

# Addressing workplace issues in UNICEF: A Roadmap on Where to Go and When

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A reference tool to guide all UNICEF Personnel on  
**where to go and when...**

## INTRODUCTION

The Ethics Office created this roadmap, in consultation with the Office of the Executive Director and all relevant internal stakeholders, as a reference tool to guide all UNICEF Personnel on **where to go and when for the following:**

### Obtain advice and Guidance

UNICEF Personnel may receive advice and guidance from various offices for a clearer understanding of their responsibilities, rights and options. The varying mandates of offices listed in this section is designed to allow for clear direction to personnel seeking advice and guidance on the respective topics.

### Reporting suspected misconduct and seeking protection against retaliation

In accordance with UN Staff Rules, all UN/UNICEF Personnel have an obligation to report any reasonable suspicion of misconduct. In this section, UNICEF's reporting procedures are explained, reflecting the policies on the disciplinary process and whistle-blower protection against retaliation.

### Contest a performance evaluation or an administrative decision

This section describes how UNICEF **staff members** can challenge a performance evaluation or contest an administrative decision that negatively affects their terms of appointment or conditions of service, including through the internal justice system.

## ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

- The Ethics Office (confidential)
- The Office of the Ombudsman for the UN Funds and Programmes (confidential)
- Peer Support Volunteers (PSV) (confidential)
- HR Business Partner or HR Offices in COs/ROs
- Policy, Employee Relations, Compensation and Social Benefits Team (PERCS)
- Performance Management and Career Development Section (PMCD) in DHR
- Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) (confidential)
- Child Safeguarding Unit



## ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

UNICEF Personnel may receive guidance and advice from various offices, for a clearer understanding of their responsibilities as international civil servants in avoiding conflicts of interest, addressing internal workplace disputes, understanding legal rights and procedures, and obtaining workplace counseling. The varying mandates of the offices listed below are designed to allow for clear direction to personnel seeking advice and guidance on the respective topics.

### 1. The Ethics Office (confidential)

#### When:

1) If a staff member needs confidential advice and guidance on professional ethical standards of conduct for international civil service, including:

- Employment related conflicts of interest and maintaining independence and impartiality ([CF/EXD/2012-003: UNICEF Executive Directive on Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest Statements](#))
- Engaging in outside activities ([CF/EXD/2012-009: Outside Activities](#))
- Accepting awards, decorations, gifts and honors ([CF/EXD/2012-008: Awards](#))
- Post-employment restrictions ([Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service 2013](#)) Français | Español | العربية

2) If a staff member needs guidance and support on protection against retaliation, as the Ethics Office has the responsibility to:

- Provide informal guidance and support on issues related to retaliation for those who seek it;
- Receive and keep a confidential record of all complaints of retaliation; and
- Conduct an initial review of complaints in order to determine whether allegations can be classified as retaliatory or threat of retaliation; and recommend to the Executive Director, preventative measures to safeguard the interests of the complainant and to prevent any retaliatory action as a consequence of engaging in a protected activity.

#### Where:

By e-mail: [ethics@unicef.org](mailto:ethics@unicef.org)  
 By phone: +1-212-326-7142  
 By visit or mail: **The Ethics Office**  
**UNICEF House, Room 582**  
**3 United Nations Plaza**  
**New York, NY 10017, USA**



## 2. The Office of the Ombudsman for the UN Funds and Programmes (confidential)

**When:** If a UNICEF contract holder needs confidential assistance about any kind of work-related issues, including those relating to conditions of employment, administration of benefits, managerial practices and interpersonal problems. In addition, both staff and management can approach the Office of the Ombudsman to seek mediation or other forms of third-party neutral intervention to prevent and resolve conflicts at all stages.

### Where:

By e-mail: [ombudsmediation@fpombudsman.org](mailto:ombudsmediation@fpombudsman.org)  
 By phone: +1-646-781-4083  
 By visit or mail: Office of the Ombudsman for  
 United Nations Funds  
 304 East 45th Street, Room FF-671  
 New York, NY 10017, USA

## 3. The Staff Counsellors and the Staff Wellbeing Team (confidential)

**When:** If a staff member needs confidential psychological support, consultations can be provided in person, or remotely, via e-mail, telephone or Skype. Staff Counsellors are trained professionals who provide confidential counselling for staff and dependents, conduct wellbeing missions and facilitate training. A Staff Counsellor can also assist with access to additional resources within the UN or with external mental health providers. There are Staff Counsellors in NYHQ, each regional office, and in some emergency duty stations

**Where:** [Link to staff counsellors contacts](#)

## 4. Peer Support Volunteers (PSV) (confidential)

**When:** If a staff member needs to speak confidentially with someone who is trained to provide guidance and support to their office colleagues, PSVs can help. They are not counsellors, but they are the first line of support in helping staff who are faced with elevated levels of stress, coping with loss, or dealing with a critical incident. PSVs will not mediate a conflict but will help staff reflect on their options and provide guidance in strengthening their coping skills. PSVs liaise with Staff Counsellors to improve overall wellness in the UNICEF workplace.

