CEB
Chief Executives Board
for Coordination

High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM)

CEB Task Force on the Future of the United Nations System Workforce

Interim Report of the CEB Task Force on the Future of the United Nations System Workforce

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I. OBJECTIVES

1. The HLCM Task Force on the Future of the UN Workforce was established in 2019[1] with a mandate consisting of three principle aims - to review the current contractual modalities of the UN system; to consider new ways of working in order to propose elements to foster an enabling culture and positive employee experience from multiple perspectives, including leadership, people management, flexible work arrangements, transparency and dialogue; and to look into pilot initiatives that leverage the digitized work environment, enabled by technology, in support of the aims of the other two key areas.

2. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Task Force has re-oriented its work to focus on its immediate impacts – both positive and negative – on the UN's ways of working and on the implications for the future, as well as derive important lessons learned that could be applied to the future.

3. Prior to COVID-19, a great deal of work had already been undertaken by the Task Force employing a visionary approach in defining the medium to long-term workforce needs of the Organization to remain able to deliver on its mission for peace and security, human rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the highest standards of competencies, ethics and integrity. Discussions on important topics such as leadership, organizational culture, performance management and career development, as well as environmental considerations, along with potential proposals were elaborated upon.

4. However, in the context of COVID-19 and the immediate need for the Organization to adapt its ways of working, as discussed during the Virtual Executive Session of 15 June 2020, it was decided and endorsed by the HLCM to examine those aspects of the work of the Task Force that could have the most impact and be implemented on an expedited basis, namely elements of an expanded approach to remote working, supported by agile contractual arrangements and enabling technologies.

5. This interim report therefore reflects only a portion of the aspirations of the UN system organisations' visions to become more agile, effective and inclusive in the fulfilment of their mandates, with particular focus on the management, the equipment and well-being of their most valued asset: their personnel2. Other important areas that were discussed and are highlighted throughout the document will be further elaborated upon in future reports.

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[1] CEB/2019/5

[2] Throughout the document, "personnel" is used as an inclusive term to refer to staff members, individual contractors, consultants, UN volunteers, interns and other member of the workforce that helps the UN System to deliver on its mandate.

II.   PRINCIPLES

Importance of the UN's unique role in the future

6. In an increasingly volatile world, the role of the UN remains as relevant now as it ever has been. The United Nations and its workforce are increasingly confronted with challenges from an array of external factors, including social and economic issues, emerging technologies, and changing political situations. The UN remains the principal global forum for multilateral negotiation and response to international critical events. In order to respond to Member States expectations, the UN system needs to anticipate and adapt to these challenges in order to prepare for the future and ensure the Organization can continue to deliver upon its ever-evolving mandates.

7. The Secretary-General's management reform has been a key enabler of the Organization's ability to deliver in the face of the increasingly complex demands of the modern world. To confront global challenges and remain relevant in fast-changing environments, the reform has empowered managers and staff, simplified processes, increased accountability and transparency and improved on the delivery of our mandates. However, the UN needs to move forward with a model that allows for greater agility and responsiveness in real-time to critical incidents, such as COVID-19, or other global imperatives.

8. At the same time, the UN faces funding constraints and challenges. Traditional funding sources are shifting, and financial constraints becoming more apparent, from insecurity around donor funding (especially for core resources) as well as the broader implications on the global economy that will come from the pandemic. The UN needs to prepare itself for the such global financial crises and its eventual impact on our mandate delivery.

Increasing field-focus

9. The world faces multiple and complex threats and the current pandemic has set far-reaching and fundamental changes in motion: UN personnel perform essential functions in field locations - from peacekeeping operations to supporting refugee and other vulnerable populations. This strong field capacity is one of the UN system's greatest strengths and added value in the international system and they are functions that cannot easily be performed remotely.

10. New ways of working must be approached from multiple perspectives that include the UN system's normative functions as well as regard for field requirements, given the UN's unique mandate to provide aid and assistance to populations in need no matter where in the world or how remote the location.

