

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

**Sustaining  
Trust  
through  
Transitions**

Working together  
to find solutions



unicef   
for every child

 **UNOPS**

  
**UN WOMEN**



It is astonishing how elements which seem insoluble become soluble when someone listens.



– CARL ROGERS, *A WAY OF BEING*

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## A TYPICAL CASE IN 2025

***The following illustrates a real situation with common themes encountered by the Office of the Ombudsman for UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN-Women (the Office) during the reporting period. It is anonymized to protect confidentiality.***

The email about an all-staff meeting arrived with little explanation, and by the time people joined, many already suspected what was coming. The Head of the Country Office spoke plainly: the office would absorb a 30 per cent funding cut, several projects would be ending shortly, and affected staff would receive letters soon. She stressed the decision had been made elsewhere and there was little room for discussion. The meeting was scheduled late on a Friday; senior management departed for an off-site engagement immediately afterward. Staff were left knowing cuts were coming, but with no clarity on who would be affected, when, or what the practical consequences would be.

Over the weekend, anxiety spread quickly. Some colleagues worried about schooling decisions for their children or whether to begin planning repatriation. Others faced constraints that made leaving uncertain—ongoing medical treatment, immigration status tied to UN employment, or crisis situations in their home countries. Some believed they might be targeted unfairly.

By early the following week, several staff had reached out to the Office of the Ombudsman, encouraged by their organization's well-being team and staff association. In confidential conversations, they described feeling shocked

and uninformed. Many were also deeply concerned for the communities their projects served. The group included section chiefs who felt pressure to reassure their own teams but had no further information themselves. The Office helped staff analyze the uncertainties and clarify how separation processes generally work based on contract type. Some personnel expected payment for being let go, and this was the first time they learned that their contract terms did not include any indemnities or redundancy compensation if they separated on their contract expiration date.

While outcomes for many staff ultimately did not change, the Office helped them distinguish between what could be realistically pursued and how to take charge rather than feeling passive in the face of events—including, where appropriate, raising personal circumstances directly with management or human resources through shuttle diplomacy. As one staff member later reflected, having clearer information and a neutral space to process the situation made it more manageable than the uncertainty that followed the initial announcement.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 2025, the Office of the Ombudsman's work with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN-Women had a common thread: supporting colleagues as they dealt with sudden and far-reaching organizational changes. Funding shifts, geopolitical crises and restructuring and relocation efforts affected personnel who had to absorb and adjust to new realities quickly.

Leaders and managers across the five UN organizations worked hard to design, communicate and implement the necessary changes to deliver mandates within budgetary constraints while mitigating the impacts on personnel. These efforts were complemented by the activities of staff associations and staff well-being teams globally. The Office appreciates the collaboration of all stakeholders, which included referrals of conflict cases, specific mentions of the Office's services, as well as joint webinar presentations during this complex year.

The Office supported teams and individuals at all levels in navigating the transitions, helping them reflect on their experiences and perspectives and manage the emotions that accompany change. For many, this involved a deep sense of loss—of work portfolios built over years or decades, of livelihoods, of family and community ties, of colleagues and friends, and, for some, of aspects of their professional identity as international civil servants dedicated to multilateral service.

This annual report presents an overview of the Office of the Ombudsman's work in 2025 and highlights key trends and observations

“ One of the main observations is that during organizational restructuring, the nature and intensity of conflict depend on how human relationships are navigated. ”

during the year. One of the main observations is that during organizational restructuring, the nature and intensity of conflict depend on how human relationships are navigated.

In 2025, the Office handled 830 cases—a 17 per cent increase from the previous year. An uptick in cases is generally considered a positive development as it indicates greater support and encouragement from the five UN organizations to explore informal resolution, as well as trust in the effectiveness of the services provided by the Office.

The complexity of the cases in 2025 varied widely. Some involved the interpersonal dynamics of entire teams with interventions by multiple members of the Office, while others required just one or two conversations to explore perspectives and options or provide guidance in locating critical information. The Office also noted cases in which individuals sought validation of the lawfulness of specific decisions or processes, or to pronounce a party “right” or “wrong.” As an informal and neutral resource, the Office does not determine the legality of administrative decisions or assign fault in conflicts. However, it does have an express mandate to promote fairness and justice and can direct personnel

to applicable rules and procedures and liaise with decision-making authorities. The objective is always to explore options for informal resolution of conflicts or to prevent harmful conflict in the first place.

In 2025, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) completed a system-wide review of the ombudsman and mediation function and issued its final report.<sup>1</sup> The report reaffirmed the importance of the independence of the Office and made several recommendations to strengthen the function.

The Office continues to invest in improving its capacity and systems for demographic data analyses, as well as real-time case management data monitoring. A newly introduced survey on ombudsman services after case closure has provided additional data points for the Office and are included in this report.

It also invested in its team and ensured its members undertook capacity-building initiatives to improve the Office's responsiveness and accessibility for individuals with diverse neurocognitive profiles.

## A. Principles and standards of practice

The Office operates under the terms of reference for the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services contained in the Secretary-General's bulletin of 22 June 2016 ([ST/SGB/2016/7](#)). Its key principles of operations are independence, informality, confidentiality and impartiality, as well as voluntary participation.

In addition, the Office adheres to the principle of minimal intervention for conflict resolution.

This means it prioritizes addressing conflicts at their source or at the appropriate level of line management capable of effectively managing the situation.

Under the Standards of Practice of the United Nations System Network of Ombudsman and Mediators,<sup>2</sup> *“the Ombudsman is the only designated neutral resource that provides confidential, impartial and independent services within their organizations to informally address workplace-related concerns.”*

## B. Services

One of the Office's primary services is providing a confidential space for visitors to feel truly heard and seen, to share their concerns openly and to understand their options, both informal and formal, if applicable. The following paragraphs describe the categories of services provided by the Office. These service descriptions have been prepared jointly and agreed on within the Integrated Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services, of which the Office is a part.

### 1. Discussion of options

Following an exploration of the concerns raised, the various perspectives and underlying needs and interests, the Ombudsman helps the visitor examine a variety of options that could address the issue. The Ombudsman also provides visitors with information on workplace policies, procedures and rights, helping them understand their options and potential courses of action. Options are assessed together with the

1 United Nations. (2025). *Review of the Ombudsman and Mediation function in the United Nations system organizations. Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)*.

2 United Nations. (2023). *Standards of Practice for UN System Ombudsman and Mediators*.

visitor, considering the advantages and disadvantages of each, thereby enabling the visitor to make an informed choice. Options can include continued engagement using other conflict resolution processes or connecting the visitor to another office with a more appropriate mandate to handle the relevant issues.

## 2. Conflict coaching

Visitors may opt for one-on-one conflict coaching with a conflict resolution practitioner. The aim of the coaching is to improve current or future professional relationships and empower the visitor to handle and take control of issues involving workplace relationships. Through the conflict coaching process, the visitor can prepare for difficult conversations and explore new ways of communicating with others. It helps the visitor create better strategies to address workplace issues before they escalate or become entrenched. Several of the Office team members are International Coaching Federation (ICF)-certified coaches and on-call professional conflict coaching consultants are also available.

## 3. Mediation

Mediation is a structured and collaborative process used to address and resolve workplace differences, concerns or conflicts with the help of an impartial and neutral third party—the mediator. It may take the form of a facilitated dialogue between two colleagues or involve a more complex process with multiple individuals or offices. Mediation can be conducted through joint meetings, separate discussions or both, depending on what best supports the parties. It is particularly useful when parties seek to resolve an issue constructively and confidentially.

Parties may request mediation on their own—individually or together—or a matter may be referred by others (such as supervisors, or colleagues in human resources, legal advisory or ethics functions, or the United Nations Dispute Tribunal), with the parties' consent. When successful, mediation may result in an agreement. The parties are responsible for documenting the terms either in writing or by email. A mediated agreement between a staff member and a relevant United Nations organization can be enforced by the UN Dispute Tribunal.

## 4. Shuttle diplomacy

When parties are unable or unwilling to interact directly, for whatever reason, an Ombudsman may act as the intermediary, conveying each party's concerns, positions and interests. Often, shuttle diplomacy constitutes or is part of a mediation process.