**Where:** To find your local PSV, contact your HR or Operations Officer, the Regional Staff Counsellor or the Staff Wellbeing Team in NYHQ.



## 5. HR Business Partner or HR Offices in COs/ROs

**When:** If a staff member needs advice and guidance on [HR policies](#), the staff member should be in touch with his/her HR Business Partner/HR Officer, who will be familiar with the HR policies. The HR Business Partner/HR Officer may need to seek advice from the Policy, Employee Relations, Compensation and Social Benefits team in New York, for an authoritative interpretation.

**Where:** [Link to Who's Who in HR](#)

## 6. Policy, Employee Relations, Compensation and Social Benefits team (PERCS)

**When:** If a staff member needs support and guidance on the interlinked pillars of work of HR policy, social benefits, and employee relations and compensation, the staff member could consult with the PERCS team. With respect to cases related to outside activities and awards, staff members may contact the PERCS team or the Ethics Office directly.

**Where:** [Link to PERCS team](#)

## 7. Performance Management and Career Development (PMCD) in DHR

**When:** If a staff member needs advice and guidance on performance or career management, then PMCD can provide individualized performance management, soft skills career coaching and useful guidance on career management.

## 8. Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) (confidential)

**When:** If a staff member needs legal assistance on employment-related issues, then OSLA can help. OSLA assists staff members in the appeal of administrative decisions and against disciplinary action. OSLA provides legal advice and guidance through dispute resolution processes, as well as advocacy services during the management evaluation process and before the UN Dispute and Appeals Tribunals.

**Where:** OSLA has offices in New York, Nairobi, Geneva, Beirut and Addis Ababa. You can request assistance here: <https://oslaw.un.org>, or visit the [website for more information: Link to OSLA website](#)  
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## 9. Child Safeguarding Unit

**When:** If a staff member needs advice and guidance on child safeguarding, which refers to measures taken to limit direct and indirect collateral risks of harm to children, arising from UNICEF's work, UNICEF personnel or UNICEF associates, then Child Safeguarding Unit can help. Such risks may include those associated with: physical and sexual violence and abuse; emotional and verbal abuse; economic exploitation; neglect of physical, emotional or psychological needs; harmful cultural practices; and privacy violations. The Unit coordinates safeguarding efforts and provides legal and policy expertise across UNICEF to assess accountability and policy gaps, ensure appropriate norms and standards, establish communications and information systems, and register safeguarding risks and incidents.

**Where:** [Link to Child Safeguarding Unit contacts](#)



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## **Reporting suspected misconduct and seeking protection against retaliation**

- Reporting suspected misconduct: Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI)
- Informal Resolution (only applicable to complaints related to Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority)
- File Request for Protection against Retaliation: Ethics Office



# REPORTING SUSPECTED MISCONDUCT AND SEEKING PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

In accordance with UN Staff Rule 1.2 (c), all UNICEF Personnel have an obligation to report any reasonable suspicion of misconduct. UNICEF's established formal procedures for reporting misconduct are listed below.

## 1. Reporting suspected misconduct: Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI)

**When:** If a staff member has any reasonable suspicion of misconduct of another UNICEF personnel, or any non-staff personnel failing to comply with obligations and standards of conduct applicable to their engagement with UNICEF, the staff member has the obligation to report. Reports of possible misconduct may be made anonymously.

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, sexual exploitation and abuse unlawful acts, fraud, corruption, failure to comply with child safeguarding standards, and attempting the above-mentioned actions.

### Where:

The staff member should report possible misconduct directly to OIAI:

By e-mail: [integrity1@unicef.org](mailto:integrity1@unicef.org)

By mail: **Director – Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI)**  
**UNICEF, 3 UN Plaza**  
**New York, NY 10017, USA**

### Reference documents:

- [UNICEF Policy on the Disciplinary Process and Measures \(POLICY/DHR/2020/001\)](#)
- [UNICEF Policy on the Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority \(POLICY/2020/002\)](#)
- UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special measure for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) ([English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#) | [Arabic](#))
- UNICEF Executive Directive on Policy Prohibiting and Combatting Fraud and Corruption (CF/EXD/2013-008) ([English](#))
- Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding Of Children (CF/EXD/2016-006) ([English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#) | [Arabic](#))
- [UNICEF Procedure for a Child Safeguarding Framework \(DFAM/Procedure/ 2019/009\)](#)

## 2. Informal Resolution (only applicable to complaints related to Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority)

**When:** In situations where UNICEF Personnel who believe that they have been a victim of discrimination, (sexual) harassment and/or abuse of authority, would like to resolve their concerns informally. The formal and informal processes are not mutually exclusive.

