

Values and Behaviours

F R A M E W O R K

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Background

In 1999, the UN ‘Competencies for the Future’ were launched with a view of enabling “staff to contribute to their maximum potential”. For twenty years, these competencies have provided the Organization with the base on which to define its organizational culture. The ‘UN Values and Behaviours Framework’ builds on their strength and transforms them to better reflect the goals of the organization for the next decade. It takes into account the constant changing nature of the world and renews our commitment to the people we serve.

The ‘UN Values and Behaviours Framework’ forms the basis of an organizational culture that is both current and aspirational. Its nine elements, the result of a co-creation process involving nearly 4500 staff, should guide how we build relationships, how we perform our jobs, and how we experience the organization on a daily basis. As such, they will also inform human resources processes, such as workforce planning, recruitment, learning and performance management.

Living our values

A V I S I O N F O R T H E C U L T U R E O F T H E S E C R E T A R I A T

Our culture as an organization is what characterises us. It's how we in the Secretariat relate to each other, our work and the world, and it's how those with whom we interact experience us. It defines who we are together, and it is more than the sum of each of us. It's the norms that shape everything we do, from how we engage with each other day-to-day to how we partner with others to deliver on our most ambitious hopes for the future. Like many organisational cultures, it often goes unspoken.

This document is the first attempt to articulate our vision for the culture of the UN Secretariat. This vision describes who we are, who we want to be, and why each aspect of our culture matters. It is aspirational, but rooted in present-day experience. It has been co-created from the inputs of nearly 4500 Secretariat staff and leaders who helped identify four values and five behaviours that are important to them personally and to the work of the United Nations in the future.

Our culture

We are inclusive. Our culture is one in which everyone can bring their whole selves to work. We value and respect differences and diversity, and we actively oppose bias and discrimination of all types. We do this because we are committed to social justice for all and know that diverse inputs make for better outcomes. We work better when we work together; we are more than the sum of our parts.

We demonstrate humanity in everything we do. We are committed to upholding human rights and dignity for all. We care for each other and for those we serve. Our humanity makes us courageous, and it is what defines and distinguishes us.

We deliver results, but not just any results. We deliver results that make a positive difference to the people and causes that we serve. We hold ourselves accountable for doing so. We are true to our word, and able to rely on each other. We want the people we serve to be able to rely on us too.

We have integrity. We uphold the standards of conduct of the United Nations in all we do because what we say and how we act affects our credibility and trust with each other and with those whom we serve. This matters because we need to trust each other, and we need others to trust us to deliver for the people and causes that we serve.

We take a collaborative approach in all we do. We invest time and effort in building trusted partnerships with each other and our teams, stakeholders, and those we serve. We work as One UN.

We value learning, and continuously seek to develop ourselves and support the development of others. We make mistakes, and we learn from them. We are curious and generous in sharing our insights, skills and experiences. Our continuous learning is what will help keep us relevant for the future.

We act with humility. We value each others' skills, knowledge, and experience, recognising that no one individual has all the right answers. We see humility not as a sign of weakness but of self-awareness, which allows us to support each other and the people we serve.

We take time to analyse and plan our approach. We draw on data from a wide range of sources whenever we can to ensure all our work is informed by a robust evidence base. We are analytical and reflective because the alternative - basing action on assumptions and guess-work - rarely proves effective.

