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Programme questions: evaluation

Triennial review of recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its twenty-second session to review the implementation of recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) three years after the Committee had endorsed them (see A/37/38, para. 362). The present triennial review determined the extent to which the three recommendations emanating from the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/2017/11) were implemented.

The 2017 OIOS report on the evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) focused on assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the advocacy role of OCHA from 2013 to 2016. Concurrently with and subsequent to the evaluation, OCHA embarked, in 2016, on an ambitious organizational change process that was finalized in 2018, with some aspects continuing to be implemented at the time of the triennial review. OCHA broadly accepted the analysis, results statements and recommendations that arose from the evaluation, while noting that the full implementation of recommendation 2 was contingent on the finalization of its change management process.

On the basis of the information provided by OCHA and interviews with selected staff members, OIOS determined, through the triennial review, that recommendation 1 had been satisfactorily implemented, recommendation 2 had been partially implemented and recommendation 3 had been closed on the understanding that OCHA management accepted the risk of its non-implementation.

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* The dates for the substantive session are tentative.
** E/AC.51/2020/1.

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In recommendation 1, OCHA was requested to complete the recruitment for the post of Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch, a post that had been occupied by temporary replacements since 2012. In December 2018, the recruitment process was finalized and a new Chief was appointed. The positive results of the implementation of the recent process of organizational change and, in that context, of the appointment of the new Chief, included improved collaboration between the Branch and other key departments and the launch of a broad discussion process related to a global communications and public advocacy strategy for the period 2020–2021, and were already visible to most stakeholders. In the light of the evidence gathered, this recommendation was considered fully implemented.

In recommendation 2, OIOS addressed the need to consolidate the core Headquarters-based advocacy function of OCHA under the leadership of, and demonstrating a clear reporting line to, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, as chief advocate. OIOS also recommended the establishment of a coordination mechanism that could bring together the different levels of the OCHA that work on advocacy. During the triennial review, evidence of significant efforts to consolidate the advocacy function was found. Structural changes, such as the creation of a new Operations and Advocacy Division and the restructuring of the Policy Branch, sections of which were merged with the new Division, were unanimously perceived as major steps towards consolidating the advocacy function. In parallel to these structural changes, the newly developed Strategic Plan 2018–2021 added clarity and presented five strategic objectives organized on the basis of the five core functions of OCHA, including strategic objective 4, expressly linked to the results framework outcome related to advocacy. Although several coordination mechanisms at different levels had been established at the time of the review, however, OCHA had not instituted an effective global coordination mechanism as required in accordance with the recommendation. A Global Advocacy Team was created and held its first meeting in August 2018, but there was no evidence of further follow-up subsequent to that meeting, or of due and effective coverage of advocacy issues in those other coordination mechanisms, and no other mechanism had explicitly replaced the Team. This recommendation was implemented in part.

In recommendation 3, OCHA was advised to revisit and update its 2006 Advocacy Policy Instruction and Guidelines on Advocacy, and its 2013–2017 Advocacy Strategy. During the first and only meeting of the Global Advocacy Team in August 2018, OCHA strategic priorities and vision related to advocacy were discussed. According to the minutes of that meeting, participants acknowledged the need to improve global advocacy efforts through better linkages to country-level advocacy and identified the importance of prioritizing a few key issues that could potentially prevent competition among and the dilution of messages. The development of the 2018–2021 Advocacy Strategy was also included in the list of priority actions on which to follow up. A more limited strategic document, the Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy, led by the Strategic Communications Branch, was endorsed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator in January 2020. The Strategy was circulated among the members of the Global Management Team on 4 March 2020. Given the timing of its release vis-à-vis the present review, the Strategy could not be assessed for its quality and adherence to the requirements of the recommendation.

