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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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43 C

General Conference
43rd session, Samarkand 2025

43 C/46 Add.
28 October 2025
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Item **9.5** of the revised provisional agenda

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR 2023–2027

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS OF 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 Human Resources Strategy for 2023–2027 (document 43 C/46).

1. ISAU wishes first of all to denounce the incomprehensible delay in the submission of document 43 C/46 on the Human Resources Strategy for 2023–2027, which was published on 23 October 2025, just one week before the opening of the General Conference. This delay contravenes the provisions of Rule 11, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, which states that "All documentation required for consideration of the various items on the provisional agenda shall be placed in the possession of Member States and Associate Members, so far as possible, at least twenty-five days before the opening of the session".

2. We understand that certain decisions taken at the last session of the Executive Board may require adjustments or must take into account new elements. In the present case, however, there seems to be no justification for such a delay. Examination of the document reveals that, if we exclude

Job: 2501132E

the annexes already submitted to the Executive Board at its 222nd session, it consists of just two pages which simply reproduce a decision of the Executive Board. It contains nothing that would have required last-minute preparation or unpredictable revisions on the part of HRM. This detail is not insignificant: while the document involved little work and could have been published quickly, its delay has hampered the preparatory work of Member States and staff associations.

3. In addition to the formal and procedural shortcomings, the Administration's document should have provided more clarification or information on certain points that were the subject of specific debates within the FA Commission.

4. By way of example, no mention is made of the **proposed amendments to Staff Regulations 4.4.1 and 4.4.3**, even though the Executive Board decided, on the one hand, "to submit to the General Conference the following proposed amendments to Staff Regulation 4.4.1: Recruitment and appointments shall be made on a competitive basis following formal advertisement of ~~the vacant~~ posts for a minimum of one month" (document 222 EX/52, 222 EX/Decision 4.IV.A paragraph 5) and, on the other, to reject the proposal for a new Regulation 4.4.3 on the "roster-based approach to recruitment".

5. In this respect, we would like to reiterate that the failure to consult staff associations on the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations constitutes a clear breach of the procedures in force, namely provision 1.1.D, paragraph 11 of the HR Manual, which states that "DIR/HRM shall ensure that staff associations are consulted on proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations. He/she shall also obtain clearance by LA on such proposed amendments, before submitting them to the Director-General for his/her approval". We should also point out that prior consultation with ISAU would have enabled HRM not only to better prepare this initiative, but also to present a more coherent and sounder project to the Member States.

6. Indeed, in its written comments (annexed hereto, see paragraphs 29-31), ISAU had highlighted several grey areas and raised questions concerning the creation of the "roster-based approach to recruitment" – a measure which, while potentially relevant, required substantial clarification. In the absence of answers to these legitimate questions, the Executive Board ultimately rejected the project.

7. ISAU has submitted its detailed comments on the Director-General's report on the Human Resources Strategy (annexed hereto). We hereby submit additional comments which take into account the debates held at the 222nd session of the Executive Board in the FA Commission.

Remote internship

8. During discussions at the last session of the Executive Board on Item 4.IV.C "Geographical distribution and gender balance of the staff of the Secretariat", the Director of the Bureau of Human Resources Management (DIR/HRM) stated that internships were a good way to enter the Organization and mentioned that HRM were looking at possibilities for remote internship.

9. ISAU cannot but express its perplexity at such a statement. In fact, as we pointed out in our written comments (documents 222 EX/4.IV.A.Add, paragraph 13 and 222 EX/4.IV.C.Add, paragraph 18), the remote internship option, which had initially featured in the draft policy on the UNESCO Internship Programme, **had been removed**. This had been done without consulting staff associations when the first phase of the policy was officially published in September 2025 (Administrative Circular AC/HR/90).

10. In this context, it would be useful for HRM to clarify its position. How is it possible that a measure that was ruled out less than two months ago could now be presented as a potential solution? This development calls for reflection on the coherence of the decision-making process and the way in which guidelines are communicated to Member States and staff associations. We therefore request official confirmation of the integration of remote internship into the policy on the UNESCO Internship Programme.

11. DIR/HRM also mentioned the forthcoming implementation of the second phase of the internship reform, including the introduction of a monthly allowance. ISAU supports this measure, which is a necessary step towards a more equitable geographical distribution and recognition of the contribution of all staff working at UNESCO. It is important to recall that the implementation of this policy had been announced for July 2024 (document 219 EX/5.III.A, paragraph 4). We encourage the Administration to implement this reform as soon as possible, while maintaining an open and constructive dialogue with staff associations.

Expanded 360-degree feedback

12. ISAU welcomes the announcement by DIR/HRM of the launch of an **expanded** 360-degree feedback for managers before the end of the year in response to Member States' concerns in light of the results of the UNESCO Employee Engagement Survey 2024. The introduction of such a 360-degree assessment framework is a welcome step forward. It will enable a more comprehensive, fair and collaborative assessment of performance, while contributing to a healthier working environment. However, the 360-degree feedback will only have a real impact if it is applied to a significant number of managers, ideally all of them.

Conclusion

13. The Administration's failure to consult staff associations in recent processes reflects a lack of transparency that compromises the legitimacy of reforms, undermines confidence in governing bodies and reveals flaws in the planning and governance of human resources policies. A transparent and balanced management of UNESCO's human resources cannot be ensured without the consultation and active participation of the staff associations. This consultation must remain at the heart of our Organization's social dialogue and good governance.

14. Beyond its regulatory basis, consultation with the staff associations reflects a sound administration, respectful of its staff and their rights. The Administration seems to perceive our involvement as a constraint. We regret this because we see it, on the contrary, as a guarantee of staff protection, promotion of social dialogue and respect for the transparency of Member States' discussions.

15. Finally, we would like to thank the Members of the Executive Board for their attentiveness and commitment to constructive dialogue. ISAU endeavours to ensure that its comments are formulated with the utmost objectivity. They are positive when the Administration's actions and statements are clearly in the interests of UNESCO, its Member States and its staff. They are critical when these same actions or statements fail to meet the requirements of transparency, consistency and accountability expected in an organization of this stature. Our contributions are part of a constant drive to strengthen institutional governance, support relevant reforms and ensure that decisions taken are commensurate with UNESCO's ambitions.

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222 EX/4.IV.A Add.

Executive Board
Two hundred and twenty-second session

PARIS, 2 October 2025
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Item **4** 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

COMMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

SUMMARY

A. Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027

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 222 EX/4.IV.A).

