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

COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

ADDENDUM 2

SUMMARY

- B. 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**

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 220 EX/5.IV.B).



Job: 202403161

Introduction

1. ISAU takes note of the Administration's report on geographical distribution and gender balance, and welcomes the progress made.
2. We acknowledge the effort made to collect all data **over the same period**, as previously requested by ISAU. We note, however, in Annex IV, concerning "External recruitment between July 2023 and June 2024", the following statement: "Includes recent appointment decisions". This specification concerns us and raises questions. Does the external recruitment recorded concern only that conducted up to 30 June 2024, as the title implies, or does it also include recruitment made after this date, as this specification would seem to indicate? If **appointment decisions** made up to 30 June are included, yet some of those posts have been taken up beyond that date, this could result in the double counting of some new staff in the next report. It would be helpful to clarify this wording.
3. Regarding the set of criteria applicable for the analysis of geographical distribution within the Secretariat, in its report on human resources ([IOS/EVS/PI 207](#), Recommendation 2, March 2023), the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) indicated that other United Nations organizations and programmes classified countries according to world groups, such as the global South. Does the Administration plan to consider this possibility, which would give a different reading of the data and a better understanding of changes in geographical distribution?

Part I – Geographical distribution of staff

Overall representation

4. With regard to overall representation within the Organization, we welcome the increase in the total number of Member States represented, reaching 81%. However, it should be recalled that the objective of 85% set for 2022 has still not been reached ([41 C/Resolution 64](#)).
5. In paragraph 3 of its document, the Administration states that "the positive impact of recruiting candidates from non-represented Member States is often mitigated by separations (most of them unforeseeable) resulting in the non-representation of previously represented Member States". This makes it all the more essential to strengthen the recruitment of candidates from non- and under-represented Member States, so that any departures do not automatically affect overall representation.
6. It seems to us that the Administration is over-optimistic about the evolution of the overall level of representation as described in paragraph 8 and illustrated in Chart 3. While the number of under-represented Member States has fallen since 2016, for which the Administration can be commended, it is nonetheless clear that this number has increased over the last six months (January 2024 – June 2024), from 50 to 52. We urge the Administration to do everything in its power to ensure that this number falls again. In addition, there was an increase from 17 to 25 in the number of over-represented Member States between January 2016 and July 2024. This situation highlights the need for additional concrete measures to remedy the imbalances that have persisted for too long.
7. The presentation of data in Annex I of the Administration's document does not provide a clear overview of the geographical distribution of our Organization. We have therefore drawn up Tables 1 and 2 to make it easier to read the data on geographical **and** non-geographical posts. We deplore the absence of details concerning the distribution by grade of non-geographical posts, which nevertheless represent 72% of staff members. In non-geographical posts, the prevalence of Group I is even more marked than in geographical posts. In addition, there has been an increase in this same group compared to July 2023. Finally, in terms of geographical posts, Group I continues to dominate among the highest-level posts in the hierarchy, accounting for almost 50% (48% to be precise) of staff at levels P-5, D-1 and D-2. This proportion is even higher for non-geographical posts (53%).

Table 1: Breakdown of geographical posts by category and regional group (July 2024)

Geographical posts - breakdown by category and regional group											
Regional group	DDG	ADG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	P-1	Total	%
Group I - Europe and North America	-	3	7	16	59	57	71	28	1	242	35%
Group II - Eastern Europe	-	-	1	4	3	16	19	13	-	56	8%
Group III - GRULAC	-	2	1	3	14	19	23	17	1	80	12%
Group IV - ASPAC	1	-	1	9	17	50	38	21	-	137	20%
Group V(a) - Africa	-	1	2	4	20	32	36	24	-	119	17%
Group V(b) - Arab States	-	1	-	6	4	15	15	11	-	52	8%
Total	1	7	12	42	117	189	202	114	2	686	
Non-Member States											
Israel	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	

Table 2: Breakdown of non-geographical posts by category and regional group (July 2024)