As in the case of the need for a coordination mechanism, discussed above, there were significant differences in opinion among stakeholders on the need for a broader advocacy strategy encompassing both the public and private sides of humanitarian diplomacy, with the majority expressing the view that the particularities and context-specific needs of OCHA private advocacy work would make such a strategy either

unnecessarily restrictive or too broad to be useful. While some strongly advocated a clear set of priorities and strategic directions to guide the performance of the advocacy function, most believed that the very nature of the advocacy work of OCHA required a case-by-case approach and made the need for an all-encompassing strategy irrelevant. In the light of this difference of opinion within OCHA, this recommendation was closed on the understanding that OCHA management accepts the risk of its non-implementation. OIOS intends to revisit the matter in greater detail as part of its upcoming evaluation of OCHA, to be completed in 2021.

I. Introduction

1.   At its fifty-seventh session, in 2017, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (E/AC.51/2017/11).

2.   The Committee expressed appreciation and high regard for the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Members of the Committee expressed appreciation for the OIOS report, including the recommendations, and supported the balanced analysis of the advocacy work of OCHA. Delegations supported the OIOS conclusions on the need to improve internal coordination within OCHA and emphasized the importance of advocacy, among other components of the mandate and global work of OCHA. While recognizing the need for alignment with all the internal management reforms under way within OCHA, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 60 to 62 of the OIOS report.

3.   The present report is issued pursuant to a triennial review of the implementation of the three recommendations contained in the 2017 report. Through the review, OIOS also assessed whether and to what extent the implementation of the recommendations had contributed to programme changes.

4.   The methodology for the triennial review included:

(a)   Review and analysis of biennial progress reports on the status of the implementation of recommendations, which was monitored through the OIOS recommendation database;

(b)   Analysis of relevant information, documents and reports obtained from OCHA on various topics related to the recommendations;

(c)   Interviews with a selected sample of six OCHA senior managers and programme staff at the Headquarters and field levels.

5.   The present report incorporates comments received from OCHA during the drafting process. A final draft was shared with OCHA, which provided comments on it (see annex). OIOS expresses its appreciation for the cooperation extended by OCHA in the preparation of the present report.

II. Results

6.   OIOS, in its report on the evaluation of OCHA (E/AC.51/2017/11), recommended that OCHA: (a) complete the recruitment for the post of Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch; (b) consolidate its core Headquarters-based advocacy function under the leadership of, and demonstrating a clear reporting line to, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, as chief advocate; and (c) revisit, and update as necessary, its 2006 Advocacy Policy Instruction and Guidelines on Advocacy, and its 2013–2017 Advocacy Strategy, through an internal and external consultation process, and roll out and implement the updated documents. Of the three recommendations, one (recommendation 1) was considered to be fully implemented, another (recommendation 2) was deemed to be implemented in part and the last (recommendation 3) had not been implemented at the time of the triennial review. The implementation status of each of the three recommendations is discussed below.

Recommendation 1
Recruitment for the post of Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch

7.   Recommendation 1 reads as follows:

OCHA should complete the recruitment for the post of Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch

Indicators of achievement: Recruitment process completed; post filled by qualified candidate

8.   Taking into consideration the overall responsibility for public advocacy vested in the Strategic Communications Branch, OIOS indicated in its evaluation report the need to address the lack of continuity in the leadership of this key advocacy role. It was expected that the recruitment of a Chief of the Branch, a position occupied by temporary replacements since 2012, would contribute to strengthening the strategic management of the advocacy function, in the specific areas for which the Branch was directly responsible.

9.   In accordance with this recommendation, OCHA launched a recruitment process to fill the position in January 2018. According to the description published in the job opening, the position was located in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and reported directly to the Under-Secretary-General. In the job opening, the key responsibilities of the Chief of the Branch, including public communications, media relations, public campaigns and media products, were clearly described. No specific reference to the advocacy function was made.

