



INTERNAL AUDIT DIVISION

REPORT 2021/067

Audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which included the establishment of a hospital facility, was effective

**17 December 2021
Assignment No. AA2021-210-01**

Audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the measures implemented by UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure continued operations. The audit covered the period from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2021 and included a review of: (a) crisis management; (b) workplace arrangements; (c) measures to assist staff and ensure continuity of operations; (d) COVID-19 Hospital Facility at Nairobi and related arrangements; and (e) staff health, welfare and counselling. The audit did not cover the procurement and construction aspects relating to the COVID-19 Hospital Facility which will be covered in a separate audit at a later date.

The audit showed that the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which included the establishment of a hospital facility, was effective. UNEP and UN-Habitat could improve their compliance with the policy on organizational resilience.

OIOS made three recommendations. To address the issues identified in the audit:

- UNEP and UN-Habitat needed to establish and implement the maintenance, exercise and review programme in terms of the Organizational Resilience Management System and ensure that members of its crisis management teams receive the required training under the organizational resilience policy;
- UNEP and UN-Habitat needed to provide annual updates as required on the implementation of the organizational resilience policy to achieve full compliance and address any gaps; and
- UN-Habitat needed to review the COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist for all its duty stations and take corrective measures where necessary.

UNEP and UN-Habitat accepted the recommendations and have undertaken to implement them.

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Audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conducted an audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).
2. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak as a pandemic. In March 2020, UNON set up a COVID-19 Crisis Management Team (CMT) which included representatives from UNEP, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), among others. The role of the CMT was to manage and respond to known and emerging COVID-19 risks under the guidance of WHO, UNON's Joint Medical Services (JMS) and the Office of UNON's Director-General. UNON approved a COVID-19 contingency plan to protect the health and safety of United Nations staff and their dependents in Kenya, while at the same time, maintaining essential functions and services. UNON facilitated remote working arrangements for staff in Kenya and provided administrative support to staff at 150 other duty stations.
3. UNEP set up the Executive Director's Crisis Management Group (CMG) in March 2020 which appointed COVID-19 country coordinators to assist with monitoring, compliance and reporting on established protocols. UNEP provided duty of care support to staff, as well as business continuity at its headquarters in Nairobi and in 40 other duty stations.
4. In March 2020, UN-Habitat established its own CMG which managed and coordinated its response to COVID-19. UN-Habitat's response included duty of care, business continuity and facilitation of business processes. UN-Habitat provided its response and support to staff at its headquarters in Nairobi and at 11 other duty stations.
5. As of 29 April 2021, JMS reported a cumulative COVID-19 caseload for the United Nations in Kenya of 973 cases, 774 recoveries, 31 deaths and 170 active cases. This included 102 cases of medical evacuations (medevac) out of which there were 21 deaths and 6 active cases.
6. A key initiative at Nairobi was the construction of a United Nations COVID-19 Hospital Facility in partnership with a major public hospital (hereafter referred to as "the Operator"). The hospital facility was budgeted to cost \$7.5 million and was financed through the United Nations system's inter-agency global medical evacuation response. It was constructed in three months (August to October 2020) and was operational in November 2020 at the peak of the pandemic. Prior to that in April 2020, the United Nations had entered into a three-month contract with the Operator for the provision of COVID-19 quarantine and isolation facilities for United Nations staff at an estimated maximum of \$2.18 million.
7. Comments provided by UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat are incorporated in italics.

II. AUDIT OBJECTIVE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

8. The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the measures implemented by UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure continued operations.

9. This audit was included in the 2021 risk-based work plan of OIOS due to the risks associated with the potential adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operations and staff of UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat.

10. OIOS conducted this audit from March to August 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya. The audit covered the period from 1 March 2020 to 30 June 2021. Based on an activity-level risk assessment, the audit covered risk areas relating to: (a) crisis management; (b) workplace arrangements; (c) measures to assist staff and ensure continuity of operations; (d) COVID-19 Hospital Facility at Nairobi and related arrangements; and (e) staff health, welfare and counselling. The audit did not cover the procurement and construction aspects relating to the COVID-19 Hospital Facility which will be covered in a separate audit at a later date.

