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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
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REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR 2017-2022

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS FROM 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) submits its comments on the Report by the Director-General on the implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022 (document 41 C/47).

1. First of all, we wish to denounce the excessive and incomprehensible delay in the publication of management's document on the Human Resources Management Strategy. This document was published after the General Conference had already begun, and the day before the meeting of the APX (Finance, Administration and General Questions, Programme Support and External Relations) Commission. It is clear that this lack of organization on the part of management prevents us from carrying out our work and in particular our main mission, which consists of expressing, orally and in writing, the concerns and demands of our colleagues before the governing bodies of the Organization. As the meeting of the governing bodies provides a unique opportunity to make our voice heard, it is regrettable that this could not be done under optimal conditions.

2. In the light of the content of management's document, we repeat in large part the comments we submitted at the last session of the Executive Board (document 212 EX/5.IV.A Add.2). We reiterate our deep regret at the absence of any reference to career development and staff motivation,



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which are essential to the development of an efficient and sustainable human resources management strategy.

Mobility

3. ISAU hopes that the mobility exercise announced will be transparent and that the recommendations made in the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) audit will be applied. ISAU will be all the more vigilant on this point since it has had to ask the Bureau of Human Resources Management (ADM/HRM) to intervene to put an end to attempts to circumvent the mobility exercise by means of transfers outside the mobility period, even though the exercise has already begun. ISAU reiterates that this exercise must be carried out transparently and fairly in order to gain the support of the staff. In this regard, the document refers to the Global Staff Survey to say that staff consider mobility to be an advantage, but it does not sufficiently emphasize that the same survey has demonstrated a decline in confidence in the mobility exercise. We reiterate that such an exercise absolutely must be based on the principles of efficiency, competence and justice, bearing in mind that the staff and the associations representing them have expertise in this area, which management would be well advised to take into account.

4. ISAU is fully in favour of allowing a staff member to apply for a more senior post in the context of mobility. We therefore support the proposed revision of Staff Regulation 4.4.2, which is as much a matter of fairness as of efficiency. We also see this reform as a step towards a return to internal recruitment. It should be recalled that the elimination of the phase of internal advertisement of posts has not been formally evaluated as such. While no one disputes the objective of speeding up recruitment procedures, it must be stressed that it has had an adverse impact on staff motivation.

Recruitment and outreach

5. We note with satisfaction that the recruitment of former Project Appointments (PAs) from January 2020 to June 2021 concerns 20% of the total recruitment of posts (geographical and non-geographical) at the professional and director level. ISAU would like efforts to be made to regularize PAs and temporary staff, in particular those individuals who have been with the Organization for more than five years.

6. It should be noted, again in the light of figures on geographical distribution, that outreach measures have had a limited effect. The geographical imbalances are not related to the number of applications submitted but to the fact that ADM/HRM does not have sufficient control over the recruitment process. With 75% of recruitment from normally represented or over-represented countries, it is clear that ADM/HRM does not exercise strict control over the recruitment process.

7. The excessive time taken for recruitment, as pointed out in the IOS audit report on the recruitment process, discussed at the 212th session of the Board, continues to concern us. The measures implemented so far seem to have failed, and we are still far from the 130-day objective. The instances of non-compliance revealed by the audit (panel members did not sign off on the appointment recommendations, important information was missing from recruitment files) are further proof of ADM/HRM's failure and lack of involvement and follow-up.

8. In this respect, the audit report clearly points to ADM/HRM's shortcomings in terms of planning, management and even involvement in recruitment. ISAU has been making this observation for many years and, while we are pleased to see it highlighted by IOS, we expect it to be followed by action. As we have repeatedly denounced, recruitment is in the hands of the sectors and ADM/HRM simply records the process. It is essential that recruitment be better managed at the level of ADM/HRM.

9. On the whole, ISAU supports the IOS recommendations, except those with regard to PAs, which we consider insufficient. We also reiterate our request that the recruitment of PAs be better managed by ADM/HRM and subject to the Appointment Review Board (ARB) and the principle of geographical distribution.

