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# 2020 Annual Implementation Report on the Policy on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses Secretariat management response

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## **Summary**

This document presents the Secretariat management response to the Annual Implementation Report on the Policy on Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses of the Independent Integrity Unit.

## I. Introduction

1. The GCF's Independent Integrity Unit (IIU) prepared the Annual Implementation Report on the Policy on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses (IIU Report), to be presented to, and considered by, the GCF Board for information at its 30<sup>th</sup> Board meeting (B.30). The IIU Report covers the period January to December 2020. This Secretariat Management Response presents the compilation of inputs from various offices within the Secretariat as part of the IIU consultation exercise

2. The IIU Report was drafted by IIU as part of their mandate "to provide a brief report to the Board on experiences and lessons learned in the implementation of this Policy two years following its adoption".<sup>1</sup> The Policy on the Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses (the Policy), states that "The IIU shall report on an annual basis to the Board. Before doing so, the IIU shall communicate the report to the Executive Director for information, who shall have the possibility to provide comments for consideration by the IIU and the Board" (Section XIII, para. 71). The Secretariat offers this clarification to the IIU Report, which sets out this requirement by indicating that IIU is responsible to report annually on the implementation of the policy in consultation with the Executive Director (page 1, para. 3)

3. The objective of the Secretariat's response is to provide insights and feedback regarding the implementation of the Policy, as well as pathways for the Secretariat to provide its support to the IIU as the implementers of the Policy. The Secretariat's response has been reviewed by its Senior Management Team.

4. The Secretariat's response to the IIU Report is provided as an addendum to the IIU Report.

## II. Secretariat comments

5. The Secretariat notes the importance of having comprehensive and effective whistleblower and witness safeguards against retaliation, especially considering instituting interim protective measures permitting the IIU to conduct its work expeditiously, as well as ensuring a safe and harmonious working environment in GCF. This has translated into, *inter-alia*, the Secretariat collaborating fully with the IIU in instances where interim protective measures for whistleblowers and witnesses were recommended by the IIU, during the reporting period, pending investigation, as well as keeping investigation information strictly confidential.

6. The Secretariat values the insights and observations of the IIU, responsible for implementing the Policy, as well as the measures they have undertaken to communicate the Policy internally. The Secretariat looks forward to collaborating further with the IIU to provide focused, regular training and advocacy for Covered Individuals especially for GCF staff and personnel, and appreciates IIU's undertaking to provide advice and guidance in ensuring that GCF Counterparties have effective whistleblowing and witness protection policies and practices in place.

7. The Secretariat also appreciates IIU's efforts to roll out the proposed multi-lingual 24/7 hotline service without delay, with a proposed operational date of 2022, in order to make reporting channels for Wrongdoing more accessible and available<sup>2</sup>.

8. The Secretariat acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of the IIU's regular and productive consultation and collaboration with the Secretariat throughout 2020 that has resulted in the imminent finalisation of its investigations standards that, pertinently, includes the time bar for completion of retaliation investigations.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision of the GCF Board B.BM-2018/21

<sup>2</sup> The IIU Report, page 2, para.13

### III. Conclusion

9. The IIU Report is useful in assessing the implementation of the Policy in 2020 for both the Secretariat and the IIU to consider and reflect on. The Secretariat is confident that the strong collaborative spirit cemented in 2020 with the IIU will certainly assist the Secretariat in supporting the IIU in its implementation of the Policy moving forward, such that Covered Individuals and Counterparties have the confidence to report misconduct without fear of retaliation. To this end, the Secretariat stands ready to work with the IIU in effecting the recommendations in the IIU Report<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The IIU Report, page 4, para.26