## 5. Feedback on systemic issues

The Office collects and analyses data derived from its casework. It publishes its annual report and offers feedback to the administration on systemic issues and may suggest recommendations on how to address some of the root causes of conflict within the organization.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE OFFICE

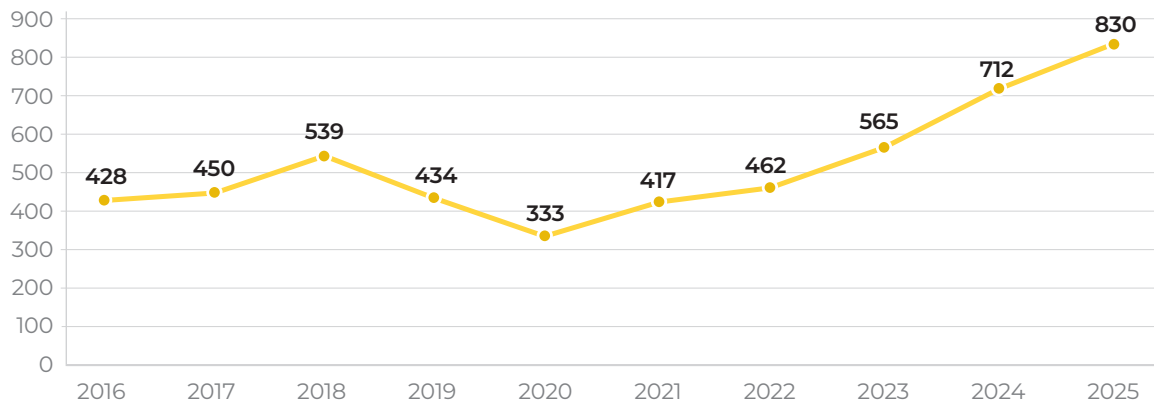
### A. Overview of cases<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. Caseload by year and organization

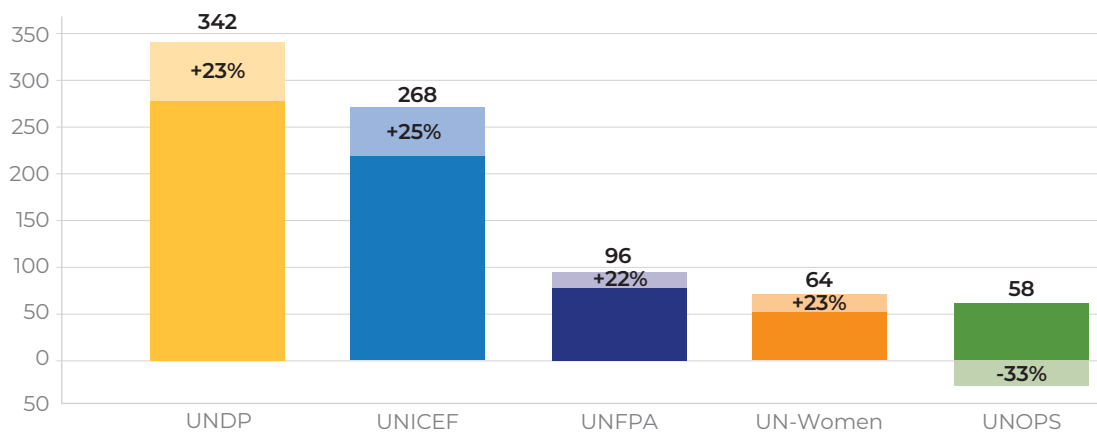
In 2025, the Office recorded 830 cases<sup>4</sup>— a 17 per cent increase from the previous

year (figure 1). This growth may be due to increased awareness of the Office's services and informal conflict resolution mechanisms to address workplace concerns, against a backdrop of comprehensive organizational changes and uncertainties.

**FIGURE 1.** Caseload by year, 2016–2025



**FIGURE 2.** Cases by organization (2025) and percentage change from 2024



<sup>3</sup> A case is defined as a workplace issue or question brought to the Office by a visitor seeking information, resolution options or assistance. Each case is unique and may involve several issues, multiple parties and any of the services described in the previous section. The time required can range from about an hour to several sessions over a few weeks, depending on the number and complexity of issues. See Annex I: Terminology.

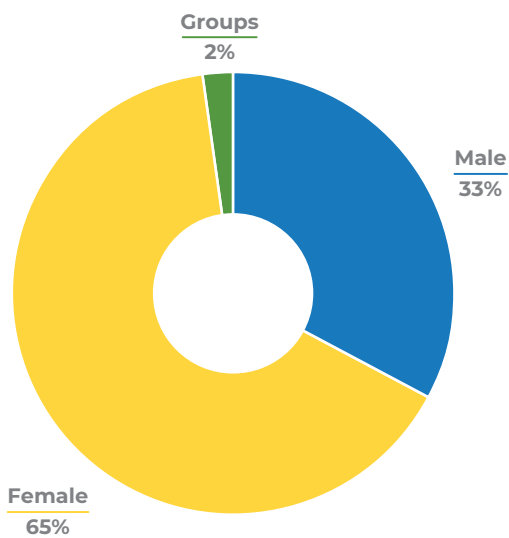
<sup>4</sup> 828 are from the five organizations and two from other entities, i.e., cases involving staff from multiple UN organizations in conflict and working at a joint workplace.

By organization, UNDP accounted for the largest share of cases (41 per cent), followed by UNICEF (32 per cent), UNFPA (12 per cent), UN-Women (8 per cent) and UNOPS (7 per cent) (figure 2). The Office served a combined workforce of approximately 58,000 personnel across the five organizations during the reporting period. While the workforce is 6 per cent smaller than in 2024, the number of cases increased.

### 2. Cases by gender

Female personnel accounted for 65 per cent of the caseload, compared with 33 per cent male personnel and 2 per cent groups (figure 3). Women have consistently represented the larger share of Ombudsman cases over the past decade, generally accounting for around 50 to 60 per cent of cases, with a more marked increase to 64 per cent in 2024 and 65 per cent in 2025. Two out of every three visitors approaching the Office are women. The gender composition of the workforce suggests that women accounted for a higher share of Ombudsman cases, and this pattern was visible across the five organizations. During the reporting period, the types of issues varied somewhat by gender, with supervisory relationship concerns more prominent among female cases, while job- and career-related concerns were relatively more prominent among male cases.

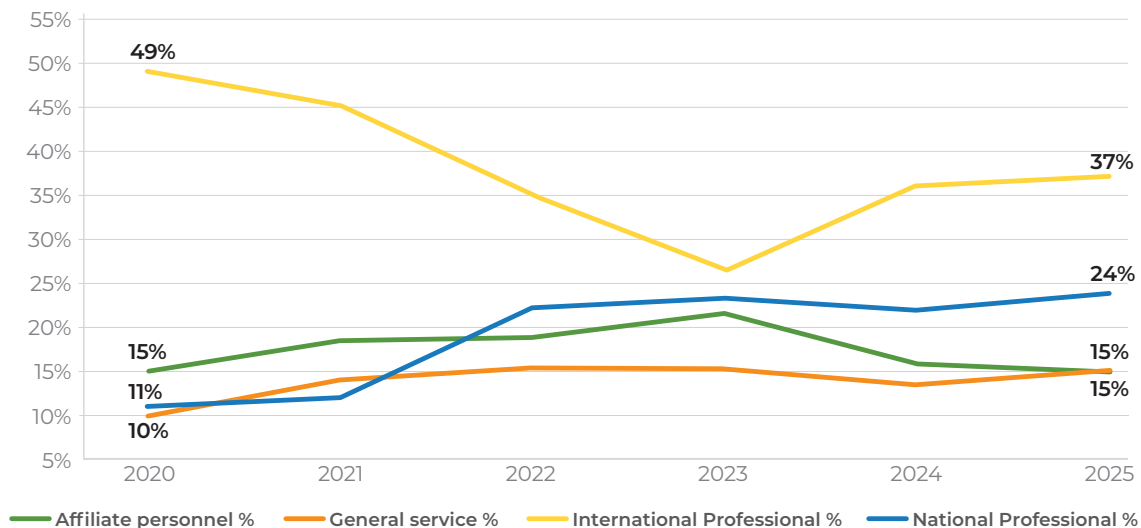
**FIGURE 3.** Cases by gender



### 3. Cases by personnel category

In terms of personnel categories, staff members represented 76 per cent of visitors. Affiliate personnel, such as consultants and

**FIGURE 4.** Cases by personnel category, 2020–2025 (excluding Groups/Other)



UN Volunteers (UNV), accounted for 15 per cent. The remaining 9 per cent included other categories such as former staff, retirees, dependents, uncategorized cases and group cases. While International Professionals have historically represented the largest share of visitors, engagement with other staff categories has increased, notably National Professionals, whose share doubled over the past five years, rising from 11 per cent to 24 per cent of cases (figure 4).

