



Joint Inspection Unit
of the United Nations System

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inspection, evaluation
and investigation"*

English only

Review of management and administration in the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

**Supplementary Papers to Report of the Joint Inspection Unit
(JIU/REP/2022/1)**

Review Highlights

Appendix: Results of the UN-Habitat Staff Survey

Prepared by Jean Wesley Cazeau and Tesfa Alem Seyoum



REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-Habitat)

Inspectors Jean Wesley Cazeau and Tesfa Alem Seyoum

UN HABITAT

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Background

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is a specialized, technical programme of the United Nations Secretariat working towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable and inclusive human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

Objectives

The overall objective of the present review is to provide an independent assessment of the management and administration in UN-Habitat, focusing, inter alia, on (a) the recent governance reform; (b) financial management; (c) organizational restructuring and management; and (d) oversight and evaluation.

What the JIU found

1. The new governance structure has led to more opportunities for Member States to engage in UN-Habitat, enhance their oversight and therefore increase the accountability of the secretariat

A new three-tier governance structure of UN-Habitat was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 73/239 in December 2018. The establishment of the UN-Habitat Assembly on the basis of universal membership, as well as the creation of the Executive Board with the power to take decisions and hold much more frequent meetings than the previous Governing Council, has been viewed as a positive change to resolve the main challenges faced

by the previous governance structure. The increased frequency of meetings of the governing bodies leads to more opportunities for Member States to engage in UN-Habitat and provide guidance and oversight to the secretariat. The accountability of the secretariat has also increased as the Executive Director is required to report much more frequently to the governing bodies. At the same time, it must be noted that the work and costs associated with more frequent reporting have increased for the secretariat and these must be absorbed within existing resources.

2. Clarification of distinct roles and responsibilities of each of the governing bodies is necessary

The roles and responsibilities of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as well as the division of labour between the Committee and the Executive Board, are not clearly articulated in the new rules of procedure of the UN-Habitat Assembly. There is a compelling need to clarify the distinct roles and responsibilities of each of the governing bodies, in particular those of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, especially given the current financial constraints of UN-Habitat and the increased costs associated with servicing the meetings of the governing bodies.

3. Further broadening the base of contributions by Member States and enhancing predictability in financing the Foundation non-earmarked fund is critical

Over the years, the revenues of contributions from Member States to the Foundation non-earmarked fund have been consistently low. For example, for 2020, the Executive Board approved a budget of \$18.9 million for the Foundation non-earmarked fund, however, contributions made to the fund were only \$4.9 million for 2020, a shortfall of nearly 75 per cent.

Member States should consider making sufficient contributions to the approved budget of the Foundation non-earmarked fund, so that UN-Habitat can carry out its critical normative work in accordance with its mandate and in a consistent and sustainable manner.

To address the financial situation, in 2017, the management approved an internal loan of \$3 million from the programme support fund to the Foundation non-earmarked fund. Austerity measures have been put in place since 2018 that include aligning expenditures with revenue and exercising tighter control over staff costs. Management has also made strenuous appeals to Member States to contribute to the Foundation non-earmarked fund for core activities and programme of work approved by the Executive Board. The situation is improving, but as of 31 December 2021, the internal loan had not been repaid. Still less than a quarter of the 193 Member States contribute to the Foundation non-earmarked fund, with most of the contributions being made by only a few Member States from the Western European and other States regional group.

Further broadening the base of contributions by Member States and enhancing predictability in financing the Foundation non-earmarked fund is critical for UN-Habitat. The Executive Board should establish a voluntary indicative scale of contributions, similar to the one that has been applied to the Environmental Fund of the United Nations Environmental Programme, for the Foundation non-earmarked fund.

4. Organizational restructuring has been incomplete due to lack of non-earmarked funding

In 2018, in parallel with the governance reform, the UN-Habitat secretariat launched an organizational restructuring exercise to maximize fulfilment of its mandate. In November 2019, a new organizational structure and overall human resources requirements were approved by the Executive Board. However, insufficient funding of the Foundation non-earmarked fund has delayed the full implementation of the organizational restructuring, including the proposed regional architecture, and most approved posts funded from Foundation non-earmarked contributions have remained unoccupied. The secretariat has been operating with only about two thirds of the originally estimated number of posts needed to implement the strategic plan 2020-2023.

Considering the current funding situation, in order to prevent further deterioration of the financial situation, the Executive Director should implement activities supported by the Foundation non-earmarked fund within existing resources and should not consider new activities until adequate contributions for that fund are received. The current situation of understaffed management and oversight makes it even more essential for the secretariat to prepare a corporate risk register that provides an overview of key strategic and other significant risks faced by UN-Habitat, their potential impact and mitigation and management strategies. The Executive Director should develop a corporate risk register, including risk owners and action plans for each risk, and ensure that the critical risks faced by the organization are regularly monitored and the necessary actions are taken.

5. Main outstanding audit recommendations should be implemented as a matter of urgency

Over the years, the number of outstanding audit recommendations has increased. The Board of Auditors is concerned about the low implementation rate of recommendations by UN-Habitat.

The Independent Audit Advisory Committee has also pointed this out and urged management to make efforts to ensure the timely implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors. Addressing outstanding audit recommendations may require significant time and resources. Nevertheless, the Executive Director should implement the main outstanding audit recommendations as a matter of urgency.

6. UN-Habitat should urgently seek substantive support from the United Nations Secretariat

UN-Habitat is in a critical situation. The financial situation of UN-Habitat remains a serious concern. Many core functions of normative work, such as monitoring the implementation of the urban dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as management, advocacy and oversight, are severely underfunded and understaffed. As of April 2022, most management posts within the new structure, such as division directors and branch, section and unit chiefs, are either vacant or occupied by "ad interim" or "acting" officers. It is evident that the organization operates with the absolute minimum of human resources. Staff are stretched to the limit and their morale has been critically affected. The low implementation rate of audit recommendations is another severe risk to the organization that should not be overlooked and could pose a risk to the United Nations. UN-Habitat, being part of the United Nations Secretariat, should urgently seek substantive support from the United Nations Secretariat. The Secretary-General should address the current situation of UN-Habitat as a matter of priority to enable it to fulfil its mandate and avoid any reputational risk of the United Nations.



Approach & Methodology

In accordance with JIU internal standards and working procedures, the review was conducted using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods from different sources for consistency, validity, and reliability.



Desk review of relevant documents



One corporate questionnaire to the UN-Habitat secretariat



46 online interviews with 63 stakeholders, including the respective Chairs of the Executive Board and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Chairs of all five regional groups, the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, senior managers and other staff in charge of the main administrative, management and oversight functions and staff representatives



One online staff survey to collect opinions from UN-Habitat staff



Observations of the sessions of the Executive Board and the Committee of Permanent Representatives



What the JIU recommends

The JIU makes 1 formal recommendation to the UN-Habitat Assembly, 2 to the Executive Board, 4 to the Executive Director and 1 to the Secretary-General, as well as 24 informal recommendations.

