

### MEASURES AND MECHANISMS FOR ADDRESSING RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE UN SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

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### Background

Creating a more inclusive, sustainable, prosperous, stable and peaceful world has proven to be a major global challenge. Critical to achieving this goal is the need to shape the world in line with common human values and develop trust through truth and transparency.



### **Objectives & Purpose**

The review is about how the United Nations (UN) system organizations have upheld, in their own institutions, the provisions in the legal and policy framework established for addressing racism and racial discrimination. It provides a description and analysis of:

- the magnitude and the forms and configurations of racism and racial discrimination across organizations in the UN system,
- the organizational stage of development in addressing racism and racial discrimination, i.e., the measures and mechanisms adopted and implemented to enhance effectiveness, impact, coherence, continued relevance, and sustainability,
- the dynamism and continued relevance of the work of organizations, i.e., the plans for next steps and for continued relevance considering global changes and challenges.

The findings from the review will help the UN system organizations to develop or enhance strategies to prevent and address racism and racial discrimination and advance the goals of diversity, equity, inclusion, and equality, as well as justice, honesty, and dignity. It will enhance the development of a common understanding and a frame of operation which will, in turn, enhance coherence, collaboration, and coordination in addressing racism and racial discrimination across the UN system. It will support legislative organs and governing bodies of UN system organizations in safeguarding UN values and

principles and assist them in carrying out their oversight and accountability responsibilities in an area that is significant for the credibility of the leadership role of the UN system.

## What the JIU found

## **1.** Absence of working definitions that limit effective management and accountability

In the absence of a clear working definition of race and racism, the UN system remains unable to undertake the necessary assessment and analysis, and to deliver effective action and effective oversight and accountability of the issue of race and racism. Similarly, the absence of racial identifiers prevents adequate management's decision-making and policy improvement in the pursuit of equality of opportunities.

# 2. High magnitude of racism and racial discrimination based on evidence of prevalence and effects on health and economic returns

The review finds that while there has been progress in certain parts of the UN system, racism and racial discrimination are major and under-recognized problems that require urgent system-wide responses. Racism and racial discrimination are widespread throughout and the magnitude is high, based on evidence of prevalence, form, and effects of racism and racial discrimination.

Results show that one in every five surveyed respondents has been racially discriminated against or harassed. In country offices, the percentage of respondents who have been racially harassed or discriminated against is slightly lower than the average. This is partially explained by the configuration in country offices compared to headquarters, where there are differences in demographic profiles (i.e., approximately 50 per cent of personnel at country offices are nationals of the host country). These findings have implications for the management reform objectives related to moving staff to the point of service delivery and for staff mobility, diversity, inclusion and geographical representation at all levels, as well as for the multicultural strategy of the UN system.

Although the JIU common system-wide survey did not provide an opportunity to link racism and racial discrimination to performance, studies suggest that racism and racial discrimination trigger negative reactions that spill over, leading to diminished performance. This was demonstrated by the following comparison: personnel who reported personal experiences of racism and racial discrimination had lower perceptions of (i) equality of opportunity, (ii) support from senior leadership and (iii) organizational intolerance, than those who did not. Moreover, those that experienced racism and racial discrimination also reported higher levels of stress.

## **3.** Inadequate systems in place for reporting and for addressing consequences

Most of the JIU common system-wide survey respondents who have been discriminated against did not report the situation. This shows that systems in place about individual complaints and recourse are failing, that there is a lack of confidence of personnel who predominantly choose not to avail themselves of existing recourse mechanisms, and when employed are rarely perceived as delivering satisfactory outcomes. Of the personnel who experienced and reported incidents of racism and racial discrimination, the overwhelming majority (73%) indicated that the receiver of the complaint had failed to take the appropriate actions. The most frequent receivers of reports were supervisors or line managers and middle managers, followed by senior leadership and managers, human resources services and ombudsman and mediation services. Ethics and oversight offices were third in terms of frequency of reporting. Suggested measures to address inadequate reporting systems in place include enhancing knowledge, expertise, and objectivity of personnel with roles in key functions.