#### 4. Cases by region

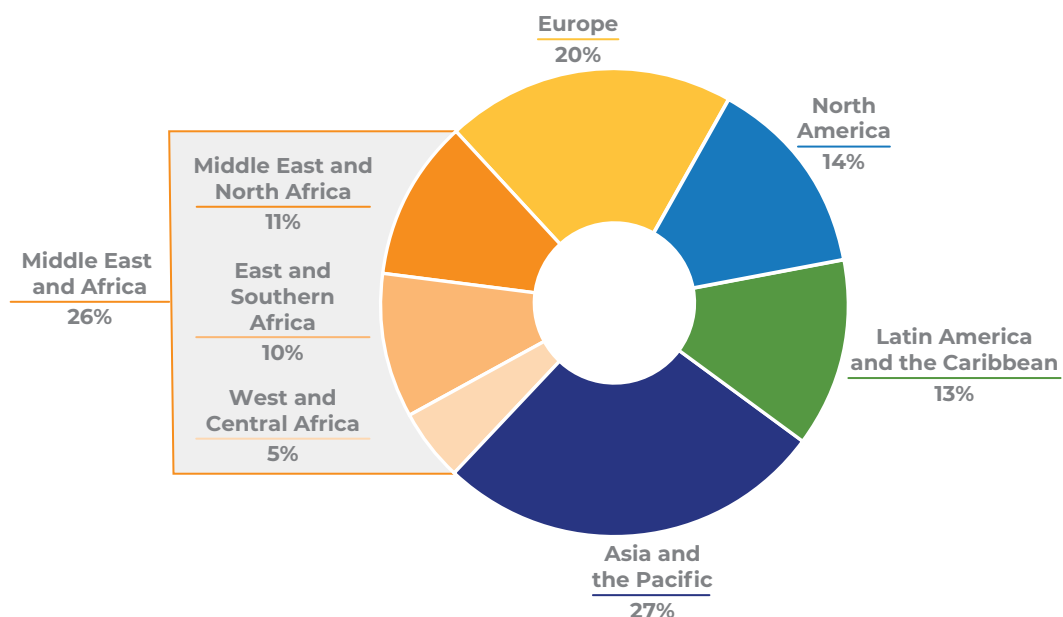
Regionally, the largest share of cases originated in Asia and the Pacific (27 per cent), followed by Europe (20 per cent) and North America (14 per cent) (figure 5). In terms of case numbers, Europe recorded the largest year-on-year increase, rising by 43 per cent, while Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a decline of 23 per cent. Overall, cases were associated with 130 countries, reflecting the global reach of the Office's services.

#### 5. Cases by issue category

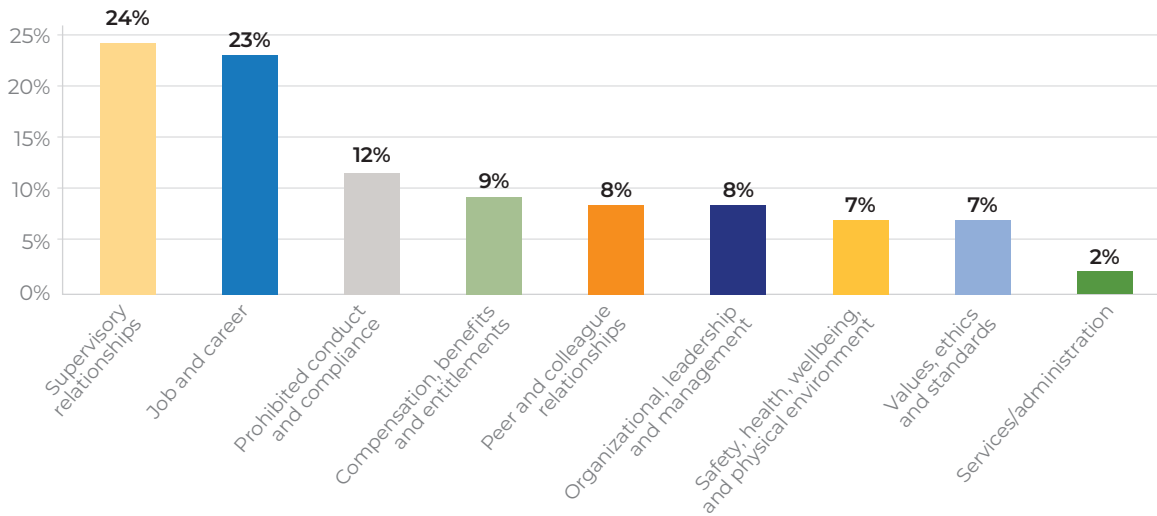
The distribution of issues raised with the Office was broadly consistent with previous years. Supervisory relationships and job- and career-related concerns remained the largest categories at 24 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively (figure 6). However, the share of supervisory relationship concerns declined from 31 per cent in 2024 to 24 per cent in 2025, while prohibited conduct and compliance concerns increased from 8 to 12 per cent of cases, becoming the third most frequently raised issue. Job- and career-related concerns remained comparatively stable and continued to feature prominently as the second most frequently raised issue.

Cases can fall under multiple categories, and the Office has recorded more cases of job- and career-related concerns that also included concerns of potential misuse of authority, for example, in the abolition of a duty post or contract decisions.

**FIGURE 5.** Cases by region



**FIGURE 6.** Distribution of cases by issue category,<sup>5</sup> 2025

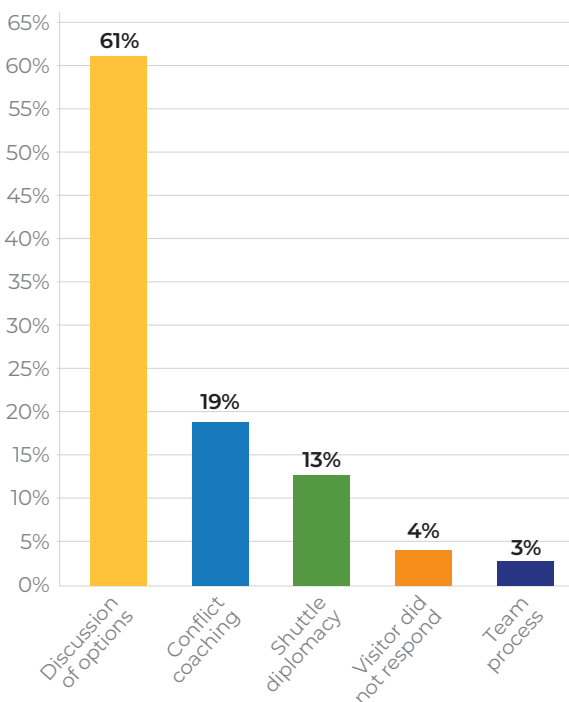


### 6. Cases and services

A total of 85 per cent of cases were addressed through ombudsman services and 15 per cent involved mediation. The most common ombudsman services were discussion of options, conflict coaching and shuttle

diplomacy (figure 7). This distribution underscores the Office’s role as an early, informal and confidential resource through which personnel can clarify concerns, explore potential approaches and seek resolution options.