1. ISAU takes note of the Administration's document on the follow-up to the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027. Although identified as a management tool, this document gives the impression of a Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) in need of renewal, repeating observations already made in previous reports without providing concrete measures or a clear strategic vision. In a context marked by the announced withdrawal of the United States of America, a more proactive and innovative stance would have been expected from HRM.

2. Furthermore, the lack of clarity in the annexes prevents any rigorous analysis of the actual progress made. This exercise seems to be more about administrative compliance – ticking boxes – than a genuine human resources management strategy based on measurable objectives and tangible results.

3. Finally, the late submission of draft revisions to regulations and the hasty publication of circulars without prior consultation of the staff associations, on the eve of this session of the

Executive Board, attest to worrying flaws in the planning and governance of the HRM process. These practices undermine the quality of social dialogue and weaken the legitimacy of the reforms proposed.

4. As previously denounced by ISAU, HRM continues to hide behind the budget argument. Lack of funding cannot be used as a permanent excuse; there are many low-cost measures which could improve the situation (telecommuting away from the duty station; flexible working hours; better compliance on the part of the Administration with its own rules and procedures in order to avoid high costs associated with the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal [ILOAT]; the review of ineffective policies, such as the mobility programme, whose results are not conclusive; and so on).

5. Even more worryingly, the document does not propose any measures for dealing with the critical problems which we reported, and which were confirmed by the Ethics Office (ETH) (221 EX/30) and by the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) (221 EX/29) in their respective 2024 reports: harassment, an unhealthy working climate, loss of staff trust. This omission undermines HRM's credibility.

6. Thus, while HRM claims to pursue its four strategic aims "at a steady pace", this claim is contradicted by the number of aims not achieved, as demonstrated in the road map (Annex I). The findings contained in the 2025 MOPAN (Multilateral Performance Network) assessment report[1] confirm this discrepancy: "UNESCO's progress [...] has been notably slow, particularly in field network reform, human resources management, and the deployment of core digital platforms".

Strategic Aim 1: Attract and retain talent and expertise

7. The organization of induction workshops, as mentioned in paragraph 4 of the document in question, remains largely insufficient for addressing chronic weaknesses in workforce planning. There have been no responses or concrete measures to address the findings published in the MOPAN and Ethics Office reports, particularly with regard to recruitment:

- In its report (figure IV, p. 4), the Ethics Office reveals that conflict-of-interest issues related to recruitment constitute the category of third-most frequently handled cases.

- The 2025 MOPAN assessment report (p. 41) states that the extreme centralization of recruitment decisions on professional-level assignments by the Director-General is "highly unusual" and "has led to delays in recruitment".

8. ISAU would like to point out the recurring problems associated with recruitment and performance management: lack of transparency, suspicions of nepotism, tailor-made vacancy notices, biased interviews, the nearly complete impossibility of contesting performance evaluations, absence of the staff members concerned from meetings of the Performance Review Board (PRB).

9. With regard to the performance management framework, we take a positive view of the Performance Insights series. We look forward to the conclusions and recommendations of the IOS audit of the performance management framework. We already know that the reform will have to be structural. As the Appeals Board pointed out in its 2024 annual report (initial version), the absence of a competent body to review "partially meets expectations" evaluations requires a review of the policy.

10. ISAU once again stresses the importance of establishing a link between training, rewarding good performance and career development. We therefore recommend:

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[1] *MOPAN Assessment Report: UNESCO*, 8 July 2025, p. 57.

- A reform of the performance management framework which ensures transparency and effective remedy;

- The re-establishment of the Evaluation Committee and the Reports Board;

- The introduction of 360° evaluations for all managers;

- The introduction of concrete incentives (e.g., additional leave for exceptional performance, as at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

Strategic Aim 2: Promote inclusion and diversity by achieving in particular an equitable geographical distribution and gender balance

11. We welcome the development of the HR Dashboards platform, which is essential for data transparency.

12. ISAU welcomes measures to include persons with disabilities and remains ready to work closely with HRM on this issue. However, we emphasize that such measures should not depend on "the availability of resources"; reasonable accommodation is a right, not a budgetary option.

13. The internship policy also illustrates this lack of rigour. It is strange to have to note that this initiative, announced at the 219th session of the Executive Board for implementation in July 2024, will only be **partially** implemented in October 2025. The elimination of the remote internship option and the unjustified deferral of the monthly allowance, inter alia, continue to increase geographical imbalances. These changes in the implementation of this policy are all the more problematic in that they were decided by HRM without consulting the staff associations or Young UNESCO.

Strategic Aim 3 – Adapt for the future

14. The parental leave policy and the policy on daily breaks for breastfeeding parents are still "pending [...] publication". This inertia is incomprehensible; if transitional measures already granting these benefits are applicable, why wait until the approval of document 43 C/5 to formalize their adoption?

Strategic Aim 4 - Attain better results and impact

15. HRM claims that it "continues to advance" initiatives in mental health, well-being and career development. However, this assertion is called into question by the UNESCO Employee Engagement Survey 2024, as well as by the reports of the Ethics Office and IOS.

16. Indicators are down sharply compared to 2021: -14% for perception of UNESCO's attention to well-being, -6% for support for dealing with stress, -8% for work-life balance. These figures, well below United Nations system standards, demonstrate the urgent need for a strategy specifically dedicated to mental health, aligned with the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy.

17. In general, HRM downplays the results of the UNESCO Employee Engagement Survey 2024, which are alarming compared to those produced in 2021:

- Only 59% of employees recommend UNESCO as a good place to work (versus 70% in 2021);

- A 7% drop in mental health and well-being;

- An 11% drop with regard to transparent and effective information-sharing;

- Only 21% see real career opportunities;

- 31% feel supported in managing stress (versus 37%);
- 36% feel that UNESCO helps them strike a work-life balance (versus 44%);
- A 10% drop in confidence that management will act in response to the survey results (-24% compared with the reference median);
- An 11% drop in the effectiveness of the geographical mobility programme in terms of career development.

18. These results paint a worrying picture: while our colleagues are committed and proud of their mission (94% feel responsible for their tasks, 86% understand their contribution), they do not seem to receive the institutional support necessary. This discrepancy highlights persistent weaknesses in the structures of leadership and management, whose inability to create a safe and fair working environment continues to affect staff morale.

19. The Ethics Office and IOS, in their respective reports, confirm this deterioration:

- 55 claims in 2024 (versus 35 in 2023);
- 26 cases substantiated after investigation (versus 6 in 2023);
- 22 cases of moral harassment (versus 15 in 2023);
- 57% increase in allegations recorded by IOS in one year.