The UN-Habitat Assembly is called on to:

1 Consider amending its rules of procedure, in accordance with rule 71 thereof, to further clarify the distinct roles and responsibilities of each of the governing bodies of UN-Habitat. Such an amendment should be adopted by the end of 2024.

6 Given the current financial constraints and staffing situation of the UN-Habitat secretariat, implement the main outstanding audit recommendations as a matter of urgency.

The Executive Board is called on to:

2 Approve a realistic budget for the Foundation non-earmarked fund, to which Member States should consider making sufficient contributions so that UN-Habitat can carry out its critical normative work in accordance with its mandate and in a consistent and sustainable manner.

7 Urgently discuss the current financial and human resources issues with the Secretary-General and request substantive support and special arrangements, at no cost to UN-Habitat, until the financial stability of the Foundation non-earmarked fund is secured.

3 Establish a voluntary indicative scale of contributions for the Foundation non-earmarked fund by the end of 2023.

The Secretary-General is called on to:

8 As a matter of priority, address the financial and human resources issues of UN-Habitat, re-evaluate its capability to fulfil its mandate, and explore ways to make it a more viable and sustainable entity.

The Executive Director is called on to:

4 Implement activities supported by the Foundation non-earmarked fund within existing resources and should not consider new activities until adequate contributions for that fund are received.

5 By no later than the end of 2023, develop a corporate risk register, including risk owners and action plans for each risk, and ensure that critical risks faced by UN-Habitat are regularly monitored and the necessary actions are taken.



2021-2022 JIU Reports

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

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Main
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2022
Programme of Work



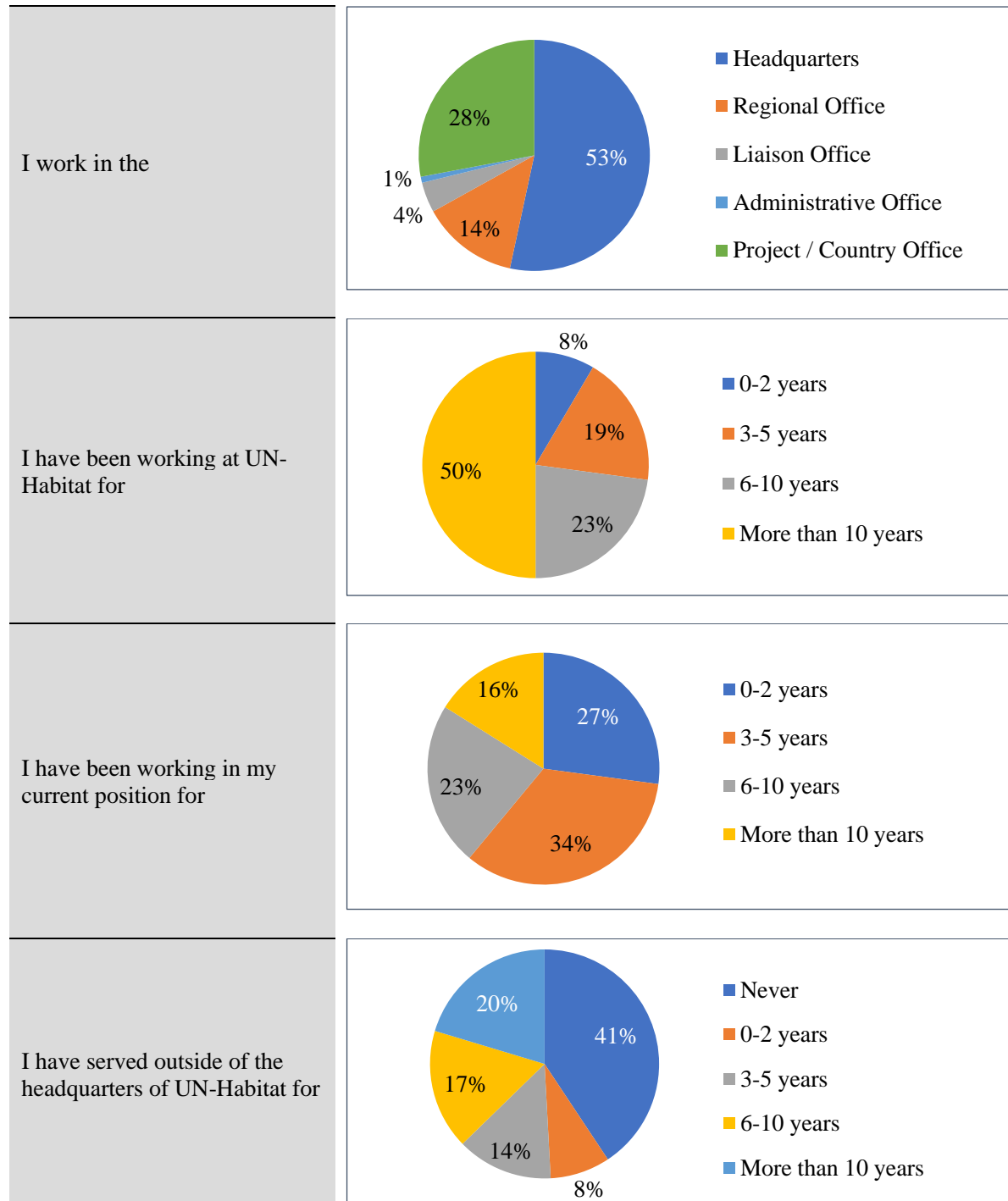
28 Participating
Organizations

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

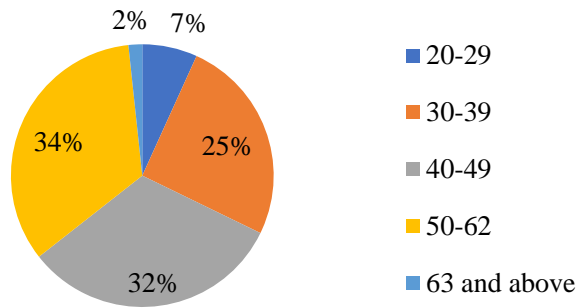
UN-Habitat Staff Survey

Online staff survey was conducted by JIU in January 2022 to collect opinions from the UN-Habitat staff and 118 completed responses were received.