10. With regard to geographical distribution, IOS' finding that nine out of 20 geographical posts were recruited from over-represented countries undermines the hope of improving geographical distribution within the Organization. These figures corroborate our analysis of management's reports on staff movements, which show that from January 2020 to June 2021, 38% of appointments were of Group I nationals. We therefore welcome the IOS recommendation to submit decisions to appoint candidates from over-represented Member States to the Director-General for final decision.

11. The IOS recommendations are in line with our commitment to fighting the lack of transparency in the recruitment process. In this regard, we cannot help but be shocked upon reading paragraph 36 of the audit report, which states: "in some of the cases from our sample, important information relating to recruitment files kept in HRM was missing". This kind of observation once again demonstrates ADM/HRM' s insufficient involvement in recruitment; if ADM/HRM does not have all the important information, should we thus not conclude that its role is not important? From this point of view, the improvements promised by the adoption of the SAP SuccessFactors software system have not been achieved. Such a tool can only be successful if ADM/HRM plays a truly key role in recruitment; this requires ADM/HRM to have the necessary information.

12. Improving ADM/HRM's control over recruitment from the outset would help to reassure all the stakeholders that these processes are transparent. It would also help to dispel the legitimate suspicion that certain posts are earmarked, or even reserved, and that their descriptions are tailored accordingly.

Geographical distribution

13. The comments which ISAU submitted at the last session of the Executive Board with regard to document 212 EX/5.IV.C.I, on the subject of geographical distribution and gender balance, can be found in the annex to this document. We believe that these issues, which are important for the Organization, deserve special attention.

Learning and development

14. With regard to staff learning and development, we note once again that ADM/HRM has not considered it important to link learning and training with career development, despite our repeated requests to do so.

Internship programme

15. ISAU is in favour of the principle of paid internships because its implementation both would provide fair compensation for the substantial work carried out for the Organization and could significantly help nationals of non- and under-represented countries to carry out internships at UNESCO. We support the Executive Board's recommendation to encourage Member States to fund internship programmes.

Performance management

16. ISAU wishes to reiterate its profound disagreement with the new performance management policy, in particular with the abolition of the Review Panel and the Reports Board. This policy entrusts too much power to supervisors, especially in cases in which there is no second-level supervisor, which can be conducive to abuse. This shows the extent to which the 360-degree evaluation called for by ISAU is now more relevant than ever: it is essential to be able to assess the ability of supervisors to evaluate their staff.

17. Furthermore, the Global Staff Survey revealed that only 37% of staff surveyed found UNESCO's performance evaluation system to be effective. The fact that only one third of staff members considers the performance management system effective is a cause for concern and should give rise to extensive reflection not only on the management mechanisms in place but also on the relationship between management and staff.

18. ADM/HRM had provided assurances that a committee headed by the official responsible for legal matters within ADM/HRM would ensure that there was no abuse and that the policy could be changed if necessary. It would be advisable to evaluate this new policy and take appropriate remedial action. ISAU has concrete proposals in this regard and remains available to work with ADM/HRM.

Staff welfare

19. We welcome the efforts made by management with regard to staff welfare, particularly the measures taken to facilitate teleworking during the health crisis and the vaccination campaign implemented at Headquarters and in the field. We also appreciate the flexibility shown by management with regard to the carry-over of annual leave and the provision of a room for sports activities. We note the development of an occupational health and safety policy, in which we wish to be involved before its implementation. It should nonetheless be taken into account that the Global Staff Survey shows an 8% decrease in respondents who deem positive the measures taken to ensure staff safety at work.

20. In conclusion, for any human resources management strategy to be effective, it is essential that management fully include the field staff, who often feel neglected. In this regard, we believe that decentralizing the Ethics Office would help to better manage any ethical issues that arise and to promote a safe and serene working environment.

Executive Board
Two hundred and twelfth session

212 EX/5.IV.C.I Add.2

PARIS, 7 October 2021
Original: English

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**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.

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
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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	DDG	ADG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	P-1	Total	Percentage
Group											
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.