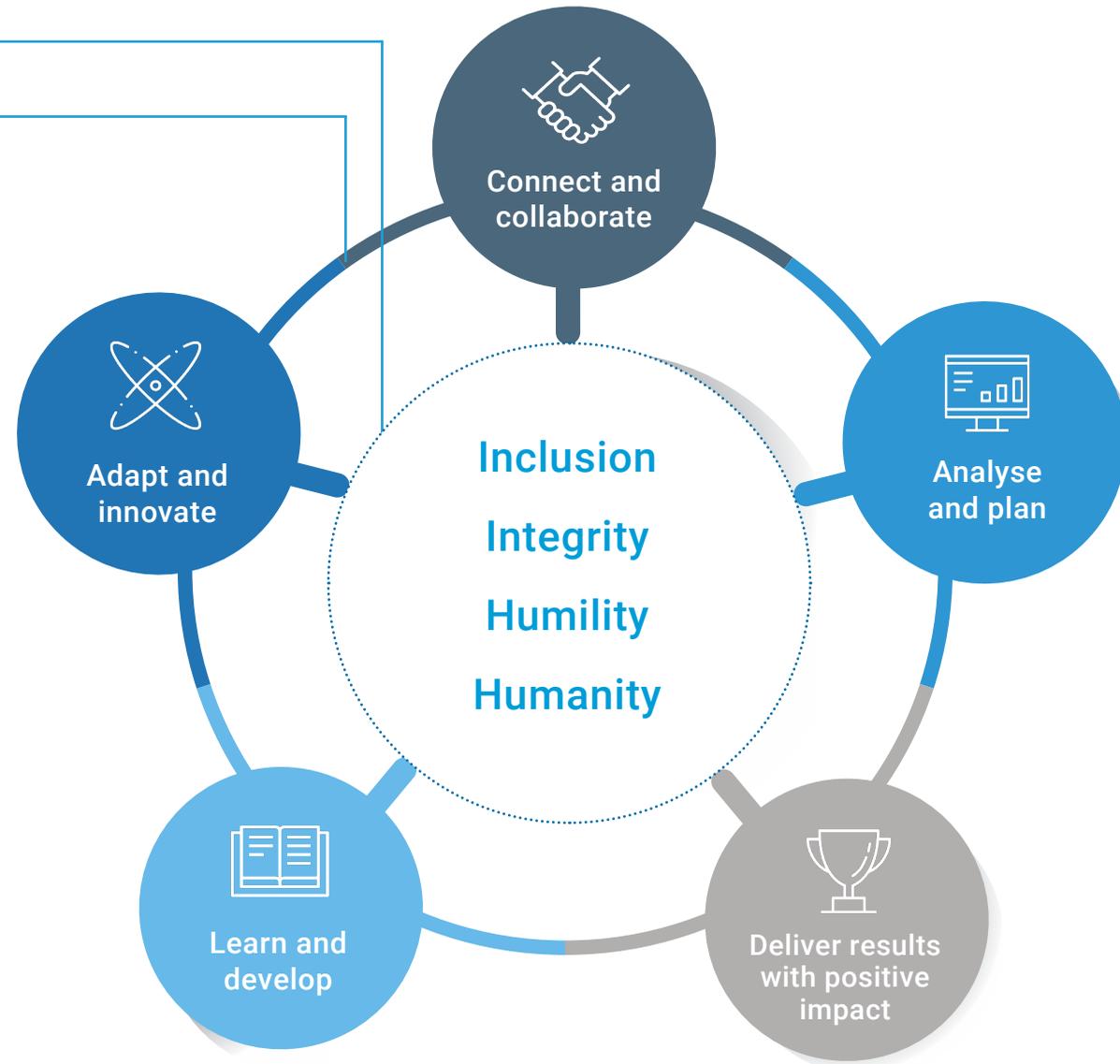
We are adaptive and we innovate. We welcome new ideas. We don't fear the complexity and uncertainty of our work; we embrace it. We value differences in people, skills, education and experience because these all contribute to diverse thinking and better solutions. We don't stand still. Our adaptability and capacity to innovate mean we are resilient, able to thrive in the most complex and challenging circumstances.

Values and Behaviours

The framework comprises:

- **Four values:**
Inclusion, Integrity, Humility and Humanity
- **Five behaviours:**
Connect and Collaborate; Analyse and Plan; Deliver Results with Positive Impact; Learn and Develop; and Adapt and Innovate
- Overall definitions
- Examples of what it looks like in practice

Each behaviour also has examples of how it looks like in practice, but is presented at different levels: all staff, all managers and senior leaders. These are cumulative examples, meaning that the examples under all staff are also relevant for all managers and senior leaders; and those under all managers also apply to senior leaders.



