Executive Board
Two hundred and twenty first session

PARIS, 28 March 2025
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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 III

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 221 EX/5.III.A).

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1.   We have read the Administration's document reporting on progress made in implementing the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027. We regret that no additions or rectifications to the targets have been made as we proposed should be done to address the issues raised in our previous comments, particularly with regard to transparency of recruitment, geographical distribution, HRM's involvement in the recruitment process, and well-being and health in the workplace. Furthermore, the findings in the annual reports of the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) (document 221 EX/29) and the Ethics Office (document 221 EX/30) on the increase in moral harassment reflect the toxic and worrying working climate, and call for swift and effective action by the Administration. This means that HRM needs to be agile and readjust the targets in its roadmap in order to take the necessary measures.

Job: 2500252

General comments

2.   HRM refers to "steady progress" in the introduction, but this assertion is not borne out by the content of the document, and even less so by Annex I, which clearly illustrates the difficulties encountered by HRM in implementing the Strategy, with a significant number of targets not yet achieved. Care must be taken not to accumulate implementation delays. The UNESCO Employee Engagement Survey conducted in 2024 seems to have highlighted many of these unmet targets. In this respect, we fail to understand the inexplicable delay in publishing the results of the survey. All these shortcomings reflect a worrying reality: a loss of confidence in the Administration on the part of staff.

3.   Generally speaking, the document in question is too vague and sorely lacking in precise, relevant indicators enabling an objective assessment of the Strategy's progress and deficiencies. Even more worryingly, no concrete corrective action is proposed to remedy the shortcomings identified.

Aim 1: Attract and retain talent and expertise

Workforce planning

4.   We ask for the 2023 Audit of Workforce Planning (IOS/AUD/2023/11) and its Agreed Management Actions (AMA) to be taken into account rigorously. What concrete measures have been put in place to respond to these observations? At this stage, it is difficult to know whether the shortcomings identified by IOS have been corrected or whether they persist. It is important to note that in its annual report, IOS states that "[t]he results of the field office audits carried out in 2024 have again raised recurring observations such as the absence of UNESCO [...] Strategies and Resource Mobilization plans, inadequate workforce [...]".

5.   HRM indicates that it will continue to meet with the sectors so that they take into account "other HR processes". What are these processes? No details are provided, which makes this statement of little practical use. We need concrete, measurable commitments rather than vague words.

6.   On the question of geographical mobility, we are waiting to find out the consequences of the lessons learned from the last exercise (2023–2024) and the measures that will be taken to improve it, or even whether it will be deemed useful to continue the mobility exercise. Let us recall that as it stands, mobility is stressful for staff and requires the mobilization of substantial financial and human resources, with the end result being more than disappointing.

Recruitment and outreach activities

7.   While no one can deny the importance of outreach in order to diversify recruitment, it must be stressed that the appointment is the crucial step. It is essential not to merely attract candidates, but to ensure that recruitment leads to concrete, effective appointments.

8.   Furthermore, Annex 1, Aim 1, Action 2, Target 2, states that the objective of "75% of all positions meeting the target timeline of 130 days" has not been achieved.

9.   The proposal to recruit on the basis of generic profiles runs the risk of profoundly contradicting the specialized nature of UNESCO's Professionals, whose official designation, it is recalled, is that of "programme specialist". This designation is not insignificant, as it reflects the specific expertise required for UNESCO's missions. As a specialized agency, UNESCO requires experts with particular skills for its programmes. The adoption of generic profiles could lead to a deskilling of the Organization, thereby compromising the effectiveness of its missions. It is crucial to put measures in place to counter this risk, such as integrating programme-specific criteria in the recruitment process and ensuring that candidates' skills match job requirements. Recruitment must be aligned with UNESCO's specific missions so as to ensure their success and maintain the quality of its interventions.

10.   We welcome the ongoing review of recruitment policies and practices by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and await its findings and recommendations. However, we would like to see immediate measures implemented: greater transparency, better involvement of HRM in the recruitment process, and respect for recruitment timelines. It is imperative that HRM play a more active role in order to ensure genuine fairness in the process.

Performance management

11.   We welcome the fact that IOS has launched a survey as part of its audit of UNESCO's performance management system. We will rely heavily on the findings and recommendations of the audit to demand a revision of the flawed performance appraisal policy, in particular the absence of any right to contest professional reports. We also hope that the IOS recommendations will finally dispel the persistent ambiguity surrounding 360° evaluation.

<u>**Aim 2 - Inclusion and diversity**</u>

Geographical distribution and gender balance

12.   While we are pleased to note that the number of under-represented States has fallen, and that the number of normally represented States has risen, we need to redouble our efforts with regard to non-represented and over-represented States.

13.   With regard to gender equality, we note that the IOS 2024 annual report highlights low take-up of training courses. If UNESCO really wants to make progress on these issues, HRM must urge the sectors to increase staff participation in training courses and ensure that their content is adapted to today's challenges.

14.   We also welcome the initiative on digital reporting, which represents a step towards greater transparency. However, to be fully exploitable, these reports must be accompanied by detailed tables enabling data to be cross-referenced. Among other things, it is essential to avoid errors concerning staff movements and to ensure that each factor is measured over the same time period in order to guarantee a reliable and relevant analysis, as we pointed out in our comments on geographical distribution at the 220th session (220 EX/5.IV.B Add. 2).[1]

Disability inclusion

15.   We salute the Administration's sustained efforts in the field of disability inclusion and the measures taken in this respect. ISAU obviously remains ready to contribute to the development of guidelines on reasonable accommodation and the updating of the policy on the employment of persons with disabilities, which should also apply to colleagues in the field.

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[1]   Para. 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."

Employee engagement

16. We welcome the inclusion of all types of contracts in the employee engagement survey. However, the 50% response rate cannot be considered satisfactory, especially as it is down on the 2021 global survey, which achieved a 52% participation rate.

17. As mentioned above, we would like to express our astonishment at the unusual delay in publishing the results of the UNESCO Employee Engagement Survey, which was completed at the end of October 2024. Publication is scheduled for the first half of 2025. What justifies such a delay? The deferral can only limit the impact of the survey and postpone the implementation of the necessary remedial measures. There is also the question of possible data obsolescence at the time of publication. In a context of limited resources for HRM, it would be regrettable if this survey turned out to be a simple exercise with no follow-up, which would amount to a waste of resources. Instead of achieving the objective of "mobilizing employees", this opacity actually reinforces staff mistrust, as evidenced by the unsatisfactory results visible in the Roadmap (Annex I).