20. In this context, holding a few discussion meetings, however well intentioned, does not constitute a sufficient response. It is now essential that the Organization adopt concrete structural measures: credible disciplinary mechanisms, reinforced protection systems for victims, and the reform of managerial practices. The sheer scale of these figures demands action equal to what is at stake.

21. To demonstrate its commitment to concretely improving staff well-being, the Administration could start by implementing simple, low-cost, high-impact measures. These – accessible and immediately feasible - actions would constitute a clear sign of commitment to a healthier and fairer working environment: telecommuting away from the duty station (e.g., a maximum of 60 days per year), compressed or staggered working hours, and so on. These reforms could be implemented without delay. It bears noting that UNESCO is still the only organization in the United Nations system to prohibit telecommuting away from the duty station, a position which is difficult to reconcile with the principles of flexibility and adaptability which the Organization also promotes. This restriction contributes directly to the negative results reflected in the survey with regard to work-life balance, and demands an urgent review of current practices.

22. As far as learning and career development are concerned, we lament the fact that the 360° evaluation exercise involved only 14 additional participants. This was a significantly low figure given the significant managerial shortcomings identified.

Regulatory changes

23. ISAU expresses its deep concern over the presentation of a regulatory reform (Regulation 4.4.1 and new Regulation 4.4.3 of UNESCO's Staff Regulations and Staff Rules) to the Executive Board without prior consultation of the staff associations. This is a clear breach of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual (provision 1.1.D, paragraph 11), which explicitly states that "DIR/HRM shall ensure that the Staff Associations are consulted on proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations. He/she shall also obtain clearance by LA on such proposed amendments, before submitting to the Director-General for his/her approval ".

24. Compliance with this procedure is not a formality; it is a fundamental principle of participatory governance and social dialogue. By omitting this step, the Administration is weakening the legitimacy of the reform process and compromising trust between management authorities and staff representatives. Such an omission, in an area as sensitive as statutory provisions, can only be interpreted as a breach of the established normative framework. It calls for immediate clarification, as well as a firm commitment to following consultation procedures in the future.

25. In addition, we have been informed by HRM that an addendum will be submitted at this session of the Executive Board in order to present the draft **amendment to the Statutes of the Appeals Board**. At the time of writing, said addendum had not yet been published. Nonetheless, ISAU already wishes to express its strong opposition to the non-consideration of Recommendation 2 of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) (JIU/REP/2023/2) concerning the introduction of a provision for suspension of action of contested decisions at the pre-tribunal stage[2].

26. At meetings of the Advisory Council on Personnel Policies (ACPP), in which ISAU participated as an observer, and in our written comments submitted to HRM, we expressed our strong opposition to not taking this recommendation into account in the working document. However, the draft revision initially submitted to the ACPP explicitly included this suspension measure. Despite our request, HRM categorically refused to work on the initial document, thus depriving the ACPP of a debate on this subject.

27. The reason given by HRM for excluding the measure was that the Administration does not have the resources to implement such a mechanism. It should be noted that the JIU report was published in **early 2023**. More than two years later, such an argument is unacceptable. Moreover, why wait until one month before the opening of the session of the Executive Board to submit this draft to the ACPP? Rushing and putting pressure on the ACPP, citing the risk that the other recommendations will not be implemented quickly if the draft is not submitted at this session, show not only a lack of rigour, but also a certain contempt on the part of HRM.

28. The JIU's recommendations are the result of in-depth work and are based on solid grounds. In paragraph 118 of its report, the JIU explicitly states that the "implementation of certain decisions while the contested decision is still pending judgment can cause irreparable damage, as the organization could be obliged to pay compensation" (emphasis added). The introduction of a suspension measure, therefore, would not only provide an essential guarantee for staff, but also serve the Organization's interests, particularly its financial ones. In this respect, it bears recalling that, from January 2025 to date, the compensation which the Organization has had to pay, pursuant to ILOAT decisions, amounts to over US $270,000.

29. ISAU acknowledges certain advantages of the roster-based approach to recruitment, including the possibility of encouraging internal candidates and reducing recruitment times. However, these advantages require strict, transparent oversight. Several key questions remain unanswered: For how long will applications be valid? Who will manage these candidate pools and according to what criteria will they do so? Which posts will be affected, and on what basis will they be selected?

30. In the absence of clear criteria and solid guarantees, such a system would instead risk exacerbating existing biases and limiting transparency.

31. Finally, it is imperative that recruitment conducted via this mechanism continue to be subject to examination by the ARB (Appointment Review Board). Any dispensation from this control would undermine transparency and procedural guarantees. In this respect, we wish to point out that Project

[2] "The executive heads of United Nations system organizations who have not yet done so should, by the end of 2025, introduce into their regulatory frameworks a provision for suspension of action of contested decisions at the pre-tribunal stage, ex officio or upon the appellant's request, in cases of prima facie unlawfulness of the decision, error of fact, particular urgency or when implementation of the decision could cause irreparable damage; or propose the introduction of this provision for decision to their legislative organs or governing bodies."

Appointments (PAs) and temporary posts are not subject to examination by the ARB, and thus remain somewhat opaque.

Conclusion

32. Generally speaking, there is a worrying gap between the institutional rhetoric promoted by HRM and the reality experienced by staff, as revealed by converging data from the survey, the Ethics Office, IOS and the Appeals Board. This discrepancy undermines the credibility of the commitments made and fuels a sense of mistrust within the Organization.

33. In this context, it is essential that guarantees be given as to the timetable for deployment of the policies announced. The chronic delays observed in the implementation of HRM initiatives raise questions as to their actual feasibility and the Administration's ability to translate its intentions into action. The budget factor, often invoked, cannot justify inertia. What we expect today are tangible signs of a real desire to improve working conditions, through concrete, consistent and sustained measures.

34. Finally, ISAU calls on HRM to fulfil its obligation to consult staff associations, to implement concrete measures without delay, and to apply a clear and transparent methodology. Otherwise, the confidence of staff and Member States in UNESCO's human resources management will continue to erode, to the detriment of the Organization's credibility.

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Item **9.5** of the agenda

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY 2023–2027

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

CORRIGENDUM

Paragraph 12 should read as follows:

12. ISAU welcomes the announcement by DIR/HRM of the launch of an expanded 360-degree ~~feedback~~ **evaluation (and not a simple *feedback*)** for managers before the end of the year in response to Member States' concerns in light of the results of the UNESCO Employee Engagement Survey 2024. The introduction of such a 360-degree ~~assessment~~ **evaluation** framework is a welcome step forward. It will enable a more comprehensive, fair and collaborative assessment of performance, while contributing to a healthier working environment. However, the 360-degree ~~feedback~~ **evaluation** will only have a real impact if it is applied to a significant number of managers, ideally all of them.