Values

VALUE

Inclusion

DEFINITION

Take action to create an environment of dignity and respect for all, regardless of age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, geography, grade, language, nationality, racial identity, religion, sex, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, social origin or any other aspect of identity.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Treat all people with dignity and respect
- Uphold the commitments of the United Nations to fairness, equality, respect for diversity, gender equity, anti-racism and multilingualism in creating an enabling working environment for all
- Take action to mitigate own biases, stereotypes and assumptions about other individuals, groups, cultures, languages, organizations and approaches
- Actively seek and incorporate a diversity of perspectives, ways of thinking, experiences and opinions in decision-making
- Take responsibility for understanding the factors contributing to exclusion and for creating a work environment in which everyone can thrive
- Work effectively with people regardless of age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, geography, grade, language, nationality, racial identity, religion, sex, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, social origin or any other aspect of identity
- Demonstrate sensitivity to cross-cultural differences and awareness of how actions and behaviour may be perceived in other cultures



VALUE

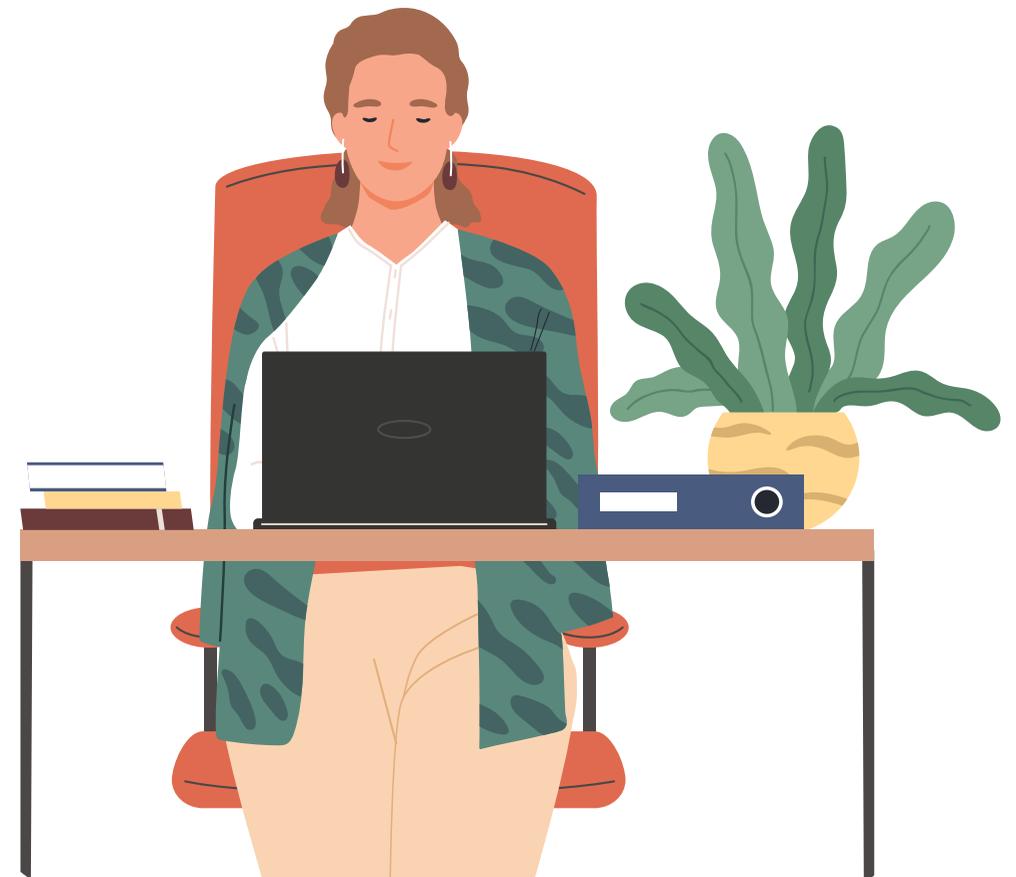
Integrity

DEFINITION

Act ethically, demonstrating the standards of conduct of the United Nations and taking prompt action in case of witnessing unprofessional or unethical behaviour, or any other breach of UN standards.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Ensure zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority, or any kind of discriminatory behaviour, including racism, sexism, disablism, ageism, homophobia.
- Demonstrate impartiality, fairness, accountability, honesty and truthfulness, in daily activities and behaviour
- Act without consideration of personal gain
- Do not abuse power, privilege or authority, including on the basis of age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, geography, grade, language, nationality, racial identity, religion, sex, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, or social origin.
- Resist undue pressure in decision-making from political or other actors
- Stand by decisions that are in the interests of the people and causes that the Organization serves



VALUE

Humility

DEFINITION

Demonstrate self-awareness and willingness to learn from others.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Value the knowledge, skills and experience of others
- Ask for and take into account others' feedback, views, opinions and perspectives
- Engage others in addressing problems and finding solutions, accepting that there is likely to be more than one possible approach
- Recognize the complexity of local contexts and the value of local knowledge, incorporating both into decision-making
- Give credit to others where credit is due
- Recognize own strengths and weaknesses
- Acknowledge own mistakes and take action to address them



VALUE

Humanity

DEFINITION

Act according to the purposes of the United Nations: peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Ensure that all decisions and actions prioritize the needs of those whom the United Nations serves