**FIGURE 7.** Distribution of ombudsman services provided in 2025



### B. Ombudsman survey results

In 2025, the Office introduced a new survey for visitors after their cases were closed, in addition to its established post-mediation surveys. Feedback was positive overall, indicating strong confidence in the Office’s services. As seen in figure 8, 84 per cent of respondents said they would recommend the Office and 80 per cent found the engagement valuable. Responses also showed that the workplace concerns leading individuals to seek support often affected their mental health or well-being, with 84 per cent reporting a negative impact on their health. Among those answering follow-up questions, 77 per cent said the interaction with the Office helped reduce stress or emotional distress. In response to a question on the responsiveness of the Office, 89 per cent reported that their initial contact was acknowledged and responded to within 48 hours.

<sup>5</sup> See Annex II.

**FIGURE 8.** Overview of the Ombudsman Office client survey results



### C. Capacity building and outreach activities

In 2025, the Office delivered 179 capacity building and outreach sessions, reaching at least 11,373 participants across the five organizations served. Sessions were offered in person, online and in hybrid formats, and delivered in English, French and Spanish, with the objective of strengthening conflict competence, promoting respectful workplaces and increasing awareness of the services provided by the Office. Core offerings continued to include Mediation, Conflict Management, Psychological Safety in Teams, Effective Communication as well as Dignity and Respect.

The Office also delivered tailored sessions for specific needs and audiences, including conflict management for supervisors, teams and middle managers, as well as “managing upwards” for supervisees. Other

sessions addressed emerging workplace challenges and leadership topics, such as Leading Teams through Uncertainty, Transformative Negotiation, Delivering News with Compassion and Respectful Workplace Behaviour: Preventing Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse of Authority.

In addition, the Office contributed to several agency-led initiatives, adapting learning sessions to specific programmes and audiences. These included the People Managers’ Bootcamp, the Rising Leaders Programme, the Leadership Business Clinic Series, and joint initiatives with internal partners, such as staff well-being teams, PSEAH<sup>6</sup> focal points, ethics offices, staff legal assistance and investigations offices.

The Office was also invited to participate in select induction and orientation programmes for new personnel. Given the importance of ensuring new colleagues at all levels are aware and familiar with the Office’s services from the onset of their careers, the Office would welcome further opportunities to take part in orientation or induction programmes across all five organizations.

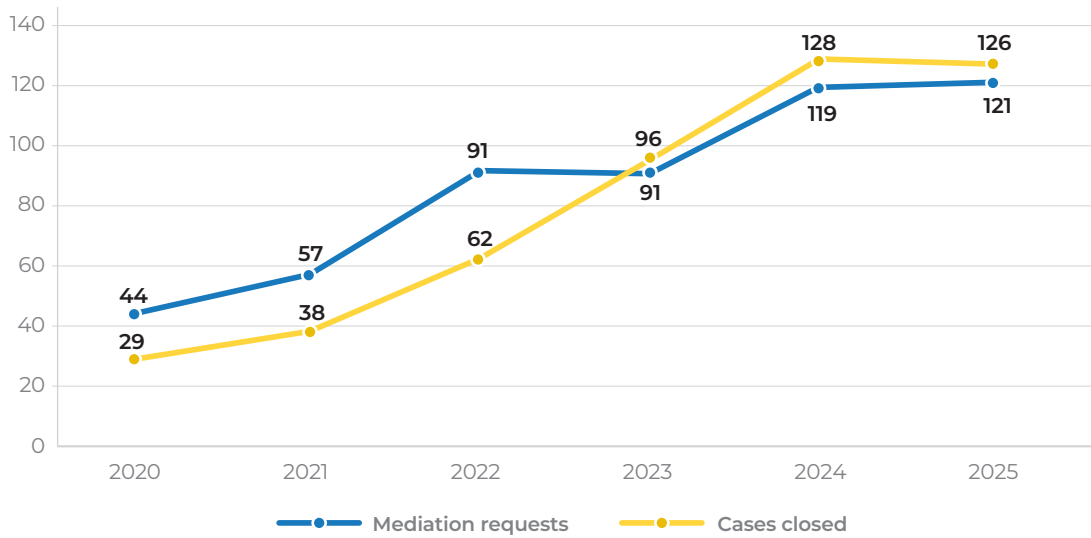
Participant feedback remained very positive. Post-session surveys showed high satisfaction and relevance scores (4.8/5), with confidence in applying learning rated 4.5/5. Participants highlighted the sessions as “well-structured and engaging”, praised the “excellent facilitation that allowed for conversation and deeper understanding” and noted that the content was relevant and well researched.

### D. Mediation

In 2025, the Office continued to strengthen its mediation services, responding to growing demand across duty stations and

<sup>6</sup> Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH).

**FIGURE 9.** Mediation requests received and cases closed (2020–2025)



maintaining the high standards established in previous years. A total of 121 mediation requests were received in 2025, marking a 2 per cent increase from the previous year. Of the cases concluded in 2025, 81 per cent resulted in a resolution, underscoring the continued effectiveness and relevance of mediation as a constructive, informal tool for addressing workplace conflict and preventing unnecessary litigation. Mediation cases involved personnel from 58 country offices, with the highest share at headquarter offices in New York (14 per cent) and Geneva (8 per cent).

Consistent with trends observed in recent annual reports, most disputes involved job- and career-related issues (31 per cent) and supervisory relationships (27 per cent), which together accounted for more than half of all issues raised in mediation cases. Notably, 2025 marked the first year since the launch of the mediation programme in 2020 in which job- and career-related matters surpassed supervisee-supervisor conflicts—a shift that aligns with the organizational changes currently unfolding across all five UN organizations.

Survey feedback demonstrated continued confidence in mediation as a trusted

mechanism. Participants rated their overall satisfaction as 4.38 out of 5, and 96 per cent indicated they would recommend mediation to colleagues regardless of the outcome. Most mediations were concluded efficiently, with 65 per cent completed within five hours.

The Conversation with the Mediator programme, which provided an opportunity to explain and demystify the mediation process, completed its final year with an exceptional reach of nearly 8,000 personnel. In 2025, 3,337 personnel were engaged across more than 35 country offices. This represented a 36.9 per cent increase compared to the 2,437 personnel reached in 2024, a reflection of the heightened visibility and organizational relevance of the programme.

**FIGURE 10.** Time required to complete mediation (% of all cases)

	As a percentage of all cases
Up to 5 hours	65.4%
5–10 hours	15.4%
10–20 hours	7.7%
Over 20 hours	11.5%

The Office also expanded the use of mediation to support teams through group and restorative approaches, in line with its broader mandate to foster collaborative, healthy and respectful workplaces. Using restorative group practices, the process provides a confidential, structured space for open dialogue, mutual understanding and collective problem solving for groups and teams. It is particularly valuable in situations involving breakdowns in trust or communication, post-investigation recovery, organizational change or incidents affecting team morale. Through facilitated group sessions, teams identify shared commitments and practical steps to rebuild trust and sustain effective collaboration. Building on this momentum, the mediation team will prioritize group interventions in the coming year, including the roll out of the Group Mediation for Teams programme.

The Office is grateful for the continued support of the mediation programme by UNICEF, which has provided support beyond its cost-share arrangement since 2020. The programme has contributed to hundreds of successful settlements with consistently high satisfaction rates.

## **E. Respectful Workplace Facilitators**

The Respectful Workplace Facilitators (RWF) programme aims to strengthen conflict management and resolution capacity in UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women offices worldwide, through volunteer peers trained and managed by the Office to serve as a confidential, locally available resource for personnel who may be experiencing conflict in the workplace. There are now 77 RWFs in 70 country offices.

In 2025, the Office continued to strengthen the RWF programme through increased

engagement with participating offices, learning activities for RWFs and preparatory work to expand the programme. A programme assessment survey of 43 offices generated more than 1,300 responses, providing important insights into awareness and use of the programme. Results indicated that around 70 per cent of respondents would use the services of the RWF if needed. Participants highlighted the value of the RWFs, noting that they are “fantastic and approachable” and provide a safe space for colleagues to assess their situation and options.

The Office also organized a series of master classes for the RWF network. Topics included Helping Colleagues During Uncertain Times, Breathing for Success, sessions with the UN Ethics Office, RWF case presentations<sup>7</sup> and a joint session with colleagues from the teams handling PSEAH and internal investigations. To sustain the network, the Office offered extensions to more than 60 RWFs whose terms were concluding, with 75 per cent of them choosing to continue in the role.

