

**Seventy-fifth session**

Agenda item 151

**Report on the activities of the Office of Internal
Oversight Services****Evaluation of the organizational culture in
peacekeeping operations****Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services***Summary*

The evaluation of the organizational culture in peacekeeping operations assessed the extent to which organizational culture in 14 peacekeeping operations was aligned with the normative framework of the United Nations and supported the effective functioning of the missions. It focused primarily on mission personnel's perceptions about selected dimensions of organizational culture, which included leadership and management; accountability, ethics and integrity; teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing; risk appetite; sensitive issues and gender. Perceptions on organizational culture diverged depending on mission component, gender, staff level and duty station. Uniformed personnel were generally more positive about the organizational culture in their mission compared with civilian staff. Female international civilian staff consistently expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction across cultural elements.

Overall, in part owing to their difficult operating environments and internal diversity, the existing perceptions about organizational culture in missions were not fully aligned with the high standards adopted by the Organization and need to be improved to fully support the effective functioning of missions.

The evaluation made two critical and nine important recommendations.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 29 April 2021.



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction and objective	3
II. Background	3
III. Methodology	4
A. Evaluation scope	4
B. Data collection methods	5
C. Limitations in assessing organizational culture	5
D. Dissemination of evaluation results	5
IV. Evaluation results	6
A. Leadership and management	6
B. Accountability, ethics and integrity	9
C. Teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing	12
D. Risk appetite	14
E. Sensitive issues	15
F. Gender	19
V. Conclusion	22
VI. Recommendations	23
Annexes	
I. Comments received from entities on the draft report	26
II. Response of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to formal comments from entities	33

I. Introduction and objective

1. The evaluation determined the relevance and effectiveness of organizational culture in 14 peacekeeping operations¹ by assessing the extent to which it was aligned with the normative framework of the United Nations and supported the effective functioning of the missions. Its objective was to assist mission leadership, the Departments of Peace Operations, Operational Support, Peacebuilding and Political Affairs and Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to engage in a systematic reflection on organizational culture. Management comments on the evaluation results were requested from the above-mentioned entities, together with the 14 evaluated missions, and are presented in annex I to the present report.

2. The guiding evaluation questions were the following:

(a) To what extent is the existing organizational culture in missions relevant and aligned to the normative framework of the United Nations?

(b) To what extent does the organizational culture in missions support their effective functioning?

3. It is important to note that the evaluation was conducted prior to the start of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and consequently does not refer to the new ways of working that this crisis both created and accelerated, or its impact on the organizational culture of the missions.

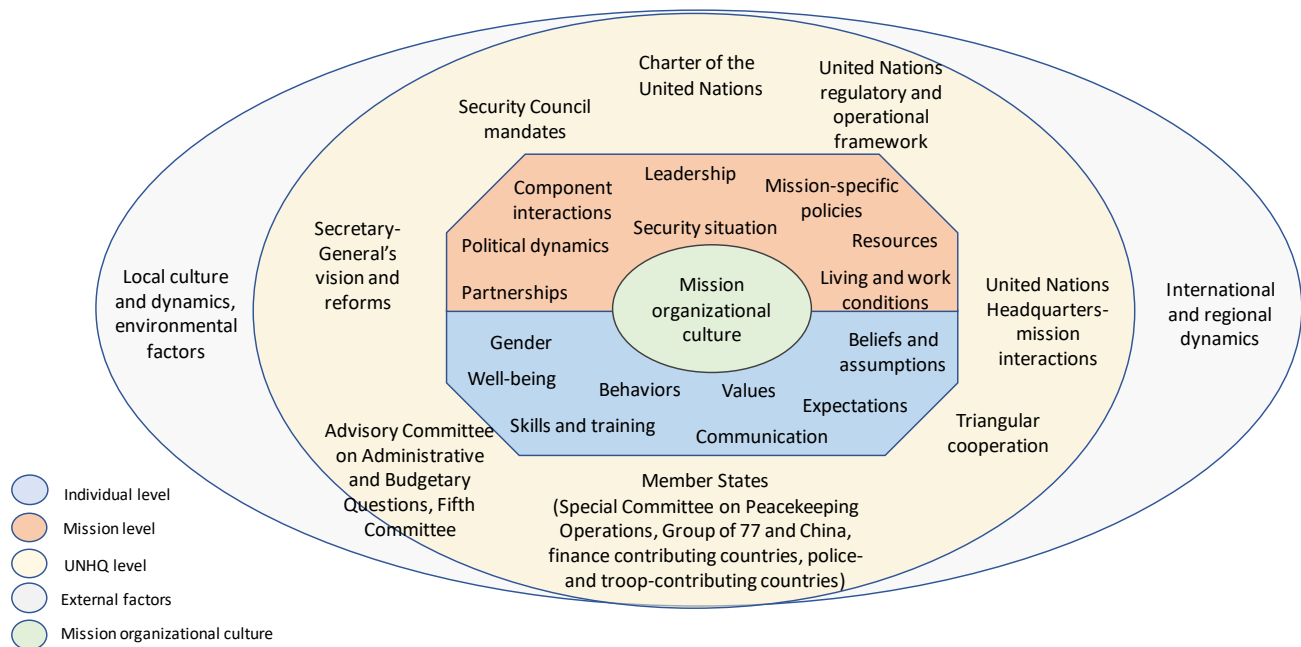
II. Background

4. Although no universal definition exists for the term organizational culture, there is general agreement that it consists of different components that influence how an organization “gets things done”. The Office of Internal Oversight Services defined organizational culture as: “Comprising the behaviours and underlying beliefs, assumptions and values that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization and affect how people think, act and interact with each other, with clients and with stakeholders”.

5. The Office of Internal Oversight Services undertook an extensive review and determined that organizational culture in peacekeeping operations is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that could be conceptually represented as presented in figure I below.

¹ The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID; end of mandate in December 2020), the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

Figure I
Interacting and interlinked elements that generate organizational culture in peacekeeping operations



6. The United Nations does not explicitly prescribe an organizational culture for its personnel. Nevertheless, normative frameworks aim to create a culture that reflects the norms and values of the Organization. Furthermore, the Secretary-General has identified specific cultural elements as being critical to the success of the Organization, such as effective leadership, accountability, results-focused and transparency (see [A/72/492](#)). The United Nations Security Council has encouraged peacekeeping missions to “standardize a culture of performance” (see [S/PRST/2018/10](#)).

III. Methodology

A. Evaluation scope

7. For the evaluation, the Office of Internal Oversight Services considered the following elements of organizational culture in peacekeeping operations:

- (a) Leadership and management
- (b) Accountability, which includes all main components of accountability as defined by the Organization:²
 - i. The Charter of the United Nations
 - ii. The Programme, planning and budget documents
 - iii. Results and performance
 - iv. Internal systems and controls
 - v. Ethical standards and integrity
 - vi. Oversight roles and functions

² General Assembly resolution [64/259](#).

- (c) Teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing
- (d) Risk appetite
- (e) Sensitive issues
- (f) Gender

8. Mission personnel or staff members considered in the evaluation included international and national civilians, military and police personnel. Components in this report refer to the civilian, military and police components. Mission pillars refer to the different substantive sections and mission support.

B. Data collection methods

9. Data were collected using the following methods:

(a) Key informant interviews and focus group discussions with a purposive sample of mission management and personnel from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS);

(b) An online survey sent to 18,007 active civilian and uniformed staff members in 14 peacekeeping missions;

(c) Document review of relevant United Nations documents and external reports;

(d) Review of data retrieved from Umoja, Inspira, past staff surveys and other relevant mission sources;

(e) Field visits to five peacekeeping missions (see (a) above); direct observation was also carried out to capture salient aspects of organizational culture.

C. Limitations in assessing organizational culture

10. Limited time and resources did not allow the inclusion of other dimensions of organizational culture, such as innovation and adaptability or staff morale and well-being.

11. The evaluation report is focused primarily on the perceptions of mission personnel about the selected dimensions of organizational culture. Corroborating information was used where possible, but was not available for many perceptions. It is important to acknowledge that perceptions may not always reflect reality.

12. Some of the evaluation findings, in particular with regard to oversight matters, also relate to the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Due to the inherent conflict of interest, the present report does not make any recommendations specific to the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

D. Dissemination of evaluation results

13. In addition to the present evaluation report, the Office of Internal Oversight Services provided each evaluated peacekeeping operation with its mission-specific results, which were based on disaggregated data from the online survey, interviews and focus group discussions.

IV. Evaluation results

A. Leadership and management

Mission personnel were mostly positive about their direct supervisors

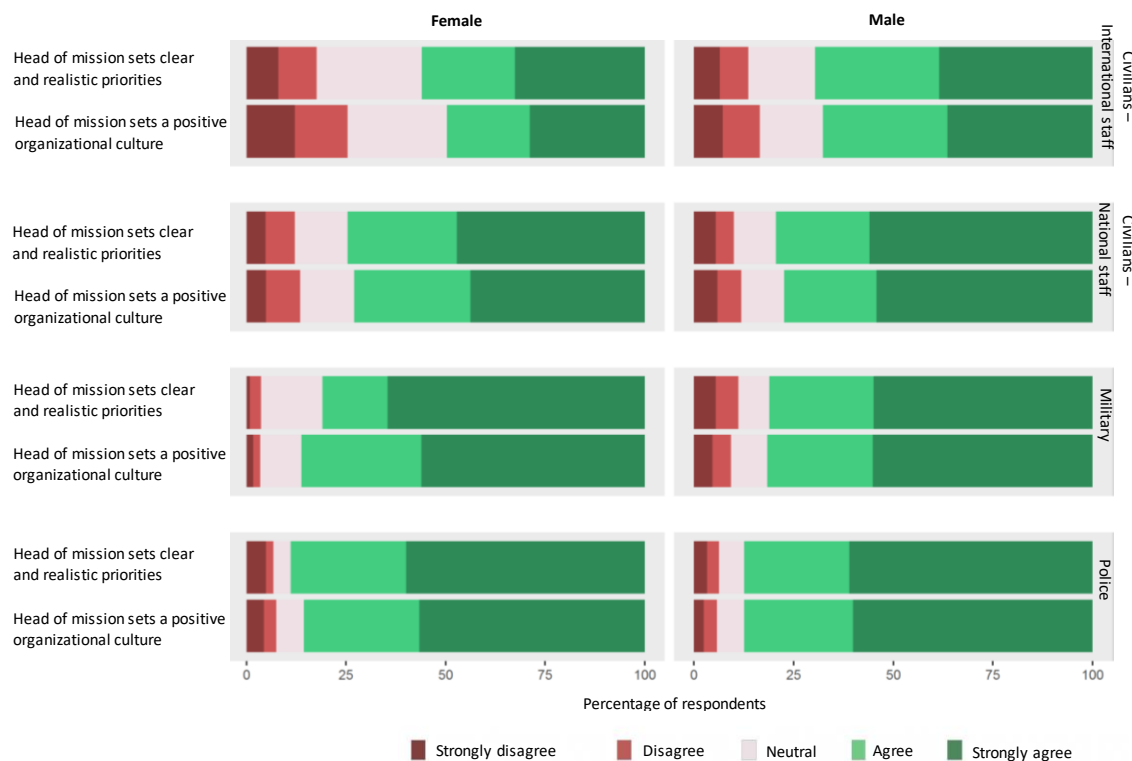
14. There was strong evidence that mission leaders and managers were pivotal in creating, contributing to and changing the mission culture, both positively and negatively. Survey respondents (67 per cent) identified leadership as the key element influencing the mission's organizational culture.