18. We welcome the initiative of publishing results on a dedicated webpage, provided they are published in a complete, objective and transparent way. In any case, this should not be a substitute for sending an email to all colleagues informing them of the online publication of the survey results. Discreet communication risks being perceived as an attempt to downplay worrying results, which would only exacerbate the existing lack of trust.

Internships programme

19. This policy will now be implemented in two stages, and there is no apparent justification for this. The first phase, scheduled for 2025, remains unclear: are we talking about imminent application or one at the end of the year? Such inaccuracy is problematic and raises fears of further postponement. As for the second phase, which calls for the introduction of an allowance in January 2026, we are concerned about the guarantee of its financing. We assume that the necessary resources have been budgeted for in document 43 C/5, but is it not risky to bring forward implementation to 2026 when the budget has not yet been adopted? This uncertainty raises questions about the Administration's ambition to implement this reform within the announced timeframe.

20. Moreover, the Administration states that "[t]he deployment of the first step was conducted with a focus on structured engagement and communication with onboarded interns, managers and implementor groups that have been equipped with detailed guidelines and training for a consistent implementation across the Organization. Engagement with the stakeholders was integral to this step to prepare for a full-scale implementation of the revised policy." However, ISAU has been approached by Young UNESCO representatives who have expressed their disagreement with certain changes to the terms of the internship policy that were made after the announced date of its application in July 2024.[2] ISAU must emphasize that it is a staff association, and that it does not only represent permanent staff. Interns are not a separate category of people whose management falls outside our scope. We therefore ask to be consulted on any changes to this policy before it is published and implemented.

<u>Aim 3 - Adapt for the Future</u>

Supporting an agile and flexible Organization

21. We wonder about the persistent, unexplained delay in enacting the new parental leave policy, whose implementation was originally announced for 2023. With reference to the delays announced

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[2]   In its document 219 EX/5.III.A of February 2024, HRM declared that "[t]he new internship policy will apply from July 2024".

for the implementation of the new internship policy, it would be advisable for HRM to respect its commitments regarding the deadlines for the publication and implementation of its policies.

22.   We are concerned about the lack of concrete measures on flexible working arrangements. The Administration's document refers to a review of the policy, but no timetable is announced: "2025" remains a vague indication that guarantees nothing. We recall that the JIU report (JIU/REP/2023/6) on this subject dates back to 2023, and we fail to understand why a reform that simply consists of aligning with other United Nation system organizations should take so long. Let us not forget that UNESCO is the only United Nations system organization to prohibit telework away from the duty station, while others allow it for up to 90 days a year. Opposition in principle on such a subject is not rational, and should be replaced by a more pragmatic approach. We reiterate our earlier calls for greater flexibility, in particular by increasing the number of teleworking days, allowing telework away from the duty station and permitting compressed working hours. UNESCO claims to want to become more agile and flexible, but the lack of pragmatism and red tape run counter to this very objective. It is also essential to include staff associations in this review.

Improving performance and operations

23.   We dispute the assertion that short-term appointments foster staff development. In reality, these contracts are grossly over-used, and often of long duration, with no real prospect of advancement, leading colleagues into a situation of prolonged insecurity. Although this measure looks convincing on paper, it has many unintended consequences due to a lack of effective regulation and transparency. The concept of short-term assignments should include non-renewal and return-to-origin clauses to guarantee the stability and security of staff members.

24.   We understand the budgetary constraints, but a balanced approach that guarantees both organizational flexibility and the security of the staff concerned is essential. We are calling for clear measures to regulate the use of this type of contract, and to ensure that it remains the exception rather than a disguised substitute for long-term recruitment. We encourage the Administration to incorporate specific measures to regulate short-term assignments, ensuring that they are transparent and respectful of staff needs. Close coordination with the mobility policy is essential to ensure coherent and efficient human resources management, while promoting the professional development and satisfaction of staff members.

Aim 4 - Attain better results and impact

Staff well-being

25.   ISAU fully supports the initiative to develop a staff mental health and well-being strategy based on the recommendations of the JIU (p. x-xi, JIU/REP/2023/4), and looks forward to working closely with the Administration in its preparation. However, in addition to long-term commitments, we are calling for the implementation of immediate, concrete measures that require little or no additional cost, in particular regarding flexible working arrangements and a reinforced fight against moral harassment. UNESCO should not wait for the finalization of a strategy before taking action.

26.   In addition, the attention paid to preventative medicine and periodic medical examinations is a positive step forward, but it is also important that the medical service provide all useful information to colleagues concerning their rights, particularly in terms of long-term sick leave. Many colleagues have expressed their disappointment at the discontinuation of medical consultations with the doctor at Headquarters. We do not see how focusing on prevention campaigns prevents consultations, which help reduce absences and create a climate of trust contributing to good staff performance. We call for the reintroduction of these consultations so as not to deprive staff of practical and effective medical access.

27.   Finally, the latest annual reports from IOS and the Ethics Office highlight a clear deterioration in the working climate within UNESCO, thus reinforcing the urgent need to adopt concrete measures

to improve staff well-being. As staff associations are not authorized to comment directly on Ethics Office documents, you will find our comments on the annual report of the Ethics Office and on the feasibility study on an independent ombudsperson's office in annex to this document.

Career development initiatives

28. We deem it more appropriate to refer to 360° evaluations under Aim 1 in the section on "Performance management". A number of questions remain unanswered: what are the precise process and modalities of this evaluation? Who selects the evaluators? Is it just an informal opinion with no consequences? In this respect, we welcome the ongoing IOS audit of the performance management system, and look forward to its findings and recommendations to clarify the persistent ambiguity surrounding 360° evaluation, currently presented by HRM as just "feedback". We also stress the importance of integrating 360° evaluation into the revised evaluation policy, to ensure that it is meaningful and effective.

29. A true 360° evaluation is one in which supervisors are assessed by their peers and subordinates. It must lead to concrete improvement measures in the event of underperformance, in order to reinforce the Organization's culture of responsibility and excellence. Data reported by the IOS Investigation Office and the Ethics Office, particularly on moral harassment, show the need for an evaluation that goes beyond mere personal development.