11. The audit methodology included: (a) interviews with key personnel; (b) review of relevant documentation; (c) analytical review of data; and (d) site visit/physical observation at the Gigiri compound in Nairobi. The audit also relied on: (a) relevant data extracted from Umoja; (b) emails and broadcasts to staff; (c) minutes of meetings held by the CMT and CMG; and (d) information provided by UNEP and UN-Habitat on their out-posted offices.

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

III. AUDIT RESULTS

A. Crisis management

Governance mechanisms were promptly set up and activated in response to the pandemic

13. In March 2020, the Secretary-General required all duty stations to immediately designate a COVID-19 Outbreak Coordinator at their locations to work with existing crisis management and preparedness mechanisms to ensure that all plans were prepared, and preparedness was monitored and tested.

14. As indicated earlier in this report, UNON set up a CMT to manage and respond to the pandemic's known and emerging risks. Additionally, a COVID-19 Steering Committee was established in Nairobi consisting of UNON, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNSOS, WHO, OCHA, the Department of Safety and Security, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes, and the Resident Coordinator who represented the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Kenya. The Steering Committee, chaired by the Designated Official/Director-General of UNON and co-chaired by the Executive Director of UNEP, provided strategic guidance, oversight and advice on matters related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and also assisted to formulate joint inter-agency positions, host country engagement, and plans for the 'back to office' phase.

15. To safeguard the staff, CMT decided to reduce their presence at the Gigiri compound to 10 per cent, mainly comprising staff who performed critical functions. UNON subsequently: (a) issued a COVID-19 contingency plan; (b) promulgated COVID-19 protocols and guidelines on human resources and facilities management based on guidelines issued by United Nations Headquarters, WHO and the host

country; and (c) implemented a daily access online system for staff to access the office premises. In January 2021, UNON trained compliance monitors in preparing for gradual return to the office. Compliance monitors are responsible for monitoring adherence to COVID-19 protocols in the Gigiri compound when larger numbers of staff share the common spaces.

16. UNEP's CMG appointed COVID-19 country coordinators to assist with monitoring, compliance and reporting on established protocols. Under the guidance of the CMG and in collaboration with UNON, UNEP provided administrative guidance and support to its personnel. For its offices globally, UNEP implemented flexible working arrangements, developed policy reviews based on guidance issued by United Nations Headquarters, and organized regular briefings, townhalls and web-based communication to keep its personnel connected. It also provided guidance for the 'back to office' plan.

17. UN-Habitat's response, led by its CMG, included provision of administrative support to its staff and collaboration with UNON to streamline administrative arrangements. UN-Habitat held weekly coordination meetings with its regional offices and their respective focal points. Further, UN-Habitat convened regular coordination and townhall meetings to communicate with staff, besides conducting a survey to obtain feedback and lessons learned.

18. Overall, the governance mechanisms established by UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat in response to the pandemic were adequate and operating satisfactorily.

Elaborate and effective communication systems were implemented

19. UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat established and implemented elaborate and effective communication systems related to COVID-19 to ensure its personnel were properly informed.

20. UNON spelled out communication protocols in its Crisis Management Handbook describing the communication flow between the Security Management Team, Steering Committee and external entities. UNON communication initiatives included: (a) periodic townhall meetings led by the Office of the Director-General and supported by the WHO Country Director and the JMS Chief Medical Officer to provide information to staff and address their questions and concerns; (b) periodic information broadcasts to staff in Kenya; (c) provision of regular updates and frequently asked questions on the UNON and JMS websites; (d) availability of a COVID-19 hotline and later a vaccination hotline; and (e) use of the warden system to establish the whereabouts of staff and provide relevant information on the COVID-19 situation as received from the national authorities.

