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FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THEIR PREVIOUS SESSIONS

PART IV

HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

ADDENDUM 2

COMMENTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

SUMMARY

C. Report on the geographical distribution and gender balance of Secretariat staff and measures taken to redress any imbalance

Pursuant to item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) submits its comments on human resources issues (document 212 EX/5.IV.C.I).

1. We note that there has been no improvement in geographical representation within the Secretariat, which remains at 79% and is far from the target of 85%. We regret noting that management continues to promise to make efforts, using almost exactly the same language from one report to the next, without any apparent effect.
2. According to document 212 EX/5.IV.C.I, "efforts will be continued and further strengthened, notably aiming to increase the level of representation of non-represented Member States, including through the Young Professionals Programme (YPP), launched in May 2021." However, these measures have never had the desired effect and no new measures have been proposed.
3. The statistics on recruitment show that this is an area requiring further improvement. We cannot hope to solve the problem of geographical imbalance when 75% of external recruitment concerns nationals of normally represented and over-represented countries, even though external recruitment is precisely the modality most likely to solve the problem. It would also be appropriate to give preference to appointments with the promotion of staff from under-represented regional groups. This measure would, in particular, allow for a rebalancing in appointments to grades such as P-5 and P-4.



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4. With regard to applications from non- and under-represented countries, we have been informed that only 25% of these meet the post requirements. However, it would be interesting to know how many of the candidates out of the 25% were actually appointed. It would also be useful to have information on the number of appointments made from the "talent pools" in order to assess the effectiveness of this type of measure.

5. It should be noted that, faced with the problem of geographical imbalance, the Bureau of Human Resources Management (ADM/HRM) has for many years been making efforts, including financial efforts, aimed at increasing the number of applications from under- or non-represented countries. Nevertheless, while this approach may seem intuitive to management, it has never been factually established that the problem is the result of a lack of candidates from these countries. At the very least, the criterion for the Organization's policy on the matter should not be the number of applications from these countries, but rather the number of appointments concerning them. The results are a reflection of this. ISAU reiterates that ADM/HRM must be more involved in the recruitment process.

6. The tables below, which we have compiled from management reports on staff movements circulated by ADM/HRM, show the appointments made between January 2020 and June 2021 (excluding transfers) by regional group. The data clearly show that there continues to be a tendency to recruit a majority of Group I nationals for posts as well as appointments with promotion. Group I appointments thus amounted to 42%. They amount to 38% if we include recruitment with promotion. In contrast, Group II appointments do not exceed 5%.

Appointments From 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021							
Regional group	ADG	D-2	P-5	P-4	P-3	P2	Total
Western European and North American States	-	2	2	6	10	3	23
Eastern European States	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Latin American and Caribbean States	1	-	-	1	2	3	7
Asian and Pacific States	-	-	-	6	1	2	9
African States	-	1	-	3	1	2	7
Arab States	-	-	1	3	1	-	5
Total	1	3	3	19	15	13	54

Appointments with promotion From 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021								
Regional group	D2	D1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	P-1	Total
Western European and North American States	-	2	8	3	4	-	1	18
Eastern European States	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Latin American and Caribbean States	-	-	3	3	1	-	-	7
Asian and Pacific States	-	2	3	2	-	1	-	8
African States	1	1	5	2	2	2	-	13
Arab States	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	4
Total	1	6	19	14	8	3	1	52

7. It is also surprising that, in terms of the appointment of former Professional-category project appointment (PA) staff, the rate for Group I is 46%. This type of imbalance supports our request for detailed information on PAs similar to the information provided on the use of non-staff contracts (212 EX/5.IV.B).

8. The information provided by ADM/HRM (Annexes I and IV of document 212 EX/5.IV.C.I) does not give a clear picture of the real overall circumstances pertaining to geographical distribution. We have therefore created the following simple and straightforward tables, which provide a clear picture of the situation. The imbalance in posts at the Director level and above, 35% of which are held by Group I nationals, also persists at the Professional level.

9. We regret that ADM/HRM has once again failed to provide information on the evolution of geographical distribution by regional group for staff at grades P-1 to P-5. The tables below show the persistence of imbalances, particularly in favour of Group I, whose nationals account for 34% of the total workforce (37% if the United States of America and Israel are included).

Geographical posts Distribution by grade and regional group											
Grade Group	DDG	ADG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	P-1	Total	Percentage
Western European and North American States	0	2	8	13	53	52	58	27	2	215	34%
Eastern European States	0	1	1	3	7	13	15	13	0	53	8%
Latin American and Caribbean States	0	2	2	3	10	16	20	20	0	73	12%
Asian and Pacific States	1	0	2	7	14	39	36	23	0	122	20%
African States	0	2	3	6	18	30	34	20	0	113	18%
Arab States	0	0	0	7	4	12	12	13	0	48	8%
Total	1	7	16	39	106	162	175	116	2	624	
Non-Member States											
United States of America	0	0	0	2	5	4	5	1	0	17	
Israel	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	

10. The preponderance of Group I is even more pronounced with regard to non-geographical posts, with a rate of 41%. Taking into account only geographical posts, which account for less than 26% of the staff, does not, therefore, reflect the Organization's "true" geographical distribution.

Non-geographical posts						
Distribution by category and by regional group						
Regional group	D/P		NO	GS		Total
	HQ	Field		HQ	Field	
Western European and North American States	159	106	0	306	143	714
Eastern European States	19	9	6	36	18	88
Latin American and Caribbean States	22	16	33	23	77	171
Asian and Pacific States	66	33	42	37	87	265
African States	25	40	101	65	113	344
Arab States	21	13	20	40	45	139
Total	312	217	202	507	483	1,721
Non-Member States						
United States of America	10	5	0	6	3	24
Israel	0	0	0	1	0	1

11. ISAU stresses once again that the Organization's stakeholders, the Member States and staff associations first and foremost, need to have information which is more precise and more transparent in order to be able to monitor these issues effectively. ADM/HRM's tacit refusal to accede to our requests for better information on geographical distribution is all the more disconcerting because the information provided on gender equality is of much better quality. For a change, project appointments (PAs) provide a striking example of what we can only interpret as a lack of transparency. Thus, while for gender equality we have information on all the holders of such posts, in the context of geographical distribution, we only have information on contracts of more than four years, that is, on 90 of the 182 PAs. A criterion relating to the duration of the contracts examined is not applied when looking at gender equality. As is the case regarding all other issues, regarding this issue, we expect management to demonstrate the same degree of transparency at all levels.

Gender balance

12. We applaud the progress made at the P-5 level, and we ask that management continue its efforts. The decrease in respect of the D-2 level must be corrected.

Report by the Working Group of the Executive Board on Geographical Distribution

13. ISAU has taken note of the report of the working group of the Executive Board centred on correcting the profound imbalance in geographical distribution at all levels. We welcome the group's conclusions on a problem which has gone on for too long and to which we have been drawing Member States' attention for several years.

14. Insofar as the working group's report corroborates the observations which ISAU has repeatedly made, we particularly welcome the following specific proposals:

- Requiring a minimum of 50% of candidates from non- or under-represented Member States when recruiting externally;
- Establishing performance indicators for senior managers and holding them responsible and accountable for the efforts made;
- Developing an outreach strategy targeting qualified candidates from non- or under-represented Member States;
- Funding internship programmes.

We are convinced that these measures will have a decisive impact on rebalancing the Organization's geographical distribution.