The Office also coordinated with regional offices and country leadership to identify offices for future programme expansion and support nomination processes of new RWFs. The process will be concluded in 2026, with the RWF programme being implemented in 59 new regional and country offices globally. The Office deeply appreciates the commitment of the RWFs who generously volunteer their time and energy alongside their regular duties to support their colleagues and foster respectful workplaces. The Office equally values the continued additional support of UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, including their country and regional offices, whose engagement is essential to the programme's success.

<sup>7</sup> Case study presentations use actual scenarios for learning purposes but never indicate office location or any information that could be attributed to specific individuals, teams or organizations.

## III. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING CONFLICT IN 2025

The Office continued to observe how periods of transition can heighten stress, strain working relationships and create conditions where unresolved tensions may escalate into harmful conflict. Well-being, healthy communication and early support are not peripheral concerns during times of change—they are central to organizational resilience.

### A. Conflict prevention, support and pathways to resolution

Preventing harmful conflict remains one of the most effective ways to maintain productive working relationships and the well-being of personnel. During the reporting period, the Office observed situations that began as misunderstandings or small tensions and intensified because they were not addressed. The Office also observed conflicts that could have been avoided entirely if civility and respect had guided communication. The risks of harmful conflicts become especially pronounced as offices undergo restructuring or shifts in responsibilities that can leave teams unsettled about roles, expectations and decision-making.

#### 1. Early engagement

Individuals who consult the Office early can explore ways to address concerns before positions harden and working relationships deteriorate. A recurring obstacle to early involvement of the Office remains misunderstanding of its role and process. Some personnel believe that approaching the Office

“ Preventing harmful conflict remains one of the most effective ways to maintain productive working relationships and the well-being of personnel. ”

represents an escalation of a conflict. Others assume that the Office handles only complex cases, assists only certain contract holders or should be contacted only after all options at the office level have been exhausted. Some visitors have indicated they thought they needed to ask their supervisor or human resources for permission to contact the Ombudsman. The Office noted that, in some teams, leadership expressly discouraged contacting the Office without first raising concerns with them and presented the Office's services only as a resource for more junior personnel. Even when well intentioned, such messaging is inaccurate and can delay engagement or discourage personnel from contacting the Office and raising workplace concerns.

To clarify, the Office fully encourages direct lines of communication. However, no personnel needs permission or needs to follow specific procedures before reaching out to the Office. In fact, many visitors find that a truly confidential conversation with the Office is a helpful first step in clarifying their concerns, gaining perspective and identifying possible ways forward. This includes personnel exploring how to raise workplace concerns and discuss issues such as reprisal worries before speaking with their manager, as well as senior managers who approach the

Office in preparation of sensitive or difficult conversations with supervisees.

## 2. Building communication skills

Personnel can consult with the Office to think through how to manage tensions, including how to raise concerns constructively and have difficult conversations while preserving working relationships. This can improve communication and help prevent or de-escalate conflict.

In one example, a supervisor approached the Office because a member of her team regularly challenged her decisions during meetings. Through coaching, the supervisor explored how disagreement could be acknowledged without undermining decisions once they were made. Following this exchange, she introduced new channels for feedback and adjusted how discussions were structured in team meetings, which helped reduce tensions.

In another case, a team member sought guidance on how to raise concerns with a supervisor about unrealistic expectations and timelines. The Office helped the individual prepare for the conversation by identifying an appropriate time and setting, refining how the concern could be expressed effectively and practicing the discussion through a role-play exercise to help the individual feel more confident and ready to raise the issues.

Beyond resolving immediate concerns, such coaching interventions help personnel develop practical skills for handling difficult conversations and addressing tensions earlier in the future.

## 3. Strengthening conflict management skills

The Office also supports prevention of harmful conflict through skill-building sessions that strengthen everyday communication and conflict management skills (see “Capacity building and outreach activities” on p. 10). In these sessions, participants engage with practical scenarios that allow them to apply the techniques they learned in real settings. In conflict management workshops, participants practice new skills in facilitated sessions. For example, in sessions on Psychological Safety, participants analyse a hypothetical team environment, assess levels of trust within the group and develop strategies for strengthening trust and openness within teams.

Workshops were delivered as part of team retreats or as stand-alone sessions and were often tailored to address concerns affecting particular teams. In preparation, the Office regularly conducts surveys in advance or analyses available engagement surveys. In 2025, this resulted in the Office adding new learning and reflection elements on managing uncertainty or how to address transparency concerns in organizational restructuring.

## 4. Addressing concerns without identifying individuals

In some situations, visitors hesitate to raise concerns directly because they fear damaging their working relationships, being identified as the source of a complaint and a “troublemaker” and experiencing adverse treatment for speaking up. In such cases, and in keeping with its neutrality, the Office can help address concerns without revealing the identities of those who raised them while still allowing the matter to be addressed.

In one example during the reporting period, several personnel expressed concerns about

perceived differences in how national and international staff were treated but were reluctant to raise the issue. With their consent, the Office raised the concern with management, noting that similar concerns had been expressed by several personnel without identifying anyone by name. Management and the Office then explored ways to address the issue. It was agreed that management would include a reminder about respectful communication during a routine personnel meeting. The Office subsequently facilitated a Civility Café session with the team to explore what respectful behaviour looks like in the workplace and how to promote more considerate ways of communicating and working together.

## 5. Supporting healthier team functioning

Prevention also involves supporting teams in addressing tensions. During 2025, several colleagues contacted the Office to report dysfunction within teams and strained working relationships that were affecting collaboration. The Office uses a range of processes to diagnose the sources of team difficulties and help teams address them constructively.

In one example, management contacted the Office because a team had become divided into two cliques, which was undermining the working atmosphere and affecting productivity. The Office held confidential meetings with each team member to understand their perspectives and ensure that all voices were heard. These conversations revealed that the underlying issue was an interpersonal conflict between two individuals. The Office facilitated mediation between the colleagues, which resolved the immediate conflict. A subsequent facilitated discussion with the team helped team members share concerns and identify practical steps for improving the working environment.

## B. Conflict and change

In 2025, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UN-Women underwent significant structural and operational shifts. Funding streams contracted, delivery models were reassessed, teams and offices were merged or dissolved, reporting lines were realigned and several units faced or anticipated international relocation. These disruptions created substantial potential for conflict. While most of the conflict was expected and constructive, arising from necessary debate on how to best navigate a rapidly evolving environment, some of it evolved into harmful conflicts.

All five organizations made significant efforts to regularly share high-level information and updates. They also implemented mitigation measures and offered other services to support affected personnel throughout this period, such as longer notice periods for separations or relocation where possible, support for staff well-being, career coaching and support, ringfenced selection exercises accessible only to affected staff, lateral moves to fill vacancies, information sessions on insurance plans and options, and dedicated support units for individuals throughout the adjustment period. The following observations are shared under the Office's mandate to improve change management processes, based on conflict cases that reached the Office in 2025.

### 1. Trust, tone and transparency

Whenever organizational changes affected or could have affected personnel, but the rationale, final structures or processes were not clear, individuals and teams filled these gaps with assumptions, leading to corridor "gossip" and anxieties. This real or perceived lack of transparency led to loss of trust in decision-making and implementation processes.

Trust and the perceived fairness of decisions are significantly enhanced when decision-making criteria are clear and communicated to everyone in advance, and how the criteria were consistently applied is shared transparently. Cases brought to the Office in 2025 related to organizational changes frequently revealed a gap between the information desired and expected by personnel and the level of detail made available to them. The Office noted cases where seemingly no specific reason was provided for the changes affecting personnel. In some cases, the reason given was “It is a management decision,” or that the review report of a reorganization exercise was confidential. Such responses further eroded trust in processes, resulting in speculations and assumptions within teams.