30. It is also crucial to establish a tangible link between performance appraisal and career advancement. The integration of mentoring, 360° evaluation and training is a step in the right direction, but without a mechanism to guarantee a direct impact on a transparent reward system, these efforts risk remaining superficial. We therefore expect to see concrete measures linking appraisals to career opportunities, in order to motivate staff and reward investment in skills development.

Draft 43 C/5 budget implications

31. We understand the budgetary uncertainty which is the Organization's lot, but we are concerned when HRM states that "a ZNG scenario would severely hamper the continuation and implementation of high-impact learning and development programmes as well as other flagship initiatives, including the full implementation of workforce planning principles, activities on mental health and well-being, disability inclusion and accessibility and, enhanced conditions of service for affiliate personnel, which risk being delayed or postponed should current resource levels be maintained." It is regrettable that there has been no consultation with staff associations on this subject. It would be appropriate for HRM to provide us with a timeline of its priorities so as to clarify the situation and ensure that key areas such as well-being, inclusion and workforce planning are prioritized.

32. Finally, it is important to stress that inaction has a cost. Litigation and appeals linked to poor human resources management practices represent a significant financial burden for UNESCO. Rather than waiting to be confronted with the consequences of its inertia, the Organization would benefit from investing in sound human resources policies, thus ensuring greater budgetary efficiency in the long term.

Proposed reporting adjustments

33. ISAU is well aware of the workload involved in producing reports. However, as staff are UNESCO's most precious resource, it is essential that both Member States and staff are kept informed of progress on the Human Resources Strategy, especially as its implementation is currently encountering many difficulties. In this context, it is imperative to reinforce transparency and ensure regular monitoring of the commitments made.

34. We understand that certain aspects, such as geographical distribution and gender balance, do not evolve significantly on a half-yearly basis and could be reported on less frequently, that is, only

at the autumn session when a detailed report is already scheduled. However, other elements require more frequent monitoring. Rather than a full report at each session, a summary update could be envisaged, highlighting progress and bottlenecks so that remedial action can be taken in a timely fashion. The aim must remain a balance between transparency and pragmatism: to guarantee relevant, usable monitoring, without unnecessarily multiplying administrative obligations.

Conclusion

35.   We would like to express our concerns about the implementation of the Strategy, based on three major observations. Firstly, many targets have not been met on schedule. Secondly, budgetary uncertainty persists, complicating the planning and execution of initiatives. Finally, the instability at the head of the Bureau of Human Resources Management over many years has compromised any coherent, sustainable strategic vision. It is hard to guarantee clear, effective leadership when directors come and go. This instability seriously undermines the effectiveness of reforms and the implementation of commitments made. In order to ensure that the Organization and its staff are managed in a way that meets their needs, we strongly recommend that measures be taken to strengthen the stability of the Bureau of Human Resources Management, which is essential to guarantee the effective and sustainable implementation of the Strategy and to remedy the systemic problems we face. ISAU therefore calls on Member States to demand stable, consistent governance of the Bureau of Human Resources Management, with a clear mandate, strategic continuity and accountability for the objectives set.

ANNEX

**ISAU COMMENTS ON THE IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF OF THE INFORMATION
CONTAINED IN THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ETHICS OFFICE
AND THE FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF AN INDEPENDENT OMBUDSPERSON'S OFFICE**

1.   We were told that the comments of the staff associations related solely to the terms of employment and working conditions of the staff, and that the independence of the Ethics Office had to be preserved. In accordance with this request, the following remarks relate exclusively to the actions of the Office which have an impact on the terms of employment and working conditions of the staff. The ethics report and the feasibility study provide information that the staff associations cannot ignore without failing in the mandate entrusted to them by the Member States.

A.   Annual report of the Ethics Office (2024) (document 221 EX/30)

2.   A significant increase is noted in the number of approaches made to the Ethics Office in 2024, with advice issued on 421 occasions compared with 283 in 2023. One wonders whether this increase can be explained by a greater visibility of the Office and an improved speak-up culture, or whether it expresses a deterioration in the working climate, as reflected in the feedback we receive from colleagues. In any event, efforts to disseminate a genuine culture of ethics are confirmed as a priority, in that they meet the expectations of the staff as a whole.

3.   The Ethics Office's awareness-raising and training efforts are all the more noteworthy as they reveal an increase in requests for ethical advice. Among these initiatives, the Ethics Kit helps to raise staff awareness of the ethical issues that concern them directly. However, ISAU notes a lack of understanding of the reporting procedures and mandate of the Ethics Office, in particular its role vis-à-vis the Investigation Office of the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS).

4.   We note that the main concerns of staff remain unchanged: conflicts in the workplace, harassment and job-related concerns, and that no tangible improvement has been observed. The summary report on harassment issues should therefore give us cause for alarm, with 65 requests for advice under the Anti-Harassment Policy.

5.   Finally, concerning another important aspect for staff, we fully support the Ethics Office's recommendation to integrate ethical performance indicators into supervisors' evaluations, and to take action in the case of shortcomings. This approach is in line with our demand for transparent and meaningful 360° evaluation, enabling us to identify management shortcomings and prevent inappropriate behaviour. We also support the idea of systematically assessing managers' ability to manage a team during the recruitment process. Let us stress that improvements in this area will only be possible if the Administration works to change recruitment practices, which are still too often considered a prerogative of the sectors. Too often, HRM is seen as a secondary player whose concerns are contingent.

6.   The summary report (Annex to the Annual Report of the Ethics Office) is also of interest to staff, as it clearly shows the persistence of a deleterious and hostile working environment, which continues to deteriorate. IOS, whose detailed annual report we welcome, only confirms this regrettable observation. Figures 18 and 19 show:

-      A worrying rise in the number of allegations in 2024 (55 versus 35 in 2023)

-      A significant increase in the number of investigations carried out and cases substantiated after investigation (26 in 2024 versus 6 in 2023).

-      An increase in allegations of moral harassment (22 in 2024 versus 15 in 2023).

This points to the existence of a systemic problem within UNESCO calling for an urgent response from the Administration.