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43rd session, Samarkand 2025

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HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY 2023-2027

OUTLINE

Source: 221 EX/Decision 5.III.A, 222 EX/Decision 4.IV.A

Background: UNESCO's Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027 was endorsed by the General Conference at its 42nd session in 42 C/Resolution 65. By the same Resolution, the General Conference requested the Director-General to report to the Executive Board twice yearly on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027.

Subsequent Executive Board decisions - 221 EX/Dec.5.III.A and 222 EX/Dec.4.IV.A – requested the Director-General to report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027 to the General Conference at its 43rd session and to present a proposal to consider transitioning to an annual report to allow for a more comprehensive and strategic overview of the prior year's achievements and challenges, and to present such an annual report thereafter to the Executive Board at its spring session.

Purpose: The General Conference is invited to take note of the report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027, presented to the Executive Board (document 222 EX/4.IV.A) and to adopt a resolution endorsing the transition from the current twice-yearly report to an annual report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027, with effect as from its 224th session.

Decision required: Paragraph 5

Job: 2501093E

Background

1. By 42 C/Resolution 65, the General Conference endorsed, at its 42nd session, UNESCO's Human Resources (HR) Strategy for 2023-2027 and requested the Director-General to report to the Executive Board twice yearly on its implementation.

2. In line with this reporting requirement, four progress reports on the implementation of the HR Strategy have been submitted to the Executive Board: 219 EX/5.III.A (spring 2024), 220 EX/5.IV.A (autumn 2024) and 221EX.5.III.A (spring 2025) and the most recent 222 EX/4.IV.A (autumn 2025). The detailed roadmap (updated to Q3. 2025) as well as updated strategic overview of key achievements and initiatives undertaken since the endorsement of the Strategy in November 2023 are annexed to this document.

3. By 221 EX/Decision 5.III.A and 222 EX/Decision 4.IV.A, the Executive Board endorsed the proposal to transition from the twice-yearly reporting requirement to an annual reporting cycle with a view to optimizing resources and enhancing strategic focus by allowing for a more comprehensive report of the prior year's achievements and challenges. Such an approach would allow for a more efficient use of human resources enabling greater attention to be directed towards implementation and impact. It would also better align with other strategic HR reporting cycles such as the annual autumn report on geographical distribution and gender balance of staff in the Secretariat.

4. The General Conference is therefore invited to endorse the proposal to consider transitioning to an annual report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027, to be presented at each spring session of the Executive Board, as from its 224th session.

Proposed draft resolution

5. In light of the above, the General Conference may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The General Conference,

Recalling 42 C/Resolution 65, 221 EX/Decision 5.III.A and 222 EX/Decision 4.IV.A,

Having examined document 43 C/46,

1. *Takes note* of the report therein on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027;

2. *Endorses* the proposal to transition from a twice-yearly report to an annual report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027;

3. *Requests* the Director-General to submit the annual report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027 to the Executive Board at its 224th session, and thereafter at each of its spring sessions.

ANNEX I

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR 2023-2027 : ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION - ANNEX I

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at September 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4	2027 Q1	2027 Q2	2027 Q3	2027 Q4
AIM 1 - Key Objective 1. Develop a talented & qualified workforce that can deliver the UNESCO mandate effectively.																		
1. Systematic workforce planning with Sectors	**T.1**: Workforce planning guidelines issued and communicated to Sectors & Field Offices.																	
	T.2: HR Plans for Programme & Support Sectors including PAX (Field Coordination) in place (C/5 preparation).																	
2. Deliver an effective recruitment and outreach strategy	**T.1**: Increase in % of applicants from non- and under-represented countries prescreened.																	
	T.2: 75% of all positions meeting the target timeline of 130 days.																	
	T.3: UNESCO Careers website available in at least one other official language.																	
3. Establish in-house talent pools including leadership pools	**T.1**: Talent pool/roster approach for Field Directors/Heads defined.																	
	T.2: Talent pool/roster approach for Field Directors/Heads implemented.																	
4. Develop 3 key/critical training programmes for upskilling the workforce	**T.1.**: Minimum 2 soft skills programmes delivered per year.																	
	T.2: average of 80% satisfaction rating amongst participants successfully completing the programmes.																	
5. Update learning policy	**T.1**: Guidelines and updated Learning Policy communicated to Personnel.																	
	T.2: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction with learning & development opportunities, as compared to 2021 survey.																	
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.																	
6. Develop a comprehensive induction and on-boarding programme, consistent across the Organization	**T.1**: Induction Framework for all personnel in place.																	
	T.2: 80% of staff reporting satisfaction.																	
7. Introduce improvements in an employee's career experience: applying at UNESCO, joining the Organization, when moving within UNESCO, and upon separation.	**T.1**: Onboarding: 80 % of polled staff reporting a positive experience.																	
	T.2: Inboarding: 80 % of Staff satisfaction with handling of benefits and entitlements.																	
	T.3: Offboarding: 60 % of Staff completing the Exit Survey.																	
	T.4:80 % of staff satisfied with offboarding experience.																	

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at June 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4	2027 Q1	2027 Q2	2027 Q3	2027 Q4
AIM 1 - Key Objective 2. Promote an organizational culture of accountability.																		
8. Reinforce an accountability framework for HR management with clear expectations of leaders as managers and role models	**T.1**: Roles and responsibilities for HR matters updated and widely communicated to Dir/HFO's.																	
9. Assess the performance of supervisors in people management with targeted development opportunities to address areas identified for improvement;	T.1: Target of 70% of supervisors of at least three supervisees participating in People Management training workshops by end 2027.																	
	T.2: Target of 5% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction with Learning & Development opportunities, as compared to 2021 survey.																	
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.																	
10. Equip supervisors to manage underperformance and conflicts;	**T.1**: Issuance of HR procedure and guidelines.																	
	T.2: 6-8 on-line thematic sessions per year on Perf. Insights.																	
	T.3: Increase of 10% satisfaction rating in 2024 Employee Engagement Survey as compared to the 2021 Survey.																	
	T.4.: a further 10% increase in the 2026 Employee Engagement Survery as compared to the 2024 Survey.																	
11. Establish mechanism/scheme to recognize high-performing teams.	**T.1**: Recognition Programme developed and implemented.																	

