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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

TO: Heads of Secretariat Entities in New York and Geneva
A: *(see Distribution List)*

DATE: 25 April 2025

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: E. Courtenay Rattray
DE: Chef de Cabinet



SUBJECT: **Functional review for Cost Reductions and Efficiencies**

OBJET:

1. Pursuant to the UN80 Initiative launched by the Secretary-General last month, the UN80 Initiative Working Group, under the guidance of the Task Force, has been tasked with proposing options for cost reductions and efficiencies in the operations and management of the Secretariat. To this end, the Working Group is exploring alternatives for consolidating management and operational support functions, as well as relocating relevant functions and structures from high-cost to existing lower-cost Secretariat locations. The resulting structural changes and resource requirements will be reported to the General Assembly during the main part of its 80th session, as part of the revised estimates to the proposed programme budget for 2026.
2. To allow the Secretariat to submit a comprehensive revised estimates report enabling it to relocate functions starting in 2026, all Secretariat entities in New York and Geneva – the highest-cost duty stations – are requested to conduct internal functional reviews. Your objective is to identify as many functions as possible that could be relocated to existing lower-cost locations, brought closer to mandate implementation or clients/stakeholders in the field, or otherwise reduced or abolished if they are duplicative or no longer viable. While the review of functions financed from assessed contributions should be prioritized, you are also to review the cost efficiency and viability of functions financed from voluntary contributions to ensure alignment with cash inflows.
3. When conducting your internal reviews, please consider the following overall criteria:
 - a. **Cost Savings:** Identify functions that can be relocated to reduce operational costs without compromising effectiveness, or that may otherwise be reduced or abolished if they are duplicative or no longer viable;
 - b. **Operational Efficiency:** Identify opportunities to streamline processes, eliminate redundancies that hinder programme and/or service delivery;
 - c. **Alignment with Mandates:** Ensure that functions are positioned to enhance their contribution to mandate implementation; if they do not, identify those that can be reconfigured or otherwise discontinued; and
 - d. **Impact Assessment:** Determine how proposed changes will affect programme and service delivery and organizational resilience.

4. Additionally, when assessing which functions might be relocated from New York or Geneva to existing lower-cost duty stations, please apply the following principles:

a. Provision of direct support to intergovernmental bodies in New York or Geneva: Identify those functions for relocation that are not Member State facing, e.g. those that do not require direct, daily or regular in-person engagement with Permanent Missions, Member State delegations or Geneva/New York-based advisory or oversight bodies. Functions that may be expected to appear before intergovernmental or advisory bodies to introduce reports or provide briefings, should be considered for relocation, given that IT support can be provided to facilitate hybrid meetings/events; and

b. Time Zone Alignment and Service Hours: Prioritize functions for relocation that may be performed in locations where time zones overlap with primary counterparts, clients and other stakeholders (e.g., regional offices, field operations) to maintain responsiveness in programmes. Functions that are time zone agnostic should also be considered for relocation.

5. A global review of the availability of office space and costs is currently under way. At this stage, you are asked to identify which functions could be relocated, rather than determining specific duty stations for their relocation. Please include as much detail as possible, identifying at a minimum the functions, organizational units, post numbers and grade levels proposed for relocation. The outcome of your review is to be submitted to the Office of the Controller at controller@un.org, specifying the subject “Functional Review – Relocation to Lower Cost Locations” by **16 May 2025**.

6. It is recognized that this is a tight deadline, but we have a very limited timeframe to prepare and submit the revised estimates through the ACABQ, to the Fifth Committee for its consideration within the overall context of the proposed programme budget for 2026. Additionally, matters requiring prior consultation between management and staff representatives through the Staff-Management Committee process are scheduled to take place in June.

7. For further support regarding the functional review, you may contact your Executive Office or head of administration. For any queries regarding the relocation exercise, please reach out to the Office of the Controller for clarifications on the information required for the report on the revised estimates.

8. The UN80 Initiative aims to strengthen our programmes and operations, charting a path towards a sustainable United Nations for the future. This initiative presents an opportunity to build on past reforms and equip the Organization to meet the unprecedented challenges ahead, while becoming more cost-effective, efficient and responsive to the people we serve. To achieve these goals, we must take bold and immediate steps to improve the way we work, maximizing efficiency while reducing costs.

9. I am confident that with your active participation and commitment, we can achieve significant improvements that will position the Organization for a stronger and more resilient future.

Thank you for your cooperation.

cc: The Deputy Secretary-General
Mr. Ryder

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