21. UNEP established communication channels on administrative and operational measures which included: (a) the COVID-19 Country Coordinator network to share UNEP's administrative and operational measures at the country level; (b) a dedicated page on its intranet, covering COVID-19; (c) townhall meetings with its staff to discuss areas where UNEP could still improve; and (d) a pulse survey to gauge the status of staff welfare and quality of support to facilitate corrective measures.

22. UN-Habitat's communication initiatives included: (a) an online newsletter published every two weeks to keep staff informed; (b) weekly updates from the Chief of Staff; (c) weekly reports to staff on the latest developments; (d) quarterly townhall meetings; and (e) a staff survey to obtain feedback.

UNEP and UN-Habitat need to ensure full compliance with the policy on organizational resilience

23. The policy (CEB/2014/HLCM/17) on the Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS) provides for a comprehensive emergency management system, linking actors and activities across

preparedness, prevention, response and recovery, to enhance resilience and improve the Organization's capacity to effectively manage the risks of disruptive events.

a) Need to establish a formal 'maintenance, exercise and review' programme

24. The ORMS policy has five key performance indicators (KPIs) under the maintenance, exercise and review programme: (a) a formal 'maintenance, exercise and review' programme (ME&R) approved by executive management; (b) availability of training programmes for ORMS; (c) percentage of members of the crisis management structures that have received an ORMS training; (d) availability to staff of ORMS awareness raising materials; and (e) frequency of training conducted.

25. UNON's ME&R programme was approved by its management in 2018. UNON's self-assessment showed that implementation with reference to all the KPIs was ongoing, with 60 per cent of its CMT members having already received ORMS training by May 2021.

26. UNEP stated that while formal training was not held for its CMG members, each member was assigned roles and responsibilities in their area of expertise. Similarly, UN-Habitat stated that no training had been conducted specifically for its CMG members. There was no evidence that UNEP and UN-Habitat had prepared their ME&R programme for approval by their respective executive management.

27. It is essential that UNEP and UN-Habitat prepare a formal ME&R programme as required by the ORMS policy and implement it in order to strengthen organizational resilience.

(1) UNEP and UN-Habitat should establish and implement the maintenance, exercise and review programme and ensure that members of its crisis management teams receive the required training under the organizational resilience policy.

UNEP and UN-Habitat accepted recommendation. Recommendation 1 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNEP and UN-Habitat have established and implemented the ME&R programme and ensured that members of their crisis management teams have received the required training under the organizational resilience policy.

b) Annual implementation updates need to be prepared as required by the ORMS policy

28. The ORMS policy requires all entities to provide an annual implementation update to the High-Level Committee on Management on their compliance with the policy. Providing regular updates on the status of the KPIs under the policy enables an entity to identify gaps in its organizational resilience as well as the measures required to address the gaps.

29. UNON reported its annual implementation update to United Nations Headquarters in accordance with the frequency and format requested. UNON also provided input to the Secretary-General's report for the period 2019 to 2021 on progress in implementing ORMS. In addition, UNON developed and was implementing six of the required seven plans under the ORMS policy, while the crisis communication plan was completed by June 2021 and awaited approval.

30. UNEP and UN-Habitat did not provide evidence of implementation updates under the ORMS policy. UNEP explained that it had always engaged with the focal point in UNON embedding its business continuity planning in the UNON ORMS set-up, and that UNEP was coordinating with UNON in areas such as mass casualty preparedness and evacuations, which were the responsibility of UNON. UNEP's collaborative approach was in line with the policy's recommended approach of sharing resources and avoiding duplication at the duty station. However, OIOS notes that each entity is required to provide

implementation updates on 22 additional KPIs covering planning, policy, governance, maintenance, and exercise which UNEP needs to comply with.

31. UN-Habitat explained that it had updated its business continuity plan and provided updated terms of reference for the Programme Management Group and the Business Coordination Team of the CMG. UN-Habitat did not provide an update on the status of implementation of ORMS.

