

Report of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee

The Director-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, for the Committee's consideration at its twenty-fifth meeting, the report submitted by the Chairman of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee (see Annex).

ANNEX

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT OVERSIGHT ADVISORY
COMMITTEE TO THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND
ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE, JANUARY 2017****BACKGROUND**

1. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee was established by the Executive Board in May 2009 under resolution EB125.R1, with terms of reference to advise the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, and through it the Executive Board, on matters within its mandate, which include:

- review of WHO's financial statements, financial reporting and accounting policies;
- provision of advice on the adequacy of internal control and risk management;
- review of the effectiveness of the Organization's internal and external audit functions, and monitoring of the implementation of audit findings and recommendations.

2. The current members of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee are:

Name	Date of appointment by the Executive Board¹	Decision reference
Mr Robert Samels (Chair)	May 2013	EB133(8)
Mr Mukesh Arya	May 2013	EB133(8)
Mr Steve Tinton	May 2013	EB133(8)
Dr Jeya Wilson	May 2015	EB137(4)
Mr Leonardo Gomes Pereira	May 2015	EB137(4)

3. This report is an interim report of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee following its sessions in July and October 2016. During 2016, the Advisory Committee held its eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth sessions on 4–6 April 2016, 27–29 July 2016 and 18–20 October 2016. The last session was held at the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia in Delhi, with some WHO headquarters staff joining through a videoconference link for the relevant agenda items. Since the nineteenth session was the first meeting for the two new members, it was preceded by a one-day orientation session for their benefit, although the other three members also participated in that event.

4. Matters from the eighteenth session, held in April 2016, were reported in the annual report presented to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee at its twenty-fourth meeting in

¹ Date of adoption of relevant decision by the Executive Board.

May 2016. The remaining two sessions addressed all areas of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee's mandate, with a particular focus on the areas set out below.

5. As usual, the Advisory Committee received an excellent level of support from management and is thankful to the Director-General, the Regional Director for South-East Asia and their teams for their frank and open discussions with the Advisory Committee and for allocating enough time to listen to members' concerns and provide the necessary clarifications or answers.

INTERNAL OVERSIGHT SERVICES

6. At each of its sessions, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee met with the Director of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, both privately and with members of management present.

7. The Advisory Committee reviewed the current state of outstanding audit recommendations and the work programme and is satisfied to report that outstanding audit recommendations are continuing to decrease. The Advisory Committee was informed about visible improvements in control and compliance; however, one remaining issue is that the same recommendations are not adopted by other budget centres having similar weaknesses in their systems. The Advisory Committee encourages the Organization to create a formal mechanism or structure to institutionalize the lessons learned from audit findings across the whole Organization.

8. The Advisory Committee noted that, overall, auditees are paying greater attention to open audit recommendations and a much better response in terms of implementation of recommendations is being seen. To better monitor the progress of improvements in internal controls, the Advisory Committee has requested the Director of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to consider reporting on special audits, such as that of the response to the outbreak of Ebola virus disease, in a separate section of the overall recommendations status dashboard in future. This will ensure that special audits are appropriately tracked, while the results do not distort the overall picture of improvements in the system of internal controls.

9. The Advisory Committee noted that technical units can be affected by various types of reviews, audits and evaluations, such as internal audits, programme and administrative reviews, external audits and joint evaluations. These activities should be coordinated to optimize the use of time and resources. The Advisory Committee further reiterated that in all reviews or audits it is critical to have clear linkages with the work being performed by the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics and the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

10. Six of the 11 WHO country offices in the South-East Asia Region have been audited in the recent past. The Advisory Committee noted that, in terms of overall control effectiveness, the South-East Asia Region has more or less the same performance as the global average. However, this comparison is based on data from country audits carried out in the past few years, before significant steps were taken to improve non-compliance in areas such as direct financial contributions.

EXTERNAL AUDIT

11. At its nineteenth session, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee met with the External Auditor (via video conference) and received an update in respect of the 2015 audit report; it also reviewed the scope, plan and approach for the 2016 external audit and found them to be reasonable and adequate. However, it expressed disappointment at not having been given an

opportunity to review and discuss in detail the management letter for 2015 at its April session because of timing issues. It therefore requested the External Auditor and management to ensure that the Advisory Committee receives a summary of the significant audit recommendations for 2016, together with management responses, at its April 2017 session.

12. A briefing was also provided on the implementation of previous external audit recommendations. The Advisory Committee was informed that, in the last four years, approximately 1300 recommendations have been issued by the External Auditor, and most of these have been addressed by management. The discussion that followed was about the absence of any tool or reporting mechanism to rank the recommendations in terms of their significance, in order to ensure that critical and recurring recommendations are addressed in an efficient and structured manner. The Advisory Committee suggested that the External Auditor should consider developing a tracking tool, such as the reporting dashboard used by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, to better monitor the implementation of recommendations based on their relative importance and priority. It would also help in tracking the average “age” of a recommendation before it is closed.

13. The Advisory Committee also held a private session with the External Auditor.

COMPLIANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROL FRAMEWORK

14. The self-assessment checklist, as one of the key tools of the internal control framework, was rolled out in WHO regions in 2015, followed by WHO headquarters in 2016. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee was updated on the findings in the consolidated report. The Advisory Committee noted that management recognizes that the self-assessment checklist is a good method of generating awareness about the control areas needing attention, but it should not be used to measure the effectiveness of controls, owing to the subjectivity involved in the assessment. The tool needs to be seen as an indicator rather than as a measurement of compliance. Going forward, the results of such consolidated reports should be used more effectively as a second line of defence: there needs to be alignment between the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment checklists, the risks identified in the risk register, and the audit findings by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

15. The Advisory Committee noted that, in line with one of its earlier recommendations that “compliance units in all regions should be established in harmonious and comparable manner and should be managed in a consistent consolidated approach under the framework established by the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics”, work on the establishment of a compliance network, with the Office as the secretariat, is progressing in a positive and constructive manner within the Regional Office for South-East Asia and also across the whole Organization, with the aim of harmonizing practices among regional offices. This is a very positive development, and the Advisory Committee encouraged management to continue with further efforts to ensure harmonized and consistent practices in the area of compliance.

16. The Advisory Committee was pleased with the utilization of the internal control framework throughout the Organization. This is an evolving collaborative process with many stakeholders, and it now appears to have been accepted and embedded into the organizational functions.

17. At its twentieth session, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee was updated by the Director, Administration and Finance at the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia about measures taken to achieve its objectives of enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of services, while strengthening risk management and accountability. The Director, Administration and Finance provided an overview of the internal control framework in the Region using key performance

indicators such as outstanding reports on direct financial contributions, overdue donor reports, compliance with the Organization's performance management and development system, and indicators used in the Organization's programme budget management system. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note that in the Regional Office for South-East Asia there were no open outstanding internal or external audit recommendations and only one pending direct financial contribution report.

18. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the excellent tracking of measurable outcomes through the corporate dashboard of business intelligence. It is very supportive of the standardized approach to monitoring these indicators consistently across the Organization and was impressed with the positive trend in several areas of compliance, such as direct financial contributions, audit recommendations and donor reporting. It was told that the key reasons for better compliance were the attention paid by the top leadership, continuous monitoring and strengthened accountability. The Advisory Committee urged management to continue this excellent progress.

19. The Advisory Committee is reassured to see the strong determination and commitment of the Regional Director for South-East Asia and her team to using standardized measures, adequate tools and training for country managers to improve compliance with internal controls. The positive performance indicators on the dashboard provide a testimony to the commitment to implementing reform.

20. The Advisory Committee further observed that senior management is well aware of the areas of concern in such fields as the procurement process and is developing action plans to improve policy- and decision-making. However, the challenges related to procurement are not region-specific and need support at the corporate level to be addressed in a systematic manner. This is expected to be tackled through ongoing implementation of the new procurement strategy.

21. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note that most reform initiatives, especially in the areas of compliance and the internal control framework, now appear to be embedded in the system.

RISK MANAGEMENT

22. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee continues to monitor the progress being made in the area of risk management. It received an update on the process of risk management, compliance tools and processes, the accountability compact for Assistant Directors-General, the compliance road map for Directors of Administration and Finance, and ethics management.

23. The Advisory Committee acknowledges and supports the critical role being played by the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics in the area of risk management. The risk register process has been rolled out and is well understood at the three levels of the Organization. It noted the broad divergence in most significant risks as identified by regional offices. Following a rigorous bottom-up process of risk identification, mitigation measures and validation by top management, there appears to be a sound risk architecture in place, a reasonable understanding of risk management by budget centres and a strong buy-in from all stakeholders.

24. The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the initiative now has to move from the development stage, which was driven by the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics, into operational ownership by individual business units at the headquarters, regional and country levels. It considers that there is a need to move from quantitative to qualitative management of risks; this would present a comprehensive picture in a manner that can be shared and understood by Member States and

donors. To assist this transition, it is necessary to: (i) embed the identified corporate-wide risks in the risk register, to ensure that there is an enterprise-wide framework; (ii) ensure ownership of the risk management framework at the regional level; (iii) embed the risk framework in the three levels of the Organization as an integral part of the management and accountability process; (iv) develop a web-based tool to assist in consistent modification of risks, ownership of risks, elaboration of mitigation plans and monitoring of progress.

25. The Advisory Committee urges management to ensure that the enterprise-wide risk framework and identification of risks is used in planning, budgeting and implementation of programmes on a continuous basis.

26. It further encourages management to explore whether it is an appropriate time to consider making a high-level external review or evaluation of the status, direction and implementation of the risk management process. The Advisory Committee considers the Organization to be at a critical juncture, where it needs to take stock of future steps to ensure that risk management becomes an effective and integral part of the management process, leading to ownership of risks so that risk management is embedded in the organizational culture.

27. Risk management linked to specific projects was also discussed in two separate sessions related to information technology and modernization of WHO headquarters in Geneva. In both the cases, the Advisory Committee was quite impressed with the level of detail in the entire process of risk analysis, identification, evaluation, impact, costing, and development of mitigation plans. The Advisory Committee encourages the Organization to use these two examples as benchmarks for rolling out the process of “operationalization of risk plans” in the entire Organization.

FINANCIAL DIALOGUE AND OVERALL FINANCIAL UPDATE

28. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee received the financial management update for the period January – September 2016. The Secretariat also shared with the Advisory Committee the following three draft documents related to the financing dialogue: WHO’s funding situation for the biennium 2016–2017; WHO’s need to increase assessed contributions; and the annotated draft agenda for the financing dialogue.

29. The Assistant Director-General, General Management, briefed the Advisory Committee on the progress of preparations for the financing dialogue to be held in the last week of October 2016. A discussion followed about the risks related to a financing shortfall both in the current and in the next biennium, including the 8% increase in the Programme budget 2016–2017 and the additional costs due to the new health emergency structure. The Advisory Committee noted that the projected level of the core voluntary contributions account for 2016–2017 is approximately US\$ 180 million, which is about US\$ 60 million less than what the Organization received in the last biennium. The Advisory Committee had earlier raised concerns about the Organization’s dependence on voluntary contributions with a small donor base and reiterated that these pose significant risks to the Organization, all the more so with the creation of the new WHO Health Emergencies Programme and the future decline in Polio funding when that programme ramps down over the coming years. The Advisory Committee urged the management to undertake “what if” or “scenario” planning, in order to understand the full impact on programmes of the projected funding shortfall, and to share the results with Member States.

REVIEW OF POLIO TRANSITION PLANNING

30. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee continues to monitor the progress being made by the Organization with respect to polio transition planning, and at its twentieth session it received an update from staff in the WHO Country Office for India, with members of the WHO headquarters polio team joining through a video conference. The Advisory Committee was informed about the establishment of an agency-wide steering committee co-chaired by the Executive Director, Office of the Director-General and the Assistant Director-General, General Management, with participation from the regional offices for Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia and departments at WHO headquarters, to provide guidance on risk management and programme integration.

31. The Advisory Committee was satisfied to observe the clear alignment between WHO headquarters and country office teams and took note of the detailed, well-defined transition plan for the India programme to address the staffing, financial resources and operational challenges. The Advisory Committee looks forward to seeing similar transition plans for other countries.

32. The Advisory Committee was briefed on the progress made in transition management, including the new independent study carried out to assess WHO's polio-related human resource liabilities. According to the "more likely" scenario, there is an unfunded terminal indemnity of US\$ 35 million. This unfunded liability would increase with any change in the Organization's policy on retirement age.

33. The Advisory Committee took note of the unfunded liability and of the Secretariat's view that adoption of the proposed policy change in retirement age, to be effective from 1 January 2018, would increase the polio transition cost by an estimated US\$ 4 million. The Advisory Committee recommends that management should fully assess the estimated total financial cost to the Organization and also determine the potential impacts on human resources initiatives such as gender balance. It encouraged the Secretariat to share the full impacts of the potential revision with Member States, to ensure that the change in retirement age is adopted at the most appropriate time.

FRAMEWORK OF ENGAGEMENT WITH NON-STATE ACTORS (RESOLUTION WHA69.10 (2016))

34. As mandated by the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee was briefed on the overall objectives of the Organization's Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors, proposed changes to current practices, development of the register of non-State actors, and key milestones in the implementation process.

35. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note that the World Health Assembly and the Directing Council of the Pan-American Health Organization have finally adopted the Framework, which took a significant amount of time and resources and required extensive dialogue among Member States and with the Secretariat.

36. The Advisory Committee will monitor the progress of implementation of the Framework by providing oversight of the application of rules and procedures to assess if they are being applied in a uniform and effective manner across the three levels of the Organization.

37. It opines that "benefits versus risks" and "protection versus engagement" should not be looked at only from an either/or perspective. It observes that being completely risk-averse in engaging with non-State actors can aggravate funding issues for the Organization, whereas having an important

appetite for risk may expose the Organization to serious reputational risks. It is thus imperative that from the beginning systems are set up across all the offices of the Organization in a uniform manner, and that the rules for risk identification and management are applied in a consistent and harmonized way.

38. Taking into account the need for the Framework to be transparent and credible, the Advisory Committee urged management to ensure that decisions within the review process are taken at the appropriate level. It was reassured to note that the Organization has put in place a system to share reports on due diligence and risk assessment, in line with consistent implementation at all three levels through an electronic work flow. It further encouraged management to review the different roles in relation to risks and ethics in the implementation of the Framework, and to assess how it can bring about synergies between the different functions, including possible restructuring.

39. The Advisory Committee noted that the Framework defines four groups of non-State actors (nongovernmental organizations, private sector entities, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions), which will be governed by separate policies and procedures. The Secretariat is setting up an Organization-wide process to register all non-State actors engaging with WHO through an information technology application that captures critical information on each non-State actor and its engagements. The register of non-State actors is expected to be rolled out in January 2017 as part of an information technology tool called Global Engagement Management. The Advisory Committee understands that the idea is similar to the programme budget web portal, which has created an important sense of trust among all stakeholders in terms of transparency, levels of confidence and assurance.

40. The Advisory Committee will continue to monitor progress in this area and looks forward to reviewing the detailed plan for implementation of the Framework, including operational controls to ensure consistency throughout the Organization in the application of due diligence, risk assessment and decision-making.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

41. At the nineteenth session of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, the Director, Information Technology and Telecommunications provided an update on the Organization's strategy on information technology (IT), key initiatives in the area of information management and technology, including the project on transformation of the Organization's global management system (GSM), establishment of a global IT Fund, and issues related to governance. The Advisory Committee looks forward to receiving a further update on implementation of the IT Fund and corporate IT policy, together with an update on the Organization's project management centre of excellence.

42. There was some discussion about GSM outage and the IT disaster recovery plan for mission-critical operations. In that context, the Advisory Committee reiterated its concerns about the absence of a full-scale business continuity plan for the Organization. The Advisory Committee would like to receive an overview of such a plan from senior management at a future session.

43. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note that key initiatives in the area of information management and technology are on track, and that considerable progress has been made in addressing its concerns with respect to the absence of an appropriate global IT governance structure and how that might impact the efficiency of IT service delivery in the long run. The Advisory Committee was informed that the process of establishing an IT Board and creating a global IT Fund is under way; however, it noted that those elements of global IT governance have not been yet approved by the

Organization's Global Policy Group, which may impact the planning and roll-out of the necessary operational platforms. It urges senior management to address this situation.

EVALUATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

44. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee reviewed a concept note on leadership and management at WHO entitled "An evaluation of WHO reform, third stage". At the Advisory Committee's nineteenth session, the Executive Director, Office of the Director-General gave a short update about the history of WHO reform, what triggered it, the financial crisis, how WHO reform has been a process driven by Member States rather than just by the Director-General or the Secretariat, what the reform process encompassed, and what had been achieved. He provided a briefing on the first and second stages of the evaluation of WHO reform. The Advisory Committee noted that stage 3 of the evaluation of WHO reform had been approved by Executive Board as a priority evaluation in the 2016–2017 biennial evaluation workplan, with the aims of assessing the effectiveness and impact of WHO reform after four years of its implementation and providing recommendations on the way forward.

45. The Advisory Committee took note of the scope of the work to be performed, the proposed methodology, the characteristics of the potential provider and the strategy for dissemination of results. It looked forward to being regularly briefed on progress made in this area. The Advisory Committee also proposed that the Evaluation Office should consider keeping the Chairman of the Executive Board briefed on progress.

OVERVIEW OF THE WHO HEADQUARTERS MODERNIZATION PROJECT

46. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee received an update on the WHO headquarters modernization project with its two proposed phases (construction of the new building, followed by renovation of the existing building), the associated costs, the decision-making process, measures in place to remain within the scope and estimated costs of the project, the reasons behind the decision to outsource management of the project, the process undertaken for risk analysis and the mitigation measures adopted. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note that the Organization appears to have a firm "handle" on the operations of the modernization project.

47. The Advisory Committee noted with satisfaction the strong governance structure that has been put in place for the modernization project to ensure that responsibility and accountability are well paired. The Advisory Committee welcomes the extensive risk analysis carried out for the project in terms of identification of significant risks and their evaluation both in terms of probability and impact. It examined in detail the risk register, including mitigation measures and the potential costs of such measures, and was impressed with the in-depth analysis. The Advisory Committee considers this to be a good example of an "operationalizing risks plan" and encourages the Organization to use this as a template for other budget centres to follow.

48. The Advisory Committee noted that construction of the new building is being funded from the interest-free loan provided by the Swiss Government. However, it raised concerns that the Organization as a whole does not have a formal mechanism for ensuring sustainable financing for such projects. It encouraged the Organization to look at ways of replenishing assets in an organized manner over their useful life, instead of the programme budget cycle of two years. The Advisory Committee looks forward to reviewing a comprehensive, prioritized capital master plan, including financing, at a future session.

49. There was also discussion about the increase in staff and the space requirement, especially with the establishment of the new WHO Health Emergencies Programme, and how that would fit in with the proposed space and scope of the project. The Advisory Committee encourages management to take strong action to bring about a cultural change in the mind-set regarding “my space”, in order to ensure optimal utilization of the space available while providing flexibility and efficiency.

REFORM IN THE AREA OF HEALTH EMERGENCIES

50. The Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee received an update on the WHO Health Emergencies Programme both from the headquarters and regional perspectives. The Advisory Committee noted that a robust conceptual framework identifying the basic needs has been developed. It was informed that at any given point WHO is usually responding to more than 20 emergencies with varying levels and competing demands. In addition, the Organization is in the process of implementing a new information management system. Despite the strong support for a Contingency Fund for Emergencies, significant flexible funding has not been received. Notwithstanding the funding shortfall, the goal is to respond to emergencies as one organization with surge capacity in a consistent manner. The Organization is collaborating with Member States, partners, and other bodies of the United Nations system to increase its core capacity and develop standardized services to enhance country preparedness. To mitigate the risks linked to a funding shortfall, the Secretariat is taking steps by engaging with the Global Policy Group and Member States, both bilaterally and through the financing dialogue.