15. Survey results suggested that peacekeeping personnel approved of most of their direct supervisors, with 80 per cent of respondents agreeing that direct supervisors were focused on achieving results. Over three-quarters of survey respondents indicated that their supervisors provided realistic plans and clear guidance, valued the skills and contributions of team members and were focused on achieving results. Nonetheless, one quarter of international civilians found that their supervisor did not value the skills of team members and did not provide clear guidance. Some civilian interviewees praised their supervisors for mentoring and encouraging subordinates, while others criticized them for providing inadequate guidance or lacking managerial skills.

Senior leaders were generally perceived by subordinates as setting a positive example

16. International civilians were noticeably less satisfied with senior leaders compared with police and military personnel, who tended to be highly positive in their responses. Sixty-two per cent of international civilian staff who responded to the survey agreed that the head of mission created a positive organizational culture, compared with 84 per cent of uniformed personnel. This divergence between components was starkest across gender lines: only 49 per cent of female international civilian staff indicated that the head of mission created a positive organizational culture compared with 86 per cent of female uniformed personnel (see Figure II).

Figure II
Perceptions on the head of mission



The head of mission and senior leadership team were seen as critical in influencing mission culture

17. Three quarters of survey respondents agreed that the head of mission was a United Nations role model. The power to influence organizational culture was frequently said to be centralized in the office of the head of mission. Interviewed personnel asserted that the managerial style, priorities and preferences of the head of mission were felt across pillars, components and mission areas.

18. Similar to the head of mission, the senior leadership team was also seen as highly influential on mission culture. Survey respondents were mostly positive about the senior leadership team, with two thirds agreeing that mission leaders had a common vision and acted as one. International civilian staff were the least positive about the senior leadership team and the head of mission, with over one quarter stating that the senior leadership team did not share a common vision.

19. Rotation of the head of mission and other mission leaders heavily affected organizational culture, as this resulted in at times challenging wait-and-see periods during which mission personnel sought to understand and implement the guidance and preferences of new leaders. Similarly, interviewees asserted that the high turnover levels of key military personnel and heads of field offices were also disruptive to operational activities. An overlapping period with both the incoming and outgoing leaders all present in the mission area was generally thought to improve an effective handover and transfer of knowledge.

The quality of leadership and management was perceived to vary greatly

20. Subordinate staff believed that the quality and effectiveness of managers and senior leaders varied significantly from “very good” to “totally ineffective”. A range of

leadership styles, from strictly hierarchical to more collaborative emerged. Some mission leaders were described as inspirational, while others were said to lack strategy or vision.

21. Interviewees and survey respondents in one mission asserted that the head of mission was highly collaborative, provided clear guidance and had a results-based approach. Yet in another mission, key informants highlighted specific examples of poor management by senior leaders. In one case, interviewees felt that the arrival of a new leader threw well-functioning working methods into disarray.

Personal relations and personalities of senior leaders were perceived to shape mission culture

22. The personalities and working relationships of mission leaders were perceived to have a profound impact on organizational culture. Interviewees also described the impact of dominant – and in some cases polarizing – personalities among members of the senior leadership team who were thought to have an outsized influence on mission operations.

23. Surveyed staff members from one mission alleged that a senior manager had intimidated and harassed subordinates, creating an “unhealthy work environment.” In a military-led mission, some civilian personnel complained of a “yes, sir” culture, with subordinates standing up when the head of mission entered the room.

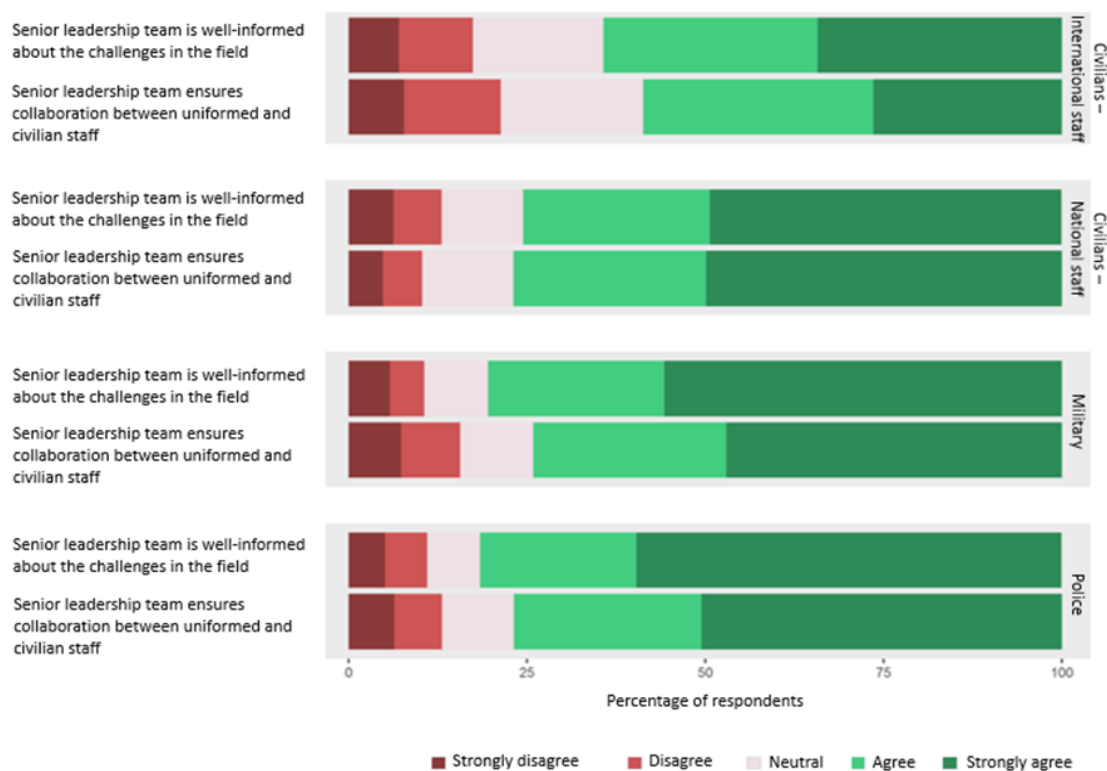
24. Harmony, tensions and interactions between senior leaders were also believed to have a substantial impact on collaboration and power dynamics between personnel. In one mission, the perceived closeness of the head of mission with some other members of the senior leadership team based on their national origin was a high-level concern and seen as bypassing established decision-making channels. In another mission, one manager stated that conflict in the senior leadership team had been highly disruptive to operations. Senior civilian staff were noticeably less positive than juniors when it came to the impact of internal politics on the mission.

Accessible, collaborative and actively engaged leaders were valued

25. Most survey respondents agreed that the senior leadership team ensured effective collaboration between uniformed and civilian personnel. However, in some cases the collaboration between uniformed and civilian leaders appeared to be difficult, which affected lower working levels.

26. Key informants asserted that senior mission leaders who communicated openly and engaged with the field were held in high regard. Regular visits by mission leadership to remote field offices, including overnight stays, were also seen as critical to understanding operational challenges. Staff members also noted the time spent by the head of mission outside the mission area and commented upon it when considered excessive. Survey respondents generally approved of the leadership’s knowledge of the field, with 74 per cent asserting that the senior leadership team was well-informed about challenges in the mission area (see Figure III).

Figure III
Perceptions on the senior leadership team



Mission personnel felt that United Nations Headquarters overly prioritized political experience over managerial expertise in the selection of the head of mission

27. Key informants expressed dissatisfaction that United Nations Headquarters was perceived to emphasize political experience over managerial skills when selecting candidates for leadership positions. Though interviewees acknowledged the required diplomatic background for mission leaders, it was not thought to be a satisfactory substitute for competently managing peacekeeping operations (A/70/95-S/2015/446).

28. Interviewees highlighted that inexperienced senior leaders needed too much time to master United Nations policies and procedures and were overly reliant on subordinates. Sixty per cent of survey respondents did not believe that senior leaders without prior United Nations experience were able to quickly learn the Organization's management rules.

29. One mission leader without prior United Nations experience acknowledged that leading a peacekeeping mission as an "outsider" was challenging and required a significant personal effort to adapt and learn about the system. Yet, in some cases, the approach of a newcomer was seen as an advantage and an opportunity to bring a fresh perspective that challenged the status quo.

B. Accountability, ethics and integrity

International civilians were the least positive about the mission's focus on delivering results for the host population

30. Eighty per cent of uniformed personnel and 65 per cent of international civilian staff agreed that the mission was focused on delivering results for the host population. Thirty-seven per cent of survey respondents believed it was sometimes necessary to break the rules to carry out their work.

Staff members perceived handling of underperformance and incentives for career advancement as insufficient

31. Key informants and survey respondents across all missions expressed frustration with both the handling of underperformance and the recognition of high performance. The absence or lack of accountability for performance was referenced as a key organizational issue in about half of the interviews.

32. Nearly one third of survey respondents felt that underperformance was not actively addressed in their missions. This sentiment was particularly strong among international civilians at management level (60 per cent at the P-4 level and above). In addition, interviewed uniformed leadership were also sharply critical about the underperformance of subordinates.