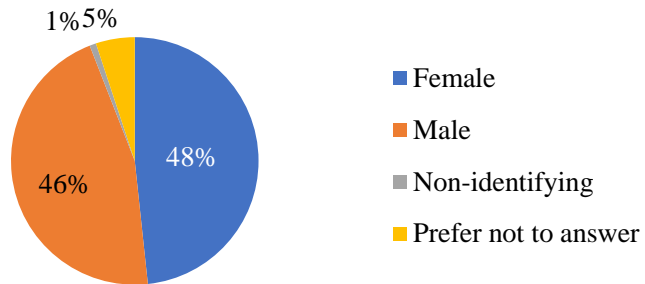
1. Profile of respondents



My age group is

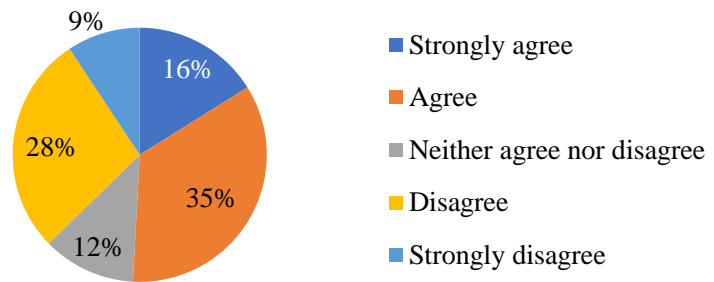


My gender is

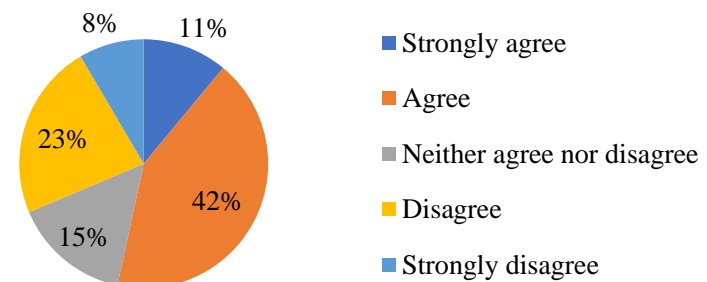


2. Working environment

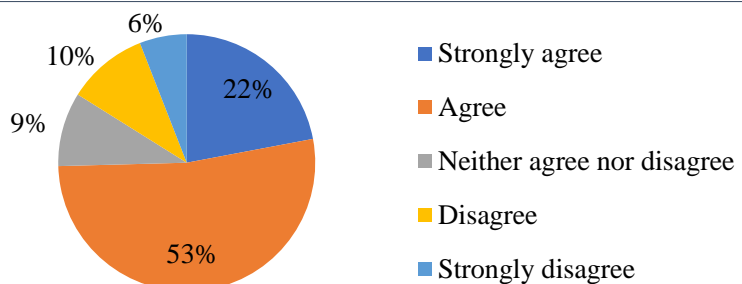
I am satisfied with the current contractual arrangement under which I am employed



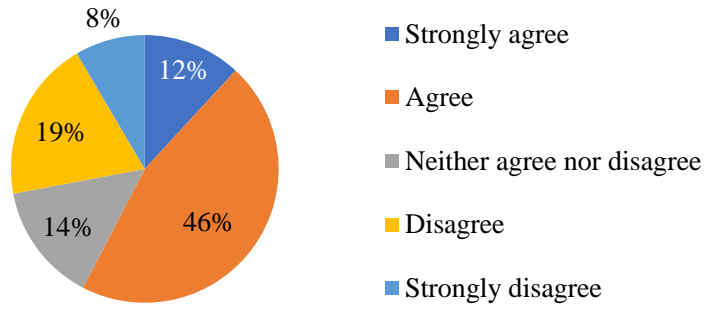
My job description reflects my actual duties



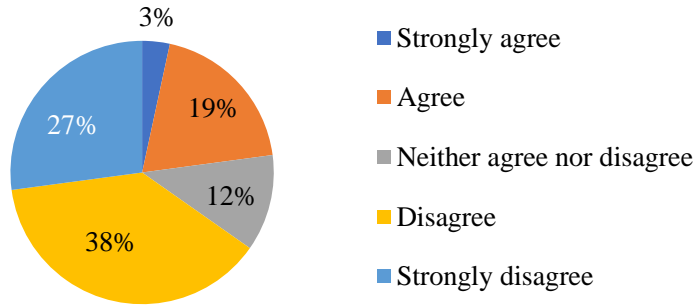
The reporting lines are clear in my unit



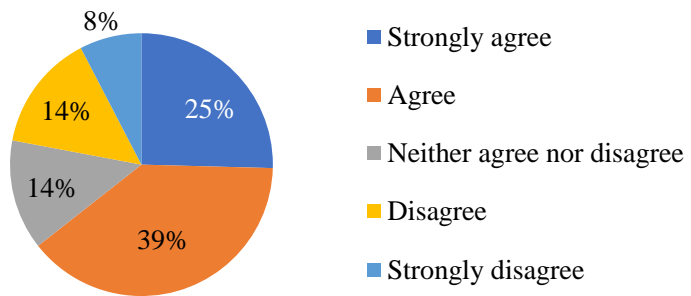
The respective responsibilities and work processes of my unit, including decision-making, are clear and well-documented



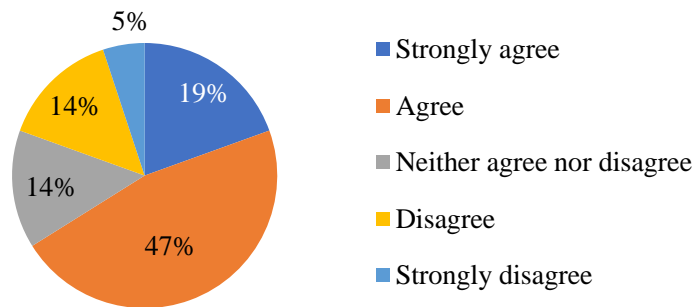
I think that my unit has adequate resources to perform its mandate / function



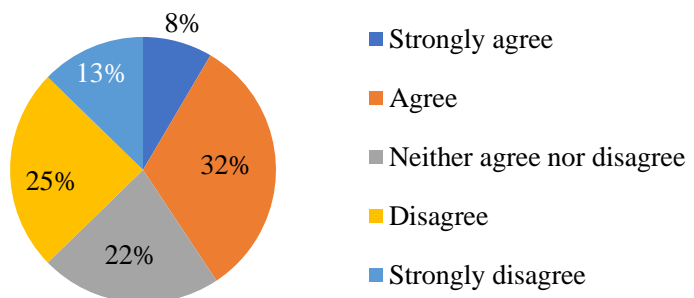
I am satisfied with the level of support that my supervisor provides to me to meet my work objectives



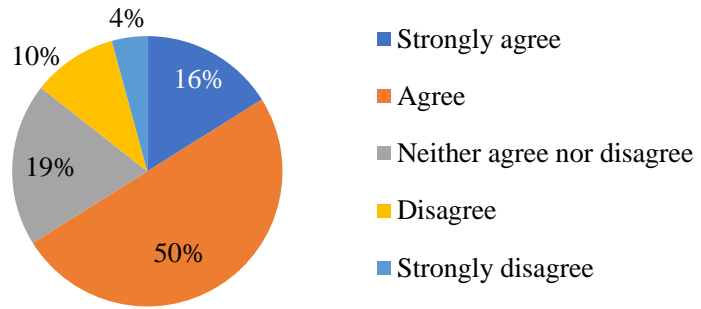
The working atmosphere in my unit is conducive to effective teamwork



