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Information document

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INFORMATION REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNING BODIES

REPORT ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND GENDER BALANCE OF THE STAFF OF THE SECRETARIAT AND ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURES TAKEN TO REDRESS ANY IMBALANCE

ADDENDUM 2

COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

OUTLINE

In accordance with Item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) comments on the report by the Director-General on the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules (document 40 C/INF.4).

1. Document 40 C/INF.4 states that the method used to calculate geographical quotas **has not been revised for more than 15 years**, even though the Organization has undergone significant changes, particularly with regard to funding type. The question of funding type is linked to that of project appointment (PA) for which recruitment is insufficiently supervised by the Bureau of Human Resources Management (ADM/HRM). ISAU has often recalled that recruitment for these posts should be subject to the principle of geographical distribution. In this connection, while it is to be welcomed that the "Secretariat plans to work on proposals, in close consultation with Member States", it should be stressed that such work must also be done in consultation with the staff associations.



2. The document states that equitable geographical representation is a priority for the Director-General - it is also a priority for ISAU, which is committed to the principles that guide our Organization. From this point of view, her efforts to increase the geographical representativeness of under- or non-represented countries are essential and to be welcomed, particularly with regard to the Young Professionals Programme (YPP). However, we ask that further measures be taken to improve the current rate (52%), which is too high.

3. However, the concept of geographical representation is not limited to that of individual representation of Member States. It must also be geocultural and therefore include representation by geographical groups. From this point of view, it is not surprising that there is a lack of information in the presentation of the data provided by the Secretariat, which gives details on the distribution of groups at the Director level and above and within the sectors, **but does not provide a table on the total distribution of geographical groups**, including posts funded through extrabudgetary means, and their distribution within the different levels.

4. In the absence of such information from the Secretariat in the document, **ISAU has been forced to calculate the missing figures**. The latter reveal significant overweighting in Group I, which represents 44% of all staff. This overweighting is all the more significant as it **in excess** of the quotas calculated on the official basis of the Organization. The incompleteness of the information provided by the Secretariat is even more striking if it is also noted that in the document provided to Member States, **the Administration does not include staff members from the United States of America and Israel**, who alone account for 46 posts.

5. It must be noted that it is inconsistent to exclude the representatives of these two countries from the calculation. These staff members remain fully-fledged officials pursuing their careers, which has an impact on the overall dynamics of posts, both in terms of hiring and promotion. It should not be overlooked that the Secretariat's singularly exceptional approach to producing a table in which these two countries are presented as not belonging to any group. Such an assertion could suggest that these staff members are simply not part of UNESCO's budget, when in reality they are indeed financed by all Member States, especially since their taxes paid by the Organization to the American tax authorities are not reimbursed, thus further increasing the debt of the United States of America.

6. The exclusion of these two countries from their geographical group seems to us to be an inappropriate statistical process and even detrimental to the principle of transparency, which is well understood. Admittedly, it can be argued that the departure of these countries means that they are no longer included in the legally established, adopted and approved quotas. This complies with the letter of the texts. What about the spirit of the text, however, which aims to ensure optimal readability of the geographical distribution of the Secretariat? Even the most attentive reader may be led to misunderstand the very real fact that the corresponding officials did not leave along with their country. It is therefore surprising when the document states in paragraph 19 that, since January 2017, "with the exception of Group I, whose number of nationals has dropped by 15, mainly due to the withdrawal of the United States of America and Israel from UNESCO, there has been an increase in the nationals of the other groups: 11 for Group V(a), 7 for Group III and between 2 and 5 for Groups II, IV and V(b)".

7. How can such arithmetic be considered valid, however, if it fails to specify that while Group I has reduced by 15 posts in absolute terms, it must be taken into account that the United States of America and Israel accounted for 22 geographical posts? The reduction of 15 posts masks the fact that the group has actually increased by seven posts, since the staff of these two countries are still Secretariat officials. Far from decreasing, the **actual number of Group I nationals has therefore increased since 2017**.

Distribution by regional group of all Secretariat staff posts (regular budget and extrabudgetary, Professionals, Directors and above) – July 2019

Group	DDG	ADG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	P-1	Total	%
Group I [including United States of America and Israel]	0	2	9	20	69	108	153	102	23	486	44%
Group II	0	1	0	3	9	18	23	18	5	77	7%
Group III	0	2	4	6	10	22	29	31	3	107	10%
Group IV	1	0	2	8	22	57	58	49	3	200	18%
Group V (a)	0	2	3	7	19	45	58	31	2	167	15%
Group V (b)	0	2	1	8	4	13	22	22	1	73	7%
Total number of staff	1	9	19	52	133	263	343	253	37	1110	100%

Distribution by regional group of professional staff posts– July 2019

Group	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	P-1	Total	%
Group I [including United States of America and Israel]	69	108	153	102	23	455	44%
Group II	9	18	23	18	5	73	7%
Group III	10	22	29	31	3	95	9%
Group IV	22	57	58	49	3	189	18%
Group V (a)	19	45	58	31	2	155	15%
Group V (b)	4	13	22	22	1	62	6%
Total number of staff	133	263	343	253	37	1029	100%

8. The imbalances noted are cause for concern with regard to the principles of geographical distribution and must be taken into account by the Administration in its work on measures to ensure proper geographical balance within the Secretariat. Such measures can only take meaning and effect in the medium term, but it is important that they be implemented, otherwise a situation will be maintained in which the geocultural balance will be rendered meaningless in the everyday practice

of the Secretariat. It should also be stressed that the action in question concerns **not only new hires but also career advancements**.

9. Above all, **ISAU requires that the Administration undertake to provide comprehensive and transparent information**, without which Member States cannot take appropriate measures. The reputation of our Organization is at stake.

10. ISAU is keen to assure the Director-General and the Member States that it is fully prepared to contribute to the efforts required, given the significance of geographical distribution in terms of what our Organization must represent both internally and in the eyes of the world, which identifies UNESCO with the noble ideal of cultural diversity.