**Minutes of the Senior Management Board meeting, 12 January 2018**

**Present**

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| Dr. Aisa Kacyira, Acting Executive Director (Chair)  Andrew Cox  Christine Musisi  Raf Tuts  Kazumi Ogawa  Atsushi Koresawa (by remote)  Naison Mutizwa-Mangiza  Elkin Velasquez (by remote)  Robert Ndugwa  Chris Mensah  Andre Dzikus  Dyfed Aubrey  Ana Moreno (by remote) | Marco Kamiya  Kerstin Sommer  Shipra Narang-Suri  Saidou Ndow |

**Key observations and action points**

**Item 1: Portfolio performance, acquisition and expenditure**

The Acting ED reminded the SMB about the budget cuts that the UN is experiencing, underlining that earmarked funding for resource mobilization requires more attention. She noted that UNH is a resilient organisation which has worked hard to strengthen itself and has a healthy portfolio, but that we should not take this for granted due to tough competition.

Andrew explained that in Umoja the numbers do not reflect what has been submitted as acquisitions, he also noted that revenue is different from acquisition. Currently, USD 120 million has been registered in Umoja as opposed to the reported USD 160 million. It is preferable that revenue and acquisition numbers are as close as possible.

**Action Point:** Each cost centre where acquisitions have been signed need to be double checked and entered within the next few days.

Tables on Acquisition targets and tables were shared and summarized noting that the first column was agreed by the SMB and that we should try to stick to that. He noted that our delivery is currently at USD 142 million, a USD 20 million reduction from last year which will have a direct impact on our overhead income. He also noted that we are not on track in implementation and that last year should have been a less challenging year with Umoja and other administrative tools up and running. He stressed that it is important to focus on what needs to be rectified in 2018 to improve numbers.

It was reiterated that agreements concluded during the joint PD and MOD workshop in December 2017 on portfolio management. He also underlined that the responsibility lies with the individual project manager to work through any issues experienced.

It was also noted that our portfolio management and numbers need to be resolved if not before WUF, directly after and that implementation needs to improve. Andrew reported and our deficit this year will be larger than last, largely due to decreased portfolio delivery.

**Comments by Board Members:**

A member noted that acquisition is not the same as revenue and that there are other factors to take into consideration in terms of the modalities from signing an agreement, to entering it to the system and to when it is used and appears in the system. He mentioned that there are four contracts from 2017 which are not yet in the system and that from his side, acquisition looks good at around USD 180 million and that the revenue side is a matter of accounting a flow of income.

It was clarified that some donors have specific contract conditionalities and are treated differently in the UN, but in general, a new contract is considered revenue in full.

The Acting ED requested to not focus on technicalities which can be discussed during the SMC, but more on the targets and how to narrow the gap between the numbers reported and registered.

A member noted that when they set targets, they do so for acquisition and not for revenue.

**Action Point:** SMB to register all grants in the system and agree that our targets and acquisitions are what counts, if they are not in the system they do not count.

A member mentioned that the numbers as presented in the tables shared by Andrew on ROAS are not accurate, that ROAS did not only achieve 70% implementation rate, but 100%.

The Acting ED requested management and Operations division to verify with PD and colleagues beforehand to have a consolidated and reconciled status. Once we have corrected figures agreed by the SMB members, then the SMB can proceed to analyse.

A member underlined the importance of reporting to Member States, that if they see different numbers, they may get confused and have a distorted view of the reality.

A member raised the matter of in house agreements, if one is signed it may stay with the original cost centre and be implemented by another branch or unit. That leads to expenditure not necessarily reflected properly, sometimes it can also reflect as income for the other, and therefore recorded twice. We need to be clear on which in-house agreements we have, if others contribute, so it is not counted twice.

A member raised the possibility that the target setting, and implementation issue is not a new but a persistent issue, are we perhaps over-ambitious in setting targets, or is there an issue with the figures?

A member noted that for her branch, sometimes donors are not transferring the funds in a timely manner, therefore, execution and implementation are impacted as a result. The member also noted that her branch will focus on enhanced planning, becoming more systematic in target setting and reviewing them regularly.

A Member raised one apparent issue in terms of engaging personnel and implementing partners since OIOS have recommended stricter selection of partners. If that is the case, then there needs to be expedited additional screening in order to not have an additional delaying factor in implementation and expenditure.

The Acting ED proposed that it would be helpful for purposes of supporting expenditure and tracking procedures and HR procurement, cooperation agreements etc., that we look at acquisition and implementation on a regular basis to monitor the progress and address any bottle necks. This may also support MOD in their follow-up.