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at June 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024				2025				2026				2027			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
AIM 2 - Key Objective 1. Identify & address challenges to achieving equitable geographical distribution.																		
1. Fully implement all measures outlined in the 41 C/Res.64;	**T.1**: Action plan developed & implemented.					🟢												
	T.2: Detailed Annual report on geographical distribution including progress on measures implemented					🟢				⚪				⚪				⚪
2. Ensure direct targeted outreach to increase the diversity of candidates from non- and under- represented Member States [diversity targets];	**T.1**: at least 30% of applicants to P/D posts from non- and under-represented countries.		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🔴	🔴	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪
	T.2: at least 3 Global Webinars per year.					🟢				⚪				⚪				⚪
3. Maximize the use of digital tools for better outreach;	**T.1**: Increase in N° of views per year.					🟢				⚪				⚪				⚪
4. Establish formal talent pools of high potential candidates;	**T.1:** Talent pools expanded to other positions based on generic profiles.		🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	🟡	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪	⚪
5. Assess the implementation of the Mid-level Professional Programme (MLPP) pilot exercise and expand its implementation accordingly;	**T.1**: Implementation of MLPP Programme each biennium & N° of positions filled (subject to identification of available posts).					🟢								⚪				
6. Address career development issues with regard to the Young Professionals Programme.	**T.1:** Dedicated Career Support Programme for YPPs institutionalized.						🟢											
	T.2.: 80% satisfaction rate of YPPs with their career development opportunities (via annual pulse surveys).									⚪				⚪				⚪

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at June 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4	2027 Q1	2027 Q2	2027 Q3	2027 Q4
AIM 2 - Key Objective 2. Foster an Organizational culture that respects and enables inclusion, equity and diversity.																		
7. Develop an Action Plan on gender parity for all levels of staff;	**T.1** Action Plan developed and implemented.																	
	T.2 Detailed Annual report on gender parity.																	
8. Ensure inclusion by critically reviewing/updating policies, procedures and processes for institutional biases;	**T.1**: Two policies/practices reviewed per year.																	
	T.2.:Updated policy on Employment of Persons with Disabilities issued and widely communicated.																	
	T.3: Overall diversity charter developed.																	
9. Identify and address barriers to effective participation/accessibility of targeted groups of staff in the work of UNESCO;	**T.1**: Diversity priniciples & unconscious bias trainings institutionalized.																	
	T.2: At least 60% of personnel trained by end 2027.																	
	T.3: Revised internship programme implemented.																	
	T.4: N° interns from non- and under-represented Member States increased by at least 10%.																	
	T.5:Guidelines on Reasonable Accommodation isssued and widely communicated.																	
10. Review, update, and mainstream the UNESCO Competency Framework, including the core values.	**T.1**: UNESCO Competency Framework developed and implemented (subject to the provision of resources).																	

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at June 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4	2027 Q1	2027 Q2	2027 Q3	2027 Q4
AIM 3 - Key Objective 1. Improve the agility & flexibility of the Organization.																		
1. Develop a transparent selection process for emergency and post-crisis situations;	**T.1**: Deployment process in place for emergency & post crisis situations.																	
2. Develop a pilot programme for decentralization of HR expertise and processes as part of the implementation of UNESCO's field network reform;	**T.1**: Core HR processes reviewed and table of delegated authorities issued.																	
3. Strengthen career development opportunities for National Professional staff	**T.1**: Increase in N° of NPOs promoted to International Professional positions.																	
	T.2: 10% annual increase in participation of NPOs in career development programmes.																	
	T.3: 80% satisifaction rate of NPOs with their career development (as evidenced through the Employee Engagement Survey).																	
4. Review and update contractual frameworks for more flexibility and alignment with the present & future workforce;	**T.1**: Guidelines issued (as part of workforce planning guidance) and widely communicated.																	
	T.2: Implementation of the accepted JIU Recommendations (subject to funding).																	
5. Identify and upscale on smarter, more agile ways of working;	**T.1**: Review of Flexible Working Arrangements Policy.																	
	T.2.: Implementation of accepted JIU recommendations on FWA.																	
	T.3: Guidelines & info. Sessions communicated to staff.																	
6. Implement measures to make UNESCO a more flexible and family-friendly Organization.	**T.1**: Parental leave framework developed and implemented.																	
	T.2:. Daily time-off for lactating parents policy elaborated and implemented.																	
	T.3.: Global Medical Insurance scheme in place for Service Contractors in the Field.																	
	T.4: Review and development of approach for spousal employment opportunities.																	

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at June 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4	2027 Q1	2027 Q2	2027 Q3	2027 Q4
AIM 3 - Key Objective 2. Strong HR Structures & Partnerships to better assist managers and personnel to improve performance and operations.																		
7. Undertake functional review of HR functions by end 2023;	**T.1**: Decentralized HR functions & delegated HR authorities consistent across the regions defined.					Yellow												
	T.2.: Updated Table of Delegated HR authorities issued & fully implemented.													Grey				
8. Align HR structures to business needs, taking into account the field reform;	**T.1**: HR struture in place that is fit for purpose and contributes to supporting field network reorganization.				Yellow													
	T.2: Each Regional Platform to include one HR Business Partner (BP) (43 C/5).										Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
9. Explore designation of HR business partners in programme sectors;	**T.1**: HR Business Partner model developed.									Grey								
	T.2: Each Sector to have at least one HR BP (43 C/5).										Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
10. Position HR partnerships (external expertise) to complement the workforce in implementing UNESCO's mandate.	**T.1**: Maintain & increase level of HR partnerships, including Partnerships with new donors.	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
	T.2. Guidelines on HR Partnerships for Managers updated and widely communicated.								Yellow									
AIM 3 - Key Objective 3. Enhanced HR Systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes																		
11. Identify and implement digital solutions for HR processes in line with UNESCO's IT Strategy;	**T.1**: Harmonization of HR systems, applications and platforms and improved efficiency of HR processes.								Yellow						Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
12. Develop SOPs for common procedures and processes to ensure consistent application of regulations;	**T.1**: Mapping of HR SOPs, identification of improvements required and plan developed for updates.						Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Grey								
	T.2: SOPs developed & finalized for each paper-based workflow moved to system.														Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
13. Increased communication of HR policies and processes using digital solutions.	**T.1**: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction that information is shared openly and honestly, and a further 10% increase in 2026 Survey.				Red								Grey					
	T.2: On-line info./sessions systematically implemented for each new or revised policy.	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey	Grey
	T.3: Interactive/dynamic dashboards using data visualization software in place for stakeholders in line with businsess needs.											Grey						

