



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2019/084

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

Gaps in leadership, difficult operational environment, inadequate work planning and poor communications adversely impacted the organizational culture of the Mission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of management practices in UNIOGBIS to manage operations and resources to deliver its mandate in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions and United Nations Regulations and Rules. The audit covered the period from 1 March 2018 to 30 April 2019 and it included a review of: (a) the process to translate relevant Security Council mandated tasks into UNIOGBIS annual work plans; (b) governance mechanisms to manage UNIOGBIS operations; (c) management of staff and other resources; and (d) the organizational culture of UNIOGBIS.

Vacancy management in UNIOGBIS was satisfactory as there were only three unencumbered posts out of the authorized staffing of 135 posts at the time of the audit, and the recruitment against these posts was completed as of July 2019. However, UNIOGBIS annual work planning processes needed improvement to translate the Security Council mandated tasks into results, and governance mechanisms needed to be clarified to effectively manage operations. There were also control weaknesses in managing staff and other resources. Most importantly, gaps in leadership, staff concerns regarding the tone at the top, difficult operational environment and poor communication adversely affected the organizational culture of UNIOGBIS.

OIOS made nine recommendations. To address issues identified in the audit, UNIOGBIS needed to:

- Develop work plans for the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator (DSRSG/RC);
- Reactivate the quarterly joint planning Strategic Policy Group meetings to ensure integrated management and oversight of its operations and resources;
- Revise its organizational structure to reflect the DSRSG's reporting line to the SRSG and include only Mission sections and offices;
- Prepare its downsizing and transition plan;
- Prepare an effective communication strategy to inform stakeholders throughout the implementation of its transition;
- Prepare and implement a formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate authority to its officials for specified aspects of the Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules;
- Strengthen the leadership and accountability of the Mission to deliver its mandate effectively;
- Foster more frequent interactions within senior leadership and between management and staff; and
- Invite Staff Counsellors to advise staff on their well-being during the drawdown and closure phases.

UNIOGBIS accepted the recommendations, implemented three of them and initiated actions to implement the rest.

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Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).
2. UNIOGBIS was established in 2009 under Security Council resolution 1876 (2009) dated 26 June 2009. It became operational effective 1 January 2010 and its mandate has been extended by successive Security Council resolutions including resolution 2458 (2019) until 28 February 2020. As a special political mission, UNIOGBIS delivers its mandate through the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).
3. According to the Secretary-General's report A/73/352/Add.3 dated 8 October 2018 to the General Assembly, UNIOGBIS objective is to contribute to the achievement of a politically stable, secure and socially and economically prosperous environment in Guinea-Bissau. The country has been mired in cyclical political crises that has deeply affected the functioning of State institutions and undermined progress in the implementation of national reforms as well as the country's socioeconomic prospects. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Road Map and the Conakry Agreement signed in 2016 provide a solution to the political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau. The twice-postponed legislative elections were successfully held on 10 March 2019 and the presidential election is also set to take place during 2019.
4. A Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) heads UNIOGBIS and works closely with the United Nations Resident Coordinator, who is also the Deputy SRSG (DSRSG/RC), as well as with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to strengthen United Nations system-wide synergies and to mobilize international assistance in support of peace consolidation efforts in Guinea-Bissau. The Mission also works to enhance cooperation between the major international partners in Bissau, especially ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese speaking countries, the European Union and the United Nations (collectively known as the Group of Five). UNIOGBIS has an authorized staffing table of 137 posts for 2018 and 135 posts for 2019. It is organized into seven organizational units working under the direction of the SRSG and Deputy SRSG: (a) Political Affairs Section; (b) Combating Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime; (c) Human Rights Section; (d) Gender Affairs Unit; (e) Public Information Unit; (f) Safety and Security Office; and (g) the Mission Support Section.
5. UNIOGBIS resource requirements were proposed at \$19.5 million for 2018 and \$18.7 million for 2019. Table 1 shows UNIOGBIS resource requirements by category of expenditures:

Table 1: UNIOGBIS resource requirements (in thousands of United States dollars)

| Category of expenditures | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Military and police personnel | 628 | 27 |
| Civilian personnel | 14,014 | 14,122 |
| Operational | 4,852 | 4,544 |
| Total | 19,494 | 18,693 |

Source: A/73/352/(Add.3)

6. In addition, in 2018, UNIOGBIS provided technical support to projects funded by extrabudgetary resources, including: (a) \$1,126,400 from the Peacebuilding Fund to support political dialogue and national reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau and to boost the media sector to promote greater peace and stability; and (b) \$50,000 from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for specific activities

related to human rights protection and promotion, and the monitoring of human rights prioritized by OHCHR. Similarly, in 2019, UNIOGBIS supported the Peacebuilding Fund- and OHCHR-funded projects in the amount of \$532,800.

7. Comments provided by UNIOGBIS are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of management practices in UNIOGBIS to manage operations and resources to deliver its mandate in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and United Nations Regulations and Rules.