11. The UN has maintained business continuity throughout the pandemic and assisted a large number of countries to adapt and mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis (e.g. supporting national health systems; providing tools and equipment to work remotely; and allowing national assemblies to continue to operate). At the same time, the UN does not yet have the capacity to support all personnel to continue to deliver by providing proper equipment, appropriate policies, sufficient internet access and bandwidth, robust cyber and data security measures, ergonomic workspace support, etc.

UN values, ethics and accountability

12. As the UN celebrates its 75th anniversary and prepares for the challenges ahead, it is an important time to reconnect to and reinvigorate the UN core values. As the UN System Leadership Framework made clear: 'We need to live up to our own principles **within** the UN System.'

13. The UN should and must be the gold standard for an inclusive, open, diverse, participatory, transparent and accountable organisation. The UN can serve as an example of an empowered organisation that establishes, upholds and defends essential values and lives by them. This includes scrutinising, monitoring and evaluating UN internal practices and addressing and preventing any forms of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse of authority, whether individual or systemic within the organisation. It is about fostering a culture of respect, zero tolerance and accountability. It means ensuring fair and decent employment for all its personnel, including universal social protection for consultants, individual contractors, UN Volunteers and interns.

14. Words must be supported by action. Existing zero tolerance policies and codes of conduct are clear, but there is a need to ensure consequences when values are not upheld in behaviour, and misconduct needs to be rigorously and transparently dealt with. Publishing data on such cases can help to build trust in the reporting system and hold the organisation accountable. Effective support and protection must be in place for whistle-blowers, and organizations need effective tools to navigate ethical dilemmas and foster value-based behaviour.

15. Other than COVID-19, one defining feature of the global landscape over the first half of 2020 has been the rise of global social justice movements against racism which have shown the extent to which race-based discrimination is institutionalized. In the UN, diversity is typically viewed through a binary gender and geography lens in many entities. A more expanded and nuanced understanding is necessary to enable a more representative and inclusive approach today. In some instances, COVID-19 has also shed light on systemic discrimination, privileges and how existing inequalities are aggravated in a crisis.

16. From a diversity and inclusion perspective, the UN System is not fully leveraging the potential of strategic people analytics, and therefore suffers from a lack of nuanced data, which is a barrier to establishing a more in-depth knowledge of our workforce, especially the "hidden" or more marginalized segments of the population. It is key to monitor all relevant dimensions and embrace a more comprehensive set of common diversity and inclusion policies that view diversity holistically with all of its intersections.

Embracing change systemically

17. The UN was built upon the principles of evolution and change. Throughout its 75 years of existence it has weathered changes of all nature, from political to socioeconomic to environmental. The Organization has shown itself as the leading institution globally in promoting dialogue and guiding nations towards peace and sustainability.

18. Transformational change and collaboration would not be possible without the strong and committed leadership of senior management across the UN System, irrespective of whether the changes are structural, are related to new ways of working or are about embracing technology. Thriving in uncertainty requires courage, vision and determination that would need to be sourced, strengthened and empowered.

19. United by the highest standards of the international civil service and the UN Secretary-General's call for 'principled and visionary UN leadership,' the Task Force has identified a number of critical UN Leadership Commitments, building on the UN System Leadership Framework, the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 crisis and the challenges identified among entities.

20. Those commitments identified by the Task Force are listed below and will be further elaborated upon in future reports:

   a. **Putting people first** by investing in and enabling our workforce

   b. **Driving a passion for results** and foster a "can do mentality" while holding people accountable

   c. **Embracing new leadership models** that foster greater collaboration with less hierarchy recognizing that the future of work requires different skills and different delivery and operating models

   d. **Building trust** through authenticity, dialogue, courage and transparency

   e. **Aggressively pursuing** the simplification of rules and policies to enable faster decision-making

   f. **Using technology** to strengthen delivery of results globally and enable new ways of working regardless of location

   g. **Embracing learning** and fostering growth mindsets and new skills for a volatile and increasingly complex world

   h. **Showcasing and advancing diversity, inclusion and gender parity**

   i. Creating a clear **Employee Value Proposition** to position the UN System as an employer of choice

   j. **Embracing the greater cause mindset: "A truly One UN"**- this aims to foster a mindset that goes beyond each organisation and genuinely places the common objectives first