# 4. Unacceptable effects on health, productivity, organizational climate and culture, and economic returns

Racism and racial discrimination affect an organization's health, adaptability, productivity, and economic returns and growth. They also affect both peace in living and working together and peace in oneself, and prosperity. The review finds that racism and racial discrimination generate high-stress levels with effects on health and productivity. On economic returns, it finds an unequal representation of the various racial groupings in senior-level positions and different patterns in promotion among the groups.

# 5. Great significance of macrostructural issues in addressing racism and racial discrimination in the UN system

Macrostructural dimensions of racism and racial discrimination (i.e., the structures that have been developed to guide how business is conducted) have been found to play a major role in the root causes or enablers of racism. The failure to address issues related to macrostructures limits the impact and sustainability of the measures and mechanisms being put in place at the individual, systemic and institutional levels. These macrostructural issues include:

• Disconnect between the principles of the UN system and modern times.

- Conceptual lacunae in defining race, often addressed through the sole lens of human rights and gender equality, and thus providing no basis for policy or decision-making.
- Power asymmetries between donor countries and recipient countries owing to donor country power and control, affect the manifestation of racism and racial discrimination in many forms.
- Structure for funding and financing, including issues with core versus non-core funding, exacerbate the power and control of donors.

• Dominance of the Western philosophy of reality and thought in the conceptual frameworks used to drive the work of the UN system.

• Racism in the world and in duty stations affecting the well-being and performance levels of staff in various duty stations.

• Limitations in knowledge and understanding of the histories of various civilizations, and of the philosophies and cultures of the peoples of the world among personnel is a drawback for a multicultural and multilingual organization, given the connection between thought, language, and culture.

### **6.** Nine pillars of performance to enhance measures and mechanisms for organizational effectiveness results

The review finds that addressing racism and racial discrimination in a way that would add value and enhance organizational effectiveness cannot be ad hoc and piecemeal. It identifies 9 pillars and 35 associated measures and mechanisms or components that are important for enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact, sustainability and continued relevance and alignment with changing times.

The 9 pillars of performance and associated components for addressing racism and racial discrimination are listed in the box and figure below. They were used for assessing respective organizations' performance or stage of development (stages 1 (low) to 6 (high)) based on: (i) scope of coverage, (ii) defined quality criteria and (iii) level of development or maturity in adopting and implementing the components.

### Pillar 1

- Regulatory framework addressing regulations and ethical codes of conduct;
- Contextual factors that serve as enablers for addressing racism and racial discrimination, including diversity, equity and inclusion systems in place;
- UN reform agenda for management
   and changes in values;
- Global changes emanating from the 4th and the 5th Industrial revolutions.

#### Pillar 7

- Conditions for success including:
   Mainstreaming racism and racial discrimination into discrimination at large,
- Enhancing organizational resilience, agility, and adaptability,
- Providing adequate and appropriate resources,
- Enhancing governance and accountability, and the empowerment of personnel and networks development for safe space as well as for supporting organizations in managing change.

#### Pillar 8

· Coherence, alignments, and alliances.

#### Pillars 2 & 3

- Normative system for strategic management addressing conceptualization of race, racism, and racial discrimination (Pillar 2);
- Normative system for addressing leadership, values, goals, outcomes, policies, and strategic plans (Pillar 3).

