessons learned.

Kenya Joint Staff Association and UN Women ESARO Staff requested the Staff Council to deploy a support mission to address serious issues in the workplace in UN Women ESARO in Kenya. Joint engagement of the Joint Staff Association (JSA) and the Staff Council resulted in a followup meeting with UN Women Executive Director, where the Staff Council presented concrete recommendations and findings from its mission and UN Women Executive Director received them positively and agreed to take action to improve the situation. The UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa RBA annual cluster meeting took place in Accra from 12 to 15 November 2019. Staff Council Chair presented on the Key Staff Priorities as part of the Interactive Dialogue on Programme Oversight, Performance Management and Talent Management. The opportunity was also used to optimize networking with the UNDP leaders in the African region to promote the upcoming Regional Workshop, review issues in the Ghana country office, connect with officers of the Uganda office to informally review the issue reported by UNFPA staff. Her presentation resulted in concrete requests for support. It also prompted a few individuals to approach her with their own concerns. We had a significant number of bilateral conversations with colleagues from various countries, and an in-depth conversation on Benin, Togo, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Uganda, Malawi and the Regional Center in Addis.

iii) Consultative Group on Staff Matters (CGSM)/UNDP

An ongoing dialogue on shared responsibilities with the management is crucial for promotion and safeguard of the rights, interests and welfare of the staff/personnel. The Consultative Group on Staff Matters (CGSM) is the official institutional channel for this. The CGSM is chaired by the Associate Administrator and the Chair of Staff Council is Vice Chair of the CGSM. The role of the CGSM is to review and propose substantive policy changes affecting UNDP personnel. The 46th Staff Council realized that CGSM had not been functioning in 2019 due to scheduling difficulties at both ends, UNDP management and the Staff Council. The first meeting of the CGSM with the current Staff Council will take place the 4th week of January 2020.

iv) Executive Board

The Chair of the Staff Council addressed the UNDP/UNOPS/UNFPA Executive Board scheduled from 3 to 6 September 2019, as well as the second regular session of the UN Women Executive Board from 9 to 10 September 2019. In her remarks, she stressed that the Staff Council, together with about 80 country and regional level associations, is fully committed to a strong UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women and to the well-being of all personnel, staff and non-staff. To be a workplace of choice, the agencies need to encourage dialogue, enhance good practices, address areas of improvement and prioritize workplace culture, contractual modalities and skilled leadership.

v) Management

The Staff Council had courtesy meetings with UNDP Administrator and Executive Directors of UNFPA, UN Women and UNOPS, as well as all UNDP Assistant Administrators and Directors of all Bureaus. A regular dialogue was established with Directors of Human Resources of UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women and a monthly meeting has been agreed with those Directors to discuss collaboration, workplace culture, change management and concern of personnel. In addition, the Staff Council participates in monthly meetings with UN Women Deputy Executive Director for Resource Management, Sustainability and Partnerships, and quarterly meetings with UN Women Executive Director. Management relationship with the Staff Council has been strengthened during the year and we look forward to continued collaboration and solution-oriented dialogue on HR

matters. We are especially happy to see that UN Women has a strong representation on the Council and UN Women senior managers



Testimony has been shared by UN Women personnel as follow: "Management/staff relationship has been strengthened during the year and we look forward to continued collaboration and solution-oriented dialogue on HR matters. We are especially happy to see that UN Women has a strong representation on the Council.

UN Women Management

vi) Paul Hoffman Staff Assistance Fund

The Fund is to provide financial assistance in any event of emergency or personal crisis, which directly affects staff members of UNDP and/or UNFPA who are serving on a permanent, probationary or fixed term contract of at least one year. The assistance provided under the Fund will normally be in the form of loans, but in exceptional cases, grants are considered. Loans made by the Fund are interest-free.

The Fund Committee shall comprise of five members from the staff of UNDP and UNFPA Headquarters, jointly nominated annually by the UNDP Staff Council and UNDP and UNFPA managements.

The current Fund Committee has submitted a detailed executive summary report to the Staff Council. The new Fund Committee is under election process in compliance with the rules of procedures of the Fund. The composition of the new membership of the Committee will be released to all personnel as soon as completed.

vii) Staff Council Website

The Staff Council website (<u>https://www.staffcouncil.org/</u>) has been updated and a new website designed by OIMT is being finalized.