III. FOCUS AREAS AND PROPOSALS

Remote working

21. The COVID-19 pandemic ignited a large-scale social experiment: the majority of the global UN workforce started working remotely in the course of a few weeks. At the organisational level, while offices will not be a thing of the past, the "Next Normal" will include a shift towards more remote working.

22. Internal surveys, such as UN-wide COVID-19 Pulse Check survey[3], have shown that working remotely has largely worked well, helping to build trust and destigmatise flexible working arrangements. Some colleagues even reported better coordination and teamwork, as the physical separation of remote working demands more explicit communication than before. This can come with various benefits for personnel, from reduced commute time to an increased empowerment and overall freedom to organise their lives more flexibly, while often delivering more effectively. With people working from home, equipping them with adequate IT equipment and knowledge of digital collaboration platforms becomes even more vital.

23. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN system entities activated relevant business continuity measures at different times since the start of the pandemic taking into account the local situation and in accordance with decisions and restrictions put in place by the national governments in relation to the pandemic in their country.

24. In the past five months, the organizations of the UN system have experienced, though under exceptional crisis circumstances, the realities of Alternate Working Arrangements on the largest scale ever (e.g. full-time remote work for the vast majority of their personnel). In many duty stations, only minimal personnel at many duty stations continued to enter the UN premises to perform essential on-site functions such as building maintenance, cleaning and security.

25. Such experience is bringing a wealth of knowledge and lessons learned to multiple areas impacted by remote/teleworking, including not only the Organization's ability to deliver on its mandated activities, but also on UN personnel's well-being and mental health. Various surveys were conducted within and among UN system organizations, such as the Pulse Check, and are being reviewed and considered as organizations are reviewing their policies on flexible working arrangements.

26. As the UN system reviews its approach to remote working, a number of considerations are being assessed including:

    a. Role of the legislative/governing bodies and decision-making authority;

    b. Programme planning, budgeting and financial implications;

    c. Key principles and values embedded in the UN Charter (such as geography and gender representation, legal status of staff members and host countries' agreements);

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[3] UN-wide Pulse Check, in which more than 4,600 colleagues from across the UN system shared challenges and highlighted opportunity areas in the context of the COVID pandemic

d. Conditions of services of international civil servants including the expatriate nature of internationally recruited staff, the Noblemaire and Flemming principles, the different elements of the compensation packages, salary surveys, classification etc; and

e. Operational opportunities and challenges: organizational culture; efficiency/effectiveness and productivity; pros and cons of long-term full-time telecommuting, including impact on work-life balance, mental and physical health of personnel; medical insurance coverage; procurement and maintenance (equipment and other considerations for individuals to setup a home office; any technological infrastructure required by staff and training on remote working requirements; official travel; security related issues and Organization's obligations, such as security evacuation, workers compensation, etc.

27. While there will be differences in each organization's policy as a reflection of their mandated activities and operational realities, it is recommended that a set of key principles be discussed and agreed upon by the High level Committee on Management (HLCM) to ensure consistency, fairness and equity in the treatment of UN personnel regardless of the organization in which they serve. These principles are set out below.

UN system remote working common principles

28. **Results focus:** The productivity of all personnel including remote workers must be reviewed through strong results-based performance management approaches and clear feedback dialogue between the employee and the manager. Performance needs to be clearly based on work deliverables as well as value-based behaviours and competencies. Organizations need to challenge the traditional 'face-time culture' and focus on the delivery of measurable results. For that to happen, managers need to be well equipped to manage the performance of virtual/hybrid teams, particularly in the areas of personal communication, enabling technology and management by results.