Non-geographical posts - breakdown by category and regional group											
Regional group	D/P		Total	%	NO	GS		Total	%	Total	%
	HQ	Field offices				HQ	Field offices				
Group I - Europe and North America	190	120	310	53%		304	136	440	45%	750	42%
Group II - Eastern Europe	14	18	32	5%	15	34	15	49	5%	96	5%
Group III - GRULAC	32	20	52	9%	45	24	73	97	10%	194	11%
Group IV - ASPAC	70	27	97	16%	45	35	92	127	13%	269	15%
Group V(a) - Africa	19	37	56	10%	115	56	114	170	17%	341	19%
Group V(b) - Arab States	32	8	40	7%	20	41	52	93	10%	153	8%
Total	357	230	587		240	494	482	976		1803	
Non-Member States											
Israel						1		1			

Appointments

8. In paragraph 10 of the Administration's document, the latter highlights the achievement of "the target of recruiting 50% of candidates from non- and under-represented Member States to geographical posts" for the 2022–2023 biennium (emphasis added). However, this objective should not be limited to geographical posts. Table 3 below shows that when analysing staff movements for both geographical and non-geographical posts, only 37.5% of appointments are from non- or under-represented Member States, well short of the 50% target. Similarly, these Member States account for only 23% of promotions.

9. In addition, we note certain inconsistencies between the data contained in the Administration's report and the staff movements regularly published by HRM. For instance:

- Annex IV does not list any appointments in the Social and Human Sciences Sector (SHS), although we have recorded at least four based on staff movements;
- at least four other appointments (notably to the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector (PAX) and the Natural Sciences Sector (SC)) are not listed in Annex IV, whereas they do appear in the staff movements;
- 13 appointments appear in Annex IV that do not appear in the staff movements published by HRM. Is this owing to the addition of recent appointment decisions? As mentioned above, such an addition could lead to double counting in the next report and should be avoided.

The establishment of a single, clear and easily accessible database would be useful to avoid such inconsistencies and produce accurate statistics. It is also essential, for the sake of transparency and to facilitate the correlation of information, that the data supplied by the Administration is not dispersed.

**Table 3: Breakdown of staff movements
by level of representation for geographical and non-geographical posts**

(based on staff-movement data published by HRM from July 2023 to June 2024)

Level of representation	Type of movement				Total	%
	Appointments (including inter-agency transfers)		Promotions			
Non- or under-represented	15	37.5%	9	23.0%	24	30%
Over-represented	11	27.5%	15	38.5%	26	33%
Normally represented	14	35.0%	15	38.5%	29	37%
Total	40		39		79	

10. Table 3 of the Administration's report, which takes into account geographical posts only, shows that several sectors are well below the target of 50% recruitment from non- and under-represented Member States: Priority Africa and External Relations Sector (25%), Division for Communications and Public Engagement (25%) and the Office of the Director-General (33%). It would be useful to make public the reasons for such disparities between sectors/offices and the measures planned to remedy them.

11. We can only regret the significant increase (from 31% to 41%) in Group I representation among staff at Director level and above. Table 4 of the Administration's document shows six appointments for a single departure. This extraordinarily high rate makes it hard to believe that every effort has been made to achieve geographical balance. The decision to replace such strategic staff by recruiting almost half of all open posts from a single group runs the reputational risk of suggesting that UNESCO's recruitment practices are not in line with the standards applied by United Nations agencies. Table 4 below shows a clear increase (10.5 points) in the representation of regional Group I, with the percentage rising from 37% to 47.5% between July 2023 and June 2024. How can we hope to restore balance if we continue to recruit mainly from within the same group? What specific measures are planned to reverse this trend? We reiterate that a balanced geographical distribution can only be achieved through a recruitment policy that is carried out with resolve and transparency.

Table 4: Appointments to geographical and non-geographical posts (combined)

(based on staff-movement data published by HRM from July 2023 to June 2024)

Appointments (including inter-agency transfers)										
From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024										From 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Regional group	ADG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	Total	%	%
Group I - Europe and North America	1	4	1	4	4	2	3	19	47.5%	37%
Group II - Eastern Europe	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2.5%	11%
Group III - GRULAC	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	5	12.5%	11%
Group IV - ASPAC	-	1	-	-	1	2	1	5	12.5%	19%
Group V(a) - Africa	1	-	-	1	1	2	3	8	20.0%	11%
Group V(b) - Arab States	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	2	5.0%	11%
Total	2	5	2	5	8	8	10	40		

12. The same remark may be made in relation to promotions. Table 5 below shows that 33.3% of promotions are accounted for by Group I, an increase of over four points on the preceding period.