9. The audit was included in the 2019 risk-based audit work plan due to the risks associated with the difficult and changing operational environment under which UNIOGBIS performed its activities in preventing conflict and sustaining peace in Guinea-Bissau.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from April to June 2019. The audit covered the period from 1 March 2018 to 30 April 2019. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit assessed whether UNIOGBIS:

- a. Translated the Security Council mandated tasks into its 2018 and 2019 work plans in coordination with UNCT, the Government of Guinea-Bissau and other stakeholders;
- b. Developed strategy and governance mechanisms to coordinate, organize and allocate resources to implement these work plans with clear assignment of roles and responsibilities;
- c. Managed staff and other resources; and
- d. Fostered an organizational culture for the effective implementation of mandated tasks and activities and management of resources.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) reviews and analyses of relevant policies, guidelines, and reports, (b) discussions and interviews with concerned UNIOGBIS officials and staff representatives on the organizational culture in: (i) organizing and allocating resources to implement 2018 and 2019 work plans; (ii) managing staff and other non-post resources; and (iii) addressing issues raised by UNIOGBIS staff in the global client satisfaction survey and the Ombudsman report following a visit of the Ombudsman in February 2019; and (c) analytical reviews and walk-through tests for key processes.

12. OIOS administered a staff survey to 131 UNIOGBIS staff on its organizational culture and received responses from 57 per cent of the staff to complement the interviews and discussions. The audit team also visited the UNIOGBIS regional office in Bafata.

13. The audit was conducted in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Programming of Security Council mandated tasks

UNIOGBIS needed to effectively translate the Security Council mandated tasks in its work plans

14. The Security Council mandated tasks under resolutions 2404 (2018) and subsequently 2458 (2019) included supporting efforts by the Government of Guinea-Bissau to: (a) fully implement the 2016 Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS Roadmap; (b) support the electoral processes; (c) expedite and complete the

review of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau; (d) strengthen democratic institutions and enhance State organs' capacity to function effectively and constitutionally; (e) promote and protect human rights and undertake human rights monitoring and reporting activities; (f) provide strategic and technical advice to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; (g) incorporate gender perspective into peacebuilding and support implementation of the country's national action plan on gender; and (h) in close cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission, mobilize and harmonize international assistance from the Group of Five for the organization of the legislative and presidential elections.

15. UNIOGBIS 2018 and 2019 work plans consolidated the activities of the Political Affairs Section, Public Information Unit, Human Rights Section, Gender Unit, and the Countering Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime Section. However, work plans for the Office of the SRSG, Office of the DSRSG and the Strategic Planner were not prepared. Therefore, good offices and coordination with the Group of Five and other key stakeholders that constitute crucial roles of the SRSG as mandated by Security Council resolutions were not fully realized.

16. Work plans of the Legal Affairs Unit, Mission Support Section, Chief of Staff and the Integrated Safety and Security Office were available but were not integrated with the overall UNIOGBIS work plans. The Chief of Staff, Mission Support Section, the Integrated Safety and Security and the Strategic Planner directly support the SRSG in his leadership and oversight responsibility for the delivery of mandated tasks and Mission resources. But without their roles and responsibilities clarified in the integrated UNIOGBIS work plan, the SRSG's ability to lead the Mission and monitor the implementation of its programme of work was seriously affected. Likewise, coordination of UNIOGBIS programme of work with the UNCT was vital to implement the Security Council's mandated tasks and ensure complementarity of activities and resources. It was, therefore, important to articulate these roles in the work plans of the Offices of the SRSG and the DSRSG.

17. Additionally, the Strategic Policy Group (SPG) is responsible for the joint planning of UNIOGBIS programme of work with UNCT and is required to meet on a quarterly basis. The membership of the SPG comprised UNIOGBIS, DSRSG/RC and heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Guinea-Bissau with UNIOGBIS SRSG as the Chair and the DSRSG/RC, heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and UNIOGBIS sections as the Deputy Chairs. The SPG had not met since May 2018 due to medical absences of the SRSG. Nonetheless, OIOS was informed that the DSRSG held regular meetings outside of the SPG framework on: (i) the mid-term review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in Guinea-Bissau, (ii) transition planning for the Mission, (iii) United Nations reforms, (iv) delinking of the United Nations Development Programme from the Resident Coordinator functions, and (v) High-level Steering Committees on elections and on political developments in Guinea-Bissau. However, attendance at these meetings mostly comprised UNCT with inclusion of only a few of the heads of UNIOGBIS sections as opposed to SPG that includes all UNIOGBIS sections.

18. Annual work planning is a tool to articulate the roles and responsibilities for each organizational unit and that of the SRSG and the DSRSG to deliver the mandated activities of the Mission. It also forms the basis for preparing staff e-performance work plans. The work plans of the SRSG and the DSRSG need to include their oversight responsibility to lead, monitor and hold each organizational unit and staff accountable to their roles and responsibilities indicated in their work plans. This oversight responsibility was not apparent without the work plans of the SRSG and the DSRSG, particularly the latter who had a double-hatted responsibility as Resident Coordinator.

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| <p>(1) UNIOGBIS should develop work plans for the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG/RC) clearly formulating the leadership, good offices and coordination</p> |
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roles under the responsibility of the SRSG, and oversight of the Mission’s programme of work and its integrated coordination with the United Nations Country Team under the DSRSG/RC.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 1 and stated that the development of work plans for the offices of the SRSG and the DSRSG/RC would commence upon their appointments and assumption of functions. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of the work plans for the offices of the SRSG and the DSRSG/RC.