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at June 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4	2027 Q1	2027 Q2	2027 Q3	2027 Q4
AIM 4 - Key Objective 1. Safe and Healthy work environment																		
1. Develop and implement an employee wellbeing framework focusing on occupational health and safety and accountability including prevention measures to address key mental health risks;	**T.1:** UNESCO's overall Occupational Health & Safety Framework developed by 2026, including Mental Health component by 2025 in line with UN Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy.																	
	T.2: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction on wellbeing, as compared to 2021 survey.																	
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.																	
2. Progressive transition of Medical Service to an Occupational Health Service [monitoring the health of the workforce, preventing work-related illness in the workplace by encouraging safe working practices, and monitoring and supporting the management of sick leave].	**T.1:** Framework & guidance for managers and staff developed and implemented.																	
	T.1: Workforce Health Monitoring Prg. & reporting mechanisms in place.																	
AIM 4 - Key Objective 2. Positive and constructive staff-supervisor relationships																		
3. Strengthen supervisors' management skills with a focus on managing remote/agile teams;	**T.1:** Increased number of supervisors participating in management training.																	
	T.2: Target of 70% of managers supervising at least three staff members participating by end 2026.																	
4. Expand 360-degree assessment and feedback for managers and implement relevant training (e.g. conflict mgmt.) based on feedback (2023);	**T.1:** 200 supervisors participating by end 2025.																	
	T.2: Action plans included in Programme by 2026.																	
	T.3.: 360° approach reviewed for potential integration in performance management process.																	
5. Proactive support to managers and personnel, as and when necessary [mediation, early prevention/ conflict management];	**T.1:** Increase in N° of managers participating in conflict management training workhops.																	
	T.2: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey feel their managers deal effectively with conflict, as compared to 2021 survey.																	
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.																	
6. Develop Code of Conduct for UNESCO staff [Ethics Office: lead].	**T.1** Code of Conduct developed (2023) and proactively communicated.																	

SCORES: Achieved | On Track/Moving forward | Not yet achieved | Future phase

Status as at June 2025

43 C/5 budget implications

ACTION	TARGET	2023	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2	2025 Q3	2025 Q4	2026 Q1	2026 Q2	2026 Q3	2026 Q4	2027 Q1	2027 Q2	2027 Q3	2027 Q4
AIM 4 - Key Objective 3. Support career development																		
7. Training not just for the job you have but for the job you want!	**T.1:** Guidelines and updated Learning Policy communicated to Personnel.																	
	T.2: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction with learning & development opportunities, as compared to 2021 survey.																	
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.																	
8. Develop an assessment and development process to ensure a rapid and inclusive identification of Heads of Field Offices, with emphasis on people mgmt. skills;	T.1: Assessment centre approach designed, deployed and evaluated, subject to resources.																	
9. Refine the Functional Mobility Programme based on lessons learned from the Pilot (2022/23);	**T.1:** Functional mobility programme reviewed & revised to make it fit-for-purpose.																	
10. Further improve the Geographical Mobility; Programme vis-à-vis candidate experience/feedback (2023/2024);	**T.1:** Geographical Mobility Programme 2023/2024 reviewed and enhanced based on experience/feedback.																	
	T.2: Increase in % of geographic moves from staff due to participate in the mobility programme.																	
	T.3: Decrease in the % of IP staff having exceeded their Standard Duration of Assignment (SDA).																	
11. Provide career development advice and support service to managers and employees;	**T.1:** Guidelines (STA) communicated to Sectors & Field Offices.																	
	T.2. Increased number of STAs facilitated per biennium, with particular focus on locally recruited staff (all categories), subject to funding.																	
	T.3. Annual reporting to Executive Board on N° of internal vs. external appointments.																	
	T.1: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction with available support to acquire skills and knowledge for career development, as compared to 2021 survey.																	
	T.2: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.																	
12. Develop Career Development Plan for Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), Young Professionals (YPs) and National Professional Officers (NPOs).	**T.1:** Development and implementation of the Framework.																	
	T.2: Three career support and/or learning & development opportunities proposed per year.																	

ANNEX II

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN TO DATE (SEPTEMBER 2025)

STRATEGIC AIM 1 - ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT AND EXPERTISE

Workforce Planning	- Dedicated unit established in HRM for Workforce Planning. - Strategic guidelines developed and disseminated to Sectors/Bureaux and Field Offices.
Recruitment & Outreach	- 20 appointments following the conclusion of the 2024 Young Professional Programme and Mid-Level Professional Programme. - Increased outreach to under-represented and non-represented Member States through targeted webinars, career fairs, and direct engagement. - Roster-based recruitment model developed to streamline recruitment process.
Employee Career Experience	- Enhanced onboarding, in-boarding and off-boarding organizational structure for enhanced employee experience. - Pulse surveys conducted to gauge employee satisfaction at each stage of career lifecycle.
Culture of accountability	- Mandatory performance objective introduced for supervisors. - Performance management curriculum developed and delivered including a series of thematic workshops.

STRATEGIC AIM 2 - PROMOTE INCLUSION & DIVERSITY BY ACHIEVING IN PARTICULAR AN EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION & GENDER BALANCE

Geographical Distribution	- Progress made towards 85% target of Member States represented. - Detailed annual reporting: 220 EX/5.IV.B and 222 EX/4.IV.C. - Monthly geographical distribution report expanded: Member States Portal.
Gender Balance	- Average rate of representation of women in the international professional category remains constant at 57%, higher than the average rate in the UN system.
Disability Inclusion	- Draft guidelines on reasonable accommodation developed. - Policy on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities being updated. - Launch of accessibility audits ongoing. - Focal points designated across Sectors/Bureaux and Field Offices - Awareness and training initiatives launched.
Internships	- First phase of revised policy implemented in line with JIU recommendations.
Employee Engagement	- 2024 Employee Engagement Survey conducted with a 50% response rate (+ 450 increase from the 2021 Survey); results disseminated to all employees. - New questions incorporated on self-identification for disability.

STRATEGIC AIM 3 – ADAPT FOR THE FUTURE

Parental Leave Policy	- New parental leave framework developed to replace the current policies on maternity, paternity and adoption leave and special leave with pay for breastfeeding purposes. - Transitional measures adopted and communicated pending promulgation of parental leave policy.
Digital Transformation	- Core HR+ project launched to streamline recruitment, onboarding, performance and learning systems. - New HR Dashboards developed for enhanced data reporting for Member States. - Participation in Inter-agency A.I. chatbot (UNifyHR) pilot project for HR policy benchmarking
Short-Term Assignments Framework	- Standard Operating Procedures developed to enhance agility and staff development.
HR Partnerships	- Increased focus on HR Partnerships as a valuable complement to in-house talent.