III. Promotion and safeguard of well-being and rights of personnel

The Council is fully committed to the well-being of personnel and has taken a series of actions and initiatives to improve working conditions as described below under four areas of work that overlap. This is done through discussions and negotiations.

In the 2018 General Staff Survey (GSS) 92% of people reported a strong sense of pride to work in UNDP, so did 95% in UNFPA and 88% in UNOPS, and 87% in UN Women (2016 survey).

However, several issues, including the **contractual modalities** remain an outstanding issue to be addressed by all agencies/entity. About 65% of UNDP personnel are identified as "non-staff", 17% UNFPA and 88% in UNOPS, and 61% in UN Women. Attracting and retaining talent when there is a persistent imbalance of core and non-core resources (88% in UNDP and 70% in UNFPA) remains a challenge. SDG integration requires long(er) term involvement and strong(er) presence and support in many countries, which requires mobile core staff rather than short-term contractors.

According to the GSS results in each of the agencies, the quality of a leader is one of the most important attributes of a working environment. Investing in education, training, coaching and skills-development of managers is a must. Conflicts relating to **performance management** review and management style remains amongst the most frequent ones. The culture of performance reviews needs to meet personnel's expectation for ongoing feedback, support to improve where needed and recognition of performance. There is a strong need for improved organizational culture that fosters collaboration within and among teams, and effective leadership.

i) Policy making processes

The Staff Council was actively involved in advocating for and in drafting of various policy documents, such as: Individual Performance Management and Development (PMD) and Occupational safety in UNDP, a new Internship policy; Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination & Abuse of Authority Policy; and Consultant/Individual Contractor Policy in UN Women.

The Staff Council also contributed comments to the development of system-wide policies, which is described under item iv) – Common UN System cooperation (page 13)

ii) Change Management Processes

The Council is actively and diligently involved in various ongoing change management processes in UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women. It is clear that personnel feel "fatigue" with change management processes, and despite being receptive to the need for change in general, finds the processes often unclear. Personnel of all agencies have expressed the need for more transparency and better and timely information sharing on such processes.

The Staff Council notes higher interest among staff to safeguard rights in the context of change management processes, as well as high professional standards that all personnel have shown and expects from management. In a relatively short time of its existence this Council experienced the

processes in which staff, individual or as groups, mobilized against the process they perceived as poorly managed as well as the ones that have been seen as not open and transparent.

There is a number of parallel processes in UNDP that the Council has continued to be engaged in. This included supporting the alignment exercises of both Global Policy Network and OHR in 2019. The Staff Council has been involved in the ongoing HR alignment of the GPN Joint Directorate and the Strategy and Systems Management teams by keeping open communication channels with affected staff and GPN management; and by sharing extensive inputs to job profiles designed by UNDP Management Consulting Team (MCT). The process is expected to be completed in March 2020.

UN Women: The Staff Council met several times with the Special Advisor to the Executive Director on the Change Management process, as well as with the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director, and HR Director to discuss issues of transparency, communication and organizational culture. The Staff Council organized a dedicated all-personnel meeting at UN Women to gather feedback and relay questions and feedback to the Change Management team, and disseminated the resulting information among all personnel of UN Women. The Council continues to follow the implementation process and is expected to provide feedback to implementation guidelines and workplace culture improvements that falls under the Change Management process in UN Women.

The Staff Council has played an integral role in assuring fairness of the Change management process in both UNFPA and UN Women. The Staff Council's rational approach and both agencies' willingness to have an open and constructive dialogue resulted in regular meetings during which the major HR issues were discussed and solved.

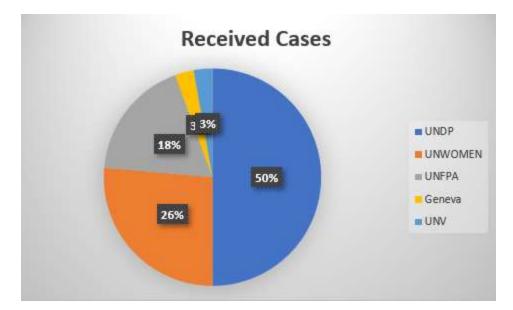
In UNFPA, the ongoing institutional transformation initiatives launched at the beginning of 2019 were organized around Task Teams. The Staff Council was involved in the initial activities regarding Pooling of HQ GS Administrative and Finance staff, to ensure a favorable outcome for all staff. The work of all Task Teams is proceeding swiftly and approaching conclusion. With the exception of the initiative on "Aligning HQ-RO-CO functions", all other task team initiatives will be completed by February 2020.

iii) Advocacy for rights and interests of personnel

The Council supports personnel rights, interest and well-being through the work described above. For example, the Chair's annual speech at the UNDP/UNOPS/UNFPA Executive Board, as well as the second regular session of the UN Women Executive Board, provided a powerful opportunity for raising personnel concerns with the management and Member States.