33. Civilian managers frequently complained about the lack of adequate tools to address underperformance. The performance evaluation system was widely held in low esteem at all levels as it was seen as minimally effective and requiring a large time investment that detracted from normal duties. Interviewed staff also considered the performance evaluation system as ineffective for their professional development, as high performance was not perceived to be appropriately linked with career advancement.

34. Interviewees complained about a culture of mediocrity and sometimes even laziness, providing several explanations for staff underperformance, including lack of mobility within and between missions, low institutional support for professional development and weak performance incentives. Long-serving personnel were generally seen as more prone to complacency and underperformance, a perception that was particularly present in longstanding missions and duty stations. Underperformance without any consequences was believed to have a detrimental impact on the mission's organizational culture. Survey respondents also reported perceived tensions between simultaneously upholding diversity and merit-based recruitment.

Senior leaders and managers were not perceived to be effectively enforcing accountability

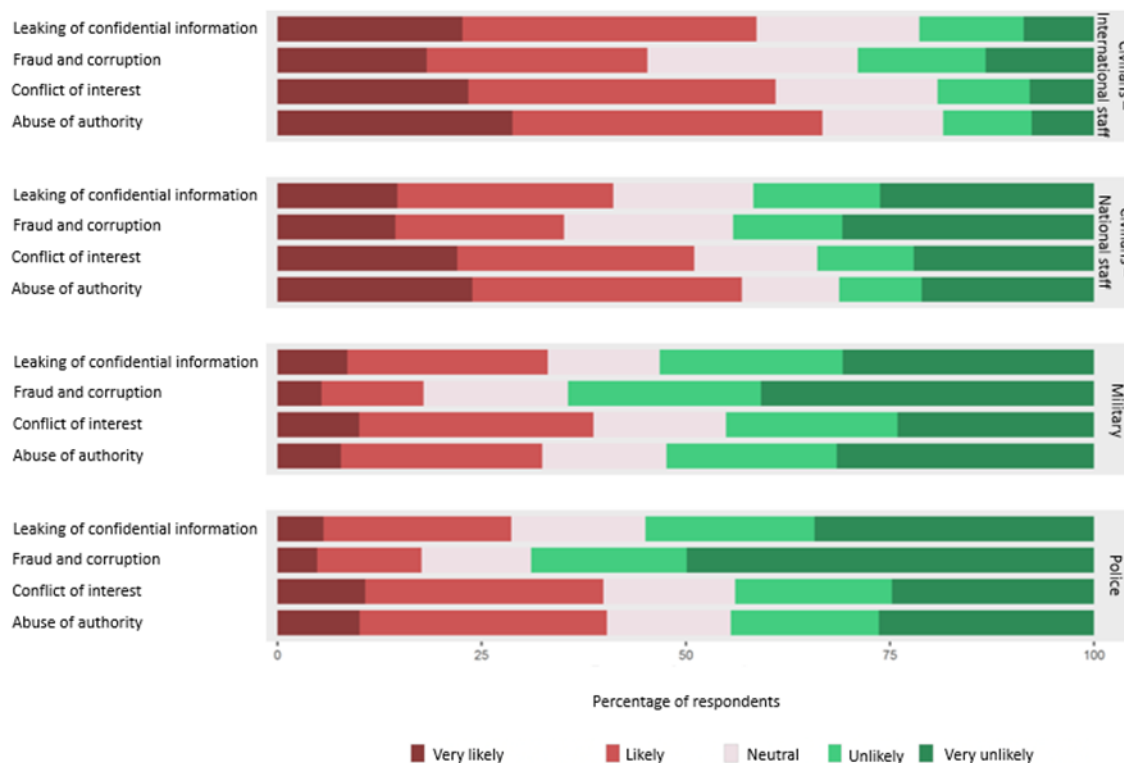
35. Key informants at all levels consistently expressed that accountability for performance and misconduct was not sufficiently enforced by senior leaders and managers. Managers described the procedural hurdles to improve staff performance (or to not renew their contracts) as insurmountable. Agreed terminations were rare, with only 39 terminations approved across 14 peacekeeping missions between May 2016 and November 2019.

Levels of ethics and integrity were generally perceived to be low

36. Sixty-seven per cent of international civilian staff survey respondents indicated that abuse of authority was likely to occur in their mission, while about 36 per cent of uniformed components affirmed that this type of misconduct was likely to take place. Forty-four per cent of the survey respondents believed that confidential information was likely to be leaked in their mission.

37. Key informants articulated deep concerns about fraud and corruption committed by mission personnel. Forty-five per cent of international civilian staff survey respondents believed that fraud and corruption were likely to occur in their mission. Examples given included the unauthorized sale of mission property, the fraudulent sale of movement control documents for United Nations flights and demands for bribes to service vehicles or to transport personal goods. In addition, key informants frequently referenced entitlement fraud and abuse of leave. Some sections were perceived as more prone to fraud and corruption (see Figure IV).

Figure IV
Likelihood that these situations could take place in your mission



Accountability for misconduct or unethical behaviour was perceived to be low

38. Across all staff levels and missions, interviewees voiced concerns about a lack of accountability in terms of corrective actions for misconduct and unethical behaviour. Key informants widely perceived investigations into misconduct to be excessive in length and lacking independence. A sense of a culture of impunity was widespread in the five missions visited. Thirty-nine per cent of surveyed international civilian staff believed that personal relationships and hierarchy affected how misconduct was addressed. Seventy per cent of uniformed staff surveyed agreed that personal relationships and hierarchy did not affect how misconduct was addressed.

39. Despite mission personnel demonstrating high levels of awareness of reporting mechanisms, underreporting or non-reporting of misconduct was perceived to occur frequently. Twenty-five per cent of surveyed international civilian staff expressed that they would be fearful of reporting misconduct. Reasons given for underreporting included fear of retaliation and the perception of lengthy, possibly biased, or inconclusive investigations. Mission living arrangements in which oversight personnel³ worked, lived and socialized in the same limited environment as other staff, were seen as detrimental to the independence and anonymity of the internal justice system processes.

There were shortfalls in completing mandatory training

40. As of October 2019, only 50 per cent of civilian peacekeeping staff in the 14 missions had completed the mandatory course on ethics and integrity and 37 per cent had completed the course on preventing fraud and corruption. The majority of senior

³ Mission staff understood “oversight personnel” as including Office of Internal Oversight Services investigators, Conduct and Discipline Teams and Special Investigations Units.

mission leaders, at the D-1 level and above, had also failed to complete required training, with 25 per cent having completed courses on the prevention of fraud and corruption and 37 per cent completing the course on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.⁴

C. Teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing

Though mission personnel were generally positive about collaboration and information-sharing, staff also highlighted numerous challenges

41. Eighty-seven per cent of survey respondents agreed that collaboration was effective within their team and between sections. Results were slightly less positive for collaboration between uniformed and civilian personnel (77 per cent) and between mission support and the substantive side (74 per cent). Interviewees, in particular international staff, however, highlighted numerous challenges regarding information-sharing and internal communication across different teams and sections.

Co-location and integrated teams were perceived as enhancing collaboration and information-sharing

42. Co-location of relevant sections and components was generally perceived to facilitate working relations, particularly for information-sharing. Key informants indicated that integrated teams, including the deployment of liaison officers across components, improved collaboration between uniformed and civilian personnel. Positive examples included integrated mission entities such as the Joint Operations Centre, the Joint Mission Analysis Centre and joint task forces.

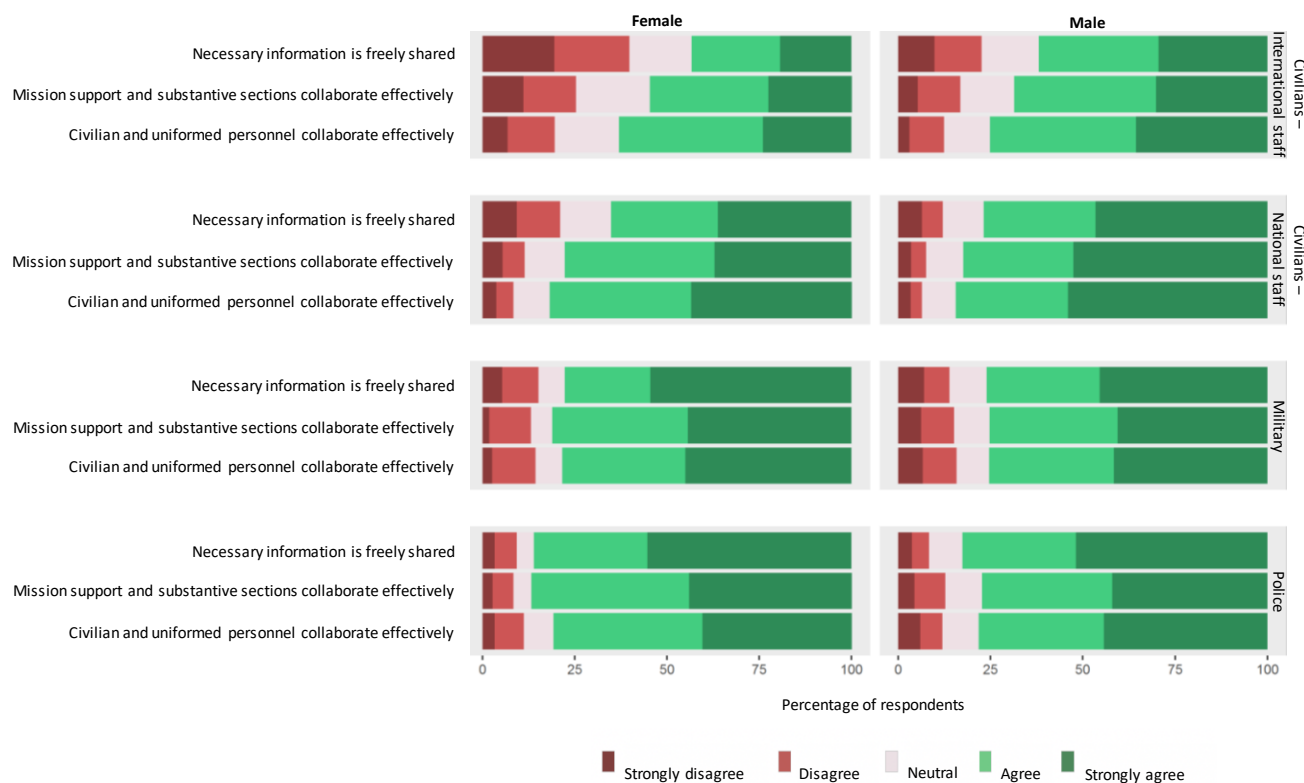
Perceived power dynamics between mission components were at play and often negatively impacted collaboration

43. Interviewees referred to “internal politics”, rivalries between different mission entities and unspoken hierarchies within the mission which sometimes hindered integration and information-sharing and deepened structural divides. Sixty-four per cent of surveyed international civilian staff members indicated that collaboration between mission support and the substantive side was effective. In one mission, the substantive sections expressed resentment concerning the power exercised by mission support, while in another mission the substantive side was said to receive preferential treatment.