I am satisfied with work/life balance policies and practices in UN-Habitat

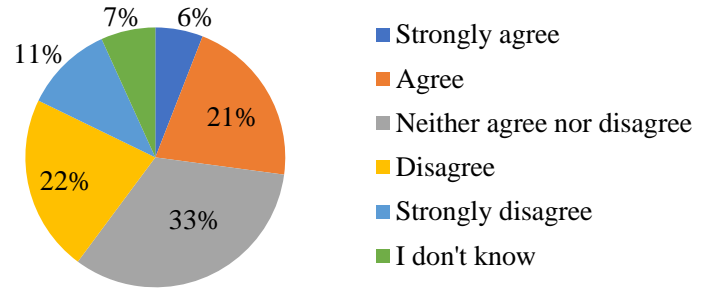


I am satisfied with the local arrangements concerning safety and security of personnel

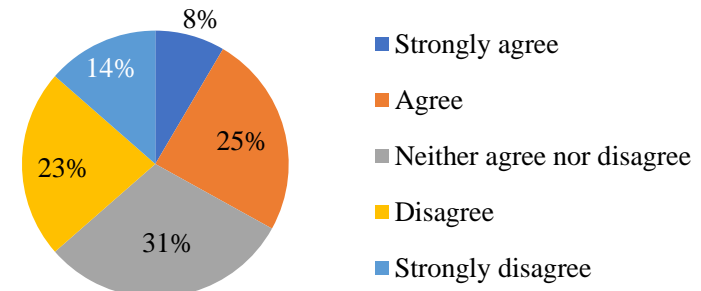


3. Management

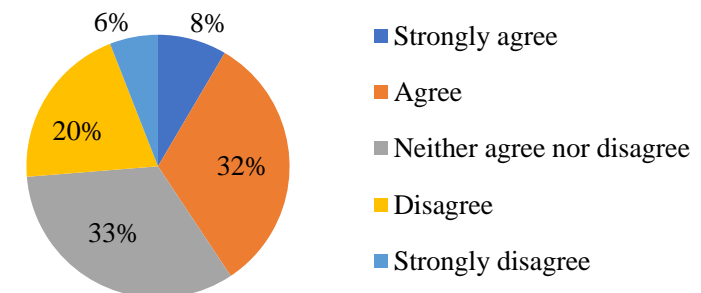
I think the recent governance reform has led to positive results on the UN-Habitat



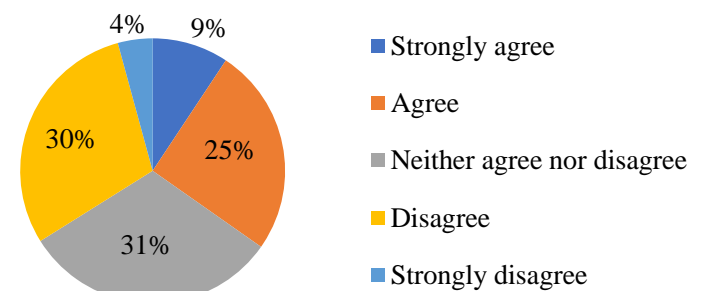
I have confidence in UN-Habitat senior management



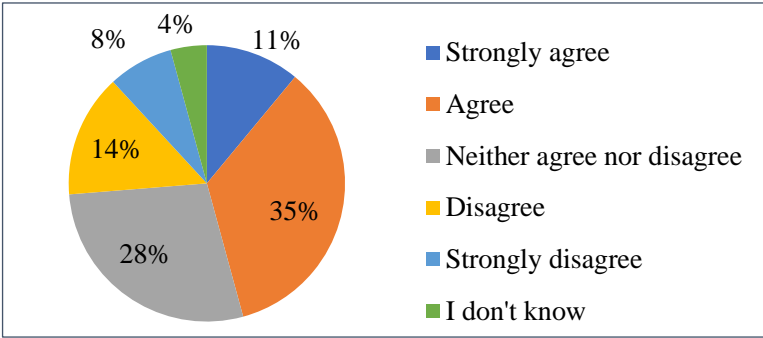
I think that UN-Habitat senior managers foster an organizational culture of integrity and ethical values



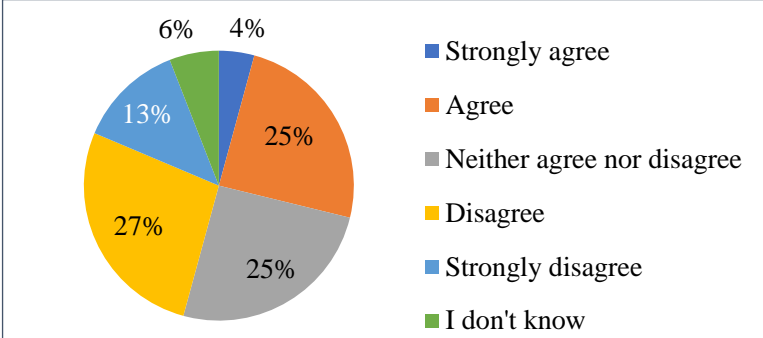
I think that UN-Habitat management encourages open discussion



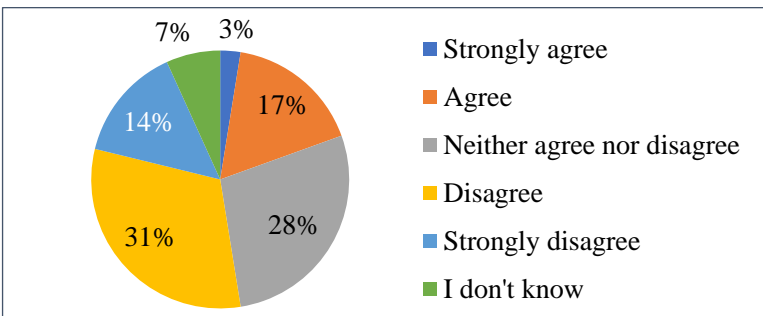
I think that UN-Habitat management complies with the standards of accountability corresponding to their level of delegated authority and responsibility



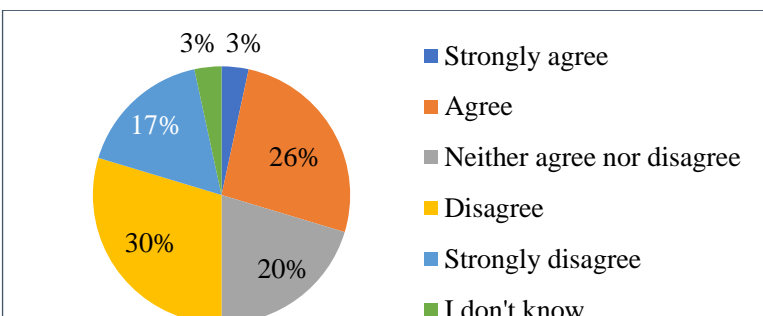
At the UN-Habitat headquarters, I think there is sufficient coordination and cooperation *within* divisions / branches / sections