In other cases, line or senior managers appear to have explained the impact of funding cuts or relocation decisions in ways that lacked empathy, such as “Tough times require tough measures,” or “We should all be happy—at least we have a job.” While such comments may have been intended to provide perspective or reassure, they can have the opposite effect and come across as minimizing the person’s experience rather than acknowledging it. Empathy is not about offering solutions or pointing out silver linings. Rather, it is about showing that the person’s perspective is heard and understood and providing time to express concerns and the impact of decisions openly.

A pattern across the Office’s 2025 casework with all five organizations was visitors reporting that they felt a lack of empathetic communications when decisions were conveyed. More time investment in direct, empathetic conversations could perhaps have reduced some of the feelings of loss and anxiety and prevented information gaps from being filled with false interpretations and assumptions.

All the organizations provided regular updates to personnel on overall organizational changes and status through townhalls and broadcast messages, including by executive leadership. The Office understands there may have been an expectation that line managers would then take time to speak with their affected team members. When approaching the Office, visitors regularly indicated that such conversations did not take place or were very short (for example, five minutes) and that they felt lost, uninformed, unheard or unseen.

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“ Empathy is not about offering solutions or pointing out silver linings. Rather, it is about showing that the person’s perspective is heard and understood and providing time to express concerns and the impact of decisions openly. ”

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At an individual level, visitors remained deeply affected by the uncertainties and changes, from mental stress to fear of loss of livelihoods, family disruptions or loss of identity. In some cases, when the Office approached management with consent of the visitor, it appeared that the line manager assumed human resources or senior leadership would handle the difficult conversations and vice versa. This resulted in no one taking charge of the conversation and trust being lost. More direct, empathetic conversations and detailed explanations may have created greater trust and transparency and prevented some of these sentiments.

At the same time, managers who approached the Office reported significant challenges in meeting expectations to explain, justify and implement organizational changes within compressed time frames. These expectations were placed on managers while they were concurrently managing workforce reductions,

maintaining unchanged deliverables and navigating uncertainty regarding their own roles. In this context, managers frequently reported feeling insufficiently supported or acknowledged. Some also indicated that they had been subject to accusations or verbally aggressive behaviour from team members affected by the changes, which in turn impacted their own mental well-being.

Some personnel also reported frustration and disengagement due to language they perceived as misleading or euphemistic. For example, they referred to terms such as “contract optimization” and “rebalancing of contracts”, which were used by organizations to describe a function review exercise that would likely lead to staff separations and greater use of non-staff contracts. Colleagues shared that this use of “jargon” downplayed the impact of changes on the private and professional lives of those affected. Using clear, consistent language can better convey the impact of measures and build trust during times of organizational change.

## 2. UN80 Initiative

The purpose of the UN80 Initiative is to transform the UN into a more fit-for-purpose organization that is integrated and effective.<sup>8</sup>

Following the Secretary-General’s Report on the UN80 Initiative<sup>9</sup> Workstream 3, issued in September 2025, personnel of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UN-Women heard about potential mergers of organizations. The report states:

“36. The proposals set out below constitute a first phase in a series of possible mergers, consolidations and realignments that could open a path towards greater joint impact at scale.

“ Using clear, consistent language can better convey the impact of measures and build trust during times of organizational change. ”

*(i) Merge the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services 37. We will conduct a thorough assessment of the benefits of a merger between the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services, which could create a stronger engine for sustainable development in United Nations country teams, with greater scale. An initial analysis will be presented to the Executive Board of those entities in February 2026.*

*(ii) Merge the United Nations Population Fund and UN-Women 38. We will conduct a thorough assessment of the benefits of a merger between the United Nations Population Fund and UN-Women and their respective mandates to create a unified voice and platform on gender equality and women’s rights. As a subsequent step, we will also consider options to optimize normative functions on population statistics and related activities, including those currently undertaken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Initial analysis will be presented to Member States in early 2026.”*

The report was clear that these were proposals and that assessments of benefits or analyses were yet to be undertaken. However, in nearly all outreach and conflict-support missions following the issuance of this report, the Office heard concerns, speculation and assumptions

<sup>8</sup> [UN80 Initiative](#) website.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (22 September 2025). [UN80 Initiative Workstream 3: Changing structures and realigning programmes](#). Report of the Secretary-General.

from personnel of the organizations mentioned in the report. The concerns were related primarily to job security and created a distraction, particularly in regional and country offices. There seemed to be a firm belief among personnel that more information might be available but was not being shared by headquarters with regional or country office staff. Again, information gaps were filled with assumptions rather than facts. Personnel told the Office they believed ongoing restructuring efforts and relocations were already part of a “secret” implementation of the potential mergers mentioned in the report.

While local leadership worked to help personnel focus on their regular job functions, at that stage they could not provide the desired information. The Office, in turn, offered more tailored discussion sessions on dealing with uncertainty, which provided space to share the impact of the report and address how assumptions work in conflict management. The sessions also provided opportunities to share the available facts as a group (including reading the actual report language rather than relying on colleagues’ paraphrasing), what is in their control and how to recognize it when they are in a state of ambiguity.

### **3. Natural disasters and other emergencies**

2025 was marked by natural disasters and other emergencies, which had direct impacts on personnel and their work deliverables when they were already reeling from the financial challenges facing their organization. Visitors to the Office reported their perceptions that, due to shrinking resources and scaled down personnel, they were expected to do more with less. They felt exhausted from sudden spikes in workload alongside the emotional distress that comes with disasters. When discussing options, they shared they did not feel comfortable raising

their concerns with management given their perceived risk of “being next” to be let go if they were not seen as resilient enough. For all cases involving potential mental health impact, the Office refers personnel to the confidential services of the staff counselling teams in their organization.

During emergencies, organizational change may be experienced as more challenging. Compressed decision-making timelines, unclear communication, changing responsibilities, safety concerns and limited consultation can influence how affected individuals perceive fairness and organizational relationships.

For example, the Office received concerns from a country office that was operating in an emergency context while also managing significant budget reductions. Visitors expressed frustration that project deliverables and workplans were being unilaterally changed by their supervisor with limited consultation. Communication regarding the project had deteriorated into lengthy email exchanges multiple times a day, reflecting growing mistrust and escalating tension.

In such situations, the Office helps create space for constructive dialogue, clarification of expectations and more effective communication. How decisions, even difficult ones, are communicated can significantly influence whether conflict remains constructive or becomes harmful.

### **4. Conflict and contract modalities or categories**

Affiliate personnel (on non-staff contracts) are used to a different extent by the five organizations as a flexible and cost-effective contractual framework to perform certain functions or address specific organizational needs. Some of the conditions of service

for affiliate personnel were enhanced in 2025 to better align them with staff compensation or benefits. Nevertheless, most affiliate personnel who contacted the Office expressed a strong preference for staff member status, contracts and benefits. Visitors indicated feeling particularly vulnerable as teams underwent comprehensive changes and downsizing because they believed their contract allowed broader managerial discretion to change the duration or terms of reference of their contract or to terminate employment.

Visitors often sought clearer information about their rights and available resolution channels when affected by organizational changes. Some expressly requested the Office to review their “appeal” of a contract decision, usually after finding out that affiliate personnel cannot access the [UN Dispute Tribunal](#) and

“ How decisions, even difficult ones, are communicated can significantly influence whether conflict remains constructive or becomes harmful. ”

do not have access to the free legal services offered by the [Office of Staff Legal Assistance \(OSLA\)](#). The Office of the Ombudsman does not provide legal advice but instead clarifies options, mediates conflicts or refers individuals to the mechanisms applicable to their specific terms of contract. In 2025 this also included speaking about arbitration mentioned in their contracts, or, for one organization, a new internal management evaluation process for affiliate personnel. Mediation remained an alternative for finding agreed solutions, offered by the Office to all members of personnel.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Office recommends that the five organizations:

- 1.** Consider promoting early engagement with the Office of the Ombudsman and reinforce that contacting the Office is not an escalation, requires no permission and is available to all personnel at any level. Earlier engagement consistently prevents escalation into harmful conflict.
- 2.** Consider strengthening people management skills during periods of change and continuing any learning efforts in this regard for all supervisors. Communicating with empathy builds trust and increases engagement.
- 3.** Consider the systematic inclusion of the Office of the Ombudsman in orientation and induction programmes for new personnel to ensure early awareness of informal conflict resolution mechanisms.
- 4.** Consider increasing transparency in decision-making by clearly communicating decision-making criteria and explaining how they are applied. Perceived opaqueness undermines trust and fuels speculation.
- 5.** Consider using restorative and group mediation by the Office of the Ombudsman as a confidential and neutral resource to rebuild trust and team functioning.
- 6.** Consider clarifying roles and accountabilities for holding difficult conversations with affected personnel, especially in times of change. Direct conversations build trust, especially prior to written notifications being sent. Clarifying roles and accountability prevents assumptions that someone else will speak with affected personnel.