44. Perceptions regarding influence over decision-making differed between missions and was said to depend heavily on individual personalities, especially within the senior leadership team. Personnel complained about a lack of information-sharing between sections, stating that an “internal competition” sometimes resulted in a “culture of secrecy” where “the one who has information, has the power”. Female respondents felt significantly less positive about information-sharing (see Figure V).

⁴ Course completion data for analysis was retrieved from Umoja for the period from April 2014 to October 2019.

Figure V
Perceptions on information-sharing and inter-mission cooperation



Perceived divisions between uniformed and civilian personnel hampered effective collaboration and integration

45. Interviews and open-ended survey responses indicated that different working cultures between uniformed and civilian personnel sometimes hindered collaboration. Reported tensions related to differences in working methods, modes and speed of decision-making, planning and communication. In military-led missions, some civilian staff members perceived the military component as wielding undue influence.

46. In multidimensional missions, staff members generally perceived the United Nations Police as the least powerful component with minimal leverage in decision-making. Both civilian and uniformed interviewees felt that United Nations Police was inadequately integrated with the civilian and military components. On the other hand, police personnel often expressed a strong sense of cohesion within their component.

Divides between mission headquarters and the field offices were perceived to hinder effective collaboration and operational coherence

47. Approximately one third of head of field offices interviewed in multidimensional missions reported not feeling fully in control of their area of responsibility or being deliberately sidelined by mission headquarters. They perceived collaboration with mission headquarters as at times uncoordinated or overly top-down, with insufficient constructive exchanges or inputs from the field being sought. Specific examples included mission headquarters-led field missions without consulting the relevant head of field office, or senior management meetings where head of field offices felt they lacked the time to discuss operational challenges or seek guidance.

48. Some civilian staff members based in the field stated that dual reporting lines, such as between head of field offices and heads of sections, were not always clear or respected. The role of head of field offices was also not standardized across missions, as it lacked any formal policy framework.

49. Staff members based in the field believed that collaboration and information-sharing worked more effectively in field offices compared with mission headquarters. Nearly one quarter (24 per cent) of survey respondents based in mission headquarters thought that necessary information was not freely shared in a constructive manner, compared with 15 per cent of survey respondents based in the field.

Top-down information-sharing and communication was perceived as insufficient and overly one-directional

50. Senior leadership communication was sometimes perceived as limited to “informing” instead of “exchanging” with the working level. Examples included town hall meetings that were perceived as one-directional. Several managers asserted that information was sent through internal communication systems, but that many staff members did “not have the culture of reading”.

International staff members felt that bottom-up communication was often duplicative

51. Thirty-seven per cent of civilian leaders and managers (at the Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, D-1, D-2, P-4 and P-5 levels) surveyed indicated that there was too much duplication of work between different sections. One mission leader expressed that they regularly received too much irrelevant information, describing it as an “overload of emails.” Two senior managers specifically cited United Nations Headquarters as generating duplicative and excessive demands on closely related topics. Another senior manager argued that certain substantive sections could benefit from a decompartmentalized and more centralized structure, as many units shared similar responsibilities. Examples given included units focusing on women’s protection, child protection and protection of civilians. Another senior leader suggested that the civil affairs and political affairs sections could be merged.

D. Risk appetite

Mission personnel had varied opinions on the risk appetite of the missions

52. Interviewees generally felt uncertain on why, when and how risks should or should not be taken, stating that risk-taking primarily depended on leadership, the availability of resources and the prevailing operational situation. Key informants held differing views on whether the missions’ structures and processes allowed personnel to take appropriate risks in their work.

53. Interviewees highlighted the existence of a sharp difference between political and physical risk-taking. Some key informants asserted that the political risk appetite of mission leaders was lacking as they were perceived to prioritize good relations over mandate implementation. Interviewees felt that mission leaders – primarily civilians – avoided taking political risks because they did not want to jeopardize their own reputation or career development, including the fear of being declared persona non grata.

54. Interviewed mission leaders largely felt they took appropriate risks but were limited by resources and operational challenges. Uniformed leaders assessed themselves as more willing to take risks in executing their mandated activities than their civilian counterparts.

Mission personnel felt that contingents were not equally committed to performing their duties

55. Thirty-one per cent of the survey respondents did not believe that contingents assumed the same amount of risk in performing their duties, with international civilian staff (44 per cent), in particular senior and mid-level civilians (at the Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, D-1, D-2, P-4 and P-5 levels) (61 per cent), being the least positive. The low risk appetite of contingents was also revealed in several inquiries ordered by the Secretary-General and in research conducted by an independent think tank.

56. Senior leaders identified high-performing contingents and those seen as unsatisfactory. Common characteristics of high-performing contingents included their greater willingness to implement mandates on the protection of civilians, refusal to back down when faced with kinetic threats and their ability to take decisive action when tasked by mission leadership. Interviewees in two missions described instances of troops on patrol remaining in their armoured personnel carriers instead of stopping to engage with the local population, also suggesting risk aversion or lacking capabilities to operate in a threatening environment.

57. Key informants believed that national caveats of contingents impacted their risk appetite and fundamentally undermined the mission's planning and operations. Interviewees in one mission perceived some well-trained and well-equipped contingents as more risk-averse compared with contingents with fewer resources or capabilities. Examples included restrictions in deployment areas, movement controls, operational activities and no tolerance for any loss of life. Such contingents reportedly held their military doctrines in higher regard than the United Nations doctrine and refused to adapt. Some interviewees stated that the use of national caveats by contingents adversely impacted mandate implementation. Undeclared caveats and restrictions were considered particularly damaging.⁵ Some senior leaders stated that the low risk appetite of missions was ultimately a political problem with United Nations Headquarters also having a risk-averse mindset.

Some contingents were perceived to prioritize their own interests and at times limit defensive coordination

58. Key informants highlighted that low risk appetite in contingents had resulted in the adoption of a self-imposed bunker mentality. Some troop-contributing countries reportedly failed to adequately coordinate field base defences. In one mission, troops developed barriers and an exclusive gated camp within a field base, creating the impression of internal segregation and posing security risks. In another mission, a contingent had built a private bunker.

59. Staff members gave numerous examples of contingents that were perceived to prioritize their own interests or demonstrate a lack of commitment to integration. Key informants also emphasized that contingents often came to United Nations missions steeped in their regional organization's procedures and culture, and that it was a challenge for these contingents to adjust. In one mission, a contingent prominently displayed an image of its national leader, which was visible from the outside.

E. Sensitive issues

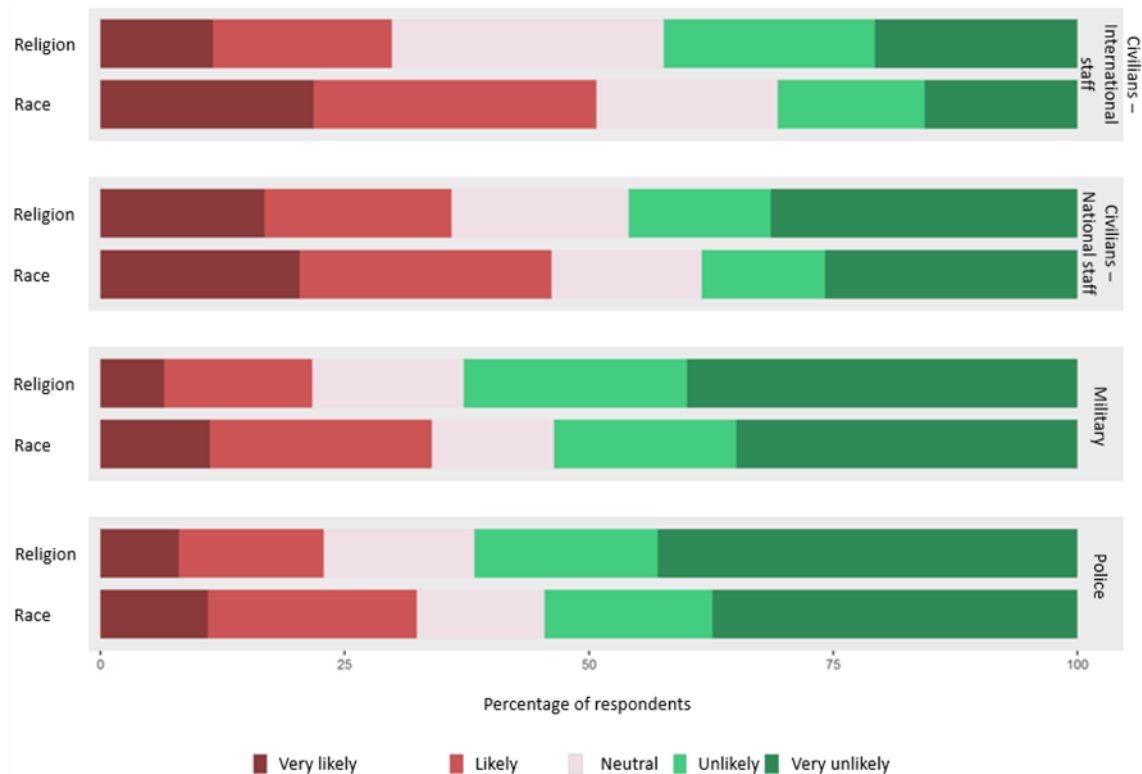
Mission personnel indicated that race and religion generated internal tensions

60. Generally, more than one-third of mission personnel felt that discrimination was likely to occur in their mission. Almost half of the civilian survey respondents

⁵ The Office of Military Affairs identified 14 undeclared caveats with nine troop-contributing countries in 2019.

believed that discrimination based on race was likely to occur, while 33 per cent felt that religion would be cause for discrimination (see Figure VI). Interviewees in the five missions visited confirmed these concerns and highlighted instances that were perceived as having a detrimental impact on both the professional and personal lives of mission staff.