STRATEGIC AIM 4 – ATTAIN BETTER RESULTS & IMPACT

Mental Health & Wellbeing	- New Project Manager (temporary) onboarded in 2025. - UNESCO's action plan for MH&WB Strategy developed and aligned with the UN-wide framework; first Scorecard completed. - Monthly webinars on MH & WB and a dedicated Intranet site launched. - Counselling services provided for personnel in hardship duty stations. - Draft framework on periodic medical examinations and return to work after extended sick leave developed.
Medical Benefits	- Revision of the Medical Benefits Fund reimbursement rates; streamlining processes and increasing reimbursement rates in particular in the promotion of preventative measures.
Career Development	- Expanded 360° feedback for managers, with integration into the People Management Programme with over 200 supervisors participating. - Supported career development through CV workshops, induction programmes, mentoring programmes, new Career Development hub launched and tailored support for young professionals, junior professional officers and interns. - Third managed mobility exercise conducted with 29 reassignments of which 8 staff promoted to higher level positions.
Language Learning	- Over 600 staff participated in UN language classes; UN proficiency exams administered.

ANNEX III

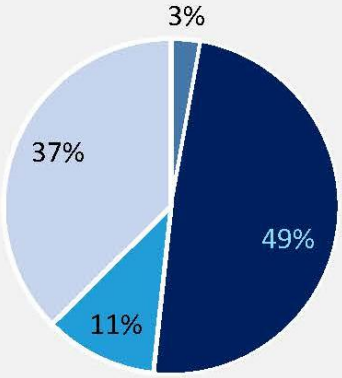
UNESCO WORKFORCE AT A GLANCE - June 2025

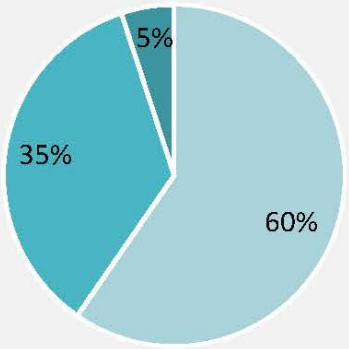
5703 PERSONNEL AT UNESCO

2575 Staff Members
45%* of total workforce

3128 Affiliate Personnel
55%* of total workforce

**The percentage figures are rounded in this report.*





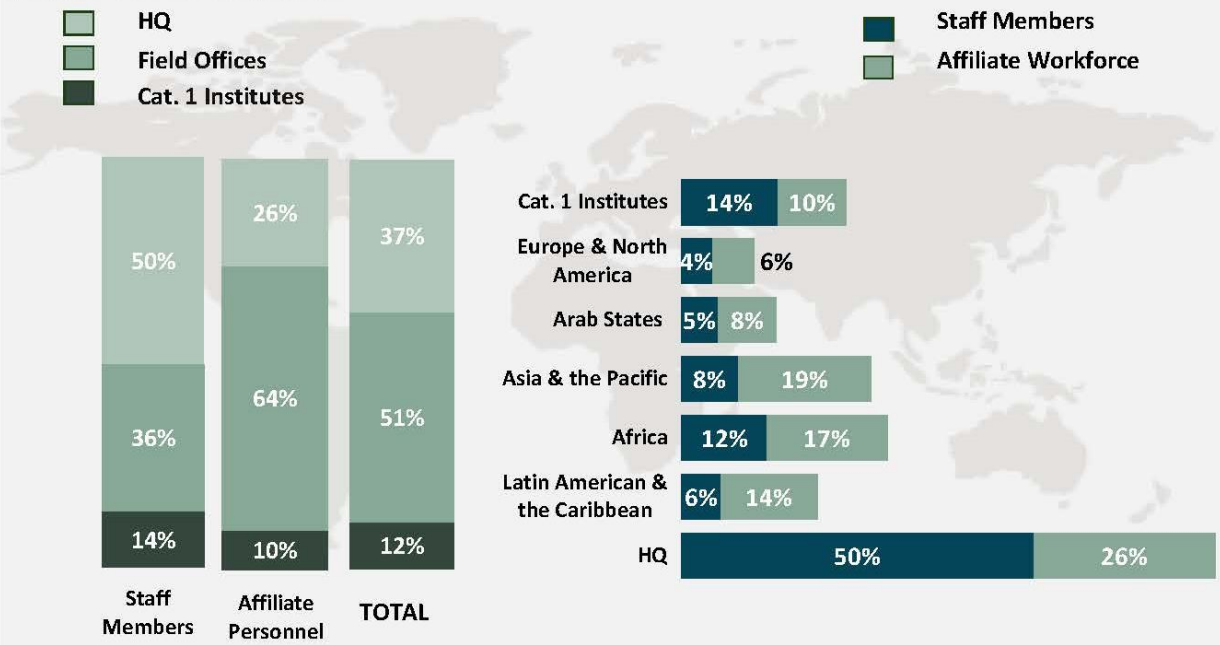
- **Director & above level Staff (D+) : 73**
- **International Professional Staff (P) : 1258**
- **National Professional Officers (NPO) : 281**
- **General Service Staff (GS) : 963**

- **Consultants: 1865**
- **Service Contracts: 1106**
- **Loans, Stand-By-Personnel, Short-Term Contracts, UN Volunteers & Sponsored Trainees: 157**

Staff Members : Fixed-Term Contracts, Temporary Appointments, Junior Professional Officers, Project Appointments & Secondments. Staff on Leave Without Pay are not included.

