



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

3 May 2017

Excellency,

Through a series of recent global agreements on sustainable development, climate change, sustaining peace, disaster risk reduction, and financing for development, Member States have provided a broad vision of the future they want. I am committed to advancing meaningful reforms to adapt the United Nations to this complex world, so that it can effectively serve all of its Member States in achieving that future and managing shared challenges and opportunities along the way.

As part of a broader effort to engage with Member States to strengthen the work of the United Nations, I wanted to provide you with a brief update of initiatives and reform processes under way to enhance our shared goal: making our Organization more effective and responsive to those we serve.

As many of you have stressed, there is a profound need for greater collaboration across the pillars of peace and security, development and human rights.

The Executive Committee, which I established in January, combines the expertise of senior managers and staff of many departments, field operations and duty stations, to provide strategic advice in a more holistic manner.

At that same time, I also decided to co-locate the regional desks of the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Political Affairs to enable greater coordination of our peace and security work. This initiative involves much more than the sharing of space. It is about pooling our perspectives more dynamically, to overcome silos and fragmentation and to generate improved policies and products.

In January, we strengthened whistle-blower protection to boost openness, transparency and fairness. Enhanced safeguards are now available for individuals who report misconduct or cooperate with duly authorized audits or investigations. I have directed an internal working group to examine how these efforts could be further expanded to cover consultants and individual contractors. The working group will submit its recommendations to me by 30 June 2017.

All Permanent Representatives of
Member States of the United Nations
New York

In March, based on the recommendations of a task force that I established in January, I launched a new strategy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the United Nations system. This effort puts the rights and dignity of victims first; aims to end impunity for those guilty of crimes and abuses; and calls on us to share best practices and draw on the knowledge of external partners such as civil society, local communities and experts. The strategy will be introduced to the Fifth Committee at its May session.

In April, I submitted my proposals to the General Assembly for creating a new office of counter-terrorism to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, who would serve as the Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and Executive Director of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre.

To advance our commitment to equal rights and the empowerment of women, I asked my Senior Adviser on Policy to lead a Gender Parity Task Force to develop a strategy for the United Nations system. The first draft of the strategy was submitted to the Senior Management Group in April and I have consulted further with the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination. We will consult with Member States and staff in the coming weeks. I plan to submit the final strategy to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

The Secretariat has also embarked on a process of comprehensive reforms on inter-linked tracks.

In January, I established an Internal Review Team (IRT), led by Mr. Tamrat Samuel, to study proposals for change in the peace and security architecture of the Secretariat. The Team is drawing on recent major reviews and consulting widely with experts across the world. I will review preliminary options in June and submit a detailed proposal to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

With respect to development, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolution provides us with a strong mandate to propose realignments to the United Nations development system so that it can support Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. I have asked the Deputy Secretary-General to lead the review to develop a more cohesive and integrated system, with enhanced leadership at all levels, more effectiveness on the ground and greater accountability for results. A first report will be issued by June 2017 and a second towards the end of 2017.

We need global responses to today's challenges that address the root causes of conflict and integrate peace, sustainable development and human rights. To this end, my Senior Adviser on Policy is mapping the prevention capacities of the United Nations system with a view to creating a platform that enables us to make the best use of our many assets. This platform will not be a new structure, but rather a new and more effective way of working together to apply all of our tools in a timely way. My forthcoming report on Sustaining Peace represents an opportunity to engage with Member States on this idea. In the meantime, I attach my broad vision of prevention for your reflection.

Our efforts to implement this ambitious reform agenda rest on ensuring that we simplify procedures, decentralize decision-making and move towards ever greater transparency and accountability. The Chef de Cabinet is overseeing the management reform track. In April, I appointed an Internal Review Team on management reform, led by Ms. Alicia Bárcena and Mr. Atul Khare.

Throughout this process, I am committed to continuing to engage in extensive consultations with Member States. To further this effort, my Chef de Cabinet, supported by the IRT on management reform, will hold informal brainstorming sessions with Member States in May. A list of questions will be circulated later this week to facilitate these sessions. I also plan to hold a retreat in mid-July with Member States to informally consult on the initial findings of the IRT on management reform.

By the end of May, the IRT, with the assistance of departments, offices and operations in the field, will prepare an action plan for immediate measures that the Secretariat could undertake to streamline internal procedures and expedite decision-making. I will submit a detailed report on management reform to the General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-second session.

The work of the various reform tracks will be aligned within my Executive Office, under the guidance of the Chef de Cabinet. Just as the broad work of the United Nations must be more integrated, so must the reform workstreams link up and be mutually reinforcing.

Once again, I thank you for your ideas and inputs to further strengthen these essential efforts and advance our common goals. I count on the continued support of Member States and staff as we embark on this shared journey of reforming and renewing our United Nations.

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

with my warmest personal regards



António Guterres