- Act with empathy, compassion and kindness towards others
- Uphold internationally recognized human rights for all
- Pay attention to the mental health and physical well-being of oneself and others
- Ensure alignment of programmes and projects with the strategic goals of the United Nations
- Consider the social and environmental impact of all decisions and actions



Behaviours



BEHAVIOUR

Connect and collaborate

DEFINITION

Build positive relationships with others to advance the work of the United Nations and work coherently as One UN

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

1 ALL STAFF

Actively listen to and take an interest in the views, expertise, experiences and feelings of others

Seek out opportunities for collaboration with others, using language and technology skills to the fullest

Demonstrate ability and willingness to identify with emotions and perspectives of others

Recognize, understand and monitor own feelings and emotions, using that information to guide thinking and actions

Seek opportunities for partnerships and collaboration within and across different teams, thematic pillars and UN System organizations

2 ALL MANAGERS

Create an enabling working environment in which everyone may speak openly, honestly and without fear of retribution

Promptly address any conflict or discriminatory, exclusionary or divisive behaviour

Involve others, incorporating their perspectives when making decisions that affect them

Advocate for diversity and inclusion as a strength in building effective teams

Actively build trust, collaboration and partnership with and between individuals, teams, stakeholders and clients

3 SENIOR LEADERS

Take an integrated approach, building partnerships with a broad and diverse range of stakeholders across organizational, sectoral, political, gender, generational, cultural, socioeconomic and other boundaries

Engage others as co-creators of a common vision

Facilitate inclusive processes to jointly analyse problems, establish goals and implement integrated solutions

Demonstrate ability to engage constructively in difficult conversations



BEHAVIOUR

Analyse and plan

DEFINITION

Seek out and use data from a wide range of sources to understand problems, inform decision-making, propose evidence-based solutions and plan action

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

1 ALL STAFF

Gather, analyse and evaluate data from a wide and diverse range of credible sources in order to define the problem and inform evidence-based decision-making

Disaggregate and analyse data, for instance by gender, ethnicity and age, to deepen understanding and inform decision-making

Plan and prioritize on the basis of data

Show willingness to adapt plans and priorities as necessary in response to emerging situations and new information

2 ALL MANAGERS

Facilitate data-driven, evidence-based analysis and planning

Encourage sharing of information, data, experience and expertise between staff and across teams

Acknowledge and take steps to minimize the impact of individual and collective bias on decision-making

Assess and plan for the time and resources needed for individuals and teams to deliver on priorities, taking into account risks and contingencies

3 SENIOR LEADERS

Work with others to interpret incomplete, contradictory or changing information

Encourage critical thinking and a systems approach to analysis and planning

Detect and interpret early signals, new and emerging trends, opportunities and risks