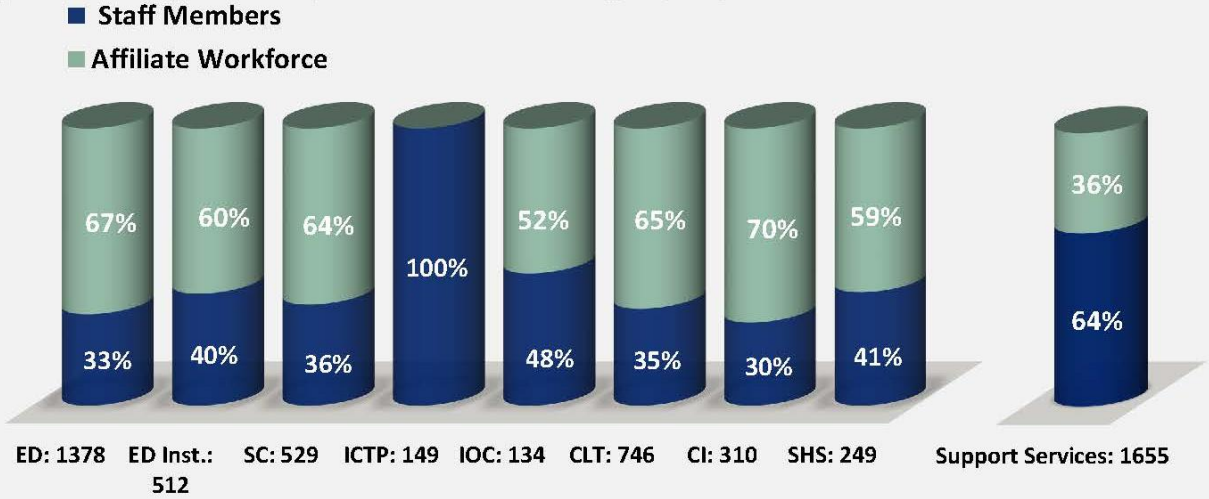
Affiliate Workforce: Consultants, Service Contracts, Short-Term contracts for free-lance interpreters and translators, Loans, Short-term contracts, Stand-By-Personnel, UNV & Sponsored Trainees.

WORLDWIDE PRESENCE



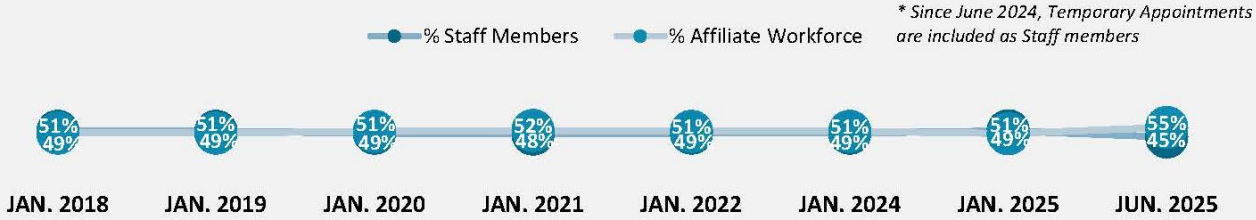
WORKFORCE BY SECTOR*

** Staff Members or Affiliate Workforce in Brasilia National Office (UBO) are not included.*



EVOLUTION OF THE WORKFORCE SINCE JANUARY 2018*

** Since June 2024, Temporary Appointments are included as Staff members*

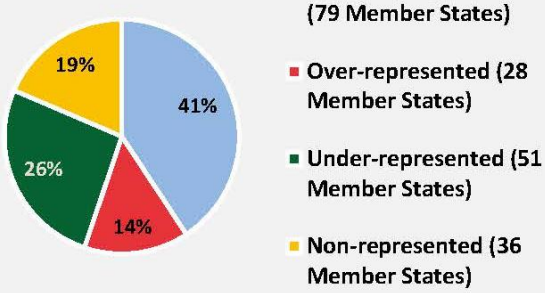


DIVERSITY

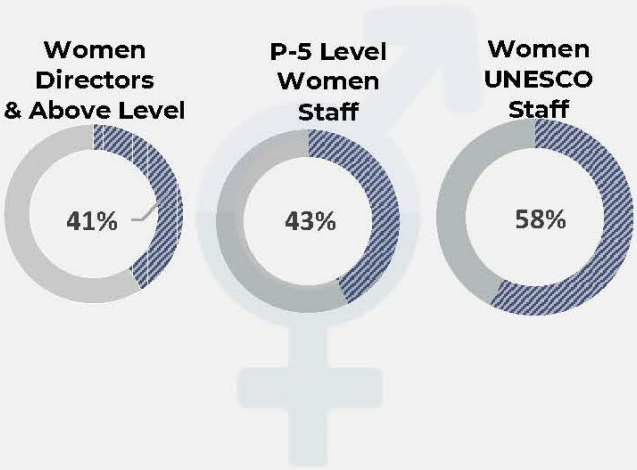
2575 STAFF MEMBERS FROM 170 NATIONALITIES

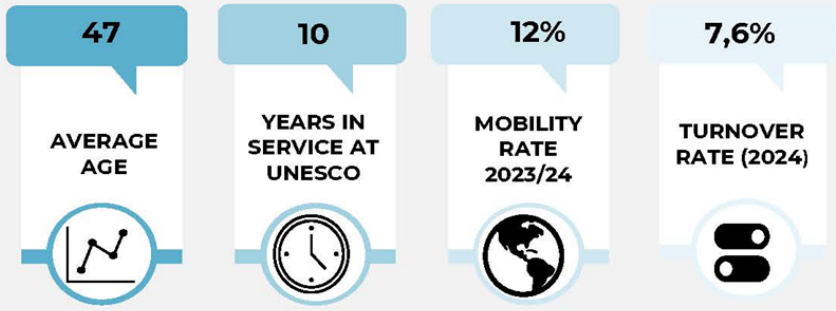
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

194 Member States of which **81%** are represented
[Geographical Professional posts only]

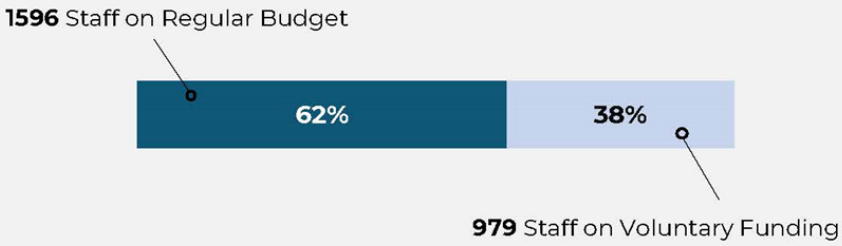


GENDER PARITY



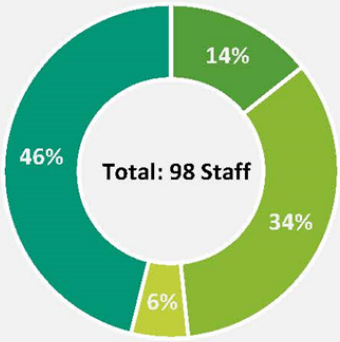


FUNDING SOURCE



ANTICIPATED RETIREMENTS OF STAFF ON ESTABLISHED POSTS BETWEEN 2025 & 2027

- Director & above level Staff (D+): 13
- International Professional Staff (P): 31
- National Professional Officers (NPO): 5
- General Service Staff (GS): 42



For more detailed information, please refer to the Key Data on UNESCO Personnel.