

Mr. Achim Steiner
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26 November 2021

Follow up: Request for updates on anti-corruption actions taken in reaction to corruption allegations made in the UNDP/GEF Project, Standards and Labels for Promotion of Energy Efficiency in the Russian Federation

Dear Mr. Steiner,

Thank you for your response dated 11 August 2021 to our letter sent on 26 March 2021 as well as for sharing the report of the Management Accountability Review Panel and independent review.

Please find in attachment of this email, the letter sent by Transparency International Russia on 15 October 2020 regarding the case of Mr. Alexey Antropov and the investigation into the UNDP GEF Russian energy efficiency standards and labels project. We would appreciate a timely response to this letter as well as to the following four points as we feel they have not been fully addressed yet:

- We advise that UNDP follow international best practices and make public its vendor debarment list to ensure perpetrators of corruption and fraud are not concealed from public knowledge, especially as UNDP has been a champion of adopting a right to information policy as an international organisation. To keep the vendor debarment list not available to the public undermines what UNDP as an organisation has achieved in the field of right to information. It is imperative that the public has access to information to hold decision-makers and deviant actors world-wide to account for their conduct, to be able to work together on solutions, and to repair the damage done to the planet and to communities. We understand ineligibility decisions are confidential as per UNDP's Vendor Sanction Policy, but we again strongly urge that at least the names are made public so that deviant actors are not given the chance again to work with and have access to public funds again – could this suggested change be proposed for an internal review? We especially call on UNDP to revisit this policy, as the vendor debarment list was made public up until at least September 2020.

- We stress the important role of whistleblowers in ensuring the integrity and functioning of organisations such as UNDP. By reporting wrongdoing through internal channels, the competent authorities or, where needed, the public, so that wrongdoing can be addressed, whistleblowers help protect the public interest. In this vein, we would like to ask whether, UNDP Regional Technical Advisor on climate change mitigation, John O'Brien, who was involved in bringing to light the allegations of corruption within the Russia Energy Efficiency S&L project, is receiving whistleblower protection as per UNDP's integrity policies? If not, could you please explain why Mr. O'Brien has not been given protected status? The January 2021 independent review indicated that an independent speedy review of the two whistleblower cases (Mr. Dmitry Ershov and Mr. John O'Brien) should be conducted. Has this review been completed? If yes, could we receive the findings of the review?
- We fully support that **UNDP must play a vital role in gathering information and protecting those that deliver it, including whistleblowers.** Therefore, we again urge you to take up our offer to support improving the integrity systems at UNDP, especially in light of the [repeated calls](#) to improve the UN internal justice system and **commit publicly to critical reforms to improve UNDP governance systems, especially regarding ensuring whistleblower protections meet international best practice standards.**
- In light of the previous point, it came to our attention that in the August 2021 report on "*Independent advice on certain systems used by the United Nations Development Program to manage its Global Environment Facility portfolio*" compiled by EY reported that in 2020 the UNDP Ethics Office received 45 enquiries regarding protection from retaliation but protected a total of zero persons. Consequently, we are concerned to read about these statistics and to learn that this report was prepared without any discussions or interviews with a single whistleblower. We urge UNDP to redact this report and include perspectives of actual whistleblowers so that their voices can henceforth be included in the reforms of UNDP governance systems. This approach would be in line with UNDP's own principles on [Social and Environmental Standards](#).

As we understand the case of the Russia S&L project in the context of the UNDP Third Party Review of Compliance with GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards report (Agenda Item 4 – GEF/C. 61/04) will be discussed in the upcoming GEF Council Meeting taking place 6-10 of December 2021, we would appreciate a written response to this letter and that of

the letter dated from October 2020 in advance of the December GEF meeting, preferably by the 3rd of December 2021.

Kind regards,

Ilia Shumanov
Director General
Transparency International – Russia



Daniel Eriksson
CEO
Transparency International Secretariat