10.   On December 2018, the Under-Secretary-General concluded the selection process with the appointment of a Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch, who effectively took office on February 2019. Primarily facilitated by, and against the backdrop of, the important organizational changes recently introduced (elaborated further in the present report), some positive outcomes were starting to emerge, according to knowledgeable staff who were interviewed. For example, there was a strong feeling that the changes introduced as part of the organizational restructuring process had drastically strengthened coordination and collaboration between the Branch, its new Chief and key divisions at the Headquarters level, including the Information Management Branch and the new Operations and Advocacy Division. In some cases, this led to a clearer delineation of tasks and responsibilities among the different departments, such as the corporate website agreement recently signed by the Strategic Communications Branch and the Information Management Branch. Improved collaboration and support were also visible to field staff, who believed that specific support for the public information and public advocacy function was now easier to obtain than it had been previously. For example, in December 2019, the new Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch visited South Sudan to support the country office in the restructuring of the public information and communications function and the strengthening of the country office's public advocacy work, support that was much appreciated by the country office. Another example was the organization of global communications training in Nairobi in April 2019. The training, although focused on enhancing the capacity of OCHA staff engaged in communications, also included some public advocacy elements. According to documents reviewed, the training brought together 54 national and international staff, not only staff working in communications (mostly public information officers) but also staff from different backgrounds and divisions, including humanitarian affairs officers, reports officers, programme officers and a deputy fund manager.

11.   This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 2
Consolidate the core advocacy function

12.   Recommendation 2 reads as follows:

> OCHA should consolidate its core Headquarters-based advocacy function under the leadership of, and demonstrating a clear reporting line to, the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator, as chief advocate. Accordingly, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator should additionally establish (or subsume under an existing coordination forum) a mechanism for the coordination of advocacy efforts within Headquarters, and between Headquarters and other levels of OCHA, as well as the implementation of recommendation 3.

> **Indicators of achievement**: Organization chart revised to demonstrate reporting lines indicated; internal mechanism established (or subsumed) and utilized to coordinate advocacy.

13.   Through the review, OIOS assessed progress related to the two elements of this recommendation. OCHA had accepted the recommendation with some qualifications. As expressed in the comments by OCHA on the OIOS evaluation report (see E/AC.51/2017/11, annex I), the implementation of this recommendation was contingent on the finalization of the change management process that was under way at the time.

14.   Concurrently with and subsequent to the OIOS evaluation, OCHA embarked, in 2016, on an ambitious organizational change process that was finalized in 2018, with some aspects continuing to be implemented at the time of the triennial review. The key milestones of that process were as follows:

- In 2016, a functional review was conducted. As a result of the review, a range of specific weaknesses in the OCHA organizational architecture were identified, and a clear set of recommendations were provided to address those shortcomings. Although the review was aimed at addressing broader organizational issues, it served to corroborate the OIOS conclusions related to advocacy (see E/AC.51/2017/11, para.18);

- In June 2017, the OCHA issued a document entitled "Creating a better OCHA" that was focused on the outcomes of the design phase of the Office's change process" was issued. In it, OCHA proposed a new organization chart that, among other things, would combine the advocacy and operations functions into a new division that would be appropriately empowered and capacitated to provide real-time, authoritative perspectives, insights, situational awareness and facts from field-based OCHA leadership. This arrangement would ensure that perspectives, insights, situational awareness and facts could be delivered consistently and rapidly to inform Advocacy efforts across OCHA";[1]

- In 2017, a Change Implementation Unit was established to lead the change management process;

- Between June 2017 and 2018, the change management implementation process was rolled out;

- In 2018, the Organizational Development Unit was established to continue the work of the Change Implementation Unit. It continued to review the roles and

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[1] See "Creating a better OCHA: outcomes of the design phase of OCHA's change process", June 2017, p. 15.

functions of the different parts of OCHA and recommended adjustments and changes that were ongoing at the time of the triennial review.

15. Through this process, a number of decisions affecting the advocacy function were taken. First, OCHA was reorganized to clearly reflect its five core functions, namely, coordination, advocacy, policy, humanitarian financing and information management.[2] In parallel to these structural changes, OCHA worked on the elaboration of a new Strategic Plan 2018–2021 that mirrored the new operating model and was aligned with the vision set out in the document entitled "Creating a better OCHA". The Strategic Plan contained five strategic objectives that were also broadly organized around the five core functions of OCHA. Strategic objective 4 (unlike strategic objective 6 of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017) was expressly linked to the results framework outcome related to advocacy, demonstrating a clear intention to give more conceptual clarity to advocacy as a core function.