7.	In the face of harassment and abuse of power, it is more necessary than ever to better train supervisors and establish a genuine culture of accountability. We reiterate the importance of 360° evaluation as a tool for identifying problem behaviour and guaranteeing quality management.

8.	We also note the low rate of disciplinary action taken following IOS investigations in 2024. Out of 29 substantiated allegations, only 4 had resulted in concrete action at the time of reporting (so 25 were still pending). It would be useful to have explanations for the reasons for this discrepancy and the delays in processing by the Administration.

9.	Finally, we note that the Ethics Office has raised the issue of disproportionate use of affiliated personnel. We share its view that, in addition to being a source of insecurity for staff, these contracts lead to high staff turnover and a loss of institutional memory. As mentioned in our comments on the Human Resources Strategy 2023–2027, over-reliance on this type of contract must not be generalized.

10.	UNESCO must adopt a proactive approach to curb the deterioration of the working climate and ensure a respectful and equitable professional environment, enabling the Organization to carry out its mission. As the Ethics Office points out, supervisors and managers have a key role to play in building a strong ethical culture. Their commitment and responsibility must be clearly demonstrated. Above all, a genuine ethical culture cannot exist without a firm commitment on the part of the Administration to adopt a policy of zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour.

**B.	Feasibility study on the establishment of an independent ombudsperson's office** (document 221 EX/27)

11.	ISAU fully supports the establishment of an independent ombudsperson's office, and will closely monitor its independence and effectiveness. Reform was needed, as the current mediation system has demonstrated its flaws and limitations, failing to meet colleagues' needs. It is essential for UNESCO to have a reliable platform for informal conflict resolution, both for staff and for the Organization, as it avoids lengthy procedures, high costs for the Organization, and above all stress that is not conducive to maintaining trust between staff and the Administration.

12.	We recommend waiting for the findings and recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) review of the ombudsperson and mediation function before establishing an ombudsperson's office, determining its structure and defining its mandate, to ensure that the initiative is based on best practice. To guarantee his or her independence, the ombudsperson should have a single, non-renewable term of office, with a ban on holding a UNESCO post for a certain period after the end of his or her term. It is also essential that the office is able to operate autonomously, without interference from the Administration.

13.	The report rightly emphasizes that the ombudsperson's role is to act as an impartial intermediary between staff and Administration. Given that this impartiality is a prerequisite for the ombudsperson's ability to win the confidence of both staff and Administration, we consider that it is essential that the holders of this position be recruited according to a procedure in which the staff associations themselves are involved. It goes without saying that the appointment decision will always rest with the Director-General, but the fact remains that an independent ombudsperson's office would be unable to fulfil its mandate effectively if its incumbent were perceived solely as a player who owes his or her appointment to the Administration alone.

14.	With regard to the role and responsibilities of the ombudsperson's office, we regret that the study does not sufficiently emphasize the importance of the office's accountability. Similarly, regular, detailed reports are needed in order to be able to monitor trends and systemic problems in workplace

conflicts and their evolution. These reports should be communicated to the Director-General, HRM and the Executive Board, so that appropriate solutions can be put in place.

15.   In conclusion, we reaffirm our support for the establishment of an independent ombudsperson's office, convinced of its usefulness in informal conflict resolution. However, the Administration also plays a crucial role in the prevention and informal resolution of conflicts in the workplace. In some cases, we have observed that the Administration refuses to resolve problems despite its non-compliance with the rules, persisting in its approach even when it is obvious that a case before the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization (ILOAT) will result in the Organization being sanctioned, entailing substantial compensation. These costs underline the need for greater accountability and sanctions against those responsible for decisions taken in violation of the rules in force.

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THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
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PART III

HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

SUMMARY

A.   Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027

Pursuant to 220 EX/Decision.5.IV.A, this document provides an update on progress achieved in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027.

Decision required: paragraph 6.

Job: 2500160E

Introduction

1.   In accordance with 220 EX/Decision.5.IV.A, this document provides a brief overview of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Human Resources (HR) Strategy for 2023-2027 since the 220th session of the Executive Board (October 2024).

2.   Overall, steady progress continues to be made across all four strategic aims, in particular key areas such as policy development, workforce planning, recruitment and outreach, learning and career development, enhanced HR operations, employee engagement and wellbeing, and disability inclusion and accessibility as detailed below. Annex I to the document also provides a "traffic light" progress assessment against the roadmap targets as at end January 2025 (time of report preparation), categorized as follows:

Achieved	On Track/Moving forward	Not yet achieved	Future phase

AIM 1: Attract & retain talent & expertise

- Develop a talented & qualified workforce that can deliver the UNESCO mandate effectively.
- Promote an organizational culture of accountability.

Workforce Planning

- In accordance with the Agreed Management Actions of IOS' 2023 Audit of Workforce Planning, strategic workforce planning guidelines have been developed and disseminated to Sectors/Bureaux/Offices in preparation of the Draft 43 C/5 Programme and Budget. The guidelines encompass key HR principles including: (a) assessing current and future profiles and skills required to deliver expected outputs, conducting a gap analysis and feasibility assessment; (b) implementing an HR business model framework and organizational structures aligned with the Field Network Reform framework; (c) ensuring appropriate use of UNESCO's contractual framework and optimal workforce composition, identifying core, continuous functions for staff members, and exploring partnership opportunities; (d) establishing appropriate succession planning measures; and (e) adhering to statutory requirements, including the standard duration of assignments in the context of geographical mobility, with special attention to staff in hardship locations classified as D and E.

- HRM will continue to meet regularly with Sectors, Bureaux, and Offices to assist in the elaboration and review of their workforce plans which will consider other HR processes such as succession planning, talent outreach, HR partnerships, mobility, learning, and career development. Coordination with the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP), the Division of Budget Management (DBM), and the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector (PAX) will also ensure strategic and budgetary alignment and coherence.

Recruitment and Outreach activities

- The 2024 Young Professionals (YPP) and Mid-Level Professionals (MLPP) Programmes were finalized resulting in a total of 20 appointments (11 MLPP and 9 YPP). All nine Young Professionals were successfully onboarded in the autumn. The YPP roster of those qualified YPP candidates not selected for the 2024 Intake will be used for future P-1/P-2 assignments (fixed-term, temporary or project appointment) that may arise until the next Intake is launched.