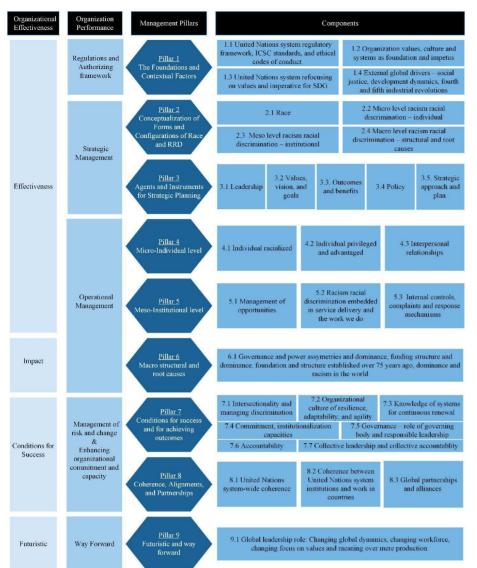
#### Pillars 4,5, & 6

- Operational management for addressing racism and racial discrimination: at the individual level inclusive of intrapersonal and inter-personal forms of racism and racial discrimination (Pillar 4);
- Operational management for addressing systemic racism focused on the human resources functions, programmatic work, and internal control and reporting mechanisms (Pillar 5);
- Macro structural form associated with the root foundations and governance structure of the UN system (Pillar 6).

#### Pillar 9

 Future directions for change and transformation.

#### **Pillars of performance and associated components**

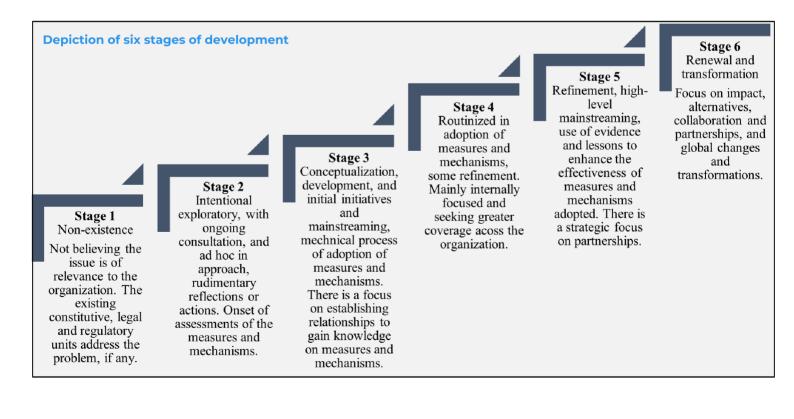


# 7. Level of performance not commensurate with magnitude of the problem in the UN system

The review finds that while there has been progress in parts of the UN system for the use of a comprehensive and holistic approach that is important in managing for achieving results for preventing and addressing racism and racial discrimination, the coverage and level of performance on the 9 pillars of performance and the associated measures and mechanisms are not commensurate with the magnitude of the racism and racial discrimination described above.

Organizations' performance is assessed based on 6 stages of development, each stage denoting a progression towards a higher level in the organization's coverage of the pillars and components, in meeting quality standards and in achieving a desired maturity level either in conceptualization or in the adoption and implementation of measures and mechanisms. Organizations move progressively through various stages as they meet the desired highest level of development for the desired outcomes and impact. See the methodology for more explanation.

The result of this assessment shows that the system is lagging behind when assessed against the magnitude of the problem and against the quality criteria that define high-level performance. The majority of UN system organizations are operating at Stage 2 out of 6.



# 8. Big difference between large size and medium and small size organizations with the former showing very high levels of performance

There are, however, four large-sized organizations that are well advanced and are operating at Stage 3 (out of 6) and above on the various measures and mechanisms. The big differences in stage of development among UN system organizations require urgent collaboration among organizations for a UN system operating as one.

### 9. Imbalance in the measures and mechanisms in favour of systems and structures versus people, who change and enhance impact, and macro structural factors that affect sustainability

The review identifies imbalances in the evolution of the dimensions that correspond to the review's adopted pillars and components of performance across the system. This calls for strategic thinking in prioritizing and in sequencing the adoption of measures and mechanisms that address racism and racial discrimination.

A focus on changing systems and structures (under Pillars 3, 5, and 7) without an equivalent focus on addressing racism and racial discrimination at the individual level (Pillar 4) is not likely to ensure success in managing the change process involved in addressing racism and racial discrimination.