(2) UNEP and UN-Habitat should provide annual updates as required on the implementation of the organizational resilience policy to achieve full compliance and address any gaps.

UNEP accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it will implement this on an annual basis starting with the last quarter of 2022. UN-Habitat accepted recommendation 2 and stated that it will review the level of its compliance with the organizational resilience policy and take necessary action to address any gaps and provide annual updates. Recommendation 2 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UNEP and UN-Habitat have provided annual updates as required by the organizational resilience policy to achieve full compliance and address any gaps.

B. Workplace arrangements

Preparedness assessments were conducted but UN-Habitat needs to assess all its outposted offices

32. In January 2020, the Public Health Unit of the Division of Healthcare Management and Occupational Safety and Health (DHMOSH) at Headquarters developed a COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist. A revised version was issued in August 2020. Offices away from Headquarters were required to use the checklist to evaluate the completeness of their existing preparedness plans.

33. In February 2020, prior to COVID-19 cases being reported in Kenya, UNON completed the checklist to assess the level of its preparedness. Following the initial assessment, JMS/UNON met weekly to reassess its preparedness and accordingly took measures to respond to the pandemic situation.

34. In March 2020, UNEP developed an emergency response and business continuity plan template for its offices located outside Nairobi. By April 2020, UNEP's review of the preparedness at its 40 duty stations identified gaps in the areas of infection control, medical consultation and advice, personal protective equipment (PPE), communication and training. The review results were used to strengthen the preparedness and response in the various duty stations.

35. In March 2020, UN-Habitat developed a COVID-19 emergency plan to protect staff and mitigate the impact of disruptions on its operations. UN-Habitat also prepared a template for COVID-19 weekly coordination updates to monitor the health measures in its outposted offices. However, the status as at May 2021 showed that the template contained information for only one outposted office. There was no evidence that the preparedness and response checklist had been reviewed for all of UN-Habitat's 11 outposted offices. Such a review is essential to enable UN-Habitat to take corrective measures where necessary.

(3) UN-Habitat should review the COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist for all its duty stations and take corrective measures where necessary.

UN-Habitat accepted recommendation 3 and stated that it will take necessary action to implement it. Recommendation 3 remains open pending receipt of evidence that UN-Habitat has reviewed the COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist for all its duty stations and taken corrective measures where necessary.

Workplace arrangements were managed adequately

36. To ensure a safe workplace, UNON implemented COVID-19 safety protocols and measures including: screening areas; social distance markings; glass barriers and temperature testing at access points including the main gate entrance, recreation centre and commissary; and hand sanitizing stations at various locations. COVID-19 protocols implemented at the main cafeteria and coffee shops included re-arranged seating to ensure social distancing, cashless payment system, regular sanitizing of the tables and chairs, and use of green and red placards to indicate sanitized and unsanitized tables. Further, under the flexible workspace plan, UNON built six outdoor work pods with adequate social distancing for use as workstations. Managers at the Gigiri compound, with the support of COVID-19 monitors, were required to ensure that personnel comply with COVID-19 protocols including social distancing, masking up, and hand hygiene. UNON stated that the monitoring system would be activated during the ‘back to office’ phase.

37. UNEP appointed country coordinators in its outposted offices who were required to follow local instructions issued by the UNCT and adhere to the local standards and policies. UNEP headquarters monitored the status at each duty station by means of virtual meetings and weekly and monthly reports.

Guidance on ‘back to office’ arrangements was adequate

38. In September 2020, the Office of Human Resources at Headquarters issued policy guidance on return to the workplace in the context of the pandemic. The policy provides that physical return to the workplace by staff members should be based on a cautious, phased, flexible and people-centered approach, considering the guidance and directives issued by WHO and the host government.

39. On 19 August 2020, UNON issued its COVID-19 ‘back to office’ plan, based on the guidance received from Headquarters, which contained indicators for each phase. In February 2021, UNON issued guidance on the physical use of premises including the COVID-19 safety protocols. Regular CMT meetings were held to discuss the various phases and triggers in relation to the plan. OIOS assessed that the guidance issued by UNON was adequate.