- Targeted outreach activities continued in efforts to identify and attract qualified candidates from non- and under-represented countries. Two virtual webinars with over 500 participants were organized for candidates from the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and for Women in Senior Roles. A presentation on UNESCO's job opportunities and HR partnerships programmes was also delivered to the newly appointed Secretaries-General of the National

Commissions, who play a crucial role in disseminating information and seeking qualified candidates from their respective countries. For example, a webinar was held at the request of the National Commission of Botswana (an under-represented Member State) to inform their nationals about careers at UNESCO, and another webinar is planned for nationals of Liberia, also under-represented. Outreach missions were also conducted in China, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland. Individual HR meetings with several non- and under-represented Member States continue in efforts to raise awareness and build capacity of nationals interested in pursuing a career in UNESCO.

- Guidelines for a roster-based recruitment approach were developed to serve as proof of concept for assessment of the feasibility of implementing this approach within the existing regulatory framework. This approach, widely used in the United Nations common system, has proven benefits including streamlined recruitment processes by preselecting and pre-qualifying candidates for generic profiles. This reduces the time required to fill vacancies, ensuring that critical positions are staffed promptly, particularly in time-sensitive contexts. It also ensures that all candidates are assessed against uniform criteria, fostering transparency and equity. The roster-based approach enhances workforce planning and supports operational agility by maintaining a pool of pre-qualified candidates that can be deployed across various duty stations. This approach also aligns with the principles of efficiency, and diversity by proactively building pools of qualified candidates.

- The feasibility assessment of this approach resulted in a recommendation to propose amendments to the Staff Regulations for approval by the General Conference at its 43rd session. These amendments will be reviewed by the Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs (LA) and presented to the Executive Board at its 222nd session for onward decision by the General Conference in November 2025.

- At the time of writing, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) is commencing a "Review of recruitment policies and practices in the United Nations system organizations", the findings of which should further contribute to the improving the efficiency of UNESCO's recruitment process.

Enhancing Employee Career Experience at UNESCO: From Application to Separation

- The Organization remains committed to enhancing the career journey of its employees, from application through integration and separation. During this reporting period, three specific pulse surveys (on-boarding, in-boarding and off-boarding) were launched to collect satisfaction feedback from employees on various contract types across Headquarters, field locations, and category 1 institutes The results demonstrated positive outcomes in creating a welcoming environment for new hires (on-boarding), with over 80% of respondents expressing satisfaction with the handling of benefits and entitlements (in-boarding) as well as the support received during the separation process (off-boarding). Further enhancements are however needed to improve communications and visibility through dedicated webinars, presentations and similar initiatives, and improvements both, in content and technical development are required for the check-out procedure including the on-line application and exit-survey.

Performance Management

- A series of on-line information sessions in English and French were organized in December 2024 and January 2025 to support supervisors and supervisees on (i) completing their annual performance review for 2024 and (ii) the setting of objectives for 2025.

- A performance audit of UNESCO's performance management system has been initiated by IOS (January 2025) to assess its effectiveness and whether it is fit-for-purpose. Key components to be reviewed included: (a) the policy framework; (b) assessing timeliness, transparency and contribution to staff development; (c) identification of development needs and support for continuous learning; (d) addressing underperformance; and (e) ensuring

consistent application across Sectors/Bureaux/Offices. The audit which is due to conclude by March 2025 will cover the past four annual performance management cycles (2020-2023).

> **AIM 2: Promote inclusion & diversity by achieving in particular an equitable geographical distribution & gender balance**
>
> - Identify and address challenges to achieving equitable geographical distribution.
> - Foster an organizational culture of mutual respect that enables inclusion, equity and diversity.

Geographical Distribution and Gender Balance

- As requested in 220 EX/Dec.5.IV.B on geographical distribution and gender balance of staff in the Secretariat, the monthly reporting on geographical distribution provides for each Member State, the number and distribution of staff occupying both geographical and non-geographical positions by category and grade. The monthly report is accessible via the Member States Portal. As at 31 December 2024, 81% (157) Member States were represented in the Secretariat, 4 percentage points off the 85% General Conference target.

- A monthly update on the status of gender parity is also provided on the Member States Portal. As at 31 December 2024, in the Secretariat, women (all categories) are in the majority (57%). There has been a slight increase since the 220th session annual reporting in the level of women represented at the Senior management level which now stands at 45% moving closer to the 50% parity target at this level. The rate of P-5 women however has regressed slightly from 43% to 40% due mainly to statutory departures. Sustained efforts to achieve gender parity across all levels and in particular at the P-5 and above continue to be implemented in line with measures outlined in UNESCO's Action Plan for Gender Parity.

- **Annex II** to the document provides an overview of UNESCO's workforce as at 31 December 2024. Further to 220 EX/Dec.5.IV.B, work has begun on the design and development of a digital reporting framework for enhanced information-sharing on the composition of UNESCO's workforce with the aim of having it fully operational and accessible to Member States by the 222nd (autumn) session of the Executive Board, when the next annual progress report on the situation of geographical distribution and gender balance of staff of the Secretariat will also be presented.

Disability Inclusion

- UNESCO remains strongly committed to providing equal opportunities and improving accessibility to all candidates and employees, including those with disabilities, across structures and processes in line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS). HRM has been designated as lead for the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion (UNDIS) Indicators 7 (Reasonable Accommodation), 13 (Employment) and 14 (Capacity Development of Employees) at UNESCO. In this framework, HRM advanced in the development of draft guidelines on reasonable accommodation, a cornerstone of disability inclusion and anti-discrimination measure that enables persons with disabilities to exercise their rights on an equal basis with others.

- HRM also steers the update of the Policy on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities, including integration of disability inclusion and accessibility in the HR processes, and the mapping of roles and responsibilities for the review and implementation of requests for reasonable workplace accommodation for candidates and employees with disabilities. Communication campaigns on the updated policy and guidelines will be key to increasing awareness, fostering understanding among employees and promoting a culture of inclusion amongst employees.