16. A result of these decisions, as indicated in the document entitled "Creating a better OCHA", was the creation of the Operations and Advocacy Division, which, in the new organization chart, assumed responsibilities over the different geographical sections and field offices and the Geneva section, and was tasked with taking the lead in providing support to the Emergency Response Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinators and Inter-Agency Standing Committee principals for advocacy on behalf of affected people. As a consequence, the Director of the Division was designated as the functional lead for the OCHA advocacy function, responsible for the delivery of the strategic objective of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 associated with advocacy (strategic objective 4).[3] Clearer reporting lines to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, as suggested in the OIOS evaluation, were also developed.

17. The new Operations and Advocacy Division brought together the responsibilities of the former Coordination and Response Division and responsibilities related to advocacy in a single unit. Following a functional review of the Policy Branch conducted by the Organizational Development Unit in 2019, the new Operations and Advocacy Division recently absorbed resources from the Policy Branch. This decision was considered particularly relevant for the performance of the advocacy function, since it meant bringing key sections of the Policy Branch – those providing operational support to the field in relation to access, protection and international humanitarian law, all of which are key components of strategic objective 4 – into the Division. The integration of these sections was completed in January 2020. As noted by OCHA staff, this decision was expected to ensure that operational support was more coherent and was given higher priority, and, ultimately, to result in the strengthening of OCHA advocacy efforts. As OCHA finalized the implementation of these changes just before the completion of the triennial review, it was too early to detect outcome-level changes resulting from them.

18. Another initiative taken by OCHA as part of the change implementation process was the creation of four posts of Deputy Director in the Operations and Advocacy Division. According to the staff interviewed, the new Deputy Directors were expected to articulate the work of the Division in a more efficient manner and, taking into consideration the seniority of the posts, to enhance the Division's advocacy

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[2] The new organization chart was made public for the first time in the *Annual Report 2017*, prepared by the Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

[3] "Strategic objective 4: international acceptance of the centrality of international humanitarian and human rights law, access and protection that results in meaningful action for affected people, especially internally displaced people", as set out in the OCHA Strategic Plan 2018–2021, pp. 15-16.

capacities, thereby multiplying the presence of OCHA at relevant high-level meetings and forums.

19.   Second, a new Director of the Division was recruited in October 2018. In accordance with the job description, the Director assumed both private and public advocacy responsibilities.[4]

20.   Interviews with staff revealed improved coordination and collaboration between the Strategic Communications Branch and the Operations and Advocacy Division. Furthermore, several interviewees highlighted the relevance and potential of incorporating parts of the Policy Branch into the Division to foster stronger cross-collaboration between the policy and advocacy functions. However, the testimonies gathered also suggested that, despite the many efforts devoted to consolidating advocacy as a function, in practice, the functional division between public and private advocacy remained firmly in place at the time of the review, with the Strategic Communications Branch leading public advocacy and the Division very much focusing on the private aspects. Although the functional division was not considered a problem in and of itself, and improved collaboration between the two divisions was repeatedly mentioned during the interviews, concerns about the effective consolidation and leadership of the function remained.

21.   In accordance with the second part of recommendation 2, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General was required to create a mechanism to coordinate the advocacy function across OCHA, bringing together key actors at the Headquarters and other levels. Both the OIOS evaluation report and the functional review contained references to "significant organizational silos between branches at Headquarters as the main impediment to connecting efforts" (see E/AC.51/2017/11, para. 39) and to the need for strengthened coordination. In that vein, a key component of the new operating model of OCHA was the establishment of five global functional teams, one for each core function. As reflected in the different documents reviewed and noted by OCHA staff, the global functional team model was introduced to facilitate functional collaboration, given the strong silos that had existed prior to the reforms. The teams were thus designed to cover all the work of OCHA under each functional area, not merely the work of a single division or branch. To that end, a Global Advocacy Team was created and held its first meeting in August 2018. According to the Team's terms of reference, issued that month, the Team was to be responsible for supporting the advocacy functional lead in the following areas:

- Defining and advancing a clear vision for the advocacy function that addresses the strategic priorities of OCHA;

- Developing and maintaining the 2018–2021 Advocacy Strategy for OCHA and advocacy-related policies, guidance and technical standards, and overseeing and monitoring their implementation;

- Facilitating collaboration in the achievement of the advocacy objective (strategic objective 4) across Headquarters divisions and branches and in the field.