MOD informed the SMB that a Memo on the Launching Project Opening and Umoja start-up, as agreed during the MOD/PD Workshop in December 2017 would shortly go out. He underlined that project implementation plans are an essential tool to facilitate implementation, foresee issues and how to manage them. He also raised the way forward on procurement.

A member raised two questions, one on the system of accountability and tracking and the other on portfolio and management support – how will they proceed.

A member requested that regular budget allocations be dispersed as early as possible to facilitate implementation on time.

**Item 2: WUF Update**

An overview on WUF preparations and progress was provided, noting that the basic programme has been published and the exact allocation of slots for side, networking and training events will be available the week of 15 January. There is progress on thematic sessions and concept notes, there are being submitted and the final list of approved events will be shared for final input by branch and event coordinators. She noted that for sessions organised by UNH, it is important to emphasize that the first level of coordination is at branch level and execution in liaising with the WUF Secretariat (WUFS).

A member also raised the need for common messaging on WUF and how UNH relates with partners and member states. A note is in process and will be available next week which can be used in presentations and engagements with partners.

Concerning staff travel, the policy was issued. The OED and Directors are working together to finalize the final list, including those participants not included in the focal point list, purpose of their participation, funding and period the staff will be there.

The SMB was informed that for austerity measures, a support pool of administrative staff for UNH would go to WUF. Division directors and OED will coordinate this.

A member summarised that:

* The host country is happy with the preparations thus far and that there are some political matters to be resolved.
* She thanked staff for their support, and for the additional funds made available ensuring certain participants and ministers were able to join as well as the staff who have worked overtime to support the WUFS.
* Participation is expected to reach the estimated 25,000, however, stressed the importance is quality of WUF and not quantity.
* Regarding high level participation, a lot of ministers are coming, particularly from the Asia Pacific region. Other high-level participation includes the Vice President of Ecuador, which ensures Habitat III legacy as well as European Commissioner Cretu. Mandela’s granddaughter is also coming and we have messages from Prince Charles and the President of the General Assembly, amongst others.
* A significant number of mayors are coming and a lot of emphasis has been placed on female mayors.
* We need to agree on what our key political messaging is during WUF.
* The detailed programme is still being finalised. The different rooms such as AFINUA, One UN Room and the Listen to Cities Room are all looking really good.

The Acting ED stressed that this is a unique WUF, to demonstrate the role of UNH as convener and enabler within UN system and in supporting Member States to deliver on the SDGs and NUA. She encouraged the SMB to use the next few weeks and make WUF a priority, to mobilize as much political support as possible and to ensure that participants leave WUF with a positive mind set. She mentioned that the High-Level Meeting on UNH finished placing UNH as an important agency, therefore, let us go to WUF showing that we are a credible agency and worth investing in.

The Acting ED also noted that the new Executive Director needs to be provided the right entry point at WUF, that political support is ready and that we need to support on the political messaging but also the coherence and unity. Concerning the fact that the WUF is non-legislative, this does not minimize the importance that Member States will be present and that they need to be well taken care of. Government representatives need to be recognized and given ample space.

**Comments by Board Members**

A member expressed his appreciated to WUFS, that it is shaping up to be a good event. He expressed that he would have appreciated more information through the entire planning stages of WUF, including more consultations on planning and substantial issues. He noted it would be useful to know who is working on what for WUF and where, to engage accordingly. The member also emphasized the importance of planning the WUF opening well, that it is crucial and where the main political messages go out. It would be useful to know at this stage who are the VIPs attending, although non-legislative, this implies dealing with Member States and WUFS and UNH need to prepare accordingly to avoid previous mistakes of dignitaries not being received and taken care appropriately.

A member requested to be updated on the ministers’ roundtable attendance, in order to support the WUFS accordingly. Chris also underlined the key role and importance that the Advisory Group plays, that it is there to guide the Executive Director, they absorb key messages and outcomes from every day and help shape the WUF Declaration, which subsequently feeds into UNH’s work.

A member requested that the list of confirmed high level participants be shared in order to facilitate his coordination and organisation of the high-level roundtables. He also mentioned that partners have been in touch about some events having received replies and others not. He noted that this is a sensitive issue and that we would want to maintain the AU in our ‘good books’ and that it would be preferable to advise applicants of their outcomes soonest.

The member further requested that the comprehensive list of focal points be shared and be advised on who is responsible for the reporting and whether this has this been taken account of in taking the list of people going to WUF.