- In complement, the Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Officer in the ADM Sector continues to conduct physical and digital accessibility audits at Headquarters and the field offices that will span over the next four years. The Officer also works very closely with HRM and other concerned ADM Divisions including procurement, finance, digital systems, conferences, languages, security, etc. to ensure UNESCO has in place an accessible and welcoming work environment. In this regard, and in line with 220 EX/Dec.5.IV.A, significant efforts have been made, in preparing the draft 43 C/5 Programme and Budget for the ADM Sector, to identify an existing position that could potentially be reprofiled as a Disability Inclusion and Accessibility function.

- In addition, and as requested in the afore-mentioned decision, focal points for each relevant service within ADM and for all Programme Sectors and relevant offices involved in the mainstreaming disability inclusion and accessibility have been designated. Following the development of the guidelines on reasonable accommodation, learning and development opportunities will be made available to all employees to increase their capacity on disability inclusion through self-paced awareness-raising capacity building initiatives. This should facilitate the roll-out and operationalization of the guidelines and a coordinated implementation of the measures foreseen in the HR Strategy for 2023-2027.

- To keep abreast of latest developments and best practices on disability inclusion and accessibility in the UN system, and in implementation of the UNDIS Indicator 12 (Joint Initiatives), ADM and HRM representatives are members of all workstreams of the Sub-group on Disability Inclusion under the CEB HLCM Network's Working Group on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Within the UN Human Resources Community of Practice, HRM also leads and facilitates policy dialogue on roles and responsibilities in the review and implementation of reasonable accommodation to exchange and leverage proven good practices for a robust and evidence-based approach to the UNESCO framework. ADM and HRM are also active contributors to the work of UNESCO's Inter-Sectoral Task Team on Disabilities, led by the SHS Sector, with regard to the development of UNESCO's Disability Inclusion Strategy which is presented to the Executive Board at its 221st session.

Employee Engagement

- The 2024 UNESCO Employee Engagement Survey was launched in English, French and Spanish during the last quarter of 2024. It included, for the first time, all employees regardless of contract type (consultants, interns, sponsored trainees and volunteers). The survey aimed to measure opinions and attitudes of UNESCO employees and give them an opportunity to voice their views. It builds on the previous 2018 and 2021 surveys, with an additional emphasis on well-being, a respectful workplace, and diversity, equity and inclusion and incorporating for the first time, self-identification questions on disability to enable disaggregation of results and advance disability inclusion in the Organization, all the while ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation in self-identification. Two open questions on the positive aspects of UNESCO as a workplace, and areas for potential change were also included.

- A total of 2230 respondents (1,371 women, 856 men) participated, achieving a response rate of 50%, an increase of 468 respondents compared to the 2021 survey. The results, to be published in the first semester 2025, are being analyzed and measured against the benchmark 2021 survey. HRM is developing follow-up action plans in collaboration with each Sector/Bureau/field office to address identified areas for improvement. The results will be made accessible to employees and managers as well as Member States via a dedicated Intranet/Extranet webpage.

Internships Programme

- The revised Internship Policy will be implemented based on a two-step phased approach. The first step involves the implementation in 2025 of the enhanced leave and other revisions such

as eligibility requirements which will be applicable to all interns onboarded as of the 2025 effective date. The second step will become effective on 1 January 2026 with the roll out of a living allowance for all interns on board on this date.

- The deployment of the first step was conducted with a focus on structured engagement and communication with onboarded interns, managers and implementor groups that have been equipped with detailed guidelines and training for a consistent implementation across the Organization. Engagement with the stakeholders was integral to this step to prepare for a full-scale implementation of the revised policy.

AIM 3: Adapt for the future
- Improve the agility and flexibility of the Organization.
- Put in place strong HR structures and partnerships to better assist managers and personnel to improve performance and operations.
- Enhanced HR systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes.

Supporting an agile and flexible Organization

- The new Parental Leave Policy which comprises a more inclusive parental leave framework with equal parental leave entitlements for all parents to contribute to the promotion of equal caregiving roles hence fostering career development by acknowledging the equal role of each parent caregiver has been developed, with transitional measures in place since January 2023 pending the policy's promulgation.

- Further to the 2023 JIU report on Flexible Working Arrangements in United Nations system organizations, HRM will commence in 2025 consultations with resource groups and stakeholders on the revision of the Flexible Working Arrangements policy bearing in mind the lessons learnt from three years of policy implementation, proven good practices in the United Nations common system and the 2023 JIU report and recommendations [Flexible Working Arrangements in United Nations system organizations](#). HRM has engaged with the United Nations HR policy community of practice to further harmonize the scope of the Flexible Working Arrangements Policy and related definitions and contribute to enhancement of system-wide coherence.

- UNESCO HRM is one of 13 UN organizations that successfully rolled out the first inter-agency Generative AI Chatbot (UNifyHR) in October 2024. This tool enables advanced benchmarking and analysis of the inter-agency Human Resources policy framework. Designed for users from the UN Human Resources policy community, it offers rapid, multilingual access to policy information from participating UN organizations, leverages a knowledge base on policy content, and enhances informed decision-making, ultimately contributing to greater coherence in the policy landscape within the United Nations system. HRM is actively engaged in further refining the solution to ensure it remains a reliable and efficient resource for the UN HR policy community.

- Work is advancing regarding a proposed Global Medical Insurance Scheme for Service Contract Holders in the field offices. A benchmark with other UN agencies has been conducted and a Steering Committee created within ADM to consider a Request for Proposal launch on the UN Global Marketplace. Four proposals have been received and evaluated, with implementation dependent on available budget.

Improving performance and operations

- Work on the accountability and delegation of authority framework for HR matters continues in 2025 for full implementation in 2026. Of the three new Business Partners positions created in

July 2024 in the Regional Coordination Bureaux, one (Beirut) has been staffed as of January 2025.

- Standard operating procedures have been developed to establish and pilot a structured and consistent framework for Short-Term Assignments of staff members within the Organization. These procedures standardize the modalities, criteria, and processes for sourcing and managing such assignments. The purpose of Short-Term Assignments is to rapidly address time-sensitive workforce needs, foster the professional development of staff members by providing them with developmental opportunities and exposure to different jobs and work environments, and support functional mobility. Consultations are currently underway to refine and finalize the framework for a pilot implementation in 2025 to enhance organizational agility and operational effectiveness.