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[4] "OCHA distinguishes between its public advocacy (for example, press conferences, media interviews, editorials, awareness-raising campaigns, remarks before open sessions of intergovernmental bodies and speeches) and its private advocacy (for example, private conversations, meetings, briefings, consultations and e-mails" (see E/AC.51/2017/11, para. 10).

22.   The membership of the Global Advocacy Team included representatives from Headquarters and from regional and country offices.[5] According to the minutes of the constituent Team meeting of August 2018, minutes that were shared with OIOS, participation was broad, with representatives of 11 field offices, three geographical sections and six Headquarters divisions from across OCHA attending. That participation represented nearly 40 per cent of country offices, 60 per cent of regional sections and all but two of the Headquarters divisions.

23.   According to all the sources consulted, the Global Advocacy Team only met once and no clear follow-up to that meeting was provided. Discussions with staff also revealed mixed perceptions of, and significant disagreements about, the need for and relevance of such an entity. For many, the Team had held no more meetings because of a general confirmation of the fact that the global functional team model was not immediately useful to all functions and functional leads equally. This was partly attributed to the large range of issues covered by each function but also to a broader recognition of the importance of avoiding additional meetings and of the response requirements of managers both in the field and at Headquarters. In that regard, most interviewees shared the view that, in contrast with other functional teams,[6] the type of advocacy work done by OCHA was very context-specific, and the need for such a global mechanism was not always clear or relevant at all the levels of OCHA. Instead, and as was the case for other functions, those interviewees believed that different, more flexible ways of ensuring cross-functional collaboration related to advocacy had been found and were more useful and effective. For example, at Headquarters from October 2019, the directors of three divisions (the Coordination Division, the Operations and Advocacy Division and the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division) had been holding monthly meetings via videoconferencing with heads of offices. According to OCHA staff, these meetings provided a forum for the discussion of issues of concern, including advocacy. Furthermore, weekly management meetings brought representatives of all the key functions together, offering further room for such discussion. Last, a global management retreat was held for staff at the P-5 and higher levels every nine months to discuss organizational issues, including advocacy. As the minutes of these meetings were not made available for the triennial review, OIOS was unable to assess the depth and extent to which advocacy discussions were conducted on the retreat, or to determine whether the retreat could sufficiently substitute for the Global Advocacy Team.

24.   At the field level, some staff stated that, because advocacy was very much owned by the heads of offices, who were a de facto team that already maintained regular interactions and consultations, it was unnecessary to hold a separate global meeting on the matter. Others also believed that meetings of the Regional Support Team, a new entity that had resulted from the change management process, had the potential to meet the need for a more coordinated and integrated approach. Regional Support Team meetings, they argued, were convened regularly and, led by the

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[5] The members at the field level were the heads of the country offices and the heads of the regional offices. The members at Headquarters were, from the Operations and Advocacy Division, the Director, the Deputy Director and the section chiefs; from the Policy Branch, the Chief of the Intergovernmental Policy Section and the Chief of the Policy Advice and Planning Section; from the Strategic Communications Branch, the Director, the Chief of the Media Relations Section and the Chief of the Public Advocacy and Campaigns Section; from the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Branch, the Chief of the External Relations and Partnership Section; from the Coordination Division, the civil-military coordination focal point and the focal point for accountability to affected people; and representatives of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and the Office of the Assistant Secretary-General.

[6] At the time of the review, the Information Management Branch functional team was the only active team of the five.

Operations and Advocacy Division, brought together heads of offices and other key functions to discuss and decide on specific issues related to advocacy. Only a minority of interviewees believed that entities such as the Global Advocacy Team were the most useful means of effectively consolidating the advocacy function across OCHA; in order for such entities to effectively work, they would need clearer objectives and a very structured process. For those who maintained this position, the Regional Support Team meetings were not considered a suitable forum for advocacy-related coordination either, because, although the Team brought together representatives from all branches of OCHA to discuss relevant regional or national issues, its agenda was usually much broader than advocacy and it might not always prioritize advocacy-related issues. As in the case of the global management retreat, the minutes of Regional Support Team meetings were not made available to OIOS and a proper assessment of the weight of advocacy as a standing item could not be made.