29. **Management culture:** Managers should be encouraged to adopt a flexible mindset to ensure that remote working policies are applied consistently. Flexible work is for all personnel, irrespective of marital or other social status: such as personnel with disabilities; with dependents with disabilities; those with diverse caregiving responsibilities ranging from childcare to eldercare; or who may be experiencing other life-changing events. Flexibility must be equitably applied and must not become a divisive or discriminatory practice. At the same time, it is the case that some functions, in some locations, will not lend themselves to flexible work in the same way as others.

30. **Transparent decision-making:** Approval authority for remote work in the duty station[4] should be defined at a reasonable level in the hierarchy, so the consideration of requests is not unduly delayed. As a general principle, supervisors should approve requests for remote work in the duty station unless the employee's functions do not lend themselves for remote work or when the requested arrangement would otherwise not be in the organisation's best interest. Approval authority may differ for different types of telework, especially in cases where the chosen modality may impact visa status, privileges and immunities, time zones or other considerations.

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[4] Locations outside a 50-mile radius from the duty station are generally considered outside the duty station.

31. **Remote work options for the field:** Availability of remote work must apply to field-based personnel as much as possible. Given that field offices may have more limitations to full-time remote working than headquarters due to the expectations of physical presence with external partners and programmes, post-pandemic scenarios that consider remote work as part of the Next Normal only for HQ locations may deepen the divides between headquarters and the field. Non-emergency duty stations should have remote work provisions like headquarters.

32. **Remuneration:** Some entitlements may need to be adjusted after a cumulative period of full-time remote work outside the duty station. For example, modifications of location-based entitlements for any remote work arrangement from outside the duty station. Discussions may be needed within the ICSC on duty station-based entitlements in various locations.

33. **Communication:** Organisations should create internal communication protocols to standardize modes of communication and agree on expected response time (e.g. what is an emergency, urgent, high or low priority). This can help colleagues navigate collaboration in remote teams, particularly when personnel work in different time zones and with asynchronous communication, which doesn't occur in real-time, is the norm. Team managers and team members must be willing to involve those working remotely in the same way as those working on location so that remote workers do not feel marginalized or pressured to be in the office.

34. **Fairness:** Remote work policies should be applied equitably and should consider different needs and broad aspects of diversity and professional contexts. Data monitoring of remote work uptake, including remote work outside the duty station, should include baseline demographic data such as by gender, and analyses should be performed to make sure policy application is fair and equitable. All personnel, and particularly managers, need to be aware of unequal gendered impacts of remote work and potential biases against female staff, who may bear an increased burden of household activities, home schooling and elder care. Remote work should be approached with consideration of gender aspects (e.g. disproportionate burden of care on many female employees), and religious and cultural events (e.g. during Ramadan).

35. **Technology:** Organisations should provide the right technology and equipment to employees working remotely. While organisations will need to invest in technology enablers and equipment, there are also potential savings and increased efficiencies derived from a workforce where more employees work remotely, including less travel/relocation allowances, lower salary costs, reduced real estate and maintenance office expenses and greater efficiencies on UN processes (e.g. e-Signatures).

36. **The Task Force seeks HLCM's guidance on the possibility of codifying the above inter-agency common principles into organizations' remote working policies.**

Agile contract modality

Elements for a more agile model contractual modality

37. During discussions of the Task Force, a number of elements were identified that would need to be taken into consideration when developing the new model contract, namely that the proposal:

(a) be different to, and **complementary to, existing contract modalities** and applicable in different organisational contexts, and could progressively replace the contractual framework with one, flexible contractual modality for the future;

(b) support the UN in becoming a **more agile** organisation that can rapidly adapt to changing needs and priorities and scale up and down as needed, and providing a forward-looking, innovative approach;

(c) provide personnel with **transparency around contract durations and predictability**, while also enabling career development, supporting a portfolio career;

(d) enable **career agility**, allowing personnel to build portfolio careers and remove barriers to join/leave;

(e) be **simple to administer** and simple to understand;

(f) be **financially sustainable** for the organisations;

(g) ensure appropriate cover for **social protection** (e.g. health, disability, unemployment insurance, savings plan) and **duty of care provisions;**

(h) Foster **diversity and inclusion**, and enable employees to fulfil a meaningful life, both professionally and personally;

(i) allow for **flexible and virtual working arrangements** (virtual, part time, retained etc.);

(j) be **fair, transparent and ensure accountability** (e.g. access to appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms.