40. As of 31 March 2021, UNEP approved the return to office work plans for 17 out of its 40 outposted offices. Of the remaining 23, 13 offices had not yet submitted their plans, seven were in the process of developing their plans, and one was being reviewed. The status of two outposted offices was not known at the time of the audit.

41. UN-Habitat requested its outposted offices to draft return to work guidelines based on recommendations of their respective UNCTs. The Regional Office for Africa based in Nairobi was covered by UNON’s ‘back to office’ plans. UN-Habitat had documented phased return to office work arrangements for its regional offices in Asia Pacific and the Arab States.

C. Measures to assist staff and ensure continuity of operations

Prompt administrative measures were taken to assist staff

42. In March 2020, UNON issued its contingency plan which included guidelines to assist staff in the areas of travel, meetings and conferences, and home preparedness for emergencies. Through broadcasts, UNON distributed information to staff on critical functions, closure of offices, leave and attendance, recruitment and appointments, and salaries and benefits. Further, UNON distributed

information related to COVID-19 protocols and the additional resources deployed for prevention and control, including PPE.

43. UNEP took measures to support staff by issuing guidance on telecommuting, recruitment freeze, travel guidance, teleconferencing, duty of care, operational measures for management of United Nations Volunteers, and payments to interns. UNEP also discussed options to address the implications of COVID-19 with country coordinators and shared Headquarters guidelines with staff.

44. UN-Habitat's administrative measures to support staff included the following: (a) liaising with UNON in streamlining administrative issues such as renewal of personnel contracts and emergency travel; (b) assigning the Chief of Staff and other senior managers on a rotational basis for all duty of care aspects related to personnel across duty stations to help address any concerns; (c) strengthening information technology across duty stations; (d) sharing guidance issued by Headquarters and UNON on telecommuting, time and attendance, travel, and benefits and entitlements; (e) providing training related to COVID-19 and encouraging staff to use UNON's counselling resources; and (f) conducting a survey to determine how staff managed during the pandemic and using the feedback to take corrective action.

Effective steps were taken to ensure continuity of operations

45. UNON experienced challenges in collecting common services revenue as United Nations entities were not using the office facilities and conferencing services. UNON therefore undertook the following initiatives to fund ongoing operations: (a) regularly reviewed its common services receivables and assessed the possibility of suspending some services in some areas; (b) regularly reviewed its work arrangements and re-adjusted its operations as necessary; and (c) implemented cost reduction measures especially on utilities. UNON also took measures to continue providing critical services to United Nations operations, including the Resident Coordinator system and staff.

46. UNEP took measures to secure the funding and continuation of operations including: (a) reviewing the budget to mitigate the impact of the pandemic; (b) targeted assistance from the United Nations COVID-19 response and recovery multi-partner trust fund – an inter-agency mechanism to support low and middle income countries; and (c) communicating with donors to arrange for no cost extensions for UNEP projects whose implementation was impacted by the pandemic.

47. UN-Habitat undertook the following measures to secure the continuation of ongoing operations: (a) established a coordinated response plan and funding appeal to mobilize resources and address the impact of COVID-19; (b) assigned the Management Advisory and Compliance Division to oversee emergency procurement, budget revisions and allotments, certification of funds and emergency creation of grants, projects and implementing partners; and (c) formed strategic regional partnerships to address the impact of the pandemic on ongoing projects in one region.

D. COVID-19 Hospital Facility and related arrangements

Measures for isolation, quarantine and hospitalization of staff in Nairobi were effective

48. The local government in Kenya initially required all people who tested positive for COVID-19 to quarantine in government-designated facilities. The media at the time was not portraying the government quarantine facilities in a positive light, and there was widespread anxiety across the United Nations community. To protect United Nations staff and their families, in May 2020, UNON negotiated an isolation facility at a public hotel run by the Operator for provision of COVID-19 quarantine and isolation services for a period of three months. The budgeted amount for the service was \$2,092,500 including a one-off

amount of \$93,356 for start-up, management and demobilization costs. As of April 2021, the total expenditure was \$1,342,100.