Figure VI
Likelihood of unequal treatment or discrimination against staff based on their religion or race



61. Some interviewees asserted that race was considered a sensitive topic around which discussions were best avoided. Key informants also commented that at times preconceptions and negative qualities attributed to ethnic groups shaped relations and interactions between staff members. The word “mafia” was often used as a suffix for nationalities or regional groups. One senior leader mentioned the existence of informal self-segregation along racial and geographic lines for housing accommodations. In some missions, speaking about local political issues was considered sensitive and negatively affected internal cohesion, especially among national staff members.

62. Mission personnel also perceived religion to affect relations within the mission. In one mission, interviewees highlighted religious divisions among national staff members that created internal tensions. Religious messages were also displayed within a field office.

63. Key informants mentioned several issues related to ill-treatment by certain contingents towards other mission personnel based on race, ethnicity and religion. Some contingents were perceived to harbour racist attitudes towards national staff, which resulted in a strike in one mission. In another mission, African staff members complained about racial prejudice and discrimination by one contingent and, in one reported case, were told to eat separately from other mission personnel within a military base.

Religion was perceived to impact the external relations of the missions

64. Overt religious practices and beliefs of peacekeeping personnel were perceived to undermine external relations and impact the impartiality of the mission. In one mission, authorities had raised concerns about contingents building places of worship outside their camps, warning the mission that any perception of partiality would undermine the peace or may be misconstrued by the local population in areas plagued by violent extremism.

65. One mission reported that local communities had protested against the presence of peacekeeping forces because of suspected partiality towards specific armed groups based on a shared religion and ethnicity.

66. Key decision-makers in three multidimensional missions acknowledged perceived partiality based on religion or ethnicity to be a sensitive issue that needed to be dealt with openly and proactively. One mission informed United Nations Headquarters about alleged proselytizing by certain contingents. Other reported problematic aspects of religious and cultural practices included distribution of religious texts among the local population; and perceived selective patronization for provision of logistics, welfare and security assistance based on religion or ethnicity.

67. One external study empirically confirmed a long-standing pattern of proselytization to spread one specific religion by certain contingents in a peacekeeping mission.⁶ Some troop- and police-contributing countries were perceived to support proselytization through their contingents. With no established United Nations policy on the matter, the risk of contingents being externally perceived as religiously partial in countries with deep-rooted inter-community conflict appeared significant.

Recruitment practices were perceived to be unfair and based on personal relations

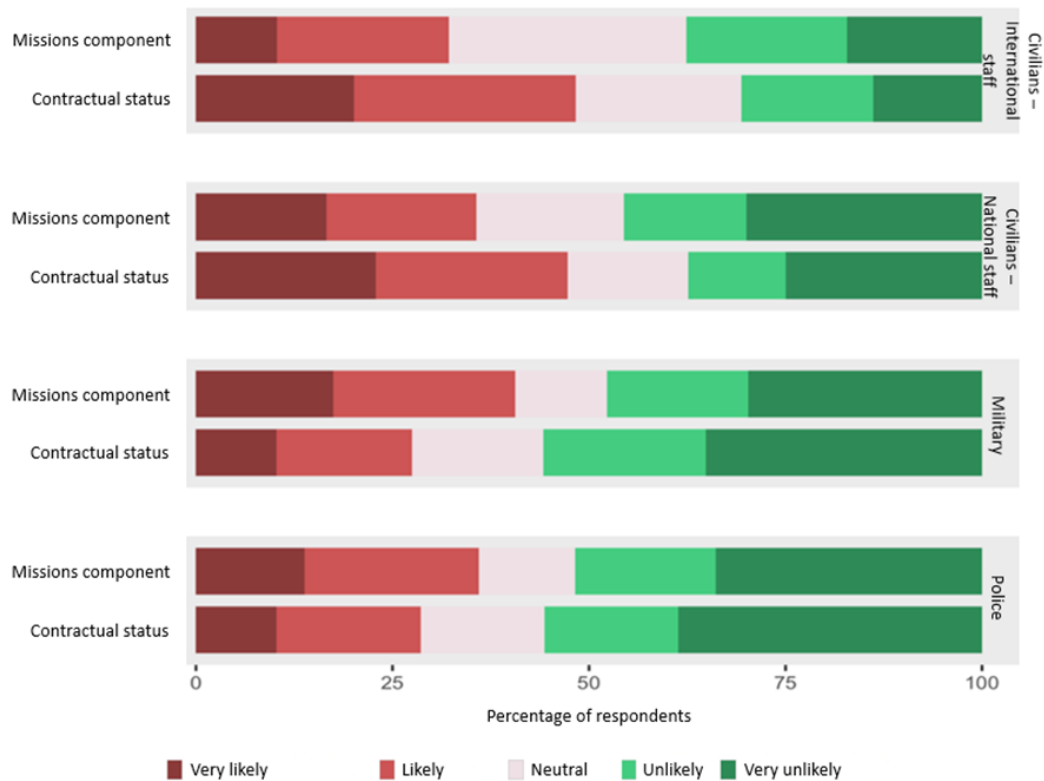
68. Half of international civilian staff who responded to the survey indicated that recruitment was unfair and may be based on personal relations. A further 70 per cent of international civilians expressed that favouritism and unfair treatment was likely to occur in their missions. Interviewees perceived personal networks and national clans to trump competencies in the recruitment process, asserting that managers at all levels used their influence to recruit preferred candidates. Close to half of all survey respondents thought there were cliques or clans based on race and nationality, leading to a perception of overrepresentation of certain groups in some missions. Some interviewees stated that there were clans around mission leaders, including the head of mission. External pressure by national authorities to recruit along ethnic or religious lines was also reported.

Mission personnel thought discrimination based on contractual status, nationality and component was likely to occur

69. Almost half of civilian staff members believed that discrimination based on contractual status could happen in their mission (see Figure VII). Interviewees referred to the prevalence of discrimination and unequal treatment based on staff categories. Examples included national staff versus field service or international staff, substantive versus support staff and civilian staff versus uniformed personnel.

⁶ D. Dijkzeul and C. I. Wakenge “Proselytizing as spoiling from within? Comparing proselytizing by United Nations Peacekeepers in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo” *Journal of International Studies*, vol. 5, issue 1, 2014, pp. 39–57.

Figure VII
Likelihood of unequal treatment or discrimination against staff based on their mission component or contractual status



70. In both the interviews and the online survey, national staff reported perceptions of unequal treatment relative to international staff, that they were not trusted, were seen as incompetent and that their full potential was not utilized. Across missions, national staff were perceived to have limited influence over decision-making and access to information. In one mission, the collaboration between mission leaders and national staff during downsizing was perceived as severely challenging.

71. Thirty-six per cent of police and 40 per cent of military survey respondents believed that discrimination based on component was likely to occur in their mission. Examples given of perceived unequal treatment compared with civilian staff included the provision of lower quality accommodation at a higher cost; secondary preference for transport; lack of duty of care and responsiveness by support services; as well as poor welfare support measures.

Staff members described a culture of gossip and bullying and expressed resentment concerning perceived misuse of entitlements

72. Some staff members resented what they perceived as a misuse of entitlements. Thirty-seven per cent of survey respondents and almost half of international civilians believed that entitlement abuse was likely to occur in their missions. Examples given by interviewees included misuse of United Nations vehicles for personal use and abuse of the provisions of annual and sick leave. Differences in entitlements between staff members in the same mission generated tensions and were sometimes perceived as unfair, especially if duty stations in the same mission had different hardship classifications.

73. Mission personnel pointed to the unhealthy pervasiveness of a culture of gossip. One mission had to warn its staff about gossip being a form of harassment. About half of

civilian staff members and one quarter of uniformed personnel believed that emotional harassment was likely to occur in their mission. For example, a significant number of staff members from one mission asserted that one manager had reportedly engaged in abusive behaviour, which included humiliating, manipulating and threatening staff.

F. Gender

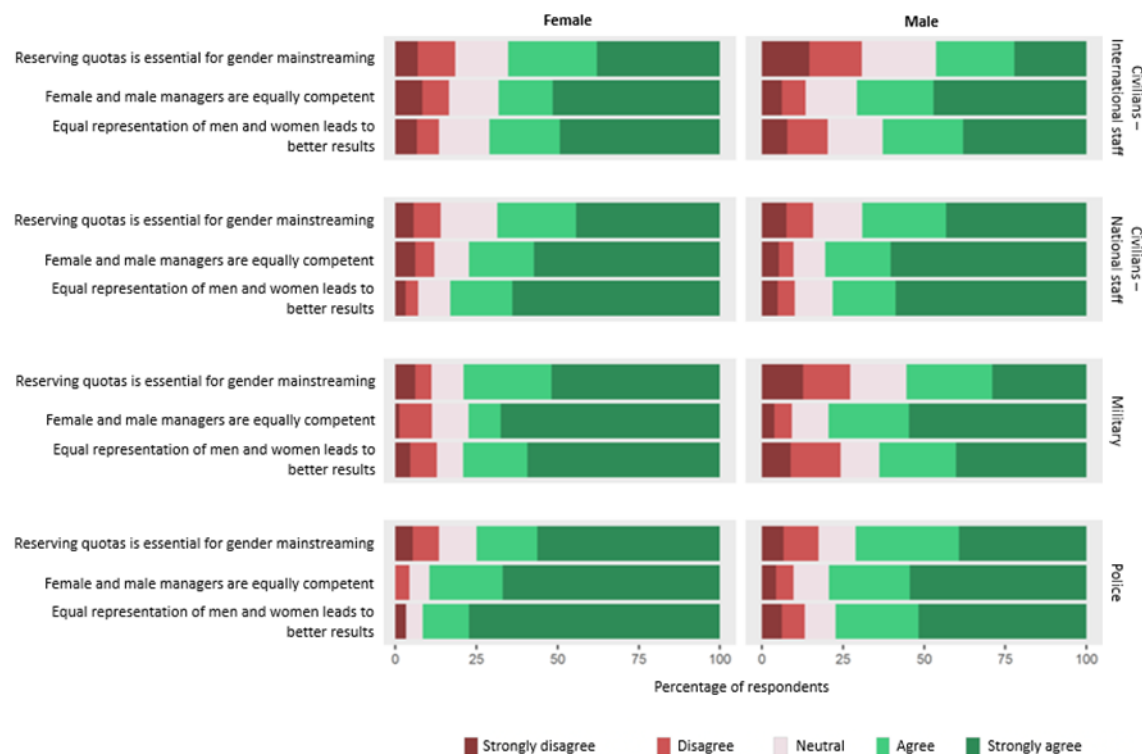
Senior managers were generally seen as committed to gender mainstreaming and increasing female representation, but underrepresentation and treatment of women at the middle and senior leadership levels was perceived as an issue

74. Many interviewees mentioned that senior managers were adequately committed to achieving gender parity, but also pointed out that gender parity should start at the top and noticed a lack of female representation in senior positions, middle management level and in the field. Senior leaders highlighted challenges in recruiting female managers, pointing at instances where selected candidates had not accepted the offered post or left the duty station prematurely.

