



► Committee on Accountability

Annual report 2019-2020

In 2019, the Committee on Accountability completed its review of 1 case that had been referred in 2018. In addition, 2 new cases were referred to it by the Treasurer and Financial Comptroller (TR/CF) pursuant to Article 13.30 of the Financial Rules, which were completed during the year. In 2020, due to disruption caused by COVID-19 pandemic and the change of composition of the Committee, no additional cases were reviewed.

Case No. 1: The Committee examined a case of alleged fraud and corruption by an ILO official in a field office, involving procurement for printing and translation services over a period of five years. The Committee considered a detailed investigation report prepared by the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO) and its supporting documentation, including two statements of confession provided by the subject official. The Committee upheld the findings of the IAO investigation and concluded that the official committed fraud in the falsification of bids for printing services, the falsification of documentation to justify the issuance of ILO bank cheques, as well as collusion in the bidding for printing services in favour of one supplier. It noted the prolonged and systematic “cheque fraud” in a significant amount from 2014 to 2018 as admitted by the subject official, and that a number of further cheques had not yet been verified with the purported suppliers. The Committee recommended that the responsible officers consider whether or not it was in the interest of the Office for further verification of these cheques for recovery purposes. In light of the office policy of zero tolerance for acts of fraud, the Committee recommended that the matter be referred for consideration of the highest levels of disciplinary sanction, and that the Office take steps to ensure that the defrauded amounts were recovered to the extent possible, including through action at the national level if necessary.

Case No. 2: The Committee examined a case of alleged fraud by an implementing partner entity at a field office location, which had submitted false financial returns to the ILO under three implementation agreements in respect of development cooperation activities being run by the ILO field office, with the intention of defrauding project funds. The Committee considered a detailed investigation report prepared by IAO, including its supporting documentation, and upheld the findings of the investigation. It recommended that the matter be referred to the competent officers to more accurately quantify the extend of losses and pursue recovery of defrauded funds. It further recommended that consideration should be given to undertaking a verification of all invoices submitted by the implementing partner under the implementation agreements concerned, in order to fully quantify the extent of fraud and consequent loss, and

steps should be taken to report the implementing partner to the Vendor Sanction List maintained by the United Nations Global Market Place. Furthermore, internal control weaknesses revealed in the investigation should be fully reviewed in order to redress or remedy them to the extent possible so as to prevent perpetuation of similar fraud and losses, and appropriate training and information should be provided to ILO staff to ensure that the pressure to deliver does not override the need for proper verification and supporting documentation prior to authorizing a payment.

Case No. 3: The Committee examined a case of alleged fraud in relation to sick leave by an official in a field office, who submitted fraudulent sick leave certificates for the four different periods between 2018 and 2019 in order to benefit from paid leave from work. The Committee considered a detailed investigation report prepared by IAO, including forensic evidence obtained from the subject official's ILO computer, and upheld the findings of the investigation. It noted that the submission of the fraudulent sickness certificates enabled the subject official to obtain 16 days of paid leave from work, which constituted fraud. In light of the office policy of zero tolerance for acts of fraud, the Committee recommended that the matter be referred for consideration of the highest levels of disciplinary sanction, and that the Office take steps to quantify the monetary value of the defrauded days of paid leave and to take steps to recover that amount to the extent possible.

The members of the Committee for 2019 were Ms Van Leur (Chairperson), Mr Chughtai (FINANCE), Ms Beaulieu (JUR) and Ms Pedersen (HRD). Ms O'Neill (HRD) served as Secretary.

Date: June 2022



Alette Van Leur
Chairperson
Committee on Accountability

**Disciplinary sanctions are subject to separate procedures – the outcomes of disciplinary cases are published in an IGDS Information Note each biennium.*