(2) UNIOGBIS should reactivate the quarterly meetings of the Strategic Policy Group to ensure joint planning of its programme of work with the United Nations Country Team.

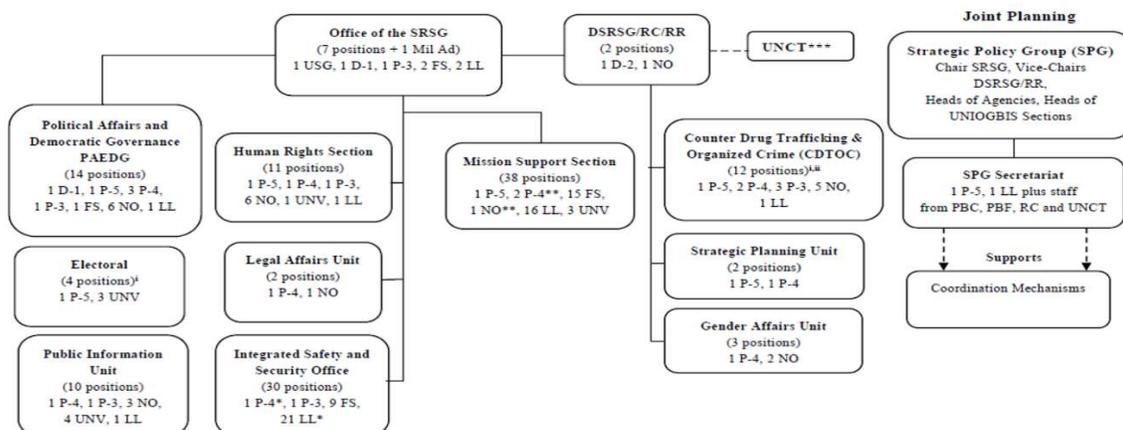
UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 2 and stated that quarterly joint planning SPG meetings had been reinstated and its first meeting was held in June 2019. Based on the action taken by UNIOGBIS, recommendation 2 has been closed.

B. Governance mechanisms

UNIOGBIS organizational structure needed to reflect DSRSG’s reporting line to the SRSG with full responsibility for UNIOGBIS programmatic activities

19. As shown in Chart 1, the organizational structure of UNIOGBIS for 2019 arranged the Mission’s programme of work between the Office of the SRSG and the DSRSG/RC with: (i) Political Affairs Section, Mission Support Section, Human Rights Section, Legal Affairs Unit and the Integrated Safety and Security Office reporting to the Office of the SRSG; and (ii) Countering Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime, Strategic Planner, and Gender Affairs Unit reporting to the DSRSG/RC. Since the DSRSG/RC was shown in the organizational chart as functioning parallel with the Office of the SRSG, the reporting lines of UNIOGBIS organizational units were separated between the Office of the SRSG and the DSRSG/RC with neither having full responsibility for all organizational units. In addition, although the Electoral and the Public Information Unit were shown under the responsibility of the Office of the SRSG, their reporting lines were left undetermined. This created division among the heads of Sections resulting in acrimonious relationships and a difficult work environment as described in part D of the report.

Chart 1: UNIOGBIS organizational structure for 2019



Source: Supplementary information to A/73/352/(Add.3)

20. According to Security Council resolution 2458 (2019), UNIOGBIS programme of work is expected to gradually transition, in three phases, to the UNCT under the United Nations Partnership Framework, the United Nations Office for the West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and other partners in Bissau by the end of 2020. Each organizational unit in UNIOGBIS plays an important role in enabling the SRSG and the DSRSG to implement the Security Council mandated tasks. The current organizational structure of UNIOGBIS with the reporting line of its organizational units fragmented between the Office of the SRSG and the DSRSG/RC has weakened the ability of the SRSG and the DSRSG to lead the heads of organizational units and collectively deliver the mandate. The clarity in the organizational structure is even more critical at the time of change in senior leadership as the previous SRSG left UNIOGBIS in mid-May 2019. In fact, the DSRSG regularly served as the Officer-in-Charge of UNIOGBIS in the absence of the SRSG, and as Resident Coordinator with reporting line to the Secretariat. DPPA also commented that as a coordination mechanism, SPG should not be included in the organizational chart.

(3) UNIOGBIS should revise its organizational structure to: (a) reflect the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General's reporting line to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with full responsibility for the integrated coordination of UNIOGBIS programmatic activities to ensure complementarity of activities and resources between UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Country Team; and (b) include only Mission sections and offices.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 3. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of the revised UNIOGBIS organizational chart.

UNIOGBIS needed to prepare a downsizing and closure plan

21. According to the Department of Operational Support's guide for senior leadership on field entity closure dated 1 January 2019, missions should seek to conduct downsizing and closure as effectively as possible in a "Lean, Clean and Responsible" manner. In its resolution 2458 (2019) Security Council decided to transition UNIOGBIS through the following three phases:

- Phase I – mission operations through elections in 2019 and closure of the four Regional Offices by 31 December 2019;
- Phase II – development of Transition Plan commencing June 2019; and
- Phase III – post-election period, implementation of the transition plan and closure of UNIOGBIS by 31 December 2020; disposal of assets and full hand-over of programme and operations to partners.