However, there are instances when the individual staff, groups or even the whole offices require ad-hoc intervention on concerns, issues and disputes. Those cases require a range of support, from advice to advocating and representing the personnel in negotiations with the management.

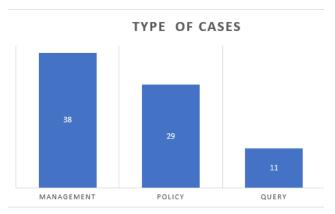
Since February 2019, seventy-two (72) cases have been recorded (36 UNDP; 19 UN Women, 13 UNFPA, 2 Geneva, 2 UNV). Out of 72 reported cases, 31 cases have been successfully supported and closed.



The cases include a variety of concerns and issues that sometimes require simple interventions with the OHR and or senior management, but often they require representation of an individual, group or larger office interests and protection of rights in negotiation with the management. The Council is fully cognisant of the informal and formal justice mechanisms available and is fully committed to advocating for the improvement and shortening of the timelines for the justice mechanisms to deliver solutions. Unfortunately, with processes such as investigations and tribunal cases taking years, the workplace dynamics are extremely challenging for the organizations, and requires hands-on and intensive support from Staff Representatives.

The Staff Council Case Management System has been developed with support from the UNDP-Office of Information Management and Technology (OIMT) to manage all reported cases of concerns and issues and to provide timely feedback to the management request of policy/guidelines.

The below chart demonstrates the cases of the Council's scope and the involvement types are: i) concerns with the work place culture and practice, change management and similar processes related issues ed ii) individual and group concerns process related to implementation entitlements, recruitment, parental leave, occupation safety, potential abuse of power and retaliation, work life balance, and iii) general queries.



iv) Common UN system cooperation

Close collaboration has been established between the Staff Council, the Secretariat Staff Union and UNICEF Association. This includes exchanges and sharing relevant information for advancing well-being and rights of all personnel.

A meeting between the Staff Council and Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) has been held in connection with the preparation of JIU review of inter-agency mobility. Upon completion of the preparatory meeting, Staff Council provided comments on the draft report, which have been reflected in the final report.

The Staff Council participates and contributes to the UN Secretariat Staff Management Committee (SMC) on **system-wide policy** development² such as for example: Gender focal points in the Secretariat (revision of SGB 2008/12); Temporary special measures on gender parity (update of ST/AI/1999/9); and Administrative instruction on part-time employment.

A regular and operational relationship was established with UNICEF Staff Association, UN Staff Union, and Local Staff Union at the country level as well. UNICEF Global Association, UN Secretariat Staff Union and Staff Council jointly presented their work and engaged in discussion with the newly appointed judges of UN Dispute Tribunal (UNDT).

Consultative meetings took place between the Staff Council and the Ombudsman Office and the Staff Council recognizes the important role that Ombudsman has been playing in the internal justice system. The Staff Council will maintain periodical meetings with the Ombudsman to share experiences to improve the working environment of the four organizations, while maintaining a clear distinction of their respective roles.

 $^{^2}$ The SMC is a

A Secretariat-wide joint staff-management body composed of equal numbers of representatives of the staff and representatives of the Secretary-General. In 2019 we contributed to drafting of many policy documents. Some examples include:

In 2007, the Staff Council and the Field Staff Union organized the United Nations International Civil **Servants' Federation** (UNISERV) (³). UNESCO joined UNISERV in 2018 and a Cooperation Agreement with Federation of International Civil Servants Associations (FICSA) was signed the same year.

An introduction and briefing meeting with UNISERV President was held with all newly elected Staff Council members in 2019, and two other meetings have been organized to meet with Council members to discuss collaboration and working relationship. Two members of the Staff Council presently hold the position of the Vice-President and General Secretary positions of UNISERV.

Representation on matters governing conditions of service is another priority for the Staff Council and it is done through UNISERV. This includes representation the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)⁴. One of the important ongoing tasks is a review of local salaries methodology. Local salary survey is being conducted every 5 years and the salaries have been last changed in 2015. The United Nations system must be competitive with the employers in the same labour market in order to both attract and retain staff of high standards.