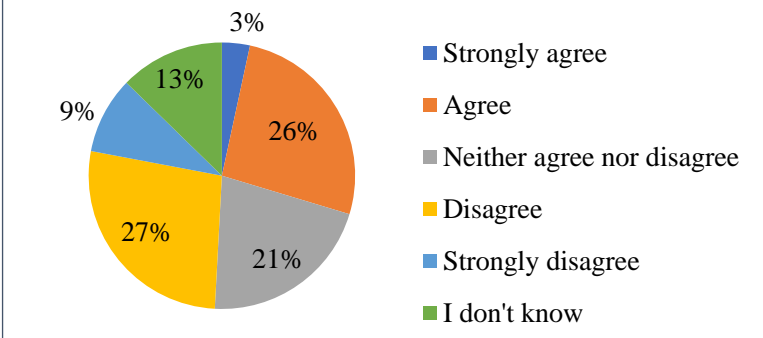
At the UN-Habitat headquarters, I think there is sufficient coordination and cooperation *between* divisions / branches / sections



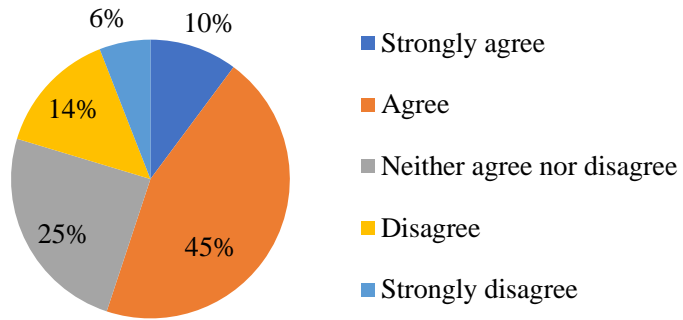
I think there is sufficient coordination and cooperation between UN-Habitat headquarters and field presences



I think there is sufficient coordination and cooperation among the regions

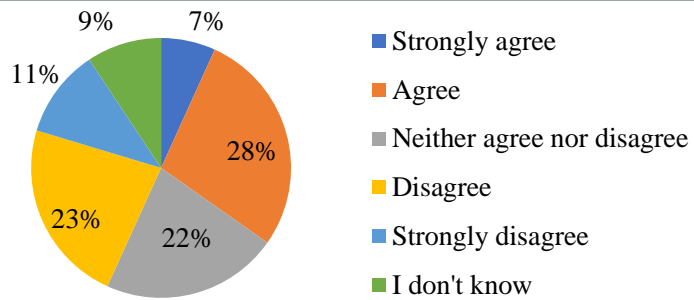


I think that important management decisions are adequately communicated through official channels (meetings, office memorandum, organizational directives / instruction, intranet, open platform, etc.)

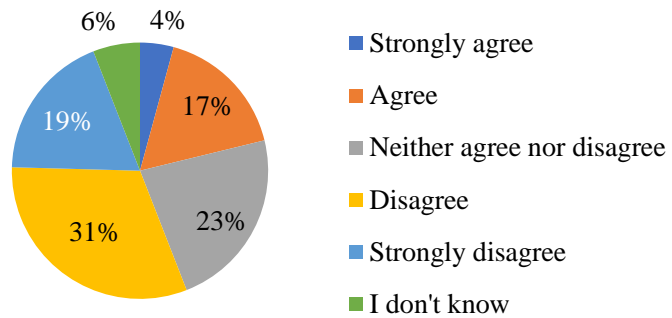


4. Structure of the UN-Habitat secretariat

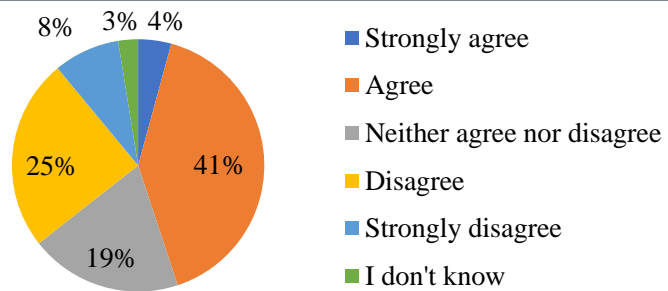
I think that the present structure of the UN-Habitat headquarters corresponds to organizational requirements



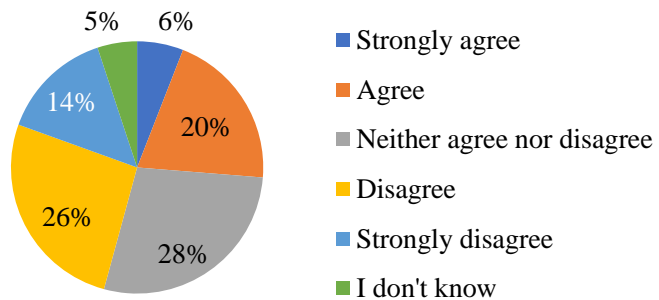
I think that the present structure of the UN-Habitat headquarters is functioning effectively



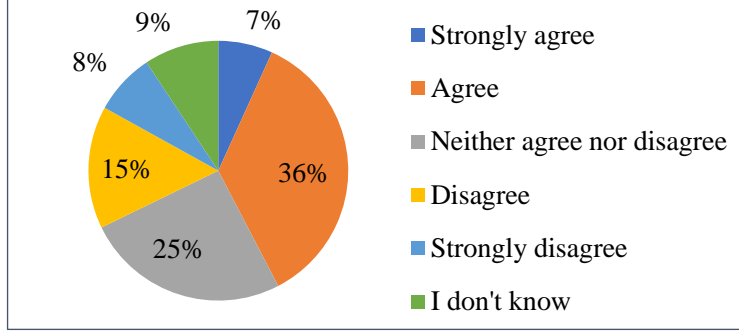
I think that the objectives of the recent restructuring of the UN-Habitat headquarters have been clearly explained and communicated to the staff



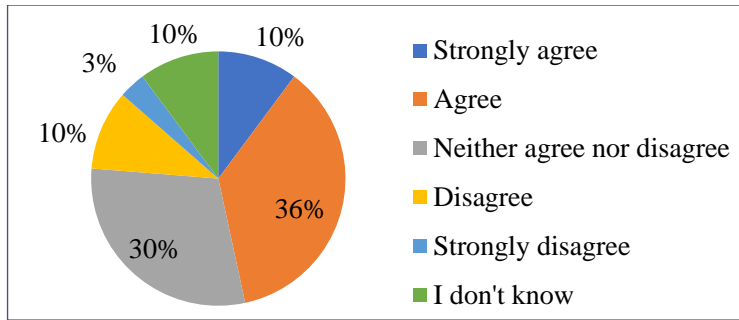
I think that the recent restructuring of the UN-Habitat headquarters has been managed in an effective and transparent manner



I think that the locations of Regional Offices are well chosen to effectively assist Member States in pursuing the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 11