22. The 2020 budget proposal showed reclassification of one Under-Secretary-General (USG) post to the Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) level and a D-1 Chief of Staff post to the P-5 level, and a reduction of 13 posts from the 2019 approved staffing table of 135 posts.

23. In addition, UNIOGBIS has leases for property at its regional offices in Bafta, Sao Domingos, Buba and Bubaque and for the SRSG's residence in Bissau. The regional office in Bubaque was scheduled for closure at the end of June 2019, and the Mission had issued a vacation notice to the landlord in accordance with the terms of the lease agreement. Similarly, the lease agreement for the residence of the SRSG in Bissau was being terminated within the terms of the agreement after the departure of the SRSG on 16 May 2019. The other regional offices are scheduled for closure by the end of December 2019. Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, UNIOGBIS had assets with book value totalling \$1.3 million as at 24 May 2019.

Table 2: UNIOGBIS assets as at 24 May 2019 (in United States dollars)

| <i>Section</i> | <i>Acquisition value</i> | <i>Book value</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Rule of Law | 8,673 | 8,673 |
| CITS | 1,109,900 | 256,329 |
| Engineering | 1,722,062 | 912,993 |
| General Administration | 341,162 | 9,736 |
| Medical | 73,760 | 0 |
| Transport | 1,830,292 | 157,347 |
| Total | 5,085,849 | 1,345,078 |

Source: Information provided by UNIOGBIS

24. UNIOGBIS established an Integrated Transition Task Team (ITTT), which became operational on 25 April 2019. The terms of reference of ITTT indicated that the SRSR had delegated the overall management of the transition planning process to the DSRSG/RC. The ITTT has four objectives, which include provision of coordination and technical support to the DSRSG to effectively, plan, prepare, and execute all three phases of the transition plan for the prospective closure of UNIOGBIS by 31 December 2020 in accordance with Security Council resolution 2458 (2019).

25. However, there was no process to convey the outcome of the ITTT meetings to the SPG to coordinate the Mission's activities with UNCT. To implement the drawdown and closure of UNIOGBIS regional offices by 31 December 2019 and the prospective closure of UNIOGBIS by 31 December 2020, ITTT needs to coordinate closely with SPG to: (i) prioritize critical remaining peacebuilding needs where continued support is required beyond the closures; (ii) identify which actors are best placed to provide such support; (iii) enable those actors to play a more prominent role as UNIOGBIS draws down and closes; (iv) scale down the mission tasks and support services in tandem with the transfer of these mandated activities to the UNCT, UNOWAS and other partners; (v) prepare for the closure and handover of Mission premises in accordance with the terms agreed with the owners; and (vi) conduct physical inventory of assets for disposal.

26. While the ITTT had started its operations, it was important for UNIOGBIS to prepare an effective communication strategy to support ITTT in performing its tasks. The communication strategy needs to be transparent to effectively explain UNIOGBIS decisions and actions for all three phases of the transition and disseminate them: (i) internally within UNIOGBIS and Headquarters, and (ii) externally to international partners and national authorities. More importantly, UNIOGBIS staff affected by the downsizing and closure need assistance for the transfer of their skills and knowledge to appropriate United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and other entities.

(4) UNIOGBIS should prepare its downsizing and transition plan covering: (a) transfer of residual mandated activities to actors best placed to provide continued support; (b) assistance to affected staff in their efforts to find alternative employment; and (c) disposal of assets and handover of premises to progressively implement the three phases of its transition in accordance with the Guide for Senior Leadership on Field Entity Closure from the Department of Operational Support.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 4 and stated that it had drafted a preliminary staff drawdown plan in May 2019 including the closure of its regional offices, which was endorsed by ITTT in August 2019. Discussions were ongoing between UNIOGBIS and the UNCT under the ITTT framework for the transfer of residual mandated activities to concerned actors. A transition plan would be submitted to Headquarters for further review once developed. Recommendation 4 remains open pending receipt of the finalized Mission transition plan.

(5) UNIOGBIS should prepare an effective communication strategy to inform staff, the international community, Guinea-Bissau national authorities and the United Nations Headquarters throughout the implementation of the three phases of its transition in a transparent manner.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 5 and stated that a draft transition communication strategy was being developed. Recommendation 5 remains open pending receipt of finalized transition communication strategy.

SRSB as head of UNIOGBIS needed to prepare a formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate authority to UNIOGBIS officials

27. According to ST/SGB/2019/2 on delegation of authority in the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules effective 1 January 2019, the Secretary-General established a framework for the reissuance of new delegations of authority directly to heads of entity to implement specified aspects of the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules.

28. Heads of entity received notification of their delegation of authority from the Secretary-General through the online portal, which they should also use to sub-delegate authority to responsible officials within their entity. The transition period for sub-delegation was extended to 30 June 2019.

29. On 15 January 2019, UNIOGBIS prepared a summary overview of the sub-delegation of authority required at the Mission and proposed actions to the SRSB for consideration and approval. While the SRSB has accepted his delegation of authority in the online portal, he did not approve the proposed actions. The SRSB left the Mission on 16 May 2019, and there was no formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate necessary authorities within the Mission, which could adversely affect UNIOGBIS operations

(6) UNIOGBIS should prepare and implement a formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate authority for specified aspects of the Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules to its officials as appropriate to ensure smooth implementation of its operations.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 6 and stated that it had completed the formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate authority to its officials as appropriate. Based on the action taken by UNIOGBIS, recommendation 6 has been closed.

