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30 September 2019

Excellency,

On behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, I write to express appreciation to the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) members and Secretariat for the 2017-2018 assessment of our Office. I take this opportunity to also sincerely thank the Permanent Mission of Finland in Geneva for their excellent leadership for this first MOPAN assessment of OHCHR.

We highly appreciate MOPAN's rigorous, participatory assessment process, which facilitated the contribution of a great number of our internal and external stakeholders. In particular, we appreciate what we believe is a very fair assessment of our strengths, with particular focus on the advancements we have made in fostering: an inclusive corporate identity; a coherent vision and roadmap for the Office; materializing our longstanding commitment to gender equality and empowerment of women; and, the efforts made to advance a culture of results across the Office.

We further appreciate the overall accuracy and relevance of the assessment: on eleven out of the twelve key performance indicators (KPI) we ranked as being *satisfactory or above*. We are particularly proud that KPI 1 "Organisational architecture and financial framework", KPI 7 "Strong and transparent result focus, explicitly geared to function", and KPI 10 "Relevance to partners" were ranked as *highly satisfactory*. We also recognise, concur with and very much value the feedback provided regarding areas that need our closer attention.

We appreciated in particular the recognition given to our efforts in key areas of organizational performance as is reflected in the MOPAN assessment as follows:

- *OHCHR has made important strides in further strengthening its strategic leadership and management and fostering an inclusive corporate identity;*
- *OHCHR's longstanding commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women is widely acknowledged and highly regarded;*

Her Excellency  
Ms Terhi Hakala  
Permanent Representative  
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- *OHCHR has made commendable progress in its operational and results-based management culture and systems.*

And finally:

- *“The relatively small Office of the High Commissioner is punching above its weight. This situation was created by the combination of (1) a corporate culture that sees as its mission to protect rights-holders, to set ambitious goals and targets for itself and to weather the storm if necessary, and (2) its dynamic inspirational leadership.”*

As noted, the MOPAN assessment also highlights areas in need of improvement. Many of these we had identified but MOPAN’s insights provides added incentive to step up efforts in this regard such as the following:

- *OHCHR’s organisational architecture is not yet fully fit for purpose. This is especially visible in the structural lack of resources from the UN’s regular budget, both for mandated activities at headquarters level and (especially) in the field.*

We very much appreciated the recognition provided of the challenges and constraints we are facing in the context of our current resources, including with regard to the Regular Budget. In this context, we have introduced as part of our Office Management Plan 2018-2021 (OMP) an Organizational Effectiveness Action Plan (OEAP) on *Resource Mobilization* which focuses us on: strengthening our engagement with Member States to increase support to the Office’s regular budget; broadening our donor base among Member States and non-traditional actors, enhancing our resource mobilization approach, and building up our related capacity and skills including at field level.

- *Partnerships are inherent to OHCHR, but it does not yet have a corporate strategy laying out why, how and which partnerships are important for the present and the future.*

We recognize the need to strengthen our partnership strategy and our OMP introduces an OEAP on *Partnerships* which commits us to identifying and focusing on key partners and enablers of partnerships, as well as to development of a vision and roadmap for the future establishment of partnerships. This OEAP will go a long way to ensuring we diversify our networks of support and engagement by reaching into sectors and audiences where we do not have partnerships as yet.

- *OHCHR’s human resource management is insufficiently aligned with the needs and requirements of the Office.*

A key tool for addressing the MOPAN’s findings in the area of human resource management is our OEAP on *Managing our Talent*. This action plan is designed “to unleash the potential of our staff, with talent and career management accessible to all”. This in turn commits us to better aligning staff recruitment and management to the OHCHR’s strategic, operational and managerial requirements and to strengthening staff learning and career development opportunities, aligning these to our more substantive human rights results.



We are taking concrete steps to better enable managers to manage and leaders to lead, identifying and investing in leadership talent support and ensuring that our staff are better equipped for and through results-based management. We are strengthening human resources management by simplifying procedures, standardizing fairness in conditions of service, enhancing resolution of complaints and establishing a fast track procedure for emergency deployment. We have also developed a *Dignity@Work* initiative that has put in place practical measures to manifest our policy of zero tolerance within our Office for harassment and abuse of authority, including for sexual harassment.

- *Although OHCHR's evaluation function is showing signs of improvement, it is under-resourced, both in terms of staff and funds.*

We very much agree that OHCHR's evaluation function requires additional human and financial resources. Despite these constraints, since its establishment in 2014, notable results have been achieved and progress made, including in building up the evaluation culture at OHCHR. The number of evaluations conducted and managed by the evaluation team of the Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service has increased significantly and steadily over the past years. While our evaluation function has fewer resources than ideal, the quality of evaluations has not been compromised and remains high. For example, the recently conducted evaluation of OHCHR's regional Gender Advisors structure was included in OIOS's 2016-2017 compendium of good evaluations, having been awarded the highest overall quality rating in their biennial study on strengthening evaluations in the United Nations Secretariat. We are committed to further strengthening the evaluation function during the current OMP and to ensuring that evaluation recommendations are monitored systematically and consistently inform programme planning and senior management decision-making.

In closing, may I reiterate that the MOPAN assessment provided invaluable external validation both of our strengths and of the areas in which we need to make substantial improvement. As illustrated above, the assessment aligns well with our own, in that we have already set in train actions aligned to addressing those areas highlighted in the assessment. The validation that the MOPAN assessment gave to those efforts is deeply appreciated, in that it not only affirms us but cheers us on to further achievement so that we do indeed fulfil our mandate to our fullest potential and strengthen our human rights impact on the ground. Thank you.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Bachelet  
High Commissioner for Human Rights