49. In July 2020, UNON signed an agreement with the Operator to construct and run a United Nations COVID-19 Hospital Facility to cater for hospitalization of United Nations personnel and their dependents from Kenya as well as medically evacuated patients from other locations who required hospitalization and treatment for COVID-19. The Hospital Facility was budgeted at a total cost of \$7,512,088 (excluding value added tax) comprising the following: \$509,850 for pre-construction services, \$4,405,428 for construction works, \$2,160,070 for equipment, and \$436,740 for Operator-supplied consumables. The Operator provided two performance securities of \$751,208 and \$2,310,442 in accordance with the agreement. The Hospital Facility was financed through the United Nations System inter-agency global medevac response.

50. The contract between the United Nations and the Operator was signed in July 2020 and the construction was substantially completed three months later. The Hospital Facility opened in November 2020 at a time when the COVID-19 infection rate was at its peak. It started with a total of 100 beds consisting of 15 Intensive Care Unit (ICU), 45 High Dependency Unit (HDU), and 40 ward beds. The total capacity was subsequently increased with the addition of 35 beds belonging to the Operator, bringing the total to 23 ICU beds, 40 HDU beds, and 72 ward beds. HDU beds are designed to be used interchangeably as ICU beds as well. The Operator also provided additional surge capacity beds at its main hospital facility to be deployed only when needed.

51. As of 29 April 2021, the COVID-19 situation summary for United Nations personnel and dependents compiled by JMS indicated 975 cases including 31 deaths, 774 recoveries and 170 active cases, which according to the Operator represented one of the lowest mortality rates at hospitals globally. Besides cases handled through JMS, the facility catered for referrals and evacuations by other United Nations entities and non-United Nations beneficiaries including international non-governmental organizations. Beds not required by United Nations personnel or their dependents were open to other patients. Stakeholders interviewed by OIOS from the United Nations and the Operator agreed that overall, despite a few challenges, the Hospital Facility has been a success as it has saved many lives.

52. In May 2021, DHMOSH conducted a medical assessment on the hospital's systems and operations. The assessment indicated that the Hospital Facility received excellent ratings of 100 per cent in 9 of the 12 areas and high ratings of 83, 90 and 93 per cent in the three remaining areas. The assessment covered key components in the areas of administration, management and hospital systems.

E. Staff health, welfare and counselling

Controls over inventory, distribution and use of medical supplies were adequate

53. The UNON Property Management Unit provided inventory management support to JMS and performed physical verification of their medical supplies inventory at the end of the year. The Property Management Manual provided guidance for the operational and financial management of inventory. In addition, an Umoja Job Aid guided medical staff in the creation, certification and approval of reservations and issuance of inventory in Umoja.

54. JMS distributed medical supplies to eligible critical personnel and maintained issuance records. JMS also kept records of medical supplies issued for consumption in Dadaab and Kakuma. OIOS concluded that controls over the inventory and distribution of medical supplies were adequate.

55. JMS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governed the management of patients and medical supplies. For example, JMS had established procedures for patient flow and donning and doffing PPE when seeing patients. Compliance with SOPs was monitored through supervision and regular meetings.

JMS took measures to disseminate medical information and monitor health needs of staff and dependents

56. JMS, with the assistance of other UNON support functions, established systems to disseminate medical information and monitor the health needs of staff and their dependents. These measures included:

(a) Monitoring the availability of COVID-19 testing services and bed space at frequently used medical facilities and keeping staff informed through general broadcasts and information on the JMS website. A Memorandum of Understanding between UNON and the International Organization for Migration also secured additional testing services for personnel. Antibody testing was also available at JMS. A private service provider was contracted, which supported JMS with sample collection, testing and reporting.

(b) A COVID-19 hotline which was established in accordance with UNON Emergency Response SOPs to support staff. At least two individual contractors were hired on part-time basis and trained to provide information on COVID-19 protocols, guidance and support to staff. The hotline was discontinued in September 2020 due to diminished usage. Instead, a vaccination hotline was deployed in 2021 to guide staff having questions related to the United Nations vaccination programme at Nairobi.

(c) Weekly briefings were provided to the Steering Committee. Regular briefings were also provided to the CMT. Other briefings were provided to the inter-agency network through the Common Services Management Team.

(d) Monitoring by clinical staff of infected personnel and their dependents using the home-based care approach. SOPs for monitoring of personnel and their dependents including follow-up were developed for this purpose.

(e) Documenting the daily clinical activities using daily situation reports, summarizing key activities and outcomes for information and decision-making by senior management.

(f) Augmenting its capacity to meet the increased demand for COVID-19 related services by recruiting one nurse, one counselling psychologist and one medical officer. Funding for the three JMS surge personnel was extended up to December 2021.

Psycho-social support and welfare measures were deployed

57. JMS established adequate psycho-social support and welfare measures. The capacity for staff counselling was strengthened with one additional counselor, in addition to referrals to external providers. Further, JMS arranged several health talks to educate staff on subjects such as mental health, depression and suicide, parenting adolescents and young adults, and hypertension. Regular broadcasts and townhall meetings provided information on general staff health and welfare.

The vaccination campaign was successfully conducted

58. JMS provided information and procedures for the vaccination programme during townhall meetings and through broadcasts and emails urging staff to be vaccinated. The first vaccines were received from the host government while the second batch was received through a procurement process. The vaccination exercise commenced in March 2021 and about 3,800 doses were administered between March and May 2021. As of July 2021, JMS reported that 14,000 doses had been administered to an estimated 80

per cent of United Nations personnel and over 7,000 individuals from various categories including dependents, household members and international non-governmental organizations.

59. Details of staff vaccinated at JMS were registered on the Everbridge system while those vaccinated at government facilities were registered on the M-Chanjo platform operated by the host government. The two systems were not initially interfaced, and some staff faced challenges in obtaining their full vaccination certificates required for travel. According to JMS, this has since been addressed by the government with the provision of a link through which personnel can register their details and download certificates for vaccines obtained from the government. The Everbridge platform has also since been upgraded to provide certificates for vaccines obtained from the United Nations.

IV. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

60. OIOS wishes to express its appreciation to the Management and staff of UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat 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 response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	C/ O ³	Actions needed to close recommendation	Implementation date ⁴
1	UNEP and UN-Habitat should establish and implement the maintenance, exercise and review programme and ensure that members of its crisis management teams receive the required training under the organizational resilience policy.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UNEP and UN-Habitat have established and implemented the maintenance, exercise and review programme and ensured that members of their crisis management teams have received the required training under the organizational resilience policy.	UNEP: 31 December 2022 UN-Habitat: 31 October 2022
2	UNEP and UN-Habitat should provide annual updates as required on the implementation of the organizational resilience policy to achieve full compliance and address any gaps.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UNEP and UN-Habitat have provided annual updates as required by the organizational resilience policy to achieve full compliance and address any gaps.	UNEP: 31 December 2022 UN-Habitat: 31 October 2022
3	UN-Habitat should review the COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist for all its duty stations and take corrective measures where necessary.	Important	O	Receipt of evidence that UN-Habitat has reviewed the COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist for all its duty stations and taken corrective measures where necessary.	31 October 2022

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

³ Please note the value C denotes closed recommendations whereas O refers to open recommendations.

⁴ Date provided by UNON, UNEP and UN-Habitat in response to recommendations.

APPENDIX I

Management Response

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT NAIROBI

TO: Eleanor T. Burns, Director DATE: 18 November 2021
Internal Audit Division, OIOS

REFERENCE: OIOS-2021

FROM: Mrs. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General,
United Nations Office at Nairobi



SUBJECT **Draft report on audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Assignment No. AA2021-210-01)**

Dear Ms. Burns,

Thank you for your Memorandum of 17 November 2021 with the above-mentioned report sent for our review.

Kindly note that UNON has no further comments.

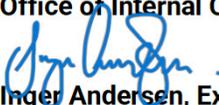
Thank you.

cc: Ms. Inger Andersen, UNEP
Ms. Maimunah Mohd. Sharif, UN-Habitat
Mr. Chris Kirkcaldy, UNON
Ms. Sonja Leighton-Kane, UNEP
Ms. Elisabeth Turnbull Brown, UNEP
Mr. Gary Landes, UN-Habitat
Ms. Mariya Essajee, UNON
Ms. Modupe Adebajo, UN-Habitat

Memorandum

To: **Ms. Eleanor T. Burns,
Director, Internal Audit Division
Office of Internal Oversight Services**

Date **29 November 2021**

From: 
**Inger Andersen, Executive Director
UNEP**

Reference **UNE-2021-COVID
AUDIT**

Subject: **Draft report on the audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme**

1. This memo refers to the draft report on the audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (OIOS-2021-01716).
2. Management has reviewed the draft report and I am happy to say that all recommendations are accepted.
3. Please find attached the Management Response (Appendix I) for you to include in the final draft of the report.
4. The Management Response includes an action plan with target dates and the titles of the individuals responsible for implementing the recommendations.

Management Response

Audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNEP and UN-Habitat should establish and implement the maintenance, exercise and review programme and ensure that members of its crisis management teams receive the required training under the organizational resilience policy.	Important	Yes	Director Corporate Services Division (CSD)	End of Q4 2022	UNEP accepts this recommendation and will implement by the end of quarter 4 2022.
2	UNEP and UN-Habitat should provide annual updates as required on the implementation of the organizational resilience policy to achieve full compliance and address any gaps.	Important	Yes	Director Corporate Services Division (CSD)	End of Q4 2022	UNEP accepts this recommendation and will implement this on an annual basis starting with 2022 (last quarter).
3	UN-Habitat should review the COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist for all its duty stations and take corrective measures where necessary.	Important	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.

UN HABITAT
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
Programme des Nations Unies pour les établissements humains

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ref: UNH-OED-OL-202123-11

Nairobi, 29 November 2021

Dear Ms. Burns,

Subject: Response to the draft report on an audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Assignment No. AA2021-210-01)

I am pleased to confirm that UN-Habitat has no further comments to the above-mentioned draft audit report. Please find attached completed Appendix 1.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the OIOS for the services rendered to UN-Habitat.

Yours sincerely,



Maimunah Mohd Sharif
Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director of UN-Habitat

Ms. Eleanor T. Burns
Director Internal Audit Division, OIOS

Management Response

Audit of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Rec. no.	Recommendation	Critical ¹ / Important ²	Accepted? (Yes/No)	Title of responsible individual	Implementation date	Client comments
1	UNEP and UN-Habitat should establish and implement the maintenance, exercise and review programme and ensure that members of its crisis management teams receive the required training under the organizational resilience policy.	Important	Yes	Director MACS	October 2022	UN-Habitat will take the necessary action to implement the audit recommendation.
2	UNEP and UN-Habitat should provide annual updates as required on the implementation of the organizational resilience policy to achieve full compliance and address any gaps.	Important	Yes	Director MACS	October 2022	UN-Habitat will review the level of its compliance of the organizational resilience policy and will take the necessary action to address any gap and provide annual updates.
3	UN-Habitat should review the COVID-19 preparedness and response checklist for all its duty stations and take corrective measures where necessary.	Important	Yes	Director MACS	October 2022	UN-Habitat will take necessary action to implement the audit recommendation.

¹ Critical recommendations address those risk issues that require immediate management attention. Failure to take action could have a critical or significant adverse impact on the Organization.

² Important recommendations address those risk issues that require timely management attention. Failure to take action could have a high or moderate adverse impact on the Organization.