



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

28 October 2021

Dear New York-based Colleagues,

Further to my message of 27 August 2021, I wanted to provide you with an update on working arrangements at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City have continued to improve and stabilize, and the host country is further opening for international travel starting on 8 November 2021. In addition, the overwhelming majority of staff have reported that they have been fully vaccinated.

In light of these improved conditions, starting on 15 November 2021, the exception which currently allows staff members to telework up to four days per week will be discontinued. As of that date, requests for telecommuting may be authorized by managers in line with the policy on Flexible Working Arrangements, [ST/SGB/2019/3](#), and subject to the nature of the functions being performed, as well as to work exigencies. Managers are encouraged to afford flexibility to staff members in line with the lessons learned over the past 20 months regarding adaptability and flexibility in our working methods. Furthermore, the requirement for core working hours will remain suspended.

I want to once again thank all colleagues for your efforts during this unprecedented period. You have helped ensure the uninterrupted work of the Organization and support for Member States as needed. As we gradually prepare for the Next Normal phase, operational requirements will continue to guide working arrangements. Some functions will require staff to work from the office more often than others. Additionally, even if staff members have been authorized to telecommute, there will be times when operational requirements will preclude telecommuting, with an expectation to work on-site for as many days and for as often as required.

While inside premises at United Nations Headquarters, all personnel will be required to continue to wear masks in common areas, such as corridors, elevators, and restrooms. Masks are also mandatory in enclosed meeting spaces where the vaccination status of all participants has not been confirmed. However, vaccinated personnel are no longer required to wear masks while working at their individual workstations. Personnel who are not vaccinated will continue to be required, at all times, to wear masks throughout United Nations premises and to observe physical distancing wherever it is possible to do so.

All United Nations Staff Members  
New York


I wish to reiterate that reporting your vaccination status is an important and necessary measure to mitigate COVID-19 risks. All staff who have not already done so must report their vaccination status through the EarthMed portal immediately.

While conditions in New York City have improved significantly, the COVID-19 pandemic remains a concern for all of us. We must each do our part in reducing the risk of exposure for ourselves, our families, our friends, and our colleagues. This includes getting vaccinated and not coming to the office under any circumstances if one experiences symptoms related to COVID-19 or symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection such as the seasonal flu since the symptoms are very similar. I strongly encourage you to become vaccinated against the seasonal flu as well. These measures help to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and seasonal flu to others, thereby together reducing our risk and ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for all.

Throughout the pandemic, we have demonstrated that we can be agile and innovative in adapting to rapidly changing and uncertain conditions to deliver on our mandates – while keeping focus on the health and safety of our workforce. Let us continue to build on the lessons we have learned as we move forward together towards our Next Normal.

Thank you again for your outstanding efforts during these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

*w.th my warmest personal regards*  


António Guterres