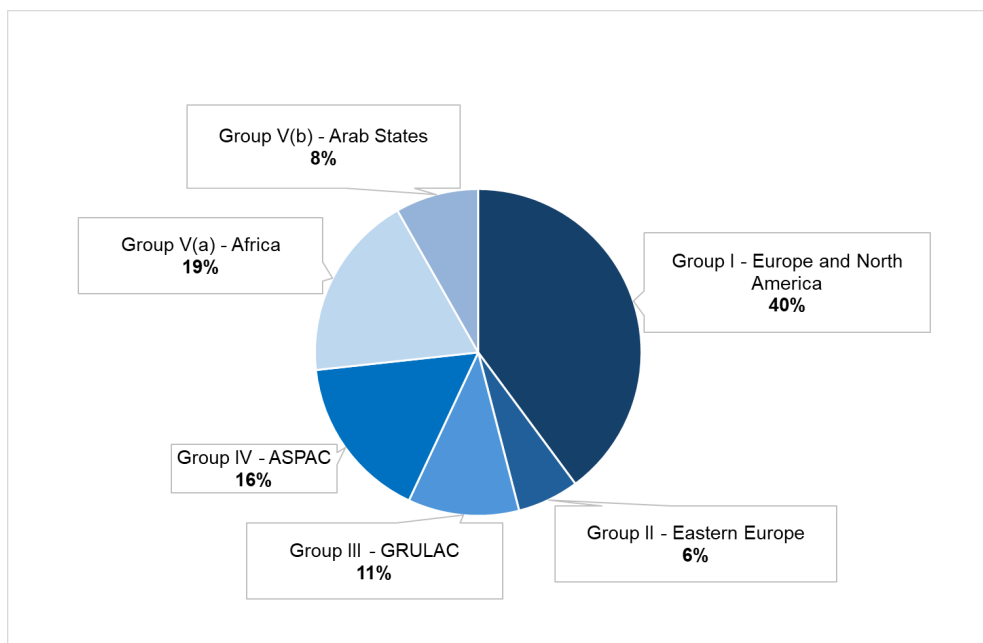
Table 5: Appointments with promotion to geographical and non-geographical posts (combined)

(based on staff-movement data published by HRM from July 2023 to June 2024)

Nominations with promotion										
From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024										From 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
Regional group	ADG	D-2	D-1	P-5	P-4	P-3	P-2	Total	%	%
Group I - Europe and North America	-	-	2	2	4	4	1	13	33.3%	29%
Group II - Eastern Europe	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	4	10.3%	16%
Group III - GRULAC	-	-	-	1	2	1	-	4	10.3%	13%
Group IV - ASPAC	-	-	3	2	2	1	-	8	20.5%	22%
Group V(a) - Africa	1	-	-	2	1	-	2	6	15.3%	16%
Group V(b) - Arab States	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	4	10.3%	4%
Total	1	0	6	7	13	7	5	39		

13. Lastly, ISAU has drawn up an overall chart illustrating the representation of staff members by regional group (geographical and non-geographical posts combined), which is an essential means of clearly visualizing the geographical distribution within the Organization. This chart shows the predominance of Group I, which accounts for 40% of staff.

Chart 1: Representation of all staff by regional group (June 2024)



Other measures for remedying the geographical imbalance

14. ISAU encourages the continuation of the Young Professionals Programme (YPP), and in particular the personal and professional support provided as soon as they join our Organization, as well as the Mid-Level Professionals Programme (MLPP).

15. With regard to the internship policy, we regret the delay in its implementation (scheduled for July 2024). We therefore ask that it be implemented as soon as possible. This measure, which is required for the rebalancing of geographical representation, is also essential to preserving — or even restoring — UNESCO's image as an employer that is concerned about the well-being of its staff and that applies the principles and values which it advocates.

Part II – Staff gender balance

16. The gender balance of UNESCO staff remains at a satisfactory level and should continue to serve as an example for other United Nations organizations and agencies. However, there is still room for improvement at P-5 level, where the proportion of women is only 43%. Similarly, women occupy only 44% of managerial and senior posts. We encourage greater efforts to improve this proportion, especially as parity had been achieved between 2018 and 2020.