38. The development of this new model contract will have to consider the learnings from COVID-19, both in terms of opportunities and risks, and build a stronger foundation for the UN in the longer term. The following aspects are vital to consider when moving forward:

(a) The common contract modality needs to be financially sustainable, and efforts must be made to provide transparency on the financial implications of the proposal. This may be done through presenting financial scenarios that allow for a financial evaluation of the costs and potential savings from the proposal. If a fully virtual or non-location specific contract is offered, the organization could explore cost-savings as a result of not granting expatriate entitlements.

(b) Any new staff contract modality needs to be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including staff unions and ICSC.

(c) It is particularly important to embed considerations around the diversity of the workforce, so no particular group is left behind due to their nationality, gender, ethnicity, age, dis/ability, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status including single, childless or childfree status, religion, hierarchical level, and any other diversity dimension. The new contract modality should not exacerbate existing demographic or other divides in the UN system workforce.

(d) Consideration should be given to possibilities for a new contract modality to include a virtual work location, so that it can be used in cases where the organisation wants to maximise mobility and flexible working arrangements to allow the staff member to work from a different location.

39. The new modality will be voluntary for organisations to use - organisations may opt in to use the modality to the extent this serves their needs.

40. **The Task Force seeks HLCM's guidance on proceeding with the development of a new modal contract modality taking into account the above elements to be further elaborated in future reports.**

Enabling technology

41. Digital technologies continue to transform the way we connect, communicate and collaborate. They allow us to transparently share information beyond silos and to connect people and skills where they are needed. When it comes to agile ways of working, cross-functional networks of teams are more effective in handling challenges and problem solving.

42. While technology has clear benefits and has enabled a significant part of the UN workforce to work remotely, it is also not a panacea. There are also negative aspects that warrant consideration, such as virtual micro-management that generates expectations of personnel always being expected to be online as well as outside working hours, which negatively impacts mental and physical health and increases the risk of burnout. Consequently, a set of 'good online practices' that allows flexibility during working hours for all personnel operating in hybrid (virtual and physical) teams should be established. This guidance must clearly define core working hours when team members should be contactable and must also include a "right to disconnect" outside core working hours, which is designed to cover what is generally accepted as a working week.

43. Noting the considerable differences between headquarters and field environments, field and political missions will also be required to determine what measures can work best in hardship contexts, so that all personnel are protected and treated equitably with respect to remote working considerations. Each organization should provide clarity on after-hours communications, including a "code of good practice" for managers that can be built on the existing enabling environment guidelines.

44. Inevitably, there are also questions around whether we have the right systems in place to accommodate that shift. For the organisation just as for employees, we will need to adapt our digital capabilities to a continuing demand for remote working and to protect corporate systems, corporate and personal data and the privacy of employees.

45. In order to be able to work online, **reliable energy and internet connections are indispensable**. In some countries, working remotely tends to be less challenging due to the widely available high-speed internet. Unfortunately, this is not the case in all countries where the UN operates. Some personnel were forced to equip their home with energy systems, expensive internet packages and VPNs to allow them to communicate securely and perform other online tasks. In some locations, internet is simply not available or affordable, causing major issues for our colleagues. A dedicated team should be established to look at connectivity across the globe and to see if there are opportunities for UN agencies, corporations and member states to collaborate[5].