## V. LOOKING AHEAD

2026 will likely continue to present workplace conflict concerns related to organizational changes. Prevention and informal resolution interventions will continue to be necessary to manage harmful conflicts. Despite much effort, many members of personnel, including managers, are unaware of or at times misunderstand the Office's mandate. The Office, therefore, aims to launch a broader communication campaign based on the General Assembly's emphasis on "informal first" resolution of conflicts and

on approaches made available by the UN Network of Ombudsman and Mediators. The campaign will include a toolkit for leaders to inform and encourage the use of informal conflict resolution mechanisms where possible and reasonable.

In terms of structure, some of the Office's posts will be moved to Rome, Italy, to address the need for a greater presence in time zones where the organizations have shifted personnel from New York to new locations.

## TESTIMONIALS



“I am glad the organization has this resource available for staff. You helped me with this huge distraction and I can focus on my actual work again.”

“I really felt heard and seen speaking with you. My managers just brushed off my issues when I spoke with them.”

“Thank you very much for the kind support and guidance you have provided over the past two years.... I am particularly grateful for the way you approached the situation with patience, impartiality, fairness, and genuine care.”

“I would like to say a big Thank You, to you for all your time and efforts to mediate this case. I very much appreciate your guidance and support in navigating me through this very difficult and unpleasant phase of my professional life. I am relieved it is over and that a peaceful resolution and commitment to improve working conditions had been finally addressed and achieved today by all of us.”

“Thanks so much for making the time to speak just now. I came in with a bunch of rather disorganized ideas and came out with a much clearer path forward—thank you for that.”

“Thank you for taking the time to explain and for acknowledging my concerns. Thank you as well for your engagement and support during this process.”

“Thank you so much for taking the time to respond and for sharing these valuable insights. I truly appreciate your thoughtful approach and the practical strategies you mentioned.”

“Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me and for helping me better understand my options. I am also grateful for you taking the time to listen and for offering suggestions on possible ways to move forward.”

“I also appreciate your discussions with the team and your efforts to identify ways to improve the working environment.”

“Many thanks for your thoughtful response. These points resonate very much. I would like to reaffirm that we—all—would like to keep working with your support.”

“Your generosity in sharing ideas along with your ongoing collaboration, makes a big difference to our team and is deeply valued.”

“Thank you for your kind, neutral, and supportive approach. Your guidance has been key in helping me reflect on my options and priorities to move forward.”

“Thank you so much for your ongoing support throughout our sessions. I truly appreciate the time, energy, and expertise you continue to invest in our team. These resources will be incredibly helpful as we reinforce key learnings and continue our dialogue on conflict management and psychological safety.”

“I just wanted to say that today’s meeting on psychological safety was one of the most engaging sessions I’ve experienced at my organization. It was inspiring to see so many colleagues speaking up and sharing their thoughts openly. I genuinely believe that if we had more sessions like this—where we practice real talk instead of corporate speak and make space for voices that are seldom heard—we would become a stronger and more effective organization.”

“Thank you for the conversation today. Our talks are honestly one of the few things that keep me grounded in this foggy reality of the office. At times, I feel like a character in a Hitchcock film, living in a dim, distorted version of reality.”

“And thank you, very encouraging to hear that this is being looked at properly now—hopefully it will lead to a reflection on working practices so that others won’t be impacted in future.”

“This was the first time we ever talked about these topics together as a team. It helped us all to open up the conversation.”



## ANNEX I. TERMINOLOGY

**The Office applies the definition of a case agreed on by the UN System Network of Ombudsman and Mediators as shown below.**

### **Ombuds case**

An ombuds case is defined as a workplace issue(s) or question(s) brought to the Office by a visitor who requests information, resolution options or assistance that requires specific ombuds skills or knowledge. A visitor who returns to the Office with the same issue(s), shall be regarded as a returning visitor and does not require a new case be recorded. One case can relate to one or more issues.

[Example: 1 visitor = 1 case]

### **Ombuds group case**

An ombuds group case is defined as an issue(s) brought by a group of visitors who request information, resolution options or assistance for the same issue(s). A group is considered more than one visitor.

[Example: 2 or more visitors request a meeting to discuss the same issue. 2 or more visitors = 1 case]

### **Mediation case**

A mediation case is defined as a workplace conflict brought to the Office by one or more visitors who request, agree and/or are referred to participate in mediation.

[Example: 1 mediation request = 1 case; 1 mediation referral = 1 case; 2 or more visitors agreeing to mediation = 1 case]

### **Visitor**

A visitor refers to any individual or entity that contacts the Office for assistance.

## ANNEX II. CASE ISSUE CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS

### Issues and definitions

<b>1. Compensation, benefits and entitlements</b>	Issues stemming from the administration of various benefits and entitlements of personnel.
<b>2. Supervisory relationships (supervisors' concerns with supervisees in addition to supervisees' concerns with supervisors)</b>	Issues stemming from supervisory relationships (excluding harassment, abuse of authority, discrimination and retaliation issues reflected under category 5). Supervisees' concerns with supervisors and vice versa.
<b>3. Peer and colleague relationships</b>	Issues between colleagues with NO supervisory relationships (excluding harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority and retaliation as reflected under category 5).
<b>4. Job and career</b>	Issues affecting job conditions or the career progression of personnel: recruitment, contract, job description/classification, training, promotion, transfer and rotation, job satisfaction, separation from service and retirement processes.
<b>5. Prohibited conduct and compliance</b>	Issues related to prohibited conduct: harassment, discrimination, retaliation, abuse of authority, investigative processes, misconduct, waste and abuse of funds.  Issues around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and duty of care.
<b>6. Safety, health, well-being and physical environment</b>	Working conditions; mental health, general well-being and stress; accommodation for disability or health conditions; and issues with safety and security.
<b>7. Services/administration</b>	Responsiveness, timeliness and nature of response/services from sections providing services to staff (HR pension fund, tax unit, etc.).
<b>8. Organizational, leadership and management</b>	Issues pertaining to organizational climate, morale, culture, communication and change management, as well as issues with leadership at the organizational level.
<b>9. Values, ethics and standards</b>	Issues pertaining to staff compliance/adherence to United Nations Core Values, ethics and standards as defined in the Standards of Conduct for the United Nations Civil Service and other applicable guidelines and rules.

## Sub-issues and definitions (continued)

### 1. Compensation, benefits and entitlements

- 1a. **Compensation and payroll administration:** Rate of pay, salary amount, job salary category, overtime, compensatory time off, special post allowance, post adjustment, mobility incentive, administration of payment
- 1b. **Retirement/pension/survivor benefits:** Inquiries about pension and other entitlements stemming from retirement or survivor benefits
- 1c. **Leave:** Annual and parental (excluding special leaves; sabbaticals; suspension for disciplinary reasons)
- 1d. **Health insurance, sick leave and medical entitlements:** Health insurance and medical entitlements; sick leave, compensation for service-incurred injury (appendix D) and medevac
- 1e. **Dependent benefits:** Education grant, spouse allowance, single parent allowance, etc.
- 1f. **Taxes:** Calculation of amount, reimbursement, delays
- 1g. **Recruitment entitlements:** Relocation grant, shipment, etc.
- 1h. **Separation entitlements:** Repatriation grant, shipping separation, excluding medical travel
- 1i. **Travel entitlements:** Ticket, DSA, hotel (excluding medical-related)
- 1j. **Special operations/hazard benefits and entitlements:** Hardship/danger pay, R&R, etc.
- 1k. **Other**