**How:** An informal approach offers victims the opportunity to resolve a complaint or grievance in an open, honest, non-threatening and non-contentious manner. This approach includes the following options:

1. Approach and notify the **alleged offender directly**, if the victim feels comfortable doing so, in an effort to stop their offensive behavior;
2. A victim may approach his/her supervisor/management who will provide information on the informal and formal options available and with the consent of the victim bring the matter to the attention of the alleged offender to prevent the reoccurrence of the possible prohibited conduct;
3. Consult the **Office of the Ombudsman for UN Funds and Programmes** for dispute resolution processes. The service of the mediators of the Ombudsman's Office is available for staff in all regions and their expertise cover varying scenarios; or,
4. Involve a neutral third party, in particular the Ombudsman's Office, who is able to facilitate a calm and respectful discussion between the parties and offer suggestions for a way forward.

### Reference documents:

- Office of the Ombudsman for UN Funds and Programmes Website ([English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#) | [Arabic](#))
- [UNICEF Policy on the Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority \(POLICY/2020-002\)](#)

## 3. File Request for Protection against Retaliation: [Ethics Office](#)

**When:** If a staff member has reported or provided information on misconduct or has cooperated with audits, investigations or oversight activities, then the staff member has the right to be protected against retaliation. If the staff member has a reasonable suspicion of actual or threatened retaliation for the above-mentioned reasons, then he/she should report to the Ethics Office.

**Where:** The staff member should report possible retaliation directly to the Ethics Office, using the [Request for Protection Against Retaliation Form](#):

By e-mail: [ethics@unicef.org](mailto:ethics@unicef.org)  
 By phone: +1-212-326-7142  
 By visit or mail: **The Ethics Office**  
**UNICEF House, Room 582**  
**3 United Nations Plaza | New York, NY 10017,**

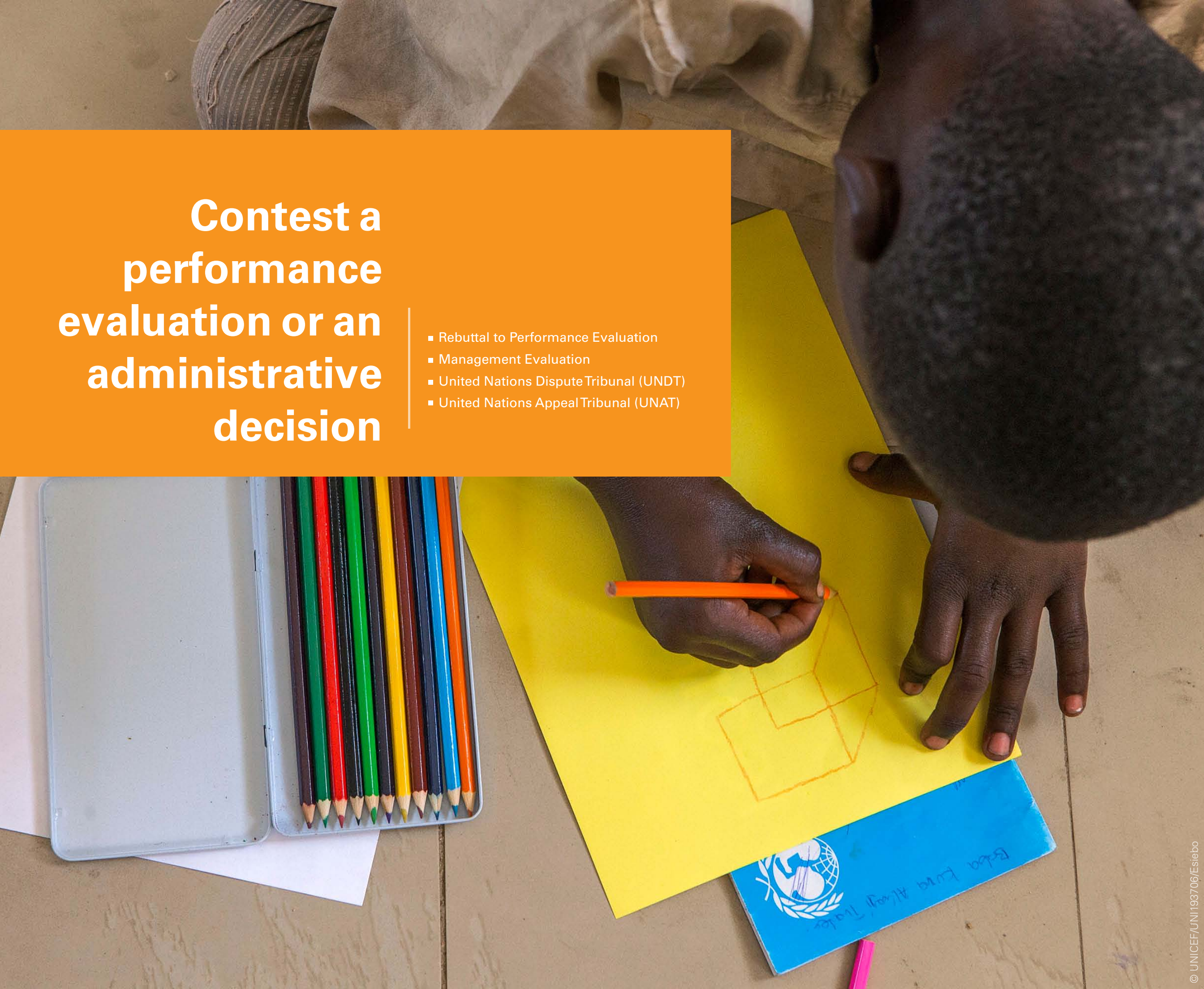
### Reference documents:

- UNICEF Policy on Whistle-Blower Protection Against Retaliation (DHR/POLICY/2018-001) ([English](#) | [French](#) | [Spanish](#))
- [Request for Protection Against Retaliation Form](#)

N.B. While the most common sequencing is to first engage in an informal process and to start the formal process if the former fails, this sequencing could be reversed for instance if the results of a formal investigation concludes that there was no misconduct, but recommendation is made for

# Contest a performance evaluation or an administrative decision

- Rebuttal to Performance Evaluation
- Management Evaluation
- United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT)
- United Nations Appeal Tribunal (UNAT)



## Contest a performance evaluation or an administrative decision

This section describes how UNICEF staff members can challenge a performance evaluation or contest an administrative decision that negatively affects their terms of appointment or conditions of service, including through the internal justice system.

Staff may seek assistance from the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) in pursuing any of the below options. At any point in the process staff may also ask the Office of the Ombudsman to intervene, should they so choose, in order to attempt to informally resolve the matter.

### 1. Rebuttal to Performance Evaluation

**When:** If a staff member is unsuccessful in his/her attempt to find a resolution to the disagreements regarding performance evaluation in line with the terms of the Administrative Instructions on Performance Management and the established criteria are met, the rebuttal reviewers will consider a staff member's rebuttal of his/her Performance Evaluation Report (PER) or Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

**Where:** This procedure is administered by the Performance Management and Career Development team of the Division of Human Resources.

#### Reference documents:

- For additional information on the rebuttal process, UNICEF Administrative Instructions on Performance management (CF/AI/2011-001 Amend. 2) ([English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#))

### 2. Management Evaluation

**When:** If a staff member believes that an administrative decision violates his/her terms of appointment and conditions of service and wishes to challenge the matter formally, he/she terms of appointment and conditions of service must request, as a first step, a management evaluation within sixty days after the staff member received notification of the administrative decision. These decisions can relate to the non-renewal or termination of an appointment, a denial of entitlements, a non-selection, or any other administrative decision. Decisions imposing disciplinary or non-disciplinary measures pursuant to UN Staff Rule 10.2 may be appealed directly with the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (see below) without first going through management evaluation.

**Where:** The staff member must write to the Executive Director to request for a management evaluation which will be conducted by the Deputy Executive Director, Management.

#### Reference documents:

- For more information on how to request a management evaluation, refer to [UNICEF Procedure on Appeals \(DHR/2020/005\)](#).

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This section does not apply to consultants and individual contractors. Such individuals should refer to the clause on "Arbitration" in the General Terms and Conditions of their respective contracts for additional information on the recourses available to them in case of disputes arising out of or in connection with their contract.

### 3. United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT)

**When:** If the result of the management evaluation is not satisfactory to the staff member, or if he/she would like to contest a decision imposing disciplinary or non-disciplinary measures, or a decision based on advice of a technical body, then the staff member can file an application to the UNDT, as a court of first instance. You can refer [here](#) to find more about the strict time limits to file an application to the UNDT.