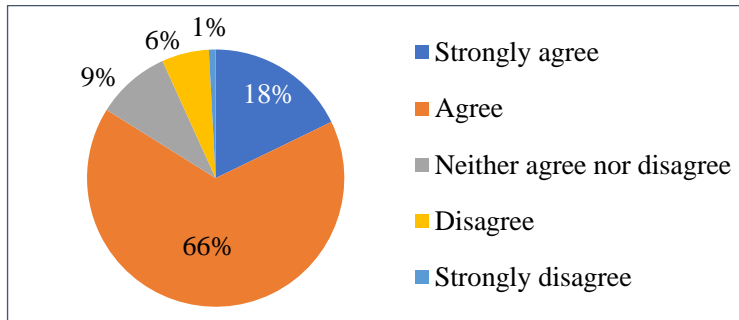


I think that the locations of field offices are well chosen to effectively assist Member States in pursuing the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 11

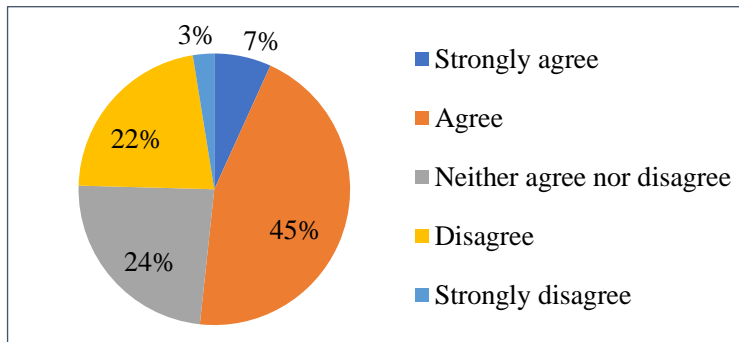


5. Results-based management

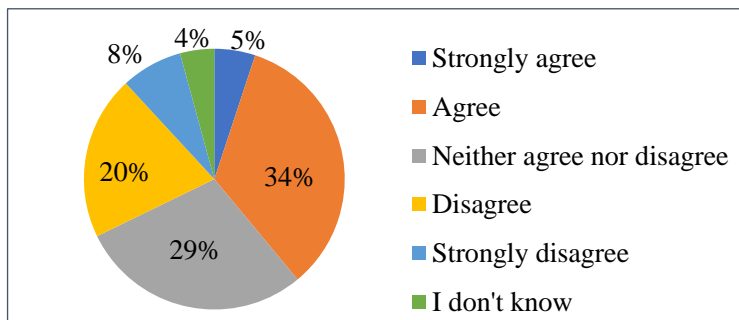
I have a basic conceptual understanding of results-based management at UN-Habitat and how it relates to my work



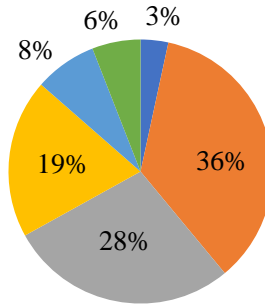
I have received sufficient training and instruction on results-based management



I think the strategic planning process at UN-Habitat is effective and supports results-based management

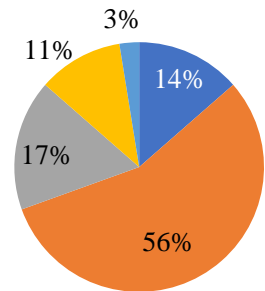


I think UN-Habitat activities are measured with clearly defined and meaningful performance indicators



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

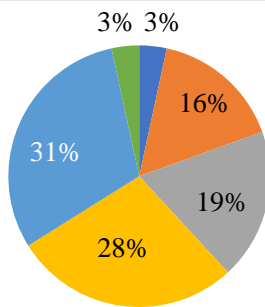
The objectives and expected results of my unit are linked to my workplan



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

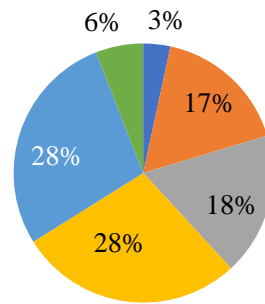
6. Administrative support services

I think that the administrative processes between UN-Habitat and UNON are efficient and clear



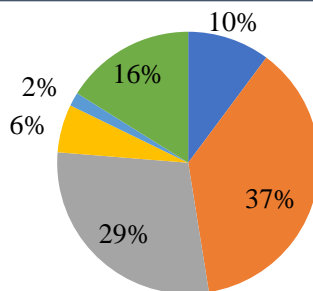
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

I think that UNON provides excellent services to support UN-Habitat operation



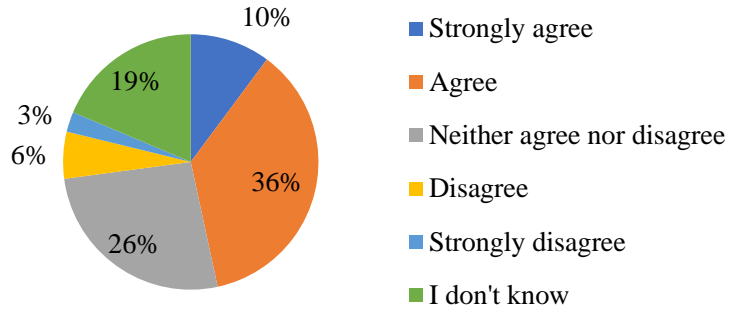
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

I think that UNDP provides excellent services to support UN-Habitat operation



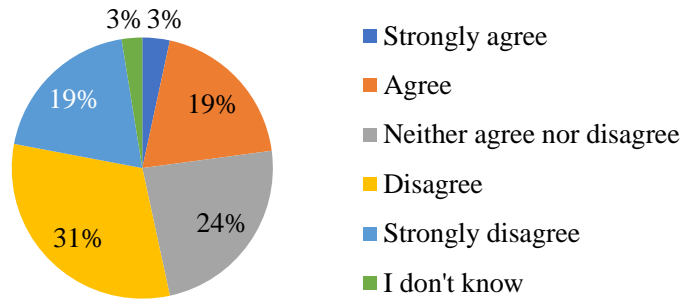
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I don't know

I think that UNOPS provides excellent services to support UN-Habitat operation

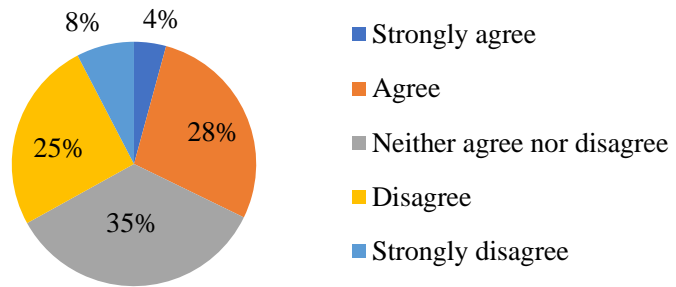


7. Human resources management

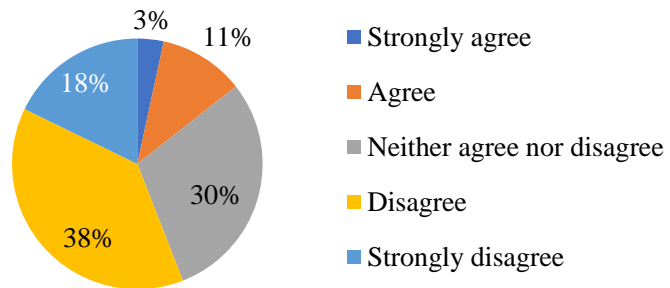
I think UN-Habitat human resources policies are implemented in a consistent and transparent manner