25.   As a result of the above-mentioned differences in opinion, some of the questions raised in the OIOS evaluation were not addressed and part of recommendation 2, namely, the establishment (or subsumption into an existing coordination forum) of a mechanism for the coordination of advocacy efforts at Headquarters, and between Headquarters and other levels of OCHA, was not implemented. However, on a more positive note, conversations with staff revealed a unanimous feeling that significant changes in work dynamics had occurred. Among those changes, improved formal and informal coordination and collaboration across departments were highlighted. Several examples of such coordination were provided. One was the daily meetings that brought the Spokesperson of OCHA, the Strategic Communications Branch and the Operations and Advocacy Division together to discuss messaging and other issues as necessary. Testimonies also suggested that dialogue between the Branch and the Division on specific issues, such as deciding on the topic of public communications campaigns and on the issues where there was a need to escalate the dialogue to the global level, was conducted on a regular basis. These changes had mitigated the relative isolation of departments, isolation that had been highlighted in the OIOS evaluation, and offered good prospects for more coordinated performance of the advocacy function in the future.

26.   In the light of the evidence gathered, it was evident that OCHA had made significant efforts to formally configure a cross-sectional function related to advocacy, and that the improved coordination and collaboration between the Operations and Advocacy Division and the Strategic Communications Branch ensured better alignment of public and private advocacy efforts. However, additional efforts to consolidate the Division's leadership of the function and to strengthen coordination at all the different levels of OCHA through the Global Advocacy Team had not been sustained.

27.   The assessment of all these elements led OIOS to the conclusion that, although the first element of recommendation 2, related to restructuring, could be considered implemented, and some degree of consolidation of the advocacy function was evident, significant differences in opinion regarding the need for and relevance of a global coordination mechanism, such as the mechanism suggested in the second part of the recommendation, had hampered the effective institutionalization of such a mechanism. Several examples of coordination and of cross-functional collaborative spaces, in which discussions on advocacy issues were ostensibly held, were provided. However, all these coordination spaces seemed to have a broader mandate and to deal with issues related to other core functions in addition to advocacy. Without documentary evidence of how these spaces effectively served to deliver a more coordinated and aligned advocacy function at all the different levels, it was difficult to judge their suitability for addressing some of the challenges highlighted in the OIOS evaluation or to consider them as tangible substitutes for the recommended

global mechanism. As a result, this recommendation is considered to be implemented in part.

Recommendation 3
Update, roll-out and implementation of the OCHA Advocacy Policy Instruction and Guidelines on Advocacy, and its Advocacy Strategy.

28. Recommendation 3 reads as follows:

OCHA should revisit, and update as necessary, its 2006 Advocacy Policy Instruction and Guidelines on OCHA Advocacy and its 2013–2017 Advocacy Strategy, through an internal and external consultation process and consideration of the experience gained since the issuance of those documents. It should then roll out the updated documents, ensure and monitor their implementation, and provide associated training and knowledge management support to ensure their broad use throughout the OCHA. The Advocacy Strategy for 2018 and beyond should include, at a minimum, the following elements:

• A current situation analysis contextualizing advocacy efforts in the years ahead

• Overarching advocacy goals and any specific objectives within those goals

• A plan for undertaking advocacy towards those goals and objectives for the entire range of humanitarian crises and issues (level 3 emergencies, corporate emergencies, protracted or forgotten crises, thematic or cross-cutting issues and international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles)

• An articulation of internal and external coordination mechanisms for how OCHA aims to achieve those goals and objectives

• Indicators for measuring achievement against those goals and objectives, and a monitoring framework for gauging performance against them

Indicators of achievement: Consultations; documents revisited and revised as necessary; roll-out and implementation activities; implementation monitored and reported on.

29. This recommendation addressed the need for OCHA to review several normative advocacy documents that were found by OIOS, during the evaluation, to be outdated, little known and not used in OCHA.

