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Head, MOPAN Secretariat

Dear Ms. Seferian, Ms. Weber and Ms. Steensen

On behalf of UNOPS, I express my appreciation for the 2020-2021 MOPAN assessment of UNOPS. It was particularly impressive to see the assessment process proceed in such an effective manner with neither the assessor team able to meet us in person nor indeed to come together themselves due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It makes our appreciation of the positive and collaborative assessment process all the more sincere.

I am also grateful to the MOPAN secretariat and to France and the USA as institutional leads for your leadership and particularly for your engagement with the relevant Member States.

As I think the assessor team discovered, UNOPS has a culture that is driven by continuous improvement and is consequently open to fresh perspectives. It is in that spirit that we welcome this, our first, MOPAN assessment and the insights it gives us. The timing of the assessment was particularly welcome as we have had the opportunity to reflect on the report's findings whilst we have been developing our Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

I am pleased that the MOPAN assessment recognises the strengths of UNOPS unique business model within the UN system and how our non-programmatic, fee-for-service operations enable us to contribute to our partners' objectives as they work to meet the SDGs.

UNOPS has grown considerably in recent years and its experience and technical expertise combined with a solid financial base allows it to accept the risks of increasingly complex projects. I am pleased that the assessment has recognised that UNOPS strong financial position is a key enabler of its ability to support partners in new and increasingly ambitious areas.

I concur with the assessment's findings that as UNOPS's strategic ambitions mature, it needs to more systematically understand the impacts of its work and how it contributes to the objectives of its partners and the achievement of broader development goals. Indeed, UNOPS has included just such an objective in its

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025. This objective will also be part of the continuous improvement of our Knowledge Management strategy which the assessment has rightly noted is a welcome addition to our more informal knowledge sharing culture.

Whilst UNOPS has come a long way in addressing human rights issues such as gender parity and equality, environmental management and the health, safety and wellbeing of both those who work for it and its beneficiaries, the assessment's encouragement to further strengthen our efforts with respect to human rights is also reflected in our new Strategic Plan.

Please find attached a more detailed response to the assessment.

On behalf of UNOPS, I thank you again for the positive and collaborative process of this assessment. We look forward to sharing our progress with you in the future.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grete Faremo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grete Faremo
Under Secretary-General and UNOPS Executive Director

UNOPS welcomes the findings of the MOPAN 2020 - 21 assessment report and expresses its appreciation for the professionalism of both the MOPAN Secretariat and the assessor team, especially given the challenges of carrying out the assessment under the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been UNOPS's first experience of a MOPAN assessment and we have found the process to be a collaborative and positive one.

We are also appreciative of the efforts made by the assessor team to understand the UNOPS business model which is very different from other multilateral organisations, as well as the willingness of the Secretariat to modify the MOPAN Methodology in order to incorporate those differences.

We also express our gratitude to France and the United States of America for serving as Institutional Leads.

The MOPAN assessment process and consequent findings were extremely timely given that they coincided with the development of UNOPS new Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Indeed, we suggest that aligning the timing of these assessments with the strategic planning cycles of multilateral organizations would enhance the value of them. The assessment has provided UNOPS with valuable insights which it has considered and incorporated into its strategic ambitions.

Areas of Strength

We are reassured that MOPAN's assessment highlights the comparative strengths of UNOPS notably:

The flexibility afforded by its non-programmatic, fee-for-service business model whilst simultaneously using its UN status to promote and enact UN Values whilst working with partners from across the development community

Its lean operating model that facilitates adaptability and responsiveness to partner needs and local operating contexts

Its strong technical expertise and reputation for delivery based on experience allowing it to tailor its services to partner needs

Implementation excellence through a project management methodology built on an internationally recognised standards framework

A robust and informed risk management system allowing UNOPS to work in difficult operating contexts.

A solid financial framework, including a robust level of assets, that is a necessity of UNOPS self-financing business model and which allows it to consider accepting the risks of more complex engagements that help partners respond to the SDGs.

Areas for Improvement

The Assessment report has recognized that UNOPS has a strong change management capacity and is on a continuous improvement journey. It recognizes that UNOPS is evolving from being a technical ‘contractor’ into becoming a strategic partner focussing on improving people’s lives and responding to the SDGs. UNOPS is therefore pleased to see that the main areas suggested for improvement identified are appropriately focussed on this future trajectory and on the next steps it will have to take to achieve its strategic goals.

Specifically,

Lessons learned, knowledge management, and post-project assessment,

The assessment report recognises that UNOPS has taken initial steps in developing its knowledge management system and suggests that it should consider further developing its approaches with respect to lessons learned and knowledge management. It suggests two key objectives:

- i. To learn lessons from implementation in order to better improve services and solutions;
- ii. To introduce a certain amount of post-project assessment concerning contribution to partners’ objectives.

UNOPS welcomes these suggestions and has included in its next Strategic Plan a commitment to continually develop its implementation standards based on lessons learned.

Additionally, it has committed to build on its current approaches of soliciting feedback from partners to better assess how its delivery of outputs and services has contributed to partners’ objectives.

We will explore supplementing reporting of relevant implementation projects with systematic collection of results data that has either been verified by partners or, where results can be directly attributable to our work, through dedicated assessments

UN Values and Global Commitments

The assessment rightly states that UNOPS is committed to both UN values and global commitments such as SDGs as well as cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender mainstreaming etc.

However, it also points out that deployment, integration and reporting on its approaches are in many cases not yet matured.

With the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights occurring at the midpoint of our new Strategic Plan, the encouragement to strengthen and deepen the deployment of our approaches in this area is very timely.

In our new Strategic Plan, we have reaffirmed our commitment to human rights for all, respect diversity and focus on inclusion of the most vulnerable. And whilst we have policies and resources in place, we recognise the need to deepen the deployment of our approaches.

We have committed to expand our gender mainstreaming strategy to intensify our efforts and include people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. We will also continue to mainstream prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, including associated risk indicators, also through our safeguards initiative.

We will drive forward our global health and safety initiative 'Goal Zero', which focuses on reducing work related accidents, injuries, and illnesses across our operations.

We will support local capacity development through engagement with implementation partners in local supply chains, strengthening safeguards for ourselves and the people we work with and for. This entails focusing on human rights, labour rights, ethical conduct, sexual exploitation and abuse, and environmental responsibility.

We support the campaign to combat climate change, biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. We will explore ways to stimulate considerations of circular economy and life-cycle costs in our procurement and infrastructure activities.

UNOPS positioning and value proposition

As the assessment report makes clear, UNOPS is not constrained by a programmatic mandate and has the possibility to engage where it has operational comparative or collaborative advantage. This is a key strength of UNOPS and its demand-driven operational model enables flexibility, agility and responsiveness.

UNOPS does agree that this ability to accept widely different types of engagements in various contexts makes it difficult to sum up the UNOPS value proposition in a succinct manner. However, UNOPS believes that the real challenge it faces is targeted engagement with partners to ensure the breadth of its capabilities is put to best use in helping them achieve the goals they are pursuing. Indeed, UNOPS own partner survey has highlighted the need for it to create a better awareness of the range of its capabilities.

Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

UNOPS has carefully considered the findings of the MOPAN assessment incorporating them into its Strategic Plan 2022-2025 as it continues on its journey to be ever more effective in its mission to help people to build better lives and countries to achieve peace and sustainable development.