C. Management of staff and other resources

While vacancy management was satisfactory, gender parity needed improvement

30. UNIOGBIS authorized staffing table for 2019 consisted of 135 posts: 1 USG, 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 6 P-5, 12 P-4, 8 P-3, 27 Field/Security Services, 25 NPOs, 11 United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) and 42 General Service (Local Level). In its incumbency report as at 31 March 2019, UNIOGBIS had three vacancies: 1 P-3, 1 NPO and 1 General Service (LL). Recruitment against these posts was completed and the selected candidates were on board by 15 July 2019.

31. In the meantime, the post of the Chief of Staff (D-1) was being reclassified at the P-5 level, and that of the Personal Assistant (GSSL-4) of the SRSB became vacant in April 2019. Filling of these two posts have been kept on hold pending the arrival of the new SRSB. OIOS concluded that vacancy management in UNIOGBIS was satisfactory.

32. The incumbency report of UNIOGBIS staffing showed a total of 134 staff (including temporary appointments) as at 31 March 2019 comprising 59 internationals, 11 UNVs and 64 nationals. Table 3 shows the geographical and gender distribution of these staff.

Table 3: Geographical and gender distribution of UNIOGBIS staff as at 31 March 2019

| <i>Geographical region</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
| International staff | 39 | 20 | 59 | |
| Africa | 16 | 10 | 26 | 44% |
| Americas | 10 | 3 | 13 | 22% |
| Asia | 5 | 1 | 6 | 10% |
| Europe | 7 | 6 | 13 | 22% |
| Oceania | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2% |
| Sub-total | 66% | 34% | | |
| Field staff | 51 | 13 | 64 | |
| Africa | 51 | 13 | 64 | 100% |
| Sub-total | 80% | 20% | | |
| United Nations Volunteers | 9 | 2 | 11 | |
| Africa | 9 | 1 | 10 | 91% |
| Europe | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9% |
| Sub-total | 82% | 18% | | |
| Total | 74% | 26% | 134 | |

33. Given that UNIOGBIS is in its drawdown phase, OIOS is not making any recommendation on the need to improve gender parity in its staffing composition. However, should there be any recruitment during the drawdown and closure phase of the Mission, UNIOGBIS needs to give priority for gender parity in the selection process.

There was a need to ensure mandatory trainings for all UNIOGBIS staff

34. The Secretary-General's bulletin on United Nations mandatory programmes (ST/SGB/2018/4) defines the mandatory trainings for all staff members of the United Nations Secretariat. Staff members are required to complete the mandatory learning programmes within six months of joining the Organization.

35. However, OIOS noted that the completion rate for all mandatory courses as of 21 May 2019 was only 6 per cent for UNIOGBIS staff. There was also no evidence of UNIOGBIS enforcing the requirement with the mandatory training. Supervisors and heads of Sections are responsible for ensuring compliance with mandatory learning requirements so that staff can realize the potential benefits from mandatory courses including: (i) imparting knowledge on key values of the organization; (ii) promoting a shared organizational culture among staff and a harmonious work environment; and (iii) complementing other efforts made by the organization to promote standards expected of staff and to prevent prohibited conduct.

36. UNIOGBIS stated that it had sent broadcast reminders to staff and was monitoring the performance dashboard on mandatory training. Based on this action, OIOS is not making a recommendation this matter.

D. Organizational culture of UNIOGBIS

Gaps in senior leadership, staff concerns regarding the tone at the top, difficult operational environment and poor communication adversely affected the organizational culture of UNIOGBIS

37. In his reform proposals, the Secretary-General emphasized the importance of establishing sound organizational culture as a pre-requisite for effectively managing operations and resources. Organizational culture includes elements of: (i) leadership, management philosophy and operating style, and (ii) human resources practices and performance management.

38. During its initial period, UNIOGBIS was headed by SRSGs who were former presidents of their home country, which although significantly enhanced the visibility of the Mission, also meant that they were appointed from outside the United Nations system. The SRSGs needed time to familiarize themselves with the Mission's operations and associated challenges. During this initial phase, not all heads of UNIOGBIS organizational units were fully supportive of the leadership as was also evident from the fragmented organizational structure and in interviews with UNIOGBIS officials and its major stakeholders. This created divisions and distrust among the senior staff. Moreover, there was a turnover of two SRSGs from January 2018 to May 2019, with a gap in leadership during the turnover, and also due to long absences of the SRSG during the period from May 2018 to May 2019. OIOS was informed that the SRSG chaired the senior leadership weekly meetings, which had been discontinued since May 2018 due to SRSG's long absence on leave. Staff-management meetings were held only at the request of staff representatives.

39. The mandate of UNIOGBIS was revised under Security Council resolution 2404 (2018) abolishing the rule of law and security institutions from its programme of work, while maintaining and emphasizing the counter drug trafficking and organized crime aspect. More recently, the Security Council decided under resolution 2458 (2019) for the reconfiguration and reprioritization of UNIOGBIS tasks, and its prospective closure by 31 December 2020.. Consequently, these revisions of the mandate resulted in reducing posts and other resources thereby creating uncertainty and apprehension among staff in UNIOGBIS. The OIOS survey responses and interviews with UNIOGBIS staff indicated that the change management process to implement the revisions to the UNIOGBIS mandate was perceived among UNIOGBIS staff and its major stakeholders as lacking leadership and transparency as it was not supported with an effective communication strategy.