Strengthening HR partnerships

- As of December 2024, UNESCO has 154 staff and experts financed by external partners, with 105 located at Headquarters, 44 in field offices, and five in category 1 institutes. Additionally, 68 UN Volunteers (UNVs) were employed by UNESCO field offices in 2024, supporting programmes and operations on the ground. Five Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) (2 from China, 2 from Saudi Arabia, and 1 from Haiti) were appointed to fixed-term positions in 2024, subsequently highlighting the need for continued career development support to these young talents. More information on the different HR Partnerships programmes/modalities is available on HRM Careers page [https://careers.unesco.org/content/HR-Partnerships/?locale=en_GB]. The six-monthly report on Key Data of UNESCO's Workforce on the Member States Portal (https://unesco.sharepoint.com/sites/ms/en-US/SitePages/Staff-Statistics.aspx) also provides aggregate data on HR partnerships.

Enhanced HR Systems

- The HR IT integrated project, encompassing recruitment, learning, performance, and onboarding, is progressing on schedule to improve service delivery and streamline key processes. The Contract Committee was successfully convened, and an implementing partner is currently being onboarded to commence work with HRM and DBS in 2025 for effective implementation as of 2026.

AIM 4: Attain better results & impact

- Ensure a safe and healthy work environment.
- Encourage positive and constructive staff-supervisor relationships.
- Support career development.

Staff Well-being

- As of January 2025, HRM has onboarded a Project Manager to design and implement a UNESCO Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy within the UNESCO Occupational Health and Safety Management System. Following the recommendations of the UN-wide Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Implementation Board, UNESCO completed its first annual scorecard in January 2025. This scorecard provides effective tools and processes to protect against mental health risks at work and support employees with mental health conditions. Of the 12 performance indicators, UNESCO is classified as "approaching requirements" primarily due to lack of dedicated resources in 2024. Measures and initiatives to meet requirements have commenced, including developing and operationalizing guidelines for returning to work after extended sick leave.

- The Occupational Health Service (OHS) continues to monitor employee health and well-being, focusing on preventative medicine. In 2025, OHS will prioritize insourcing Occupational Health and Safety skills, proposing a system to address musculoskeletal disorders at UNESCO, and launching workforce health monitoring.

- A draft policy on periodic medical examinations has been developed and is undergoing internal consultations. The policy aims to safeguard staff member's health and well-being by incorporating periodic mandatory medical examinations into the Occupational Health and Safety framework. This includes monitoring health in relation to workplace exposures, risks, and age groups, detecting health conditions early, ensuring continuous fitness to work, and implementing reasonable workplace accommodations to enable staff to perform their duties.

Career Development initiatives

- To further develop management competencies and accountability, the 360° feedback exercise launched in 2023 continued throughout 2024. This exercise enables supervisors to receive feedback from their supervisor, peers, and direct reports on 15 core management behaviours. In December 2024, three additional cohorts of the People Management Programme were delivered to 78 people managers at the P-4/P-5/NOD/NOE levels with participants systematically enrolled in the 360° feedback exercise.

- The third iteration of the mentoring programme included 59 participants from both Headquarters and field locations. Additionally, interactive skill-building sessions on three separate topics were provided to 90 colleagues in the National Professional and General Service categories.

- Some 600 participants undertook Language Classes in one of the six official United Nations languages during 2024. HRM also administered registrations for the annual United Nations Language Proficiency Examination, organized by the UN Secretariat in October 2024, with 33 staff members taking the examination. For the first time, the examination was open to Professional staff in addition to General Service staff, providing a robust assessment and confirmation of their linguistic skills.

- HRM supported Sectors with specific needs training, including a PAX-led initiative on crisis preparedness and response delivered in Q.4 2024 in collaboration with UNDP. Technical input was provided to the Gender Equality Division (GEN) on developing an e-learning module as well as DBS colleagues for the development and implementation of a new mandatory Cybersecurity module. A self-paced e-learning module on drafting an achievements-based CV was also launched as part of career development support.

- Support to new Young Professionals and interns was provided through dedicated induction sessions in October 2024 as well as an interactive workshop on Networking and Personal Pitch. Two webinars with internal subject matter experts were organized in November and December 2024, attended by 57 young talents. These sessions provided UNESCO interns and Young Professionals with an in-depth perspective on Organizational priorities and a chance to expand their professional networks.

Draft 43 C/5 budget implications:

3.   The continued delivery of the 2026-2027 HR Strategy roadmap targets is contingent on having adequate capacity and funding. While the draft 43 C/5 ZRG scenario foresees a minimal yet workable Organizational-wide budget for learning and development activities, the ZNG scenarios do not. As such, a ZNG scenario would severely hamper the continuation and implementation of high-impact learning and development programmes as well as other flagship initiatives, including the full implementation of workforce planning principles, activities on mental health and wellbeing,

disability inclusion and accessibility and, enhanced conditions of service for affiliate personnel, which risk being delayed or postponed should current resource levels be maintained.

4.   The availability of sustainable and predictable financing for workforce-related costs directly impacts the extent of possible improvements in the harmonization, alignment, and stability of structures, workforce composition, and contractual arrangements. Given the proposed 2026-2027 budget options, some Workforce Planning principles may not be possible to implement, including full implementation of the desired structures at field office level, the alignment of grades and standardized use of contract types across the organization, and the regularization of certain long-standing temporary and affiliate contract arrangements.

Proposed reporting adjustments:

5.   With regard to reporting on progress achieved on the implementation of the HR Strategy 2023-2027, 42 C/Resolution 65, endorsed at the 42nd session of the General Conference, requests the Director-General to report to the Executive Board twice-yearly on its implementation. To optimize resources for the development and implementation of the roadmap initiatives, the draft decision in paragraph 5 is proposing a transition from a biannual to an annual progress reporting (spring session) for a more comprehensive and strategic overview of the prior year's achievements and challenges. This approach would also better align with other strategic HR reporting cycles, such as the annual report on geographical distribution and gender balance of staff in the Secretariat (autumn session).