75. Close to three quarters of the survey respondents felt that female and male leaders were equally competent (see Figure VIII). Still, a significant minority of both male and female survey respondents, in particular civilian staff members, were undecided or did not agree that male and female managers were equally competent. Interviewees highlighted that senior female leaders had proactively brought greater impetus and importance to gender issues. One female senior manager explained how she gave more attention to certain issues that she believed to be overlooked by her male colleagues. One female senior leader advised an incoming female mission leader not to allow interruptions by her male counterparts.

Figure VIII

Perceptions on gender mainstreaming and gender parity within the mission



Most staff saw gender parity as necessary for gender mainstreaming within the mission, although a significant minority did not

76. Staff members generally saw gender parity as the main facet of institutional gender mainstreaming. Seventy-two per cent of survey respondents agreed that having more gender balance within the mission would lead to better results, and 62 per cent was supportive of the practice of reserving gender quotas for mission personnel. However, there remained a significant minority of respondents who did not agree that reserving quotas for women was essential for successful gender mainstreaming. In interviews, some among this minority expressed frustration and resentment at its implementation, stating that it compromised merit-based recruitment and delayed the process.

77. Some male staff members interviewed felt that gender parity discriminated against them in recruitment and career development, as some posts were seen to be reserved for female candidates. Resentment was particularly strong among male middle managers who sought to advance into senior positions. On the other hand, female managers did not always feel accepted by their subordinates, whom they felt perceived their selection to be based on their gender and not on competence. Some mission personnel also saw sharp increases in gender parity within the military and police components as unrealistic, “too doctrinaire,” rapid or even undesirable as it would lower standards of recruitment. However, some military staff officers praised the United Nations gender mainstreaming efforts as bringing positive change in their country’s armed forces.

Gender affairs sections, gender advisors and gender focal points were appreciated and perceived to promote a culture of gender sensitivity

78. Key informants provided positive examples that included a women’s working group in MINUSMA and female engagement teams in MONUSCO and MINUSCA. In addition, some staff members made positive references to the contribution of the gender affairs sections in recruitment and gender mainstreaming work plans.

Female staff members felt they faced limitations, hardships, prejudice and discrimination in their work environment

79. About two-thirds of survey respondents felt men and women were treated equally in their mission. Nonetheless, the results differed strongly between male and female staff: international female civilian staff were the least satisfied about the state of gender mainstreaming in their mission, with 44 per cent indicating that men and women were not treated equally. Female staff members at all levels reported challenging aspects of life in peacekeeping and felt they faced limitations because of their gender.

80. More than half of female international respondents believed that serving in a mission hindered their family life, with male survey respondents holding similar views. However, a mission leader in one mission stated that it was especially difficult to attract female international civilian staff to one family-duty station because personnel were not entitled to periodic leave (rest and recuperation) and the location was generally thought not to be conducive to family life.

81. Key informants identified numerous challenges related to work and living conditions in the field. Forty-three per cent of the female international civilian survey respondents indicated that their mission did not address the specific concerns of its female personnel. Female staff deployed in field locations complained about a lack of privacy, inadequate living conditions and, in some cases, a feeling of increased vulnerability. However, some uniformed personnel resisted perceived preferential

treatment for female staff, with one male military leader stating that females of lower rank should not have better living conditions than their superiors.

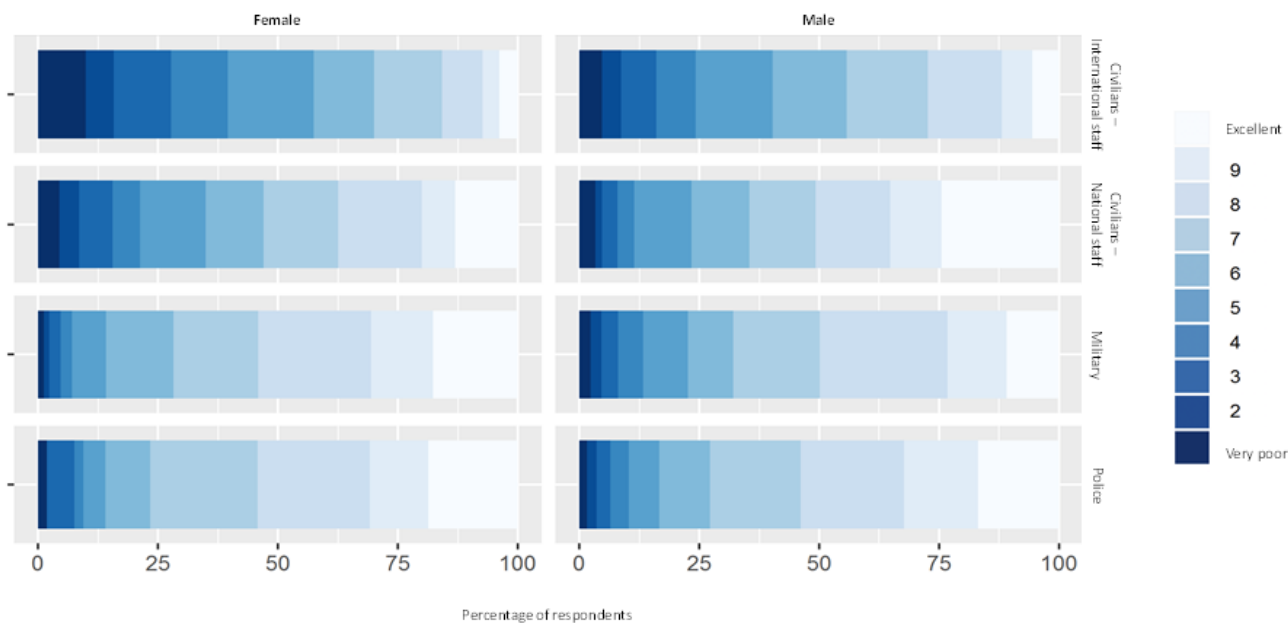
82. Talking about how women experienced the workplace in their mission was perceived as a taboo issue and some deeply problematic attitudes towards women surfaced: some contingents reportedly refused to collaborate or shake hands with female staff; one female chief complained of a contingent that only addressed her subordinate male colleague; one national male staff reportedly told another national female staff that women had to obey men based on his religious convictions, and a mission order on dress codes had to be withdrawn after protests from female staff. Some civilian sections were repeatedly mentioned as too male-dominated and as having “macho cultures.” Different military subcultures also existed among female military personnel: in one contingent, female officers were addressed as “sir”.

83. Challenges that female staff faced, such as harassment and limited privacy, were at times more acute in male-dominated environments and field locations. Women developed coping mechanisms and support networks to address these challenges, such as female-only groups and mentorship groups for female staff to encourage discussions on issues that affected them.

84. A gender makeup analysis of duty stations showed that female personnel were more likely to be stationed at mission headquarters and to occupy specific sections. Female civilian staff comprised fewer than a quarter of personnel in field offices and female representation varied per staff level and mission.

85. Female international civilian staff who responded to the survey reported the lowest levels of morale and were least positive about organizational culture in their missions (see Figure IX). International female civilian staff consistently expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction across all cultural elements covered in the survey.

Figure IX
How would you rate the organizational culture in your mission?



V. Conclusion

86. Contextually, it is important to note that this evaluation of organizational culture in peacekeeping operations relied primarily on the experiences and perceptions of staff. These are important for mission leaders to understand as they clearly have a role in shaping organizational culture and influencing personnel's actions.

87. It is acknowledged that organizational culture may differ from mission to mission, as well as within missions. Notwithstanding positive views held by mission personnel regarding certain elements of organizational culture, including aspects of leadership and collaboration, the evaluation identified a number of critical challenges. Often, the existing organizational culture in missions was not fully aligned with the high standards adopted by the Organization and needs to be improved to fully support the missions' effective functioning. To this end, some recommendations, which are not exhaustive, are made below.

VI. Recommendations

The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services has made two critical and nine important recommendations, presented in the table below.⁷

<i>Nr.</i>	<i>Key findings</i>	<i>Critical recommendation</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
CR1	Paras. 35 and 36	To address the perceived culture of impunity and power dynamics that contribute to the general lack of trust in handling of misconduct, missions should assess, with the guidance and support of relevant mandated Headquarter entities, whether the existing mechanisms are effectively implemented, and while taking rules and regulations into account, missions should communicate more openly on the process, anticipated timelines and outcomes of misconduct proceedings. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and relevant mandated Headquarter entities (as referenced in the Department's formal comment to the present critical recommendation) should consider and address cross-cutting and systemic issues that the missions' efforts may reveal. ⁸	Development of a time-bound plan to assess and address negative perceptions of handling of misconduct, and steps taken towards implementation and communication. Evidence that the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and relevant mandated United Nations Headquarter entities have considered and, as appropriate, taken action to address cross-cutting and systemic issues in the handling of misconduct in peacekeeping missions.
CR2	Paras. 74–80	Missions should assess the level of morale among their staff and identify the root cause(s) of low morale and widespread dissatisfaction among female personnel, especially international civilian staff. Leaders should take practical steps to address these issues, including increasing female participation in critical decision-making forums and establishing support networks to address specific grievances.	Greater satisfaction of female staff members as assessed by results of periodic staff surveys or other methods.