Also, a focus on micro-aggression and wrongdoing and hence on the functions of oversight fails to recognize the important role played by middle and line managers, including supervisors, and by human resource managers in addressing racism and racial discrimination (Components 4.3, 5.1, 1.1). These managers are the first points of contact in reporting on racism and racial discrimination. The review notes the lack of a defined accountability system for leadership, senior and middle and line management to ensure that racism and racial discrimination are not part of the workplace, and an overall failure to allocate necessary resources for capacity to do so.

## 10. The importance of collective leadership for impact and sustainability

The review highlights the importance of the responsibility of all personnel in addressing racism and racial discrimination. Most significant in enhancing capacities for roles and responsibilities for managers, the oversight function and for all personnel is education and expertise.

## **11. UN system has a long way to go to enhance equality of opportunity**

This conclusion is derived from analysis of (i) data disaggregation; (ii) recruitment and selection policies and processes: (iii) career advancement, professional development and promotions, and professional excellence; (iv) the incentives system, and staff empowerment.

### **12.** Next steps for change and transformation: a process started that cannot be stopped or reversed

The momentum now created for change and transformation in addressing racism and racial discrimination has major pivotal, reverberating, and spin-off effects not only for addressing racism, but also other forms of discrimination and the interlinkages among the various forms and for transformative changes in general for the sustainability and continued relevance of UN system efforts in addressing racism and racial discrimination.

All assessed UN system organizations have reflected upon and developed plans for advancing work started and for achieving high stages of development in addressing all forms of racism and racial discrimination, and for the measures needed to enhance impact and coherence. Many, including all sizes of organizations, have reflected on and have started to implement measures for coherence, for impact as well as for addressing systemic constraints that are associated with the root causes of racism and racial discrimination and are likely to reduce the value and limit the success of organizational efforts.



The JIU makes 6 recommendations addressed to the executive heads of the UN system organizations for action. As a result, the review has been issued as a Note as it does not contain recommendations to the governing bodies of the Participating Organizations

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations are called on to:

Collaborate, in the framework of the CEB, to establish a common set of categories for voluntary selfidentification by personnel by June 2024, for the purposes of monitoring, analysing, evaluating and reporting on progress and success in achieving the goals of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in addressing racism and racial discrimination.

Direct their respective training and learning units to develop and implement a high-impact and integrated curriculum to improve awareness, learning and performance that responds to the needs of personnel of various functions, categories and levels in order to address all forms and configurations of racism and racial discrimination in the workplace. Provide sufficient resources to support the achievement of defined results for the implementation of action plans for addressing racism and racial discrimination.

As members of the CEB, jointly develop and provide resources to a high-level, inter-agency standing mechanism intended to unite organizations, leverage their existing capacities and comparative added value to collaborate and work together to respond to both immediate and longer-term needs for addressing racism and racial discrimination across the UN system, and address the transformative changes needed to enhance the continued relevance and value of the various efforts at both the organizational and the system-wide levels.

Establish, by 2024, an accountability framework that sets out the expected results, outcomes and key performance indicators for addressing racism and racial discrimination, and report periodically to their legislative organs and/or governing bodies on progress made in achieving the predefined results.

Strengthen the equal distribution of opportunities in human resources management for all personnel.

### **Approach & Methodology**

In accordance with the JIU internal norms and standards, guidelines and working procedures, the review was conducted using a blend of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including:

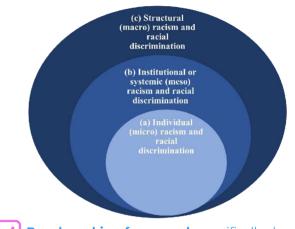
Desk review of literature and data sources, including secondary data from the CEB human resources database, which have variables for gender, nationality, duration and grade level.