40. There is pervasive political instability in Guinea-Bissau. Although UNIOGBIS is a family duty station the conditions of service are difficult with limited availability of social services such as education and health. UNIOGBIS staff composition was heavily skewed towards male, representing 74 per cent of overall staff. The former Department of Field Support conducted a global client satisfaction survey in April 2017. This survey included civilian and uniformed personnel in peacekeeping, special political and other field missions. In UNIOGBIS, 69 staff responded to the survey in which 25 per cent of staff indicated that they were 'unsatisfied' or 'very unsatisfied' with the quality of life in the Mission. It was only in March 2018 that a United Nations Staff Counsellor from the region visited the Mission since UNIOGBIS has no Staff Counsellor to advise staff on their well-being.

41. In the process, relationships among principals and other international UNIOGBIS staff were acrimonious, resulting in numerous complaints to the then Department of Management and an intervention by the United Nations Ombudsman. The United Nations Ombudsman from Entebbe visited UNIOGBIS in February 2019 and prepared a report on UNIOGBIS staff issues in March 2019.

42. As part of this audit, OIOS administered a survey to 131 UNIOGBIS staff on 3 May 2019 with the closing date of 15 May 2019. At least 72 staff (57 per cent) responded to the entire survey questions. Over

80 per cent of respondents ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the statements: (i) “I am aware of the procedure for reporting wrongdoing”; (ii) “I am aware of the requirement to complete the United Nations mandatory training”; and (iii) “I am aware of the procedure for reporting misconduct”. However, at least one-third of the staff ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statements: (i) “Complaints of inappropriate conduct are addressed by management in an impartial manner”; (ii) “Staff concerns are promptly addressed by management”; (iii) “Open communication is encouraged at all levels by management”; (iv) “Staff concerns are promptly addressed by management”; and (v) “Staff at all levels are held accountable for their performance”. In addition, a quarter of the respondents ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement “The proper tone at the top was set by management”.

43. Senior leadership sets the tone at the top which is essential to ensure accountability in managing an organization’s operations and resources. This tone serves as an indication for acceptable or unacceptable behaviour of people responsible for utilizing the Organization’s resources to effectively deliver its mandate. That a quarter of OIOS survey respondents had adverse views regarding the tone at the top is a cause for concern in UNIOGBIS.

44. The Ombudsman report, the global client satisfaction survey, the OIOS survey and interviews with representatives of the Group of Five and UNIOGBIS staff echoed gaps in leadership and accountability. Since culture has a significant impact on the long-term effectiveness of organizations, the identified issues require immediate management attention and appropriate action. UNIOGBIS has prepared an action plan, which was limited to addressing the issues raised in the Ombudsman’s report. UNIOGBIS needs to develop a comprehensive action plan to address shortcomings in work planning, governance structure, leadership vacuum, lack of a consultative and inclusive process for decision-making, and staff concerns regarding the tone at the top. In June 2019, the Mission was waiting for the appointment of a new SRS¹. In the absence of strong leadership in the Mission especially when it is transitioning to drawdown and closure phases, UNIOGBIS faces the risk of failing to deliver its mandate. In the meantime, on 9 June 2019 DPPA deployed its Director for the Western Africa Division to act as Officer-in-Charge of UNIOGBIS pending the arrival of a new SRS¹.

(7) UNIOGBIS should develop and implement a comprehensive action plan focusing on strengthening the leadership and accountability of the Mission to deliver its mandate effectively.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 7 and stated that the Mission was implementing a comprehensive action plan focusing on strengthening its leadership and accountability through weekly Senior Management heads of section meetings. Recommendation 7 remains open pending receipt of evidence of implementation of the action plan.

(8) UNIOGBIS should implement measures to foster more frequent interactions within senior leadership and between management and staff including holding: (i) regular senior management meetings; and (ii) periodic staff-management and townhall meetings to consult with staff and inform them of critical developments at the Mission.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 8 and stated that town hall meetings were held monthly to ensure open communication and information dissemination particularly during the period of transition. The weekly Senior Management meetings have been reinstated and weekly Section Chiefs meetings are now chaired by the SRS/DSRS and remain an effective forum for decision making and information sharing on critical developments in the Mission. Recommendation 8 remains open pending receipt of the minutes of the above-mentioned meetings.

¹ A new SRS was appointed on 29 July 2019.

(9) UNIOGBIS should invite Staff Counsellors from the United Nations presence in the region or from the Department of Operational Support to advise staff on their well-being during the drawdown and closure phases.

UNIOGBIS accepted recommendation 9 and stated that the Regional Stress Counsellor from Headquarters visited the Mission from 13 to 27 August 2019 to meet with both UNIOGBIS and UNCT personnel. Based on the action taken by UNIOGBIS, recommendation 9 has been closed.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

45. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the management and staff of UNIOGBIS and DPPA for the assistance and cooperation extended to the auditors during this assignment.