Develop political acumen, understanding power dynamics (political, demographic, economic and social) and their impact on the information made available



BEHAVIOUR

Deliver results with positive impact

DEFINITION

Hold oneself and others accountable for delivering results and making a positive difference to the people and causes that the United Nations serves

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

1 ALL STAFF

Demonstrate professional skills and knowledge, taking personal responsibility for own performance, results and impact

Engage with internal and external stakeholders to identify and understand their needs and propose solutions

Take advantage of new technologies and language skills to deliver results and maximize impact

Contribute own ideas and opinions even when it feels difficult to do so

Hold oneself accountable for demonstrating the UN standards of conduct in delivering results

2 ALL MANAGERS

Ensure that the work of individuals and teams is aligned with the purpose and priorities of the wider department/office/mission/Organization

Ensure all team members demonstrate the UN standards of conduct in delivering results

Empower others by delegating appropriately, sharing decision-making and encouraging them to voice their ideas and opinions

Trust others to deliver

Recognize achievements and address underperformance

3 SENIOR LEADERS

Build and sustain momentum around delivering results, inspiring others to achieve and exceed goals and expectations

Balance actions that deliver short-term impact with strategies that create longer-term systemic transformation

Empower others to deliver results that have a positive impact by facilitating collaboration, continuous feedback and learning, and encouraging self-reflection and accountability

Demonstrate the courage to make difficult decisions, have uncomfortable conversations and take calculated risks as necessary

Lead by example in demonstrating the UN standards of conduct in delivering results.



BEHAVIOUR

Learn and develop

DEFINITION

Pursue own learning and development and contribute to the learning and development of others

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

1 ALL STAFF

Demonstrate curiosity and willingness to learn and to apply learning in practice

Demonstrate a commitment to language learning and multilingualism

Keep up –to date with latest thinking and practice in own professional area

Seek out formal and informal opportunities to learn and develop, both personally and professionally, including by taking on assignments across different functions and locations

2 ALL MANAGERS

Support individual and team development through the provision of mentoring and coaching, and by sharing and suggesting learning opportunities

Make it safe for people to be open about their vulnerabilities, weaknesses and development needs

Create an environment in which people are allowed to fail and encouraged to learn from the experience

Seek feedback on own performance, and have regular, honest and constructive discussions with individuals and teams about their performance

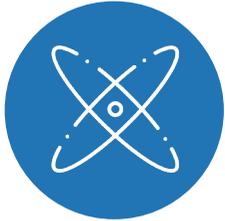
3 SENIOR LEADERS

Promote and provide resources for learning opportunities that support the development of an agile, multidisciplinary, values-driven and multilingual workforce

Identify, understand and support the development aspirations of team members

Encourage individual and collective reflection and learning from both successes and challenges

Collaborate with other United Nations entities and public and private sector partners, sharing learning and contributing to best practice



BEHAVIOUR

Adapt and innovate

DEFINITION

Demonstrate flexibility, agility and the ability to think and act in novel ways

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

1 ALL STAFF

Respond flexibly to new contexts and cultures and changing circumstances, priorities and deadlines

Demonstrate resilience, self-awareness and ability to manage own emotions in the face of stress, uncertainty and ambiguity

Experiment with new approaches and demonstrate openness to positive change

Contribute new ideas and welcome new ideas from others

2 ALL MANAGERS

Be aware of and challenge own and others' habitual ways of thinking and behaving

Encourage and empower team members to think innovatively and creatively

Mobilize others to respond to changing priorities while seeking to understand and address fear and resistance to change

Keep oneself and others motivated during times of stress and uncertainty

3 SENIOR LEADERS

Communicate the need for change in compelling ways

Disrupt habitual approaches by encouraging critical thinking, creativity, innovation, flexibility and responsiveness

Provide direction and support, and foster resilience and calm in contexts of stress, uncertainty and ambiguity

Encourage adaptation, experimentation and innovation