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DATE: 3 January 2017

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REFERENCE:

THROUGH:

S/C DE:

FROM: The Secretary-General

DE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ban Ki-moon', written over the 'DE:' field.

SUBJECT: **Establishment of an Executive Committee**

OBJET:

1. With immediate effect, I am establishing a principal-level Executive Committee and a subsidiary Deputies Committee for the Secretariat.

Purpose

2. The purpose of the Executive Committee will be to assist me in taking decisions on issues of strategic consequence requiring principal-level attention across all pillars of our work, informed by relevant deliberations in United Nations intergovernmental bodies.

3. The Deputies Committee will address the same range of issues covered by the Executive Committee. It will have two core purposes:

- First, to resolve as many issues as possible, leaving the Executive Committee free to address items requiring principal-level attention; and
- Second, to follow-up on, monitor and report on progress with respect to the implementation of decisions taken with the assistance of the Executive Committee, the Deputies Committee, the Regional Quarterly Reviews and Inter-agency/Integrated Task Forces.

Frequency and Chairing

4. The Executive Committee will meet weekly, or more often if needed, under my chairmanship. It will also have the ability to convene using electronic means. The Deputy Secretary-General or the Chef de Cabinet will serve as alternate chair in my absence, depending on the nature of the agenda. The Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination will serve as Secretary of the Executive Committee.

5. The Deputies Committee will meet weekly, including in preparation for the Executive Committee, or more often if needed, under the chairmanship of the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination. In his or her absence, another suitable EOSG official designated by the Assistant Secretary-General, taking the nature of the agenda into account, will chair the meeting.

Agenda-setting

6. Proposals for the agendas for the Executive Committee and Deputies Committee will be made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination, following consultation with members of the Executive Committee. Principals in the United Nations system and the Deputies Committee can submit proposals for agenda items. Final decisions on the forward agenda of the Executive Committee will be made by the Secretary-General.

7. The Deputies Committee will hold a standing monthly discussion in an enlarged format, including key Agencies, Funds and Programmes, on demands and opportunities for preventive action, based inter alia on the recommendations emerging from the Regional Quarterly Reviews and Inter-agency/Integrated Task Forces. The outcome of this discussion will be communicated to the Executive Committee.

Membership and Participation

8. The functioning of the Executive Committee will be nimble and effective, and thus its membership will be limited but with a composition that reflects an integrated approach of all pillars of the United Nations. The Deputy Secretary-General, the Chef de Cabinet, the Senior Adviser on Policy, the Under-Secretaries-General for Management, Political Affairs, Peacekeeping, Field Support, Economic and Social Affairs, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Executive Director of UN Women, and the Chair of the United Nations Development Group will be standing members. The Secretary-General will invite other officials to participate when issues related to their areas of responsibility are discussed.

9. As the Executive Committee is the body where all key inter-departmental issues will be discussed, attendance will be at the level of principals with substitutions only on an exceptional basis and with prior clearance.

10. Participation in the Deputies Committee will be at the level of Assistant Secretary-General, with the possibility of participation by Officers-in-Charge, with prior clearance by the Chair. Membership will mirror that of the Executive Committee.

Meeting Preparation

11. In his role as Secretary to the Executive Committee and Chair of the Deputies Committee, and reporting to the Chef de Cabinet, the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination will prepare a 1-2 page note per agenda item presenting the issues requiring action and possible options. In preparing the notes, the EOSG will consult the United Nations entities directly concerned at the earliest possible stage and take into account documents produced by the concerned department. The purpose of the notes is to help ensure that discussions focus on the most important issues; they will not need to be consensus documents and will reflect alternative viewpoints and options. They will not pre-determine the final outcome of a meeting.

12. Fast-moving and crisis issues will be subject to lighter and more flexible procedures, including the oral presentation of an agenda item where circumstances prevent a note from being prepared. In contrast, where an agenda item concerns an issue with major planning, financial, legal or human resource implications, the note and any accompanying submission paper and options will be duly consulted, inter alia and as relevant, with the Controller, the Office of Legal Counsel, the Office of Human Resources, and the Under Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs. In such instances, the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination may choose to delegate preparation of an extended submission paper to a lead department.

Conduct of Meetings

13. As the Executive Committee deals with issues of a strategic and sensitive nature, participants should engage in the discussion from the perspective not only of their individual departments but also of the overall responsibilities of the United Nations and in keeping with their roles as senior leaders of the Organization. Both the Executive Committee and the Deputies Committee will commit to and practice collective responsibility; subsidiarity; swift decision making; careful planning; flexibility; and clear presentation of options and different positions. Where country situations are considered, United Nations representatives in the field will be duly consulted. As a result of the discussion, decisions and tasking by the Secretary-General will be confirmed in the meetings and recorded. Meeting records will be kept to support follow-up and accountability, with due attention to confidentiality.

Follow-up

14. All members will be expected to maintain solidarity behind and implement decisions taken as a result of discussions in the Executive Committee or Deputy Committee. Members will be responsible for ensuring that decisions are tasked to those who need to take action within their departments and pillars. The Deputies Committee will review implementation of decisions on a regular basis, and will communicate progress in implementation to the Executive Committee.

Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination and Secretariat Support

15. Reporting to the Chef de Cabinet, in his role as Secretary to the Executive Committee and Chair of the Deputies Committee, the Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination will be supported by the staff in the units that report to him as well as by the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre (UNOCC). In addition to drafting submission papers, minutes, and related tasks, the secretariat will also work closely with the Deputies Committee to track follow-up, and ensure accountability, for implementation of decisions. The UNOCC will serve as a coordination hub for all United Nations system coordination meetings under the auspices of the EOSG, providing logistical, technical and some substantive support (*a separate memorandum provides details of this decision*).

Relationship to other Mechanisms

16. The fundamental purpose of this decision is to streamline and clarify the decision-making landscape in the United Nations Secretariat, introducing more accountability and coherence and significantly reducing the time senior officials spend in meetings, while fostering a culture of openness and robust discussion amongst senior managers. As such, the Executive Committee formally supersedes the Policy Committee, the Senior Advisers meetings, the Senior Action Group and the Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs. The Executive Committee may create working groups under its auspices for issues that warrant sustained attention.

17. Senior officials are hereby encouraged to make use of these new bodies where possible. The Regional Quarterly Reviews (RQRs) will be maintained at the level of Director, thereby ensuring an early warning system while also reducing the burden on the Executive and Deputies Committees. Suitable linkages will be defined between the RQRs and the more senior mechanisms.

18. The Senior Management Group (SMG) will remain a vital forum for discussing key cross-cutting and strategic matters in a wider format and will thus continue with its present membership and hold monthly regular meetings.

19. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination will engage in a review in order to enhance its direction-setting role for the wider United Nations system.

Capacity Review and Lessons Learned

20. More detailed guidance on the procedures outlined above will be issued in due course. The above measures are transitional and will be reviewed on the basis of experience. The Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination will make recommendations, by June 2017, regarding improvements to the mechanisms and measures decided in this memorandum and the consolidation of existing inter-departmental coordination secretariat capacities.

cc: The Deputy Secretary-General
The Chef de Cabinet
Senior Adviser Kang
Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination

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