The development of 9 principles guiding the conceptual framework used to assess racism and racial discrimination and to assess the performance of organizational measures and mechanisms:

- 1. The importance of anchoring the review in the particularities of the UN system and the values upheld by organizations, while considering the knowledge systems developed by scholars;
- 2. The need to establish the conceptual frameworks and benchmarks to guide the approach to addressing racism and racial discrimination across the UN system;
- 3. The importance of assessing not only the conceptualization of what is planned by organizations, but also the quality and level of implementation of measures and mechanism adopted:
- 4. The importance of organizing the measures and mechanisms using familiar performance areas useful for assessing organizational effectiveness in the UN system;
- 5. The importance of framing the review with the perspective of the need for collective action for impact and sustainability;
- 6. The importance of examining coherence and including alignment harmonization, and coherence, with other forms of discrimination, across the UN system and in both institutional and programmatic work;
- 7. The importance of engagement with key stakeholders throughout the review;
- 8. The need to be guided by theory and knowledge of organizational change processes and the way people change;
- 9. The outcomes of the change process for racism and racial discrimination are not only related to ethical reasons and questions of dignity and integrity for all parties, but are also aimed at achieving business goals of productivity and innovation for competitive edge and other benefits to the UN system as a whole, including the credibility of the UN system in global governance.

Conceptual framework to assess racism and racial discrimination and its forms and configurations at three levels; (a) the individual level (both intrapersonal and interpersonal racism are described as micro-level form of racism); (b) the institutional or systemic level, described as meso-level racism; and (c) the macrostructural level.

Interviews with senior executives, managers, pertinent business process holders, and personnel.



Benchmarking framework specifically developed in this review for addressing organization performance on racism and racial discrimination in the UN system. The measures and mechanisms are organized under 9 performance areas or pillars. The pillars fall under 6 main management areas that are typically used for assessing performance in the UN system to achieve organizational effectiveness.

Assessment tool using 6 stages of development: each stage denoting a progression towards a higher level in the organization's coverage of the pillars and components, in meeting quality standards and in achieving a desired maturity level either in conceptualization or in the adoption and implementation of measures and mechanisms. Organisations' ratings of their respective stage of development are assessed based on three main criteria: (a) coverage: the existence of the measure and mechanisms or component and scope of content coverage; (b) quality of implementation: the quality of the component based on empirical evidence of effectiveness and exemplary practices; and (c) level of implementation: the level of adoption and implementation or maturity level.



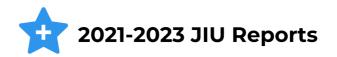
JIU common system-wide survey assessing racism and racial discrimination at the individual and systemic levels. Twenty-one JIU participating organizations administered the survey.

Corporate JIU organization-level questionnaire on the conceptualization of race, racism and racial discrimination in organizations, and responses to interviews and consultations conducted with a wide range of personnel and interest groups in the UN system.





The review applied rigorous methods to enhance the objectivity, accuracy and reliability of the evidence provided. This included multiple confirmatory analyses, analysis of confidence levels, and triangulation with other surveys on racism and racial discrimination.



JIU/REP/2023/1, Review of management and administration in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

JIU/REP/2022/1, Review of management and administration in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

JIU/REP/2021/6, Review of business continuity management in United Nations system organizations

JIU/REP/2021/5, Review of the ethics function in the United Nations system

JIU/REP/2021/4, Review of the management of implementing partners in United Nations system organizations

JIU/REP/2021/3, Cybersecurity in the United Nations system organizations and JIU/ML/2021/1, Management letter on securing the integrity of documents, records and archives of the United Nations system organizations

JIU/REP/2021/2, Review of United Nations system support for landlocked developing countries to implement the Vienna Programme of Action

JIU/REP/2021/1, Review of management and administration in the World Meteorological Organization

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Project A.457: Measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations

### **Content of the Complementary File**

This complementary file provides **30 documents** that support the evidence and references made in the JIU Note on measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations (**JIU/NOTE/2022/1**).

The first section of the complementary file (section A) briefs on the review and its findings, while the second section of the complementary file (section B) contains the documentation of the review organized in four chapters (I to IV), as outlined below.