(Signed) Eleanor T. Burns
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ² / Important ³ | C/ O ⁴ | Actions needed to close recommendation | Implementation date ⁵ |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | UNIOGBIS should develop work plans for the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG/RC) clearly formulating the leadership, good offices and coordination roles under the responsibility of the SRSG, and oversight of the Mission's programme of work and its integrated coordination with the United Nations Country Team under the DSRSG/RC. | Important | O | Submission of the work plans for the offices of the SRSG and DSRSG/RC. | 15 October 2019 |
| 2. | UNIOGBIS should reactivate the quarterly meetings of the Strategic Policy Group to ensure joint planning of its programme of work with the United Nations Country Team. | Important | C | Action completed | Implemented |
| 3. | UNIOGBIS should revise its organizational structure to: (a) reflect the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General's reporting line to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with full responsibility for the integrated coordination of UNIOGBIS programmatic activities to ensure complementarity of activities and resources between UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Country Team; and (b) include only Mission sections and offices. | Important | O | Submission of the revised UNIOGBIS organizational chart. | 31 December 2019 |
| 4. | UNIOGBIS should prepare its downsizing and transition plan covering: (a) transfer of residual mandated activities to actors best placed to provide continued support; (b) assistance to affected staff in | Important | O | Submission of the finalized Mission transition plan. | 15 September 2019 |

² Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

³ Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

⁴ C = closed, O = open

⁵ Date provided by UNIOGBIS for recommendations 1, 4 and 5. OIOS inserted the date for recommendation 3.

STATUS OF AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ² / Important ³ | C/ O ⁴ | Actions needed to close recommendation | Implementation date ⁵ |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | their efforts to find alternative employment; and (c) disposal of assets and handover of premises to progressively implement the three phases of its transition in accordance with the Guide for Senior Leadership on Field Entity Closure from the Department of Operational Support. | | | | |
| 5. | UNIOGBIS should prepare an effective communication strategy to inform staff, the international community, Guinea-Bissau national authorities and the United Nations Headquarters throughout the implementation of the three phases of its transition in a transparent manner. | Important | O | Submission of the finalized transition communication strategy. | 30 September 2019 |
| 6. | UNIOGBIS should prepare and implement a formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate authority for specified aspects of the Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules to its officials as appropriate to ensure smooth implementation of its operations. | Important | C | Action completed | Implemented |
| 7. | UNIOGBIS should develop and implement a comprehensive action plan focusing on strengthening the leadership and accountability of the Mission to deliver its mandate effectively. | Important | O | Submission of evidence of implementation of the action plan on strengthening the leadership and accountability of the Mission. | 31 December 2020 |
| 8. | UNIOGBIS should implement measures to foster more frequent interactions within senior leadership and between management and staff including holding: (i) regular senior management meetings; and (ii) periodic staff-management and townhall meetings to consult with staff and inform them of critical developments at the Mission. | Important | O | Submission of the minutes of the senior management meetings and periodic staff-management and townhall meetings. | 31 December 2020 |
| 9. | UNIOGBIS should invite Staff Counsellors from the United Nations presence in the region or from the Department of Operational Support to advise staff on their well-being during the drawdown and closure phases. | Important | C | Action completed | Implemented |

APPENDIX I

Management Response

Management Response

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

| Rec. no. | Recommendation | Critical ¹ / Important ² | Accepted? (Yes/No) | Title of responsible individual | Implementation date | Client comments |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | UNIOGBIS should develop work plans for the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG/RC) clearly formulating the leadership, good offices and coordination roles under the responsibility of the SRSG, and oversight of the Mission's programme of work and its integrated coordination with the United Nations Country Team under the DSRSG/RC. | Important | Yes | SRSG, DSRSG/RC assisted by Chief of Staff and supported by the Senior Planning Officer | 15 October 2019 The new SRSG is expected on 5 September 2019. The DSRSG/RC post is still under recruitment | Not started: Development of work plans for the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG/RC) will commence upon arrival of the SRSG and DSRSG/RC. In the meantime, the OiC UNIOGBIS has instituted weekly meetings of Senior Management as well as Section Heads; regular meetings with the Resident Coordinator a.i and UNDP Resident Representative on the two main priorities: Good offices towards the elections and UNIOGBIS Transition. |
| 2 | UNIOGBIS should reactivate the quarterly meetings of the Strategic Policy Group to ensure joint planning of its programme of work with the United Nations Country team. | Important | Yes | SRSG/DSRSG (supporting by the Mission Planning Officer) | Completed | Quarterly joint planning Strategic Policy Group meetings have been reinstated and the first meeting was held in June 2019. |
| 3 | UNIOGBIS should revise its organizational structure to reflect the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General's reporting line to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with full responsibility for the | Important | Yes | Human Resources Officer | Completed | UNIOGBIS Organizational Chart reflects the reporting lines of the DSRSG to the SRSG. The DSRSG/RC has full programmatic responsibility for Counter Drug Trafficking & Organized Crime, |

¹ Critical recommendations address critical and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided with regard to the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

² Important recommendations address important (but not critical or pervasive) deficiencies in governance, risk management or control processes, such that reasonable assurance may be at risk regarding the achievement of control and/or business objectives under review.