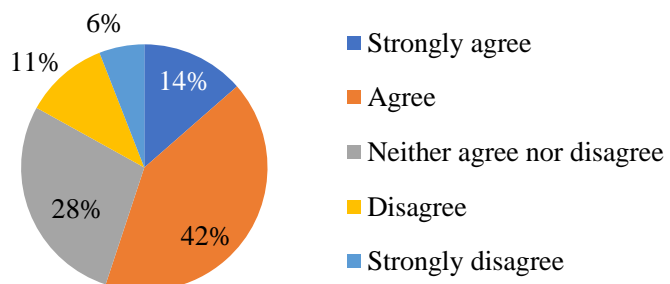
I think the recruitment process in UN-Habitat is fair and transparent



I think the promotion process in UN-Habitat is fair and transparent

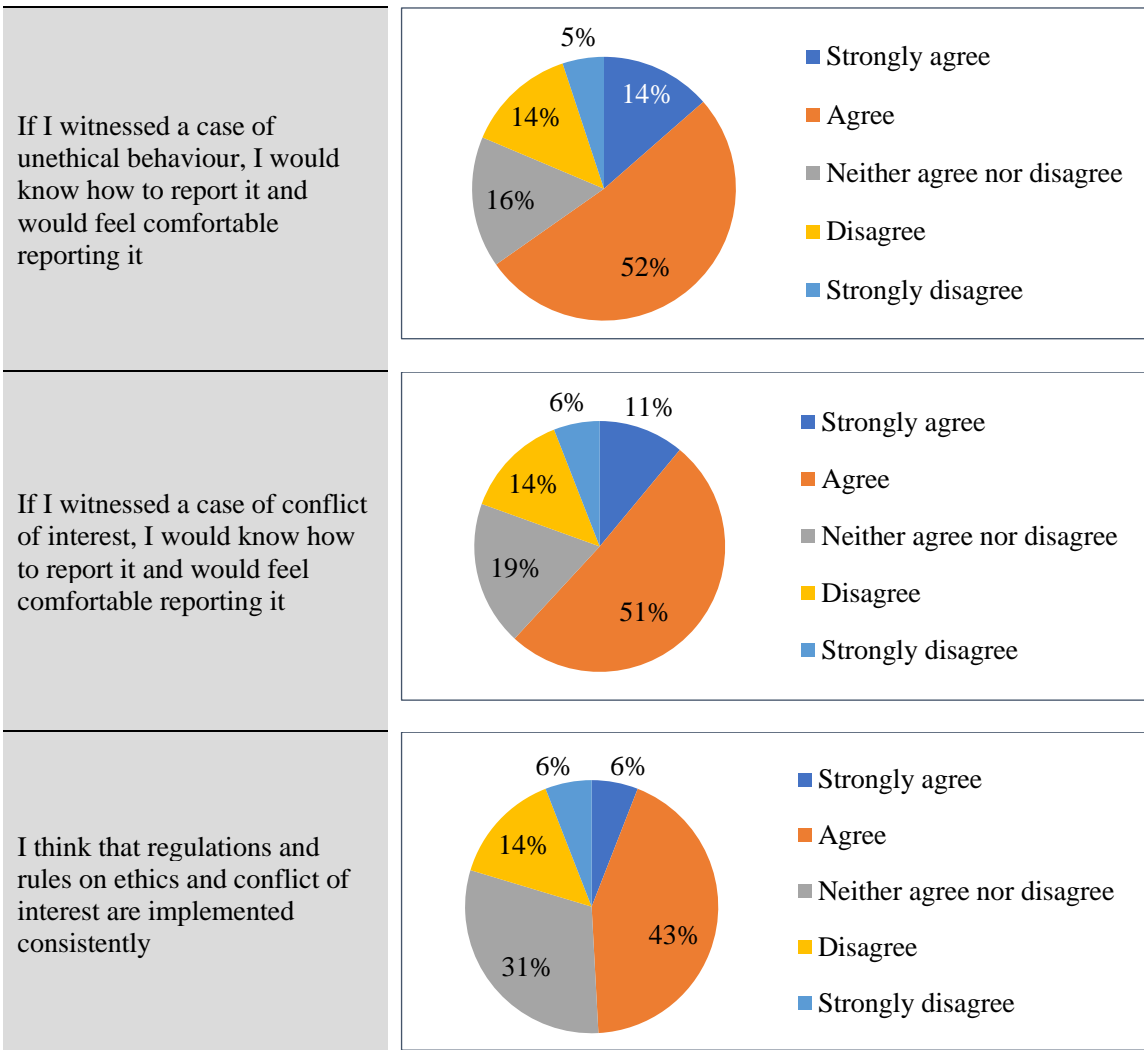


I think UN-Habitat promotes gender balance

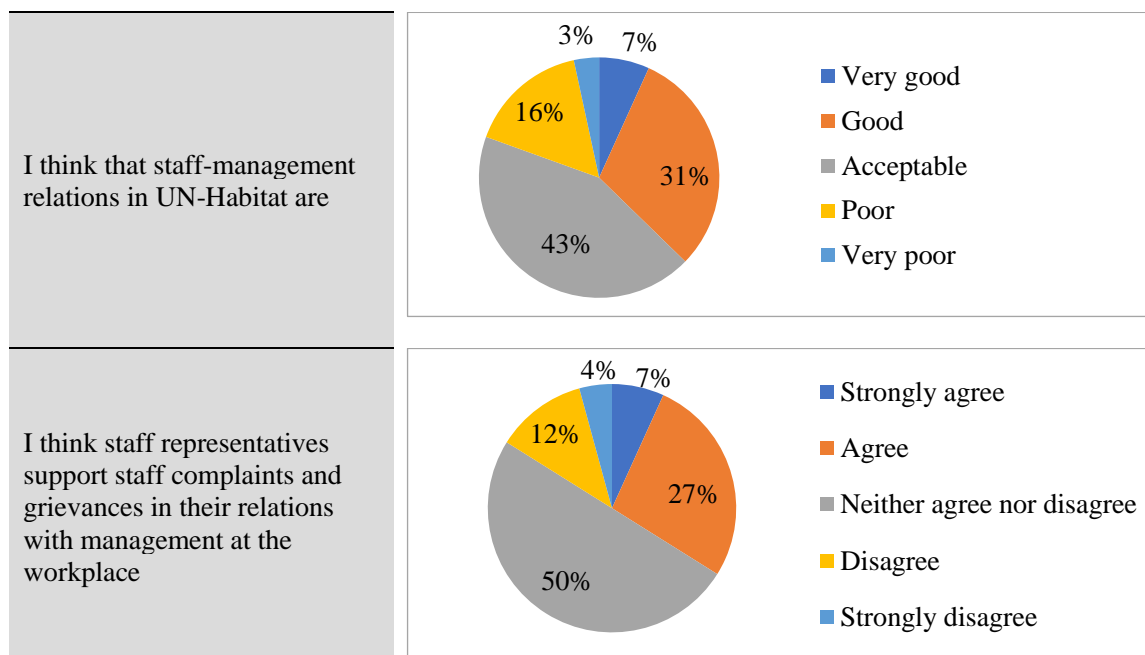


<p>I think UN-Habitat promotes geographical diversity</p>	<p> ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree </p>
<p>I think UN-Habitat has effective management tools to recognize staff members' individual performance</p>	<p> ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree </p>
<p>I understand how my performance is appraised</p>	<p> ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree </p>
<p>My performance appraisal is done in a timely manner</p>	<p> ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree </p>
<p>My performance appraisal is done in a transparent manner</p>	<p> ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree </p>