### A. Brief on the review and its findings

• The Review Highlights

### B. Documentation

### **Chapter I – The review frameworks**

- Bibliography https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 bibliography.docx
- The guiding principles https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 jiu guiding principles of the review addressing rrd.docx
- The guiding principles summary https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_jiu\_guiding\_principles\_summary.docx
- The results framework <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_jiu\_the\_results\_framework.docx</u>
- Lists of persons consulted <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_list\_of\_persons\_consulted.docx</u>
- List of persons interviewed <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_list\_of\_persons\_interviewed.docx</u>

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### Chapter II - The JIU CSWS – the survey instrument, concept notes, methodological issues, and analyses

- The JIU common system-wide survey (CSWS) including all items, and its Annex on Definitions
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_csws\_-\_a.\_questionnaire\_surveymonkey.docx
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_csws\_-\_b.\_questionnaire\_annex\_-\_definitions.docx
- The CSWS items for five constructs of RRD and analysis of their occurrence per type of duty station
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 csws 5 constructs for rrd questions per construct.docx
- <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_csws\_-\_5\_constructs\_for\_rrd\_-</u> occurence\_per\_type\_of\_duty\_station.xlsx
- Details on demographics of respondents to the JIU survey on RRD (including CSWS respondents per geographic regions)
- <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_csws\_-\_demographics\_of\_respondents\_to\_the\_survey.docx</u>
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_csws\_-\_demographics\_of\_respondents\_per\_ceb\_region.xlsx
- On race and self-identification: a concept note on principles for developing categories for self-identification accompanied by two documents used by the JIU for this and shared with the JIU participating organizations: the conceptual framework for various forms of RRD and associated outcomes and the concept paper on the dilemma for defining race
- <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 jiu concept note on the development of racial ethnic identifiers.do cx</u>
- <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_conceptual\_framework\_for\_forms\_of\_rrd\_and\_associated\_outcomes.d\_ocx</u>
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_jiu\_concept\_paper\_by\_dr\_avery\_on\_defining\_race.docx

### Project A.457: Measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations

Methodology-related answers to questions of JIU participating organizations
 <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_qa\_methodology\_incl\_representiveness -\_sample\_size.docx</u>

### Chapter III - Measures and mechanisms

- The Benchmarking Framework\_and its four annexes (Annex 1; Annex 2; Annex 3; Annex 4)
- <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_benchmarking\_framework.docx</u>
- <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_bf\_annex\_1\_-bibliography\_for\_benchmarks.docx</u>
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_bf\_annex\_2\_references\_for\_pillars\_on\_values\_and\_results\_.docx
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 bf annex 3 -assessment framework and tool.docx
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_bf\_annex\_4\_-organization-level\_questionnaire\_of\_the\_review\_.docx
- Outline of the Benchmarking Framework Pillars and Components (horizontal layout) https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_bf\_outline\_- pillars\_and\_components.docx
- List of JIU participating organizations including their number of staff and revenue categorizing them into large, medium, and small-sized organizations
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 jiu pos listed by size re staff-revenue.xlsx
- Methodology note on qualitative analysis of the relationship between the provision of resources and the performance of the JIU participating organizations in addressing racism and racial discrimination
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_jiu\_analysis\_on\_pos\_resources\_vs\_performance\_in\_addressing\_rrd.do cx
- Methodology note on determining the stage of development in addressing racism and racial discrimination
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_methodology\_note\_on\_assessing\_pos\_stage\_of\_development.docx

### Project A.457: Measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations

### **Chapter IV - Cross-cutting areas**

- Interview guide for senior executives and decision makers (on validation of findings, cross-cutting issues, next steps and changes or transformations for success
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 interview guide for senior executives or decision makers.docx
- Agenda of the validation session including information on the process
- https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\_note\_2022\_1\_validation\_session\_agenda.docx
- PowerPoint presentation of the JIU review
- <u>https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu note 2022 1 ppt presentation of the review in slides.pptx</u>