<i>NR.</i>	<i>Key findings</i>	<i>Important recommendation</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
IR1	Paras. 15 and 16; 22 and 23	To identify and address critical issues and the perceptions and misperceptions among staff, mission leadership should, while taking existing tools into account, conduct periodic staff surveys and/or explore alternative methods to assess their mission's organizational culture. To this end, all staff members should participate in end of assignment surveys and/or exit interviews as part of the checkout procedure. Senior staff should systematically provide end-of-assignment reports. These assessments should also be used to	Comprehensive knowledge-management and assessment tools developed and used. If required, a change management plan put in place.

⁷ In order to implement these recommendations, all stakeholders should consider the relevant evaluation findings in this report, together with, as applicable, the mission-specific evaluation findings (see para. 13).

⁸ See para. 12 on the relevance of this recommendation to the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

<i>NR.</i>	<i>Key findings</i>	<i>Important recommendation</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
		strengthen strategic and systematic internal communication with staff and to develop an exhaustive change management plan addressing organizational culture at the mission-level.	
IR2	Paras. 15 and 16; 22 and 23; 64–68; 69–72; 74–80	Mission leadership should actively champion diversity, inclusion and gender equality to address resistance to these issues. Dialogues among all staff should be formally and informally encouraged to help address any prejudice and discrimination, acknowledge biases and identify ways to mitigate them. Gender mainstreaming should include enhanced and systematic engagement of male staff and decisionmakers in missions through leveraging the role of Gender Affairs Units.	Documentary evidence of these activities.
IR3	Para. 63	To address the perception of lack of trust in the civilian recruitment process and the existing perceptions of unfair treatment and favouritism, missions should increase the transparency of human resources and periodically publish demographic statistics. To improve trust and staff morale, while taking time and resource limitations into account, additional feedback mechanisms should be developed for qualified, shortlisted internal applicants who are not selected.	A strategy and plan to address existing perceptions; publication of periodic and transparent human resources reports; and improved staff satisfaction with the recruitment process.
IR4	Paras. 30–32	United Nations Headquarters and the missions should review, identify and address the root causes of the lack of trust in and perceived poor use of performance management tools and mechanisms, including e-performance. In addition, United Nations Headquarters should integrate the systematic use of performance assessments in the promotion, career development and mobility of staff members.	Improved use of performance appraisal mechanisms as intended and required.
IR5	Paras. 24–26	To address existing negative perceptions of personnel towards the managerial skills and recruitment process of mission leaders, and restore trust in the recruitment process of political appointees, the Department of Peace Operations should review and improve internal communication on the process and the outcome of mission leadership recruitment. Furthermore, the Department should undertake a review of the managerial skills and experience of incoming mission leaders, and, if required, enhance this component in the selection process.	Strengthened internal communication to enhance trust, and, subject to results of review, an effective assessment methodology for the selection of mission leaders put in place, in particular with regard to managerial skills and experience.
IR6	Para. 17	To improve continuity of leadership, smoothen leadership transition periods and better prepare incoming mission leaders on operational challenges, the Department of Peace Operations should review its leadership transition arrangements and consider a period of overlap	Completed review of leadership transition arrangements and improvements made including consideration of overlapping incumbency.

<i>NR.</i>	<i>Key findings</i>	<i>Important recommendation</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
		where both the incoming and outgoing senior leaders are physically present in the mission.	
IR7	Paras. 51–55	To ensure contingents perform their duties in accordance with the policy on protection of civilians, the Department of Peace Operations and missions should review and strengthen accountability frameworks for contingents to reward, encourage and incentivize positive performance and sanction demonstrated instances of non-performance or undue risk-aversion.	Optimum use of existing performance appraisal systems. Underperforming contingents are considered for remediation, including repatriation from peacekeeping missions.
IR8	Paras. 22 and 23; 44–47	To enhance coordination between the field and mission headquarters, mission’s senior leadership should periodically visit field offices in order to gain first-hand knowledge of operational issues, listen to, motivate and guide staff to enhance their effectiveness.	Increase in relevant visits to field locations.
IR9	Paras. 60–62	To enforce the impartiality of peacekeeping operations, missions should review the need and consider developing internal operational policy that regulates external expressions of religion by mission personnel, including contingents, in their interactions with the host population. The Department of Peace Operations should undertake, through missions, to remind peacekeeping personnel of their duty to uphold the impartiality required of their function and ensure that none of their actions affect their official duties or the interests of the United Nations, per the relevant regulations or standards of conduct for each relevant category of personnel, approved by the General Assembly.	Review undertaken and internal operational policy developed if deemed necessary. Relevant communication from the Department of Peace Operations to personnel through missions.

Annex I***Comments received from entities on the draft report****Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance**

I am writing with reference to your email on 2 February 2021, in which the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) shared the final draft report on the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Operations. My office has coordinated with relevant stakeholders within our Department and, based on their inputs, is presenting you with a formal management response for the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance agrees with some of the broad issues with and challenges to organizational culture in the Secretariat as identified in the report. The report speaks about organizational culture from a broad range of perspectives, including power dynamics, communications, teamwork etc. These elements, taken together, are reflected in the results of the perceptions surveys and issues of lack of trust that arose. It would have been important for critical recommendation 1 to take a holistic approach to addressing these perceptions.

The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance does not agree with the relevance of critical recommendation 1 to the findings in the evaluation, and of the singular focus on misconduct and the resulting implications of its implementation for stakeholders involved. The perceptions and related findings described in the report speak to the larger issue of accountability and leadership responsibility and go beyond the issue of misconduct. While conduct and discipline/misconduct falls within this overall accountability, other areas of oversight play important parts, including investigations, management of disciplinary matters and the United Nations' system of administration of justice, the ethics office, among others. This broader network of players in the accountability system are identified and discussed in the report itself, but not accordingly reflected in critical recommendation 1. While OIOS has provided amendments to this recommendation based on consultations with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, the significance and impact of larger systemic challenges are still not reflected in the current formulation of critical recommendation 1.

In addition, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance is concerned with the practical feasibility of implementing critical recommendation 1 as missions do not carry out the oversight process, nor is it clear they have the requisite data from OIOS to conduct the assessments.

The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance appreciates OIOS' engagements with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance throughout this process and efforts to try to accommodate some of our substantive feedback. However, we regret that the core concerns were not reflected in the reformulation of critical recommendation 1, hence the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance is not able to accept the recommendation.

However, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance will commit to the following action plan:

1. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance will, in coordination with other United Nations Headquarters key stakeholders including the

* In the present annex, the Office of Internal Oversight Services sets out the full text of comments received from entities. This practice has been instituted in line with General Assembly resolution 64/263, following the recommendation of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee.

Inspection and Evaluation Division of OIOS, Ethics Office, Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General at mission level, issue a holistic communication by United Nations Headquarters to Secretariat entities, including missions, on information to include in awareness-raising activities aimed at strengthening understanding and trust in accountability mechanisms and related end-to-end processes as they impact on overall culture, power imbalances, collaboration, teamwork and performance. This action will be carried out by United Nations Headquarters entities in Q2, 2021.

2. The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance will also, further to the United Nations Headquarters communication, request Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to, upon receipt from OIOS of detailed data from the present report for missions which were subject to perception surveys, raise awareness among mission personnel from a holistic perspective aimed at addressing the challenges to the organizational culture noted in the report. Subject to missions receiving the necessary information, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance will request that missions undertake this action in Q3–Q4 2021.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for your engagement and collaboration throughout this process.

Department of Peace Operations

On critical recommendation 1, the Department of Peace Operations cannot undertake to provide strategic guidance for a review of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline mechanisms, which are not under its functional purview. Department of Peace Operations had indicated from its earliest comments on the draft report that this recommendation would fall under the purview of the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, which has the functional remit over and expertise on conduct and discipline processes.

On important recommendation 5, for posts, whose selection falls under the Department of Peace Operations' responsibility (Heads and Deputy-Heads of Mission), Department of Peace Operations has reviewed the skills and experience needed for incoming senior managers at this level and, based on the outcome of the review, strengthened the assessment of managerial skills and improved selection tools, by including a leadership and motivation questionnaire to be filled out by candidates before the interviews and scenario-based questions asked during the interview. The Department will strengthen internal communication on the selection process of Heads and Deputy-Heads of Mission.

On important recommendation 6, Department of Peace Operations reviewed leadership transition arrangements and issues have been remedied to the extent possible, given constraints. Efforts are systematically undertaken to ensure that departing Deputy/Heads of Mission and incoming Heads and Deputy-Heads of Mission connect at Headquarters or via video/phone, when one is in-briefing and the other is out-briefing, as well as through the sharing of End-Of-Assignment reports. The overlapping incumbency of these senior managers was considered, but actual overlaps in mission for Heads of Missions remain difficult to organize and in fact are typically not recommended for political reasons. Such overlaps also require funds and Member States' concurrence, which for Deputy Heads of Mission is rarely granted. The Department of Peace Operations will continue to implement the measures outlined above and seek overlaps in incumbency whenever feasible. Department of Peace Operations considers this recommendation implemented.

On important recommendation 7, independently of the evaluation, Department of Peace Operations, DOS and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance undertook a review of performance and accountability mechanisms across all components of missions – civilian, police and military – and developed the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework, finalized and shared with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in September 2020. By the target date, the Department of Peace Operations will provide documentation of the implementation of the framework, as it relates to contingents and the recommendation. Specific priority projects in the framework are focused on strengthening the existing accountability for contingents, as well as establishing a new mechanism to recognize outstanding performance. The framework also includes a detailed matrix with triggers if serious and systemic performance issues, including on protection of civilians are identified. Such steps include action by the mission and United Nations Headquarters and remedial measures.

On important recommendation 9, the Department of Peace Operations reviewed current administrative guidance for the relevant categories of peacekeeping personnel and determined that it could not develop a policy regulating external expressions of religion by mission personnel. Per the Department of Peace Operations' review, no current regulation or standard of conduct approved by the General Assembly appears to allow for the development of such policy, including specifically for peacekeeping personnel. The Department of Peace Operations therefore considers that any such regulation would have to be considered at Secretariat or United Nations-system level and, if developed, approved by the General Assembly. The Department of Peace Operations will undertake, through missions, to remind peacekeeping personnel of their duty to uphold the impartiality required of their function and ensure that none of their actions affect their official duties or the interests of the United Nations, per the relevant regulations or standards of conduct for each relevant category of personnel, approved by the General Assembly.

