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**For decision**

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**United Nations Children's Fund**

Executive Board

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Item 13 of the provisional agenda\*

**Management response to the report of the Ethics Office  
of UNICEF for 2024***Summary*

Pursuant to UNICEF Executive Board decision 2018/11, the present report provides a management response to the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2024 ([E/ICEF/2025/21](#)).

The report covers the period of 1 January to 31 December 2024. It details the activities and accomplishments of the Ethics Office in each of its mandated areas of work: (a) standard-setting and policy support; (b) ethics training, outreach and awareness-raising; (c) providing confidential advice and guidance to UNICEF personnel and management on ethics issues and ethics-related policies; (d) administering the UNICEF Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme; and (e) administering protection against retaliation under the UNICEF Policy on Whistle-Blower Protection against Retaliation. The report additionally details the Office's participation and engagement with the Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/12, the report also presents recommendations to management to continue fostering an ethical and values-based culture in UNICEF.

The report has been reviewed by members of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations, as envisaged in section 5.4 of the Secretary-General's bulletin on United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes ([ST/SGB/2007/11](#)).

Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section XI.

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\* [E/ICEF/2025/11](#).



## **I. Overview**

1. Management is pleased to respond to the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2024 ([E/ICEF/2025/21](#)), pursuant to Executive Board decision 2018/11. We deeply value the guiding principles of independence, impartiality and confidentiality that the Ethics Office upholds, which help UNICEF to prevent, mitigate and manage ethical, operational and reputational risks, ensuring status of UNICEF as a trusted and respected organization.

## **II. Training, education and outreach**

2. Management is delighted to acknowledge that the Ethics Office reached more than 8,100 personnel in 2024 through targeted training and outreach efforts, increasing awareness and understanding of organizational standards. This includes delivering 122 face-to-face training and outreach sessions to nearly 6,100 personnel globally, up from 81 sessions to 4,600 personnel in 2023. This extensive reach is a testament to the commitment of the Ethics Office to ethical education.

3. Management commends the Ethics Office for maintaining high training completion rates, developing a new e-learning module on sexual harassment, and continuing to be recognized for exemplary compliance.

## **III. Confidential advice and guidance**

4. The Ethics Office is a trusted resource that provides impartial, confidential advice and a safe space for staff and non-staff personnel to raise concerns and seek guidance on ethical issues. Management values this essential support.

5. Management notes that the number of requests for confidential ethics advice has almost tripled over the past four years, rising from 320 in 2020 to 925 in 2024. This sustained growth indicates the continued effectiveness of intensified training and outreach.

## **IV. Standard-setting and policy support**

6. Management commends the Ethics Office for playing a crucial role in policy and standard-setting by reviewing and providing input on 34 draft procedures, guidance and other documents. This highlights the commitment of the Ethics Office to robust governance.

7. Management appreciates the efforts by the Ethics Office to strengthen the approach of UNICEF to preventing and addressing sexual harassment through the Global Staff Survey, as well as the Office's contributions to the UNICEF accreditation by the Green Climate Fund.

8. The Ethics Office also made significant progress in aligning with other United Nations entities, particularly through the Executive Directive on Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest Statements, the UNICEF Policy on Whistle-Blower Protection against Retaliation, and the charter for the Ethics Office.

## **V. Protection against retaliation**

9. Management appreciates the increased efforts by the Ethics Office in 2024 to address requests for advice and formal protection against retaliation, conducting preliminary reviews, referring cases to the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for investigation, and recommending interim protection measures. The thorough handling of these cases is highly valued.

## **VI. Global campaign: Ethics Month**

10. Management applauds the Ethics Office for leading its eighth Ethics Month campaign in October 2024 with the theme “from safe spaces to brave spaces”, encouraging staff to engage in difficult conversations about mental health, fear of retaliation, and sexual harassment. The campaign’s reach to about 9,200 colleagues across 25 offices is impressive.

## **VII. Ethics and Culture Champions network**

11. In its third year, the Ethics and Culture Champions network has become a vital part of promoting an ethical and values-based culture. There are more than 480 Ethics and Culture Champions in 137 offices, contributing to a more supportive workplace environment. Management is grateful for their dedication.

## **VIII. Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme**

12. Management commends the Ethics Office for administering the Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme to help staff identify and manage conflicts of interest. The thorough verification exercise and consultation with the Division of People and Culture on senior staff compliance for contract renewals and appointments are highly appreciated.

13. The Ethics Office selected 1,754 staff members for the Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure Programme, focusing on seniority and organizational risk, achieving a 99.8 per cent compliance rate. The proactive management of conflicts and the support provided during the transition to a new electronic platform are highly commendable.

## **IX. Ethics Panel of the United Nations and Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations**

14. Management applauds the Ethics Office for its active engagement with the Ethics Panel of the United Nations. Management also appreciates the Ethics Office's contributions to the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations.

## **X. Observations, recommendations and conclusions**

15. Management is pleased to note that in 2024, the Ethics Office exceeded its objectives, reflecting increased trust and confidence through a significant rise in services requested and provided. The plans of the Ethics Office to enhance “people management” by focusing on ethical leadership and supporting supervisors in conflict resolution are highly commendable.

16. We deeply value the proactive identification and addressing of ethical risks by the Ethics Office, while continuously evolving to support the mission of UNICEF and uphold the organization’s esteemed reputation. The recommendations of the Ethics Office for exploring options for adequate long-term funding are noted.

## **XI. Draft decision**

*The Executive Board*

*Takes note* of the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2024 (E/ICEF/2025/21) and its management response (E/ICEF/2025/22).