46. **From sharing to collaborating**: one of the keys to effective teleworking during COVID-19 crisis is the widespread use of Microsoft Teams and other collaboration tools. Collaboration tools are an essential support component for a hybrid team, as well as for more self-managing teams. The breakthrough expected is that people can more effectively collaborate instead of sharing finished products and improving them or validating them (as it happens in the auto or in the aeronautical industries). What is needed is a global system-wide collaboration platform that links people, skills and projects across the UN system, enabling the UN to become an agile system with collaboration and continuous learning at its heart while unleashing the collective potential of its people. Consideration should be given to evaluating and testing new collaboration tools.

47. **Digital dexterity and remote support in a cyber-secure environment:** fostering digital dexterity within the organisation must be a priority in order to succeed, to keep pace with a world that is going digital. This requires organisations and their personnel to embrace new technologies and maximise personal learning and training. Training in new tools and applications needs to be complemented by an overall shift to a more open-minded learning culture where personnel of all ages embrace new technologies as they come online. Additional pressure was added to IT departments to be able to support users remotely. This has pushed the adoption of remote support tools (e.g. TeamViewer) and the standardization of personal configurations (managed by tools like MS InTune). This is accompanied by mutualization and room for pooling resources to support personnel across locations. Serious questions remain around cyber-security and the use of private devices for official business as well as professional devices for private use. This should be mitigated by wide issuance of equipment to personnel to carry out official business.

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[5] For instance, Gigaconnect (ITU and UNICEF) and the Road map for digital cooperation: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation Report of the Secretary-General. On private sector collaboration: World Economic Forum's project Internet for All and Free basics by Facebook.

Enabling technology projects to pursue

48. The following are pilot initiatives aimed at improving employee and candidate experience, which may be leveraged across UN organisations and systems. In deciding which initiatives to pursue, the business case for each will need to be considered.

49. **Creating a Digital UN ID, using Blockchain technology for personnel documents.** This initiative aims at creating a unique personal Digital ID, portable across entities, capable of holding or linking to relevant documents, and that can cover the entire employment history of the workforce. It tackles problems related to data fragmentation and data transportability across UN organisations by avoiding unnecessary duplication. The UN Digital ID intends to create a unique identity for every UN personnel, from on-boarding through retirement; the data will be immutable, protected, transparent, portable and universal. The solution may be scaled up to all interested entities.

50. The UN Digital ID proposes to use technologies like Hyperledger Indy Blockchain, secure Biometrics recognition via mobile apps, and Machine Learning Algorithms via OpenCV, OpenID Identification, etc.; when enabled, it will power well defined scenarios such as:

    (a) Rapid employee onboarding;

    (b) Seamless inter-agency transfers and loans;

    (c) Autonomous reference and academic checks;

    (d) Automated data exchange related to vaccinations with WHO;

    (e) Verification of mandatory trainings with UNDSS;

    (f) Immediate pension enrolment and eligibility with UNJSPF;

    (g) Simplified access to systems;

    (h) Access to information and common services;

    (i) Authentication and granting of physical access to secured premises;

    (j) And many similar processes to be reviewed and redesigned.

51. The proposed solution foresees that every UN organization could potentially become a trusted authority, writing information onto the blockchain system. Each organisation could run their own separate node to ensure scalability, redundancy, and real-time data transfer.

52. In terms of interoperability within the UN System, the modular concept of the UN Digital ID has the potential to scale horizontally to be used by every entity. The adoption of the UN Digital ID may serve different use case scenarios and processes, such as access to IT Systems and premises, and real-time data exchange, helping the UN System become truly one.

53. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) in talent acquisition:** Technology can contribute to better effectively screen the thousands of applications received every year and to reduce the time spent organising assessments and interviews. However, since AI learns from past data, data needs to be cleaned and AI-driven algorithms must be subjected to high scrutiny to avoid reflecting existing prejudices.

54. **Use of Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) or Robotic Process Automation (RPA):** this initiative seeks to automate various HR services. Automated assistants (chat robots or chatbots) provided through conversational artificial intelligence platforms can support applicants or personnel with HR queries, reducing the need to be intimately familiar with policies. By combining these technologies or using third-party solutions (i.e. backcheck.com), we can accelerate the use and deployment of various standards developed by the OneHR Network.