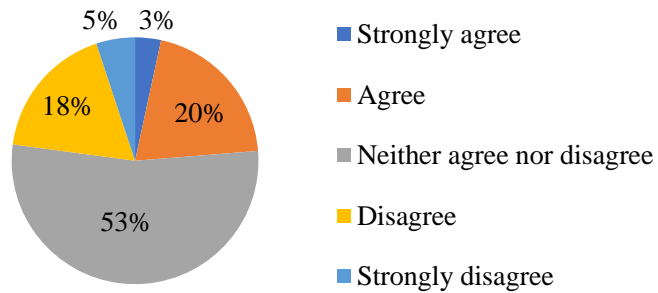
<p>My performance appraisal is done fairly / objectively</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither agree nor disagree</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly disagree</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	14%	Agree	53%	Neither agree nor disagree	28%	Disagree	4%	Strongly disagree	1%
Response	Percentage												
Strongly agree	14%												
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Disagree	4%												
Strongly disagree	1%												
<p>The training and development opportunities provided by and/or available at UN-Habitat are adequate to upgrade my skills and competences</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither agree nor disagree</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly disagree</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	6%	Agree	30%	Neither agree nor disagree	29%	Disagree	25%	Strongly disagree	10%
Response	Percentage												
Strongly agree	6%												
Agree	30%												
Neither agree nor disagree	29%												
Disagree	25%												
Strongly disagree	10%												
<p>I think UN-Habitat encourages mobility of its personnel within the organization and/or with other UN system agencies</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither agree nor disagree</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>29%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly disagree</td> <td>31%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	3%	Agree	17%	Neither agree nor disagree	21%	Disagree	29%	Strongly disagree	31%
Response	Percentage												
Strongly agree	3%												
Agree	17%												
Neither agree nor disagree	21%												
Disagree	29%												
Strongly disagree	31%												
<p>If I witnessed an incident of harassment or discrimination, I would know how to report it and would feel comfortable reporting it</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither agree nor disagree</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly disagree</td> <td>5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	14%	Agree	53%	Neither agree nor disagree	18%	Disagree	10%	Strongly disagree	5%
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Strongly disagree	5%												
<p>If I witnessed a case of fraud, I would know how to report it and would feel comfortable reporting it</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Strongly agree</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>51%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neither agree nor disagree</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly disagree</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Strongly agree	17%	Agree	51%	Neither agree nor disagree	19%	Disagree	9%	Strongly disagree	4%
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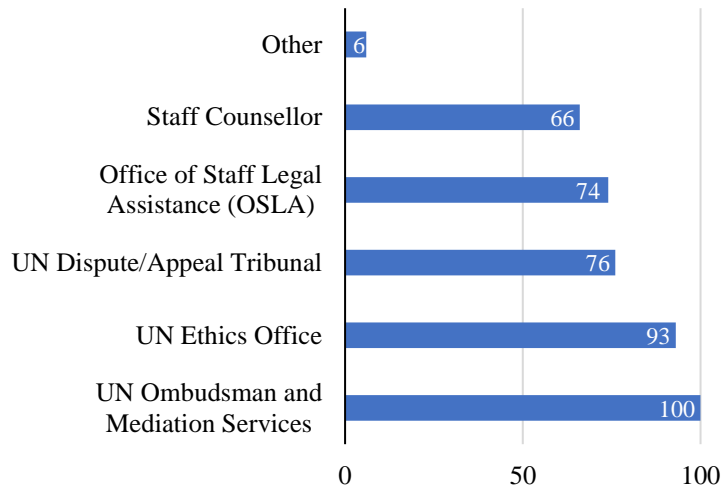
8. Staff-management relations



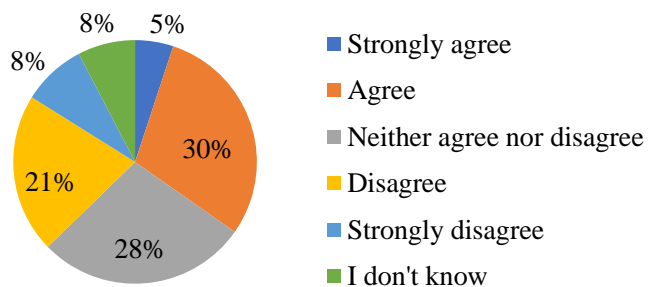
I think staff representatives are appropriately consulted by management in major decisions affecting staff



I am aware of the following modalities for formal and informal conflict resolution (Multiple answers accepted)

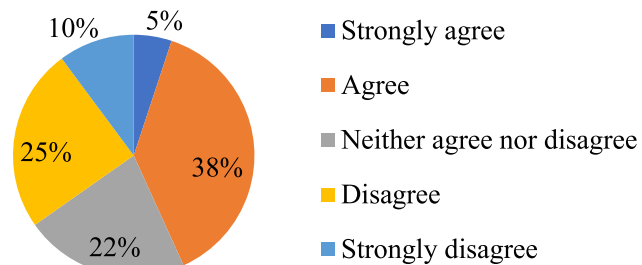


I think UN-Habitat provides staff with effective internal mechanisms and procedures to prevent and resolve conflicts and grievances at the workplace

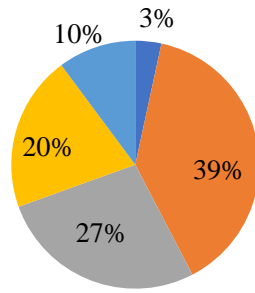


9. Knowledge management and sharing

I think UN-Habitat has adequate strategies and policies to ensure knowledge management and knowledge sharing both at headquarters and its field offices

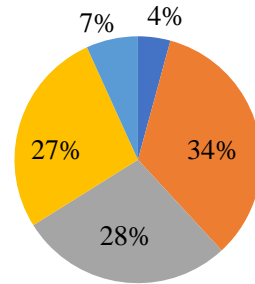


I think UN-Habitat is equipped with adequate technical tools to ensure proper knowledge management and knowledge sharing both at headquarters and its field offices



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I think the organizational culture is adequate to allow for proper knowledge management and knowledge sharing



- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree