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Administrative, financial and institutional matters

Budgetary, financial and institutional matters

Important changes to the secretariat's administrative issuances

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The report of the United Nations Board of Auditors on the financial statements of the UNFCCC for the year ended 31 December 2021 contains, inter alia, the following recommendation: "The Board further recommends that UNFCCC should bring important changes to UNFCCC administrative issuances to the attention of the COP as the governing body of the UNFCCC".¹
2. The United Nations Board of Auditors reiterated the recommendation in its report on the financial statements of the UNFCCC for the year ended 31 December 2022.²
3. Accordingly, the purpose of this document is to communicate to the Conference of the Parties (COP) important changes to UNFCCC secretariat's administrative issuances effected between 1 June 2022 and the date of publication of this document.

II. Background

A. Policy review process – scope and rationale

4. Driven by its evolution and structural review and the recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors, the secretariat began on 1 June 2022 a comprehensive process of reviewing and revising its internal administrative issuances in various functional areas, including delegation of authority. The aim of this policy review process is to create an institutional regulatory framework aligned with the secretariat's legal standing and new structure, allowing for its effective, decentralized and streamlined functioning.
5. Such a framework will ensure greater accountability, transparency and efficiency and strengthen the institutional foundation of the secretariat. This in turn will make it easier for the secretariat to deliver on the growing number of mandates.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2022/INF.10, annex, para. 98.

² FCCC/SBI/2023/INF.9, annex, para. 158.



6. The policy review process is being conducted in the context of the institutional linkage of the secretariat with the United Nations and the Executive Secretary's broad authority over the personnel and financial administration of the secretariat, which includes promulgating administrative issuances provided that they are consistent with decisions of the COP and the Financial and Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.³

7. The policy review process has also been informed by existing business practices of the secretariat.

B. Policy review project – scope and timeline

8. The policy review process is being conducted through a cross-secretariat project housed within the Legal Affairs division. It is ongoing subject to the availability of resources.

III. Important changes

9. The revised and newly developed administrative issuances have a clearer hierarchy and purpose and are aligned with the secretariat's strategic objectives, internal vision, current and possible future operational and other needs, and practices.

10. The priority administrative issuances revised to date pertain mainly to delegation of authority, human resources, finance and budget, procurement, and property management.

11. Other important areas for which administrative issuances are going to be revised or developed in the subsequent phases of the policy review project include information and communication technology, due diligence, partnerships, and internal governance bodies.

1. Delegation of authority

12. Key improvements in the new administrative issuances relating to delegation of authority are as follows: authorities and their delegations are duly recorded, decision-making is streamlined, accountability rests at the appropriate level of hierarchy, and authorities are delegated along the reporting lines and cascaded down to the appropriate service delivery point in accordance with current practice.

2. Human resources

13. The revised administrative issuances pertaining to human resources modernize and streamline recruitment processes and introduce provisions on staff well-being. They also provide for a greater pool of talent with equal opportunities for internal and external candidates, and add flexibility for managers that facilitates timely recruitment, makes processes more efficient and allows for culture change.

3. Finance and budget

14. The revised administrative issuances concerning finance and budget clarify both the existing cost recovery mechanisms and their management, and the relationship between the authority over and responsibility for the management of funds for programme support costs at the secretariat.

³ See decisions 14/CP.1, 15/CP.1, 22/CP.5, 6/CP.6 and 11/CP.11 and General Assembly resolutions A/RES/50/115, A/RES/54/222, A/RES/56/199 and A/RES/61/201. See also the letters to the Executive Secretary from the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel dated 8 April 2021 and 1 February 2023 respectively. Decision 14/CP.1 provides that the Executive Secretary is accountable to the COP "for the implementation of the policies and programme of work approved by the [COP]" and to the United Nations Secretary-General "for the observance of the Financial and Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations".

4. Procurement and property management

15. The revised administrative issuances in the areas of procurement and property management place guiding principles, procedures and practices specific to the secretariat's needs within the broader United Nations framework regulating these areas.

IV. Conclusion

16. The policy review process has progressed within the reporting period. Subject to the availability of resources, the secretariat is aiming to continue the policy review process in order to ensure that all areas of its administration are fit for purpose.