United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

I refer to your memorandum, dated 28 August 2020, regarding the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Missions (OIOS/2020/01263).

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) appreciates the detailed analysis undertaken by OIOS and extends its gratitude to the evaluation team for the consultative approach undertaken in preparing the report. The Mission also recognizes the importance of this thematic evaluation, which relied primarily on experiences and perceptions of staff, and the valuable insights for the Organization, and for peacekeeping operations in particular, contained in the report.

The Mission has reviewed the report and its recommendations closely and observes that certain of the recommendations refer to challenges that are inter-linked with broader, systemic concerns for which the required improvements cannot be brought about by Missions alone. The Mission nevertheless accepts the report's recommendations and expresses its commitment to taking into account the results of the evaluation, inter alia, as an integral part of the Mission's Action Plan on staff engagement. The Mission further notes that it has already taken a number of steps in the key areas that are the focus of the evaluation, including by holding sensitization sessions on critical accountability mechanisms for disciplinary matters such as sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and theft, conducting focus groups to advance discussions of female staff well-being and identify specific challenges and concerns, and streamlining the performance assessment

of the Mission's uniformed components in cooperation with Headquarters and troop- and police-contributing countries.

As highlighted in the report, Mission Leadership plays a critical role in influencing a Mission's organizational culture, and I am in full agreement with the need for accessible, collaborative, and actively engaged leaders. MONUSCO's leadership is deeply committed to remaining actively engaged in addressing the findings set forth in the evaluation and, together with OIOS and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations, will continue to work towards implementing OIOS' recommendations with a view to strengthening the Mission's organizational culture and enhancing its effective functioning.

United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan

This is to acknowledge receipt of your interoffice memo dated 04 December 2020 and your email dated 13 January 2021 regarding the subject.

Kindly be advised that the Mission does not have any further comments on the Final Report of the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Operations and you may therefore treat this interoffice memo as our formal acceptance of the Final Report's recommendations.

United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

Reference is made to your interoffice memorandum OIOS-2020-01775 concerning the request for a formal management response on the Final Report of the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Operations.

We have reviewed the draft report shared with us and we agree with, and accept, the recommendations made therein. As requested, we will develop and provide the action plan for implementation of the recommendations.

United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Reference is made to your interoffice memorandum, reference number OIOS-2020-01775, dated 4 December 2020, requesting a formal management response to the Final Report of the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Operations.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) accepts the recommendations of the Final Report, while noting that the Mission considers "Important recommendations" #5,6,7 and 9 as not applicable to UNFICYP. Please find attached the Mission's plan of action for each recommendation.

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

I am pleased to inform you that I have received the final report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Missions.

I welcome the findings and recommendations of the report which form a good basis for further improving the organizational culture in the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Accordingly, my team has developed the attached action plan to respond to the recommendations and will report to me on the progress regularly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the OIOS team for its efforts and cooperation with UNISFA focal points.

Thank you.

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

On behalf of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), in my capacity as Officer in Charge Head of Mission, I would like to indicate the senior leadership's formal acceptance of the recommendations in the Final Report of the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Operations.

In addition, please find the Mission's inputs for the recommendations action plan. Kindly note that additional supplementary documents are attached, including:

1. An action plan to address lack of trust in handling misconduct in the Mission (critical recommendation 1)
2. An implementation plan for the United Nations system side gender parity strategy (important recommendation 4)
3. The Terms of Reference for the Gender Task Force (important recommendation 4)

In 2021, the Mission will continue to work on other critical elements as identified in the recommendations action plan, most notably among others:

- Developing a plan to address existing perceptions by staff of recruitment process, including the publication of periodic and transparent human resources reports as well as providing feedback to internal applicants on status of their applications, test and interview results. (critical recommendation 2)
- Conducting an annual survey to assess staff satisfaction with recruitment processes. (critical recommendation 2)

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

We refer to your memorandum addressed to the Under-Secretaries-General of the Department of Peace Operations, DOS and Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance dated 04 December 2020 on the subject evaluation report and subsequent internal request from IED for formal acceptance and a mission level action plan for the recommendations contained therein.

Accordingly, please find enclosed proposed UNIFIL action plan.

Best regards.

United Nations Mission in South Sudan

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) would like to thank the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for conducting the evaluation of organizational culture in peacekeeping operations and for transmitting to us the detailed results. While many of the results relate to longstanding, well-known and often systemic issues in peacekeeping operations, the detailed findings and conclusions offered by the evaluation provide new impetus and ideas for effecting improvements. The evaluation has also brought to light issues some that have not so far been high on the agenda in peacekeeping – for example, in the area of racial discrimination among staff – but that could, if properly addressed, have a great positive impact on the organizational culture and thus staff motivation, effectiveness and retention.

UNMISS is pleased to note the positive Mission-specific results, such as on leadership and on some gender-related topics (in particular among uniformed female staff), and also acknowledges the more negative ones, such as in the areas of gender more generally, discrimination, as well as regarding communication and information sharing. We note that implementing the recommendations will for the most part

require a concerted effort by missions in close collaboration with departments at United Nations Headquarters, while some improvements require, as the report notes, inputs from Member States.

UNMISS has already undertaken measures to implement some of the recommendations, focusing on the areas, mentioned above, where the evaluation has found gaps that the Mission can address on its own. Under the area of information-sharing, regular and frequent town hall meetings were conducted with staff and at the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic with increased frequency. These have been found to be a best practice for increased information sharing, both top to bottom and bottom to top.

The Mission-level action plan to address the recommendations is enclosed. We have only included anticipated actions for the recommendations that are addressed to missions. UNMISS would also like to note the following regarding specific recommendations:

(a) With regard to critical recommendation 1, many of the perceptions that are held by mission personnel are a result of processes that are not handled at the Mission level but instead by various United Nations Headquarters entities (OIOS, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, internal justice bodies and mechanisms) as well as troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries. Furthermore, the Mission does not include oversight entities. Therefore, while the Mission agrees to improve its communication on these processes to its personnel, further Mission-level action to address such perceptions will likely only have limited effect.

(b) With regard to critical recommendation 2, the Mission has already taken steps to enhance the working and living experiences of female personnel, ensure a positive work-life balance, broaden the range of offered welfare activities, and improve the accommodation provided to personnel in efforts to address several of the root causes of dissatisfaction.

(c) With regard to important recommendation 1, the introduction of exit interviews as a required part of the checkout process of all individual personnel is well advanced. Exit interviews are already being conducted with UNMISS female individual police officers.

(d) With regard to important recommendation 3, the Mission is in the process of launching a staffing dashboard, which contains both geographical and gender distributions by category and section. The dashboard will be shared with all staff via internal broadcast.

(e) With regard to important recommendation 8, UNMISS senior leadership already conducted periodic visits to field offices before the COVID-19 pandemic. With the onset of the pandemic, the Mission increased virtual contact and information exchange with field offices. In the last quarter of 2020, the tempo of field visits by the leadership increased while observing COVID-19 preventative measures.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Reference is made to the interoffice memorandum OIOS-2020-01775 concerning the Office of Internal Oversight Services Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Operations.

We appreciate the efforts made in developing the report and accept the Final Report's recommendations.

United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Reference is made to your inter-office memorandum OIOS-2020-01775 of 4 December 2020 on the final report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Missions and the related United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) findings.

MINURSO accepts the final report and herewith encloses its action plan as approved by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The mission remains committed to implementing the relevant recommendations to improve its organizational culture.

Going forward, we remain available for further coordination with OIOS towards the ultimate closure of these recommendations.

United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

I am pleased to inform that I have received the draft report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the Evaluation of Organizational Culture in Peacekeeping Missions (OIOS/2020/01263) on 28 August 2020.

I welcome the findings and recommendations of the report which form a good basis for further improving the organizational culture in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Accordingly, I have instructed my team to develop an action plan to respond to some of the recommendation and report to me on the progress regularly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the OIOS team for its efforts and cooperation with the UNMIK focal points.

Thank you.

Annex II

Response of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to formal comments from entities*

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) thanks all missions and stakeholders at United Nations Headquarters for their strong engagement throughout this evaluation and their continued commitment to improving organizational culture in peacekeeping operations.

On critical recommendation 1, OIOS notes the Department of Peace Operations formal comment that it cannot provide strategic guidance for a review of the effectiveness of conduct and discipline mechanisms, which are not under its functional purview. The Department of Peace Operations was included in critical recommendation 1 in recognition of its roles in supporting and streamlining communication strategies, and as an interlocutor between the missions and the relevant United Nations Headquarters entities such as the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. As the Department of Peace Operations did not specify which role it saw for itself to support the implementation of critical recommendation 1, and as the focus of the recommendation is on missions, reference to Department of Peace Operations has been removed from the recommendation.

On critical recommendation 1, OIOS appreciates the formal comments received from the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and agrees that a ‘holistic approach’ with a ‘broad network of players in the accountability system’ will be needed in order to address the issue of trust deficits amongst peacekeeping personnel relating to misconduct proceedings, and it was in recognition of this that critical recommendation 1 named: ‘Missions, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance and relevant mandated United Nations Headquarters entities’ as relevant actors. OIOS notes that all missions have accepted critical recommendation 1 and have proposed several actions to implement the recommendation. At the same time, the missions have also acknowledged that they cannot fully address the issue without the necessary support from relevant mandated United Nations Headquarters entities, including the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. The proposed actions by the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance to address this matter are very welcome, and these have been included as recommendations made to the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, with assumption that they are accepted.

On important recommendation 1, OIOS appreciates the formal comment received from DOS and has added the requirement for missions to develop change management plans to address organizational culture issues.

On important recommendation 9, OIOS notes that all peacekeeping missions have welcomed important recommendation 9 as it is formulated and expressed the need for guidance and support from the Department of Peace Operations on this matter. In view of the Department of Peace Operations response, the action for the Department of Peace Operations has been adjusted accordingly; i.e., for the Department of Peace Operations to undertake, through missions, to remind peacekeeping personnel of their duty to uphold the impartiality required of their

* The Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, the Department of Peace Operations, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

function and ensure that none of their actions affect their official duties or the interests of the United Nations.

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