**Where:** United Nations Dispute Tribunal Website  
([English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#) | [Arabic](#))

#### Reference documents:

- For additional information on filing an application, refer to [UNICEF Procedure on Appeals \(DHR/2020/005\)](#).

### 4. United Nations Appeal Tribunal (UNAT)

**When:** If either the staff member or UNICEF would like to appeal a judgement rendered by UNDT, then UNAT is the court of final appeal. UNAT also hears and passes judgments on appeals from decisions taken by the Standing Committee acting on behalf of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF).

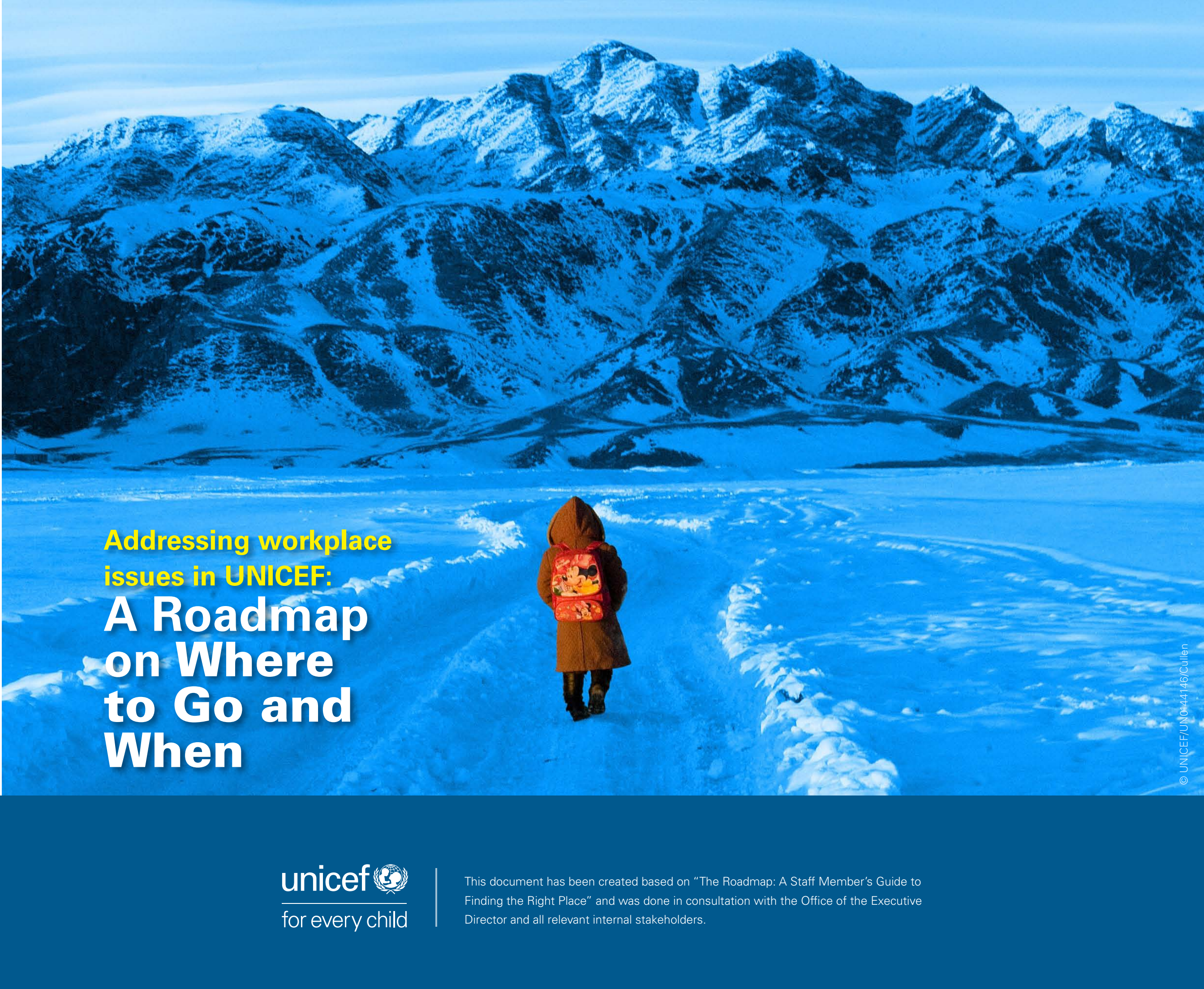
**Where:** United Nations Appeal Tribunal Website  
([English](#) | [Français](#) | [Español](#) | [Arabic](#))

#### Reference documents:

- For additional information on appealing a judgement and [UNICEF Procedure on Appeals \(DHR/2020/005\)](#).



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