30. As mentioned earlier, from 2016 to 2018, OCHA dedicated significant efforts and resources to implementing the new operating model and executing key organizational changes. Overall, the change management process that was already under way affected the rhythm and capacity of OCHA to implement the subsequent OIOS recommendations. This was particularly true of recommendation 3, which, given the recent implementation of the change management process and of the previous two recommendations, OCHA had only recently begun to address at the time of the triennial review.

31. During the first and only meeting of the Global Advocacy Team, held in August 2018, the OCHA advocacy-related strategic priorities and vision were discussed. According to the minutes of that meeting, participants acknowledged the need to improve global advocacy efforts through better linkages to country-level advocacy and identified the urge to prioritize a few key issues that could potentially prevent competition among and the dilution of messages. The development of the 2018–2021 Advocacy Strategy and the updating of the plan for the implementation of strategic

objective 4, related to advocacy,[7] were included as next steps at that meeting and duly communicated to OIOS as an indication of implementation.

32.   The plan for the implementation of strategic objective 4 was initially developed by the Policy Branch in 2017, before the Operations and Advocacy Division took responsibility for the advocacy function. In 2018, the Division revised the initial draft and, by January 2019, had updated it with feedback from, and the participation of, members of the Global Advocacy Team. The implementation plan contained an explanation of how strategic objective 4 would be translated into concrete actions. However, according to OCHA stakeholders, at the time of the triennial review, the implementation plan was no longer used. Implementation plans had been introduced with the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 but had not been found to be a useful planning tool. At the time of the review, the plans were no longer used for any OCHA functions, and planning was once more conducted through the standard divisional, branch, and office work plans. No evidence of follow-up on or the status of the decision to develop an advocacy strategy led by the Division[8] was available at the time of the triennial review.

33.   There are two possible main explanations for the lack of progress in this regard. First, as in relation to recommendation 2, discussions with staff revealed mixed views on the potential usefulness of the updated versions of the OCHA 2006 Advocacy Policy Instruction and Guidelines on Advocacy, and its 2013–2017 Advocacy Strategy. The majority felt that the particularities and context-specific needs of OCHA advocacy work would make such a strategy either unnecessarily restrictive or too broad to be useful. While some strongly advocated a clear set of priorities and strategic directions to guide the performance of the advocacy function and address issues that were common to several countries, most believed that the very nature of OCHA advocacy work required a case-by-case approach and made an all-encompassing strategy irrelevant. Others believed that, in order for a strategy to fulfil its purpose and effectively guide OCHA advocacy work, it should be a very basic document and should merely reflect a small number of priorities. This evident lack of consensus about the need for strategic guidance, and the type of strategic guidance required, may have impeded the development of a broader advocacy strategy and may continue to do so in the near future.

34.   Second, the ongoing change management process has generated many competing priorities for resources. Developing an advocacy strategy would require additional resources that have not yet been allocated, and OCHA has therefore been prevented from making progress in the implementation of this recommendation.

35.   Nevertheless, some initial steps in this direction were taken on the public side of the advocacy function. For example, in January 2020, the Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy 2020–2021 was endorsed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Under the leadership of the Strategic Communications Branch, the document was developed in 2019 through consultations with different divisions of OCHA at Headquarters (including the Operations and Advocacy Division) and in the field, and input was received from other United Nations departments and agencies, such as the Department of Global Communications, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Through the Global

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[7] Implementation plans (one for each strategic objective) were introduced as new planning documents in the 2018–2021 Advocacy Strategy.

[8] The minutes of the August 2019 meeting of the Global Advocacy Team included the following among the next steps to be taken, namely, the development of OCHA Advocacy Strategy 2018–2021; the Operations and Advocacy Division will develop a draft framework for the strategy and share with the Global Advocacy Team for inputs/revisions/comment during September.

Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy, which covered a two-year period, OCHA sought to make better use of communications and public advocacy to achieve the five strategic objectives set out in the Strategic Plan 2018–2021. Although the Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy focused solely on the public advocacy side of the work of OCHA, some staff believed that it could be a catalyst for developing a more ambitious and comprehensive advocacy strategy in the near future, and celebrated the fact that it had already served to open up an honest conversation about advocacy. The Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy was circulated to the entire global management team at OCHA by the Strategic Communications Branch on 4 March 2020. Given the timing of its release vis-à-vis the present review, the Strategy could not be assessed for its quality and adherence to the requirements of the recommendation.

36.   Although progress in the implementation of this recommendation was visible given the recent launch of the Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy, other indicators of achievement, such as the effective roll-out of an advocacy strategy, the monitoring of the implementation of such a strategy and the provision of related training had not been achieved at the time of the review. Nevertheless, with due acknowledgement of the differences of opinion within OCHA on the matter, this recommendation is closed on the understanding that OCHA management accepts the risk of its non-implementation. OIOS intends to revisit the matter in greater detail as part of its upcoming evaluation of OCHA to be completed in 2021.

III.   Conclusion

37.   In the three years after the OIOS evaluation, OCHA embarked on an ambitious process of organizational change that included the consolidation of its advocacy function. As anticipated by OCHA management in its response to the OIOS evaluation, the change management process significantly affected the pace and rhythm of the implementation of the recommendations made in the OIOS report on the evaluation (E/AC.51/2017/11), in particular recommendation 2, which was considered implemented in part, and recommendation 3, which was closed on the understanding that OCHA management accepted the risk of its non-implementation, in large part because of the differences of opinion within OCHA on the usefulness of a global advocacy strategy.

38.   The implementation of recommendation 1 resulted in the appointment of the new Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch, a division with important responsibilities related to public advocacy. This appointment, together with some of the recent organizational changes, had already delivered early results. These included improved collaboration between the Strategic Communications Branch and other branches and divisions, such as the Information Management Branch and the Operations and Advocacy Division, and the development and circulation of the Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy, which, although limited to the public side of advocacy and not launched until in March 2020, was considered to be evidence of progress in the implementation of recommendation 3. The lead-up to the launch of this document was widely regarded as being instrumental in eliciting broader discussions about the strategic needs of the advocacy function in OCHA and had the potential to act as a catalyst for the development of an OCHA-wide advocacy strategy in the future.

39.   OIOS also found that efforts by OCHA to consolidate the public and private aspects of the advocacy function, as suggested by OIOS in recommendation 2, had paid dividends, and that the new organizational changes made in the previous three years had positively contributed to strengthening advocacy as a core cross-divisional

function and to promoting further collaboration and coordination among OCHA divisions. However, no hard evidence of the institutionalization of the coordination prescribed in recommendation 2 could be found. Although significant efforts to consolidate different venues for cross-division coordination were acknowledged and celebrated by staff, taking into account the broader mandate of these venues, it was still not clear how such venues could effectively constitute a multi-level forum for coordination and strategic discussions related to the advocacy function; the effectiveness of such venues is to be tested and verified in the future.

(*Signed*) Fatoumata **Ndiaye**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
March 2020

Annex*

Comments received from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OCHA welcomes the results of the OIOS Triennial Review of the implementation of recommendations on the programme evaluation of OCHA. Over the last three years, the evaluation results and recommendations have proven useful for encouraging further reflection and identifying options to strengthen OCHA's advocacy function.

As detailed in the review, OCHA has taken significant steps to strengthen its performance in this area, including through the appointment of its new Chief of the Strategic Communications Branch, the introduction of new organizational design and governance arrangements, and a recently launched Global Communications and Public Advocacy Strategy, which will guide it over the next two years. Taken together, these steps have led, as captured in the review, to more streamlined and routine collaboration between OCHA divisions, branches and field offices to ensure real-time and joint public and private advocacy efforts towards common goals. This has facilitated a whole-of-organization approach on both cross-cutting humanitarian themes, as well as the targeted, crisis-specific advocacy needed to ensure that people in disasters and emergencies receive the aid they need.

For this reason, while our efforts to get better at all we do to advocate for principled humanitarian action will continue under our existing arrangements, I see limited benefit at this time to creating additional coordination mechanisms, as recommended.

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* In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services sets out the full text of comments received from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.