55. **Automation of mandatory checking processes** (i.e. reference, academic, earnings, language, and sanctions) would bring efficiencies while greatly reducing the risks posed of hiring someone without proper verification. Once certified, reference checks may remain valid for a longer period of time, feeding into the UN Digital ID by using blockchain. This would facilitate interagency mobility and reduce the effort of recertifying information multiple times by several UN entities.

56. An initiative to **automate the baseline onboarding process** across WFP, UNDP, and UNHCR is in place, so common steps are identified to develop a standard online process.

57. Developing a **Central Employee Skills Database** can support personnel to share their competencies, skills and interests; help hiring managers to identify the skill set necessary for certain posts, projects or tasks; enable better strategic workforce planning, inter-agency mobility and talent management; and to enable project collaboration and continuous learning for all personnel.

58. **Video and online candidate assessments:** in some organisations, candidate's assessments are mainly done on-site or remotely (email exchange) but without anti-cheating control. This brings several concerns including space and security issues in some countries, time-consuming scheduling tasks, poor candidate experience and linked to that inclusion issues in regard to more marginalized employees, not fully trustable assessment results, high cost, etc.

59. **Online learning and development platforms:** currently there are some Memoranda of Understanding between agencies; however, as much as content is shared, learning platforms are very different. An ongoing Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) review on policies, programmes, and platforms in support of learning may give more insight on potential coordination, coherence, and convergence of learning across UN agencies.

60. **The Task Force seeks HLCM's endorsement of the potential projects identified, and guidance for project prioritization.**

Resource implications

61. Resource implications of any of the above ideas and proposals will need to be reviewed and evaluated. In some cases, there will be economies of scale to be gained if the UN proceeds as one entity (i.e. all HLCM members) while in others, entity-specific approaches may be needed. Where the UN is able to move as one, additional investments may be required as organizations migrate and integrate their systems and data.

62. There will be some areas of cost savings (e.g. office space; travel as the UN moves to embrace remote working more strongly) but others where costs will be incurred (e.g. enabling technology; cybersecurity risk mitigation as the UN moves to remote working or more use of innovative solutions).

IV. SUMMARY OF ELEMENTS FOR HLCM'S CONSIDERATION AND GUIDANCE

63. The Task Force presents the following elements for HLCM consideration and guidance. This feedback will be incorporated into a more comprehensive future report.

Remote working policy

64. Taking into account lessons learned from COVID-19 and existing Flexible Working Arrangements and Alternative Working Arrangements policies that existed or were put into place to respond to the crisis, the Task Force seeks HLCM's endorsement **to codify the inter-agency common principles into organizations' remote working policies.**

Agile contract modality

65. Under the elements identified, the Task Force seeks HLCM's endorsement **to proceed with the development of a new model contractual modality** that: complements existing contract modalities; supports the UN in becoming a more agile organization; provides personnel with transparency around contract durations and predictability; enables career development and agility; is simple to administer and simple to understand; is financially sustainable for the organisations; ensures appropriate cover for social protection and duty of care provisions; fosters diversity and inclusion; allows for flexible and virtual working arrangements; and is fair, transparent and ensures accountability.

Technology

66. The HLCM could encourage the implementation, as appropriate for each UN organization, of technological solutions across the UN System: establishing a **dedicated team to look at connectivity across the globe** to assess opportunities for UN entities, corporations and member states to collaborate; encouraging entities to test and evaluate new **collaboration tools**; exploring collaboration and pooling of resources to foster **digital dexterity and remote support in a cyber-secure environment**.

67. Keeping in mind the status of existing projects and initiatives, HLCM feedback and support is requested to initiatives that can bring efficiency to HR processes, such as the use of **blockchain to create a Digital UN ID, use of artificial intelligence in talent acquisition, and the use of Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) or Robotic Process Automation (RPA).**