A member reiterated the travel procedure and policy as circulated in December 2017. She requested that the list of travellers be consolidated soonest to avoid airfare fares increasing. She emphasized that WUFS will pay for 1 extra traveller per national delegation at the ministerial level. She also requested when submitting traveller lists to note which funds are being used to pay for the trip (WUFS, Core or Project). Kazumi also reminded that UNH staff are expected to take on other tasks while at WUF. These possible tasks will be communicated once the final list has been approved. To be fair to all staff, those staff members who have medical reasons requiring that they travel in business would be given the option of declining to travel, and asked to nominate a replacement.

A member raised that it was still not clear which platform or procedure is in place to showcase UNH work on SDGs and monitoring for the NUA. It is unclear how the WUF will help monitor these frameworks and is requesting further discussion with WUFS on how this will proceed. John sought clarity on the status of training events and expressed that his branch is available to support the remaining selection of events. He also noted that partners are requesting status of their events and that according to some feedback, some regions have been selected and others not. It would be great that in the next round of review, that this be addressed.

A member asked whether there is a drafting group that helps formulate the WUF Declaration. She is also waiting for clarification on participation from developments, in order to include them in dialogues and round tables. She also noted that there are some programme clashes between branches which need to be resolved.

A member requested clarification on the involvement of the Legal Unit in WUF. Legal issues may arise and it would be good to clarify their role in order to ensure that UNH are prepared legally.

A member requested whether there would be an app to group together certain tracks, such as resilience and whether UNH would be able to feed into this app. This would be an ideal platform to sell UNH products, show leadership in this area. Andre also requested that when WUFS sends out communication to partners on events, it would be good if the relevant branch or unit could be copied to ensure that they are aware and are not caught by surprise when approached by that partner.

A member asked whether the group of RC participation in WUF has been confirmed. He also asked how AFINUA, IFSUA and the Collaborative Framework are being brought forward.

A member highlighted the importance of including some ministers of finance and that he is in touch with Indonesia and Malaysia for that dialogue. He noted that as one of the main topics of the WUF is the implementation of the NUA, it is key to have minister of finance presence in order to input on the financing side of the implementation.

A member shared that the Council of EU will be holding a working group to determine WUF participation and have requested whether the WUFS can participate to provide clarifications on certain matters.

**ERD / WUFS responses to questions by Board Members**

A member advised that the detailed programme with event slots will be ready early the week of 15 January 2018, it will also indicate time slots for events that are under consideration. There will be an opportunity for the SMB to review this list beforehand and advise whether there are any gaps or events/partners missing that need to be included.

The member took note of comments on the Advisory Board and shared that there will be a team that support the Advisory Board. The WUFS will also share during the week of 15 January 2018 the list of high level participation and that ERD has liaised with the banks and they expect full participation.

A member will discuss separately on the Legal aspects of WUF. She will also respond regarding the tracking tool / app.

A member added that it is important to arrive at WUF with a draft and clear strategy considering the UNDS reform. She agreed that WUFS will copy in relevant UNH teams once notifications are sent accepting events. She explained that there are different sessions which explore IFSUD, the Collaborative Framework and the AFINUA room will also engage partners on these matters. For stakeholders a reference group has been established. Regarding political messaging, a document will be circulated during the week of 15 January 2018. The Listen to cities room has been designed to engage a cross-section of participants and not only mayors.

**Item 3: Secretary-General reform & repositioning of the UN Development System**

A member summarised the latest document on reform and the repositioning of the UN Development System, underlining that it is a very important document and our own reform will be subsidiary to this. Certain Member States are pushing towards this direction and that it is important that we grasp the implications the reform will have for UNH. There are 7 main areas of reform that the SG is proposing to MS. The SMC will identify what is relevant under each of these 7 main elements, with opportunities for UNH to change the way of working at each level. This will ensure that we respond proactively to the reform. A draft response or strategy paper on how UNH will embrace the reform changes will be prepared and shared with you for discussion. A seminar on this may also be organised.

The Acting ED shared from her recent SMG, that the SG is intent on going ahead with this reform and advised that UNH should look at the reform as an opportunity and that as a small agency, ready to benefit from a more integrated system. Therefore, we should look for positive ways to internalize, seek support and mobilise positively. She expressed that it will not be a simple exercise and recommended that before the next SMB, a more elaborate analysis should take place on the implications based on the current document which will then inform the Organisation and become a key catalytic partner of the UN agenda.

**Abbreviations**

ED-Executive Director

SMG-Senior Management Group

UNH-UN-Habitat

SMC-Senior Management Committee

NUA- New Urban Agenda