Management Response

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

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|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | integrated coordination of UNIOGBIS programmatic activities to ensure complementarity of activities and resources between UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Country Team. | | | | | Strategic Planning and the Gender Unit. However, it does not include the human rights section. The DSRSR also coordinates the UNIOGBIS transition through the Integrated Transition Task Team (ITTT) and interfaces with national authorities. This arrangement is in line with the recommendation of the Strategic Review Mission of 2016 which abolished the D2 Political Affairs post and gave the oversight of programmatic activities to the DSRSR/RC, thereby strengthening the integration between UNIOGBIS and the UNCT |
| 4 | UNIOGBIS should prepare its downsizing and transition plan covering: (a) transfer of residual mandated activities to actors best placed to provide continued support; (b) assistance to affected staff in their efforts to find alternative employment; and (c) disposal of assets and handover of premises to progressively implement the three phases of its transition in accordance with the Guide for Senior Leadership on Field Entity Closure from the Department of Operational Support. | Important | Yes | SRSR assisted by Chief of Staff and Chief Mission Support (supported where relevant by the Senior Planning Officer) | 15 September | UNIOGBIS drafted a preliminary staff drawdown plan in May 2019 as well as a plan for the closure of its four regional offices. As requested by DPPA, the ITTT endorsed drawdown plan is to be submitted by the Mission by 30 August 2019. For the transfer of residual mandated activities to concerned actors this is ongoing and is being discussed between UNIOGBIS and the UNCT under the ITTT framework. A transition plan will be submitted to Headquarters for further review once developed. Coordination and guidance for the preparation and support for the transition plan is being conducted by the Guinea-Bissau |

Management Response

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| | | | | | | <p>Integrated Task Force Transition Sub-Working Group (SWG) established on 9 April 2019. The SWG oversees and provides guidance to the ITTT based in Bissau.</p> <p>UNIOGBIS planning and provision of support and assistance to staff to find alternative employment has commenced, which includes engagement with the UNV Support Office, UNCT vacancies shared across the Mission and regular Staff/Human Resources support for resumé writing and competency-based interviews. Discussions with national authorities and UNCT are also underway for possible placement/transfer of international and national staff to bolster UNCT and national institutions. Mentoring and stress counselling is also underway. Planning and inventory processes started by the Mission in consultation and coordination with the UN Country Team, UN Global Support Centre, Brindisi and UNHQ Archiving and Planning Units.</p> |
| 5 | UNIOGBIS should prepare an effective communication strategy to inform staff, international community, Guinea-Bissau national authorities and the United Nations Headquarters throughout the implementation of the three phases of its transition in a transparent manner. | Important | Yes | Head of Public Information Unit (assisted by the UN communication team) | 30 Sept 2019 to be updated regularly. | <p>A draft UNIOGBIS Transition's communication strategy is being developed.</p> <p>UNIOGBIS leadership has been regularly briefing key national and international interlocutors about the Mission's phased withdrawal plans.</p> |

Management Response

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

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| 6 | UNIOGBIS should prepare and implement a formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate authority for specified aspects of the Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules to its officials as appropriate to ensure smooth implementation of its operations. | Important | Yes | SRSG/DSRSG assisted by Chief Mission Support | Completed | UNIOGBIS formal strategy and plan to sub-delegate authority for specified aspects of the Staff and Financial Regulations and Rules to its officials as appropriate has been completed. |
| 7 | UNIOGBIS should develop and implement a comprehensive action plan focusing on strengthening the leadership and accountability of the Mission to deliver its mandate effectively. | Important | Yes | SRSG/DSRSG assisted by Chief of Staff and Chief Mission Support (the latter to be supported by the Mission Planning Officer who will liaise with Heads of Sections | Ongoing | UNIOGBIS is implementing a comprehensive action plan focusing on strengthening the leadership and accountability of the Mission to deliver its mandate effectively through weekly Senior Management Meetings. UNIOGBIS SRSG chairs and guides the weekly Heads of Section meetings as well as meeting with the DSRSG/RC (or RC a.i.) and provides leadership guidance on the activities to be implemented under the transition plan in collaboration with UNCT; a transition activities matrix was developed and planning for activities for the remaining period of 2019 has commenced. |
| 8 | UNIOGBIS should implement measures to foster more frequent interactions within senior leadership and between management and staff including holding: (i) regular senior management meetings; and (ii) periodic staff-management and townhall meetings to consult with staff and inform them of critical developments at the Mission. | Important | Yes | SRSG/DSRSG assisted by the Chief of Staff | Ongoing | Town Hall meetings are held monthly to ensure open communication and information dissemination particularly during the period of transition. The weekly Senior Management Meeting has been reinstated. The weekly Section Chiefs meetings is now chaired by the SRSG/DSRSG and remains an effective forum for decision making and information sharing on critical |

Management Response

Audit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

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| | | | | | | developments in the Mission, including issues related to the transition. Additionally, DPPA through code cable 897 dated 16 July 2019 requested UNIOGBIS leadership to establish a dedicated mechanism for staff-management consultations related to the transition. |
| 9 | UNIOGBIS should invite Staff Counsellors from the United Nations presence in the region or from the Department of Operational Support to advise staff on their well-being during the drawdown and closure phases. | Important | Yes | Chief Mission Support | Completed | UNIOGBIS invited the Regional Stress Counsellor from UNHQ to conduct a visit from 13 to 27 August for the Counsellor to meet with both UNIOGBIS and UNCT personnel. |