51. However, the Advisory Committee noted that most of the work has been done at the level of WHO headquarters, and only limited initiatives have provided support to the regions. Long- and short-term deliverables identified include: strengthening compliance with the International Health Regulations (2005); establishing the Contingency Fund for Emergencies; simplifying the emergency response structure; and identifying and implementing “quick win” solutions.

52. The Advisory Committee considers funding of the programme to be a challenge, as there are significant gaps both in the core budget and in the Contingency Fund. It appears that donors are waiting until they understand the definitive short- and long-term deliverables before committing themselves. In addition, based on the Advisory Committee’s discussions with staff at the Regional Office for South-East Asia and the India Country Office, it appears that there is only a limited understanding of the programme deliverables and timeline throughout the Organization.

53. The Advisory Committee understands the complexity of establishing a new structure while supporting ongoing emergencies; however, appropriate communication with all stakeholders is essential. There is an opportunity to highlight the “quick wins” that have been implemented at regional and country levels, so that managers throughout the Organization can inform Member States and donors of the progress.

54. The Advisory Committee understands that a financing dialogue is to be held the end of October 2016, and it is imperative that the programme deliverables are clearly enunciated and understood by all parties. The WHO Health Emergencies Programme has an Independent Oversight Advisory Committee that has responsibility to “determine the appropriateness and adequacy of the Programme’s financing and resourcing” and is also responsible for “monitoring and advising the Organization on the implementation of the Programme”. Therefore, that Committee’s strong support is essential to obtain the required financing.

55. The Advisory Committee thanked the Secretariat for the informative discussion and looks forward to future updates.

OTHER MATTERS

56. **Global Service Centre:** At its nineteenth session, the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee received an overview from the Director, Global Service Centre, together with his senior staff, through video conferencing. It appreciated the frank and open discussion about the key issues in the areas of finance, procurement and human resources transactions processed by the Global Service Centre. It noted the substantial volume of transactions and the challenge of ensuring due diligence and compliance, as taken up by the staff of the Centre. The Advisory Committee is encouraged by the way that the Centre is making efforts to develop measurable key performance indicators, with related monitoring and accountability arrangements, for its different streams of work. Considering customer satisfaction to be one important parameter of performance assessment for the shared Service Centre, the Advisory Committee looks forward to reviewing the results of the first survey, which will be completed next year.

57. **Human resources:** The Advisory Committee received an update from the Director, Human Resources Management about the current status of various ongoing human resources initiatives, including implementation of the Organization's mobility policy. The Advisory Committee was informed about the skewed gender balance across the Organization, especially in grades P5 and above. The Advisory Committee was pleased to note one of the key performance indicators in the accountability compact for Assistant Directors-General is linked to achieving gender parity and bringing in diversity. It encourages the management to take steps to roll that compact down to all levels of the Organization. The Advisory Committee again emphasized the importance of human resources as the driving force for ushering in cultural change in the Organization with respect to promoting diversity, improving the gender balance and enhancing mobility. It encourages the Human Resources Management team to play the role of chief facilitator in change management across the broad spectrum of initiatives under the WHO reform process.

58. **Visit to the India Country Office:** At its twentieth session, members of the Advisory Committee met with the Head of the India Country Office and its staff for an overview and an update on polio transition planning. The Advisory Committee was impressed with the excellent presentation and well-structured overview delivered by the Head of the Country Office and his senior staff. It appreciated the honest and open discussions about some of the key challenges in the areas of budget space allocation, the funding shortfall, and the sheer volume of transactions within the field offices managed by the Country Office. Direct interaction with senior staff from all the three levels present in the same room provided a refreshing insight into the functioning of the Organization, and the Advisory Committee was appreciative of this learning opportunity. The Advisory Committee was encouraged to observe the strong alignment between the regional and country offices in terms of priorities, objectives, reporting and governance.

Robert Samels (Chair), Steve Tinton, Mukesh Arya, Jeya Wilson, Leonardo Pereira

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