### 2. Supervisory relationships

- 2a. **Interpersonal differences:** Interpersonal conflicts involving differences in goals, values, attitudes, viewpoints, work styles/suspicions of hidden motives/mistrust
- 2b. **Dignity and respect:** Incivility, demonstrations of inappropriate regard for others, not listening, dismissive or rude behaviour
- 2c. **Reputation:** Potential impact of rumours or gossip about professional or personal matters
- 2d. **Team climate and morale:** Prevailing norms that impact team dynamics, behaviours or attitudes in work unit as a result of supervisory approach and management style
- 2e. **Supervisory effectiveness:** Performance management and feedback, quality and quantity of communication, performance coaching, work assignment and support, timeliness of feedback or (lack of) given outside of regular performance appraisal
- 2f. **Performance appraisal and grading:** Disagreements or concerns with performance evaluation, grading or appraisal process
- 2g. **Psychological safety:** Concerns about belonging, inclusivity and speaking up, asking questions or clarifications due to dynamics of supervisory relationships
- 2h. **Recognition:** Lack of attribution and/or acknowledgement of consistent achievement and delivery or exceeding expectations beyond usual terms of reference. Feeling/perception of not being valued for work contributions.
- 2i. **Other**

### 3. Peer and colleague relationships

- 3a. **Interpersonal differences:** Interpersonal conflicts involving differences in goals, values, attitudes, viewpoints, work styles/suspicions of hidden motives/mistrust
- 3b. **Dignity and respect:** Incivility, demonstrations of inappropriate regard for others, not listening dismissive of rude behaviour
- 3c. **Reputation:** Potential impact of rumours or gossip about professional or personal matters
- 3d. **Team climate and morale:** Prevailing norms that impact team dynamics behaviours or attitudes in work unit
- 3e. **Psychological safety:** Concerns about belonging, inclusivity and speaking up, asking questions or clarifications, due to team dynamics
- 3f. **Other**

### 4. Job and career

- 4a. **Job application/selection and recruitment processes:** Recruitment and selection processes, rosters, facilitation of job applications, shortlisting and criteria for selection, disputed decisions linked to recruitment, selection and issues with onboarding processes
- 4b. **Job description and classification**
- 4c. **Involuntary transfer/change of assignment:** Removal from prior duties, unrequested change of work tasks or location
- 4d. **Terms/conditions of contract:** Position security, ambiguity, contractual limitations
- 4e. **Career progression:** Lack of opportunities for career advancement; delay/denial of promotion
- 4f. **Mobility:** Duration of assignment in a job or location; issues with reassignment process
- 4g. **Resignation**
- 4h. **Termination**
- 4i. **Non-renewal of contract**
- 4j. **Abolition of post**
- 4k. **Abandonment of post**
- 4l. **Skills development:** Lack of opportunities for skill development, learning, coaching, mentoring, training
- 4m. **Retirement process:** Administrative issues/hurdles during the retirement process; queries and reflections on retirement options
- 4n. **Special leave:** Approval of; return from SLWOP/SLWFP (excluding suspension for disciplinary reasons)
- 4o. **Loan/secondment/transfer:** Interagency mobility; terms of and return from loan
- 4p. **Job satisfaction:** Concerns about general overall job satisfaction, nature or volume of work, low morale and motivation
- 4q. **Probation/confirmation:** Issues relating to probationary period
- 4r. **Flexible working arrangements:** Issues in acquiring or maintaining adjustments in work location and/or schedule
- 4s. **Other**

## Sub-issues and definitions (*continued*)

### 5. Prohibited conduct and compliance

- 5a. **Harassment:** Behaviours that cause offence or create a hostile or intimidating work environment; bullying/mobbing, abusive, threatening or coercive behaviours (excluding sexual harassment)
- 5b. **Sexual harassment:** Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that has or that might reasonably be perceived to cause offence or humiliation (excluding assault)
- 5c. **Sexual assault:** Attempted, threatened or performed act of sexual violence
- 5d. **Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA):** Use of position of power by UN staff and related personnel for sexual purposes against a beneficiary or vulnerable member of the community, with or without consent, including but not limited to minors
- 5e. **Abuse of authority:** Improper use of a position of influence, power or authority
- 5f. **Discrimination (excluding gender):** Bias leading to unfair decisions, unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person's race/racial identity, religion, beliefs, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status
- 5g. **Gender discrimination:** Different treatment compared with others or exclusion from some benefit on the basis of gender, gender identity, gender expressions, sex and gender
- 5h. **Retaliation:** Punitive behaviours for previous actions or comments; whistleblower
- 5i. **Diversity and parity:** Concerns about the application of policies in place to ensure DEI/parity with regard to gender, geographical distribution or other criteria
- 5j. **Investigative/disciplinary processes:** Fairness/duration/adherence to rules and regulations, during investigations and/or disciplinary measures/administrative leave
- 5k. **Organizational duty of care:** Organizational responsibility to maintain the health, safety and security of staff; duty to prevent foreseeable harm; acquiring or relinquishing travel, visa or residency status for international staff or their dependents; access to privileges and immunities
- 5l. **Waste and abuse of funds:** Inappropriate actions that abuse or waste organizational finances, facilities or equipment; property damage (excluding fraud and corruption)
- 5m. **Fraud and corruption:** Planned, observed fraudulent and corrupt activities
- 5n. **Other**

### 6. Safety, health, well-being and physical environment

- 6a. **Physical working/living conditions:** Temperature, odors, noise, available space, lighting, cleanliness, etc.
- 6b. **Safety and security:** Concerns about threats and dangerous working conditions
- 6c. **Work/life balance:** Length of working hours and workload
- 6d. **Mental health:** Mental health concerns deriving from work-related issues (stress, PTSD, etc.)
- 6e. **Disability (physical or mental conditions) and accessibility:** Temporary/permanent conditions, reasonable accommodation, assistive technology
- 6f. **Other**

## 7. Services/administration

- 7a. **Quality of services:** How well services were provided, accuracy or thoroughness of information, Competence, etc.
- 7b. **Responsiveness/timeliness:** Response time or time to completion
- 7c. **Interpretation or application of rules:** Impact of administrative actions based on interpretation of policy/guidelines/rules (excluding disciplinary decisions or formal administrative/management review decisions)
- 7d. **Behaviour of service provider(s):** Tone of an administrator or service provider when they spoke to or dealt with staff (rudeness, inattentiveness, dismissiveness or impatience)
- 7e. **Other**

## 8. Organizational, leadership and management

- 8a. **Organizational climate/morale:** At the organizational level, distinct from 2e and 3e
- 8b. **Organizational culture:** Sets of shared values, beliefs and attitudes at the organizational level affecting daily interactions
- 8c. **Organizational communication:** Content, style, timing, effects and amount; quality of communication about strategic issues at the organizational level
- 8d. **Change management:** Making, responding or adapting to organizational changes, quality of leadership in facilitating organizational change on a large scale
- 8e. **Restructuring and relocation:** Effects of reprofiling, organizational/unit downsizing, reorganization or relocation
- 8f. **Leadership and management:** Quality/capacity of management/leadership/decision-making process; accountability and transparency at the organizational level (distinct from 2)
- 8g. **Resource management:** Issues with resources/funding; priority setting and/or allocation of funds
- 8h. **Other**

## 9. Values, ethics and standards

- 9a. **Core values:** Non-adherence to stated core organizational values (e.g. integrity, inclusion, humanity, humility)
- 9b. **Individual accountability and transparency:** Issues with taking personal ownership and responsibility to perform one's duties in compliance with the standards set out in organizational rules and regulations
- 9c. **Personal conduct:** Issues concerning fulfilling private obligations outside the workplace (not respecting local laws, ignoring private legal or financial obligations, misuse of the privileges and immunities of the organization, etc.), compromising the image and the interests of the organization
- 9d. **Conflict of interest:** Appearing to benefit improperly or to have a third-party benefit improperly from certain associations, relationships or financial interests (including honours, gifts or remuneration, favouritism to family or friends, outside employment activities)
- 9e. **Other breach of organizational values, ethics and standards**

INDEPENDENCE

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NEUTRALITY

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CONFIDENTIALITY

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INFORMALITY

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