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Administrative, 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 2023 contains, *inter alia*, the following recommendation: “The Board recommends that the UNFCCC secretariat regularly report on its strategic approach [...] to the Parties [...]”.¹
2. Accordingly, the purpose of this document is to communicate to Parties important changes to the secretariat's administrative issuances effected between 1 July 2024, the end of the reporting period for the previous document on this matter,² and the date of the present note.

II. Background

A. Policy review process – scope and rationale

3. Driven by its organizational evolution and structural review, as well as recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors, since 1 June 2022 the secretariat has been undertaking a comprehensive process of reviewing and revising its internal administrative issuances across multiple functional areas. The purpose of this policy review process is to establish a coherent institutional regulatory framework that is fit for purpose and consistent with the secretariat's legal standing and structure, thereby enabling the secretariat to function effectively and efficiently.
4. Such a framework helps to strengthen accountability, transparency and efficiency within the secretariat, and provides the institutional foundation necessary for the secretariat to deliver on its growing number of mandates.
5. The policy review process continues in the context of the institutional linkage of the secretariat with the United Nations and the Executive Secretary's authority over personnel and financial administration, which includes promulgating administrative issuances provided

¹ FCCC/SBI/2024/INF.7, annex, para. 212.

² FCCC/CP/2024/INF.1.



that they are consistent with decisions of the governing bodies and the Financial and Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.³

6. The process has included consideration of the business practices of the secretariat, with the aim of meeting its operational needs while ensuring compliance with United Nations system-wide standards.

B. Policy review project – scope and timeline

7. The policy review process continues to be implemented across operational and administrative workstreams of the secretariat through a project coordinated by the Legal Affairs division and is ongoing subject to the availability of resources.

8. The scope of the project has expanded as a result of a more comprehensive assessment by policy owners and management of the secretariat's operational needs, which has increased the number of administrative issuances under consideration.

III. Important changes

9. The secretariat continued to advance its regulatory framework by promulgating a range of revised and new administrative issuances during the reporting period, reinforcing the secretariat's strategic objectives and reflecting evolving operational demands, oversight recommendations and the imperative to harmonize policies as part of the broader United Nations system while meeting the secretariat's specific organizational needs.

10. Together, these issuances, which span the key areas of financial management and accountability, institutional and operational governance, and human resources, help to enhance institutional coherence, promote compliance with United Nations system-wide standards and support the secretariat in performing its mandated functions effectively.

A. Financial resources management

11. The secretariat issued an important policy on cost recovery, which sets out clear and transparent procedures for recovering costs associated with services provided by the secretariat. The policy contributes to the stability and continuity of the secretariat's operations by facilitating efficient cash flow management and strengthening accountability for and ensuring the prudent stewardship of its financial resources.

B. Human resources

1. Conditions of service

12. The secretariat strengthened its human resources framework by addressing key conditions of service, such as clarifying aspects relating to the mandatory retirement age, as well as any extension beyond such age, thus ensuring consistent application of retirement arrangements while respecting acquired rights. In addition, the establishment of a framework for secondments facilitates staff mobility within the United Nations system, enabling organizational priorities to be balanced with staff need for professional development.

13. Further administrative issuances have been promulgated that define criteria for determining the personal status of staff members for the purpose of entitlements, guidelines

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 Conference of the Parties (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".

for recognizing academic degrees in applications and official records, and standardized staff nomenclature to foster a unified identity. Moreover, policies on private legal obligations and post-employment restrictions were adopted to enhance compliance therewith and uphold transparency and integrity in human resources management. These initiatives contribute to a coherent and accountable human resources environment that is attentive to the needs of both the organization and its staff.

2. Benefits and entitlements

14. The secretariat reinforced its framework for staff benefits and entitlements by promulgating policies designed to uphold the well-being and fair treatment of its staff and their families. These policies govern financial support mechanisms such as the repatriation and settling-in grants, salary advances, rental subsidies and the recovery of overpayments, ensuring that the need to provide timely financial assistance to staff is balanced with the need to safeguard organizational resources. Entitlements related to dependency status and associated benefits and grants, and parental and compassionate leave provisions were also clarified.

15. The administrative guidance on family-related legal obligations, tax liabilities and compensation payments promotes staff compliance and accountability in this regard, while measures taken regarding the voluntary funding mechanism for legal assistance for staff further contribute to a comprehensive and inclusive benefits framework.

3. Staff health and well-being

16. The secretariat demonstrated continued commitment to ensuring staff health and well-being by promulgating administrative issuances that promote a safe, healthy and supportive work environment for all. They include provisions on feeding infants at the workplace and managing sick leave, as well as setting out standardized medical clearance procedures and frameworks for managing appointments terminated for health reasons.

4. Learning, development and representation

17. The secretariat took steps to enhance staff capacity and engagement by promulgating an administrative issuance on mandatory learning programmes that provide essential training on organizational policies and conduct, thereby fostering a shared organizational culture. A complementary policy provides that staff representatives have the necessary resources and facilities to effectively fulfil their roles. These measures help to foster a well-informed, collaborative and inclusive workplace.

C. General services

18. The secretariat advanced its operational policies by promulgating an administrative issuance on road safety when operating secretariat vehicles, reinforcing the importance of operational safety and contributing to a safer work environment; and an administrative issuance on the use of the United Nations flag, which contributes to upholding institutional identity and strengthening the respect and recognition accorded to the secretariat as part of the United Nations system.

IV. Conclusion

19. The secretariat will continue the policy review project with a view to further strengthening its regulatory framework, addressing recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors and ensuring alignment with United Nations system-wide standards. The continued development, review and promulgation of administrative issuances will remain an institutional priority in 2026–2027, subject to the availability of resources.