The Staff Council reached out to different organizations to familiarize itself with their work and to start collaborations. Meetings took place, amongst the other, with the UNJPF Pension fund, ICSC, UN Volunteers, and UNFCU, a non-profit banking which serves 200 markets. UNFCU representatives met with the Staff Council on 19 November 2019 and presented its new developments for staff, the foundation, business development and strategies in accordance to SDG. The representatives requested feedback from Staff Council as they continue to expand and improve their services.

IV. Financial Statement

The work of the Staff Council is supported by financial contributions of the four organizations. UNDP provides salaries for the Chair and two staff members in the Secretariat as well as operating expenses. UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women make annual contributions. Personnel can contribute to the work of the Council by paying monthly dues on a sliding scale which are automatically deducted from payroll. As of December 2019, about 150 colleagues contributed to the Council

³ The United Nations International Civil Servants' Federation is an international Federation comprised of UN system staff unions and associations committed to an atmosphere of constructive cooperation in order to provide equitable and effective representation of staff at all levels. UNISERV primarily represents member interests in inter-agency bodies that make decisions and recommendations on conditions of service. There are three labor Federations serving unions and staff associations in the UN system, the other organisations being FICSA and CCISUA.

UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UNWOM 1 January - 31 December 2019	EN Financial Report	
Opening balance on 1 January 20)19	\$ 424,200.52
Income UNDP	General operating expenses (GOE)	\$ 58,857.00
	Annual contribution	\$ 15,000.00
-	Annual contribution	\$ 33,000.00
	Annual contribution	\$
	Annual contribution	20,000.00
UNFCU interest		\$ 2,418.10
Membership dues		\$ 22,308.52
Total		\$ 575,784.14
Expenditures		
Travel		\$ 37,559.45
UNISERV membership fee (2019 and 2020)		\$ 4,000.00
Staff Council retreat		\$ 4,857.91
Simply Voting		\$ 887.44
Operations		\$ 2,407.32
Website		\$ 264.00
Subtotal		\$ 49,976.12
Closing balance as of 31 December 2019		\$ 525,808.02

V. 2020 Work Plan

Staff Council, Article 2: The purposes of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UNWOMEN Staff Association shall be to: (a) promote and safeguard the rights, interests and welfare of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS/UNWOMEN staff; (b) develop and improve effective staff participation in the decision making process by maintaining active and open channels of communication with the Administration; (c) promote better understanding between the Administration and the Staff of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UNWOMEN; (d) promote cooperation and unity among Staff Associations and Unions in the United Nations and UN Specialized Agencies within one Common System on matters governing conditions of service; (e) defend staff and work to improve terms and conditions of employment

Objectives	Activities	Estimated Budget
Objective 1: Foster working environment in which staff are engaged	SC annual General meeting at HQs with 4 agencies	\$500.00
decision making processes	Regional LSA meetings - 4 regions	\$320,000.00
	Staff/personnel meetings	\$2,000.00
	Subtotal 1	\$322,500.00
Objective 2: Maintain an ongoing	UNDP RBx collaboration	\$30,000.00
dialogue on shared accountability with Management	AD hoc travel as requested	\$25,000.00
	Subtotal 2	\$55,000.00
Objective 3: Support personnel	UNISERV membership fee	\$2,000.00
wellbeing through engagement with UN Common System SA &	UN Staff Association	\$0.00
Federations	Travel	\$25,000.00
	Engagement in UN system wide and agencies specific policy development	\$0.00
	Subtotal 3	27, 000,00
Objective 4: Strengthen the staff	SC related elections	\$1,000.00
Council	Exchanges with the other entities on roles and responsibilities (Ombudsman, OIOS, Legal, Ethics, ICSC etc.)	\$500.00
	Staff Council norms and guiding principles	\$0.00
	Case management	\$0.00
	Personnel outreach	\$0.00
	Personnel outreach Trainings	\$0.00 \$0.00
	Trainings	\$0.00
	Trainings Staff Council Retreat	\$0.00 \$10,000.00
	Trainings Staff Council Retreat Communications	\$0.00 \$10,000.00 \$10,000.00

Acknowledgement

The Staff Council would like to thank all colleagues who gave their time to serve on panels and committees in the four agencies. The Staff Council also wishes to express appreciation to the Administrations of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN Women for open lines of communication and ongoing access to decision-makers of the four agencies.