Proposed draft decision

6.   In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1.   <u>Recalling</u> 220 EX/Decision 5.IV.A and 42 C/Resolution 65,

2.   <u>Having examined</u> document 221 EX/5.III.A,

3.   <u>Takes note</u> of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027;

4.   <u>Welcomes with satisfaction</u> the coordinated implementation of the measures foreseen to enhance disability inclusion and accessibility in the workplace, in particular the advancement in the development of reasonable accommodation guidelines, the designation of focal point champions on disability inclusion and accessibility across all sectors and offices and the development of awareness-raising capacity-building initiatives in this regard;

5.   <u>Welcomes</u> the efforts made within the Sector for Administration and Management (ADM) to ensure the continuity of the post of Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Officer beyond the current biennium;

6.   <u>Requests</u> the Director-General to present to it at its 222nd session an update on progress achieved in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027, in line with the twice-yearly reporting thereon;

7.   <u>Also requests</u> the Director-General to present to the General Conference at its 43rd session a proposal to consider transitioning to an annual progress report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027 to allow for a more

comprehensive and strategic overview of the prior year's achievements and challenges, and to present such a report thereafter to the Executive Board at each spring session.

ANNEX I

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR 2023-2027: ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION

SCORES:	Achieved	On Track/Moving forward	Not yet achieved	Future phase	Status as at January 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 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.					🟢				⚪				⚪				⚪

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.	(grey)
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.	(yellow ×5, grey ×10)
	T.2: Target of 5% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction with Learning & Development opportunities, as compared to 2021 survey.	(red)
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.	(grey)
10. Equip supervisors to manage underperformance and conflicts;	**T.1**: Issuance of HR procedure and guidelines.	(yellow)
	T.2: 6-8 on-line thematic sessions per year on Perf. Insights.	(green, grey, grey, grey)
	T.3: Increase of 10% satisfaction rating in 2024 Employee Engagement Survey as compared to the 2021 Survey.	(red)
	T.4: a further 10% increase in the 2026 Employee Engagement Survey as compared to the 2024 Survey.	(grey)
11. Establish mechanism/scheme to recognize high-performing teams.	**T.1**: Recognition Programme developed and implemented.	(grey)
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.	(green)
	T.2: Detailed Annual report on geographical distribution including progress on measures implemented	(green, grey, grey, grey)
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.	(yellow ×5, grey ×10)
	T.2: at least 3 Global Webinars per year.	(green, grey, grey, grey)
3. Maximize the use of digital tools for better outreach;	**T.1**: Increase in N° of views per year.	(green, grey, grey, grey)
4. Establish formal talent pools of high potential candidates;	**T.1**: Talent pools expanded to other positions based on generic profiles.	(yellow ×5, grey ×10)
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).	(green, grey)
6. Address career development issues with regard to the Young Professionals Programme.	**T.1**: Dedicated Career Support Programme for YPPs institutionalized.	(green)
	T.2: 80% satisfaction rate of YPPs with their career development opportunities (via annual pulse surveys).	(grey, grey, grey)

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).	⚫
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% satisfaction 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.	⚫

AIM 3 - Key Objective 2. Strong HR Structures & Partnerships to better assist managers and personnel to improve performance and operations.

No.	Action	Target
7. Undertake functional review of HR functions by end 2023;		T.1: Decentralized HR functions & delegated HR authorities consistent across the regions defined.
		T.2.: Updated Table of Delegated HR authorities issued & fully implemented.
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.
		T.2: Each Regional Platform to include one HR Business Partner (BP) (43 C/5).
9. Explore designation of HR business partners in programme sectors;		T.1: HR Business Partner model developed.
		T.2: Each Sector to have at least one HR BP (43 C/5).
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.
		T.2: Guidelines on HR Partnerships for Managers updated and widely communicated.

AIM 3 - Key Objective 3. Enhanced HR Systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes

No.	Action	Target
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.
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.
		T.2: SOPs developed & finalized for each paper-based workflow moved to system.
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.
		T.2: On-line info./sessions systematically implemented for each new or revised policy.
		T.3: Interactive/dynamic dashboards using data visualization software in place for stakeholders in line with businsess needs.

| 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.	⚫ (grey) ⚫ (grey, dashed box)
	T.2: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction on wellbeing, as compared to 2021 survey.	🔴 (red)
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.	⚫ (grey)
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.	⚫ (grey)
	T.1: Workforce Health Monitoring Prg. & reporting mechanisms in place.	⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫ (grey, dashed box)
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.	🟢🟢🟢🟢🟡 ⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫ (green/amber/grey)
	T.2: Target of 70% of managers supervising at least three staff members participating by end 2026.	⚫ (grey)
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.	⚫ (grey)
	T.2: Action plans included in Programme by 2026.	⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫ (grey, dashed box)
	T.3.: 360° approach reviewed for potential integration in performance management process.	⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫ (grey, dashed box)
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.	🟢🟢🟢🟢🟡 ⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫⚫ (green/amber/grey)
	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.	🔴 (red)
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.	⚫ (grey)
6. Develop Code of Conduct for UNESCO staff [Ethics Office: lead].	**T.1** Code of Conduct developed (**2023**) and proactively communicated.	🟢 (green)

AIM 4 - Key Objective 3. Support career development

	Target	Status/Timeline markers
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.	grey
	T.2: Target of 10% increase from respondents to 2024 Employee Engagement Survey expressing satisfaction with learning & development opportunities, as compared to 2021 survey.	red
	T.3: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.	grey
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.	grey
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.	grey
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.	yellow
	T.2: Increase in % of geographic moves from staff due to participate in the mobility programme.	green, grey
	T.3: Decrease in the % of IP staff having exceeded their Standard Duration of Assignment (SDA).	green, grey, grey, grey
11. Provide career development advice and support service to managers and employees;	**T.1:** Guidelines (STA) communicated to Sectors & Field Offices.	grey
	T.2: Increased number of STAs facilitated per biennium, with particular focus on locally recruited staff (all categories), subject to funding.	grey, grey
	T.3: Annual reporting to Executive Board on N° of internal vs. external appointments.	grey
	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.	red
	T.2: A further 10% increase from respondents to 2026 Employee Engagement Survey, as compared to 2024 survey.	grey
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.	yellow
	T.2: Three career support and/or learning & development opportunities proposed per year.	green, grey, grey, grey

ANNEX II - UNESCO WORKFORCE AT A GLANCE - December 2024

5060 PERSONNEL AT UNESCO

2534 Staff Members
50%* of total workforce

2526 Affiliate Personnel
50%* of total workforce

*The percentage figures are rounded in this report.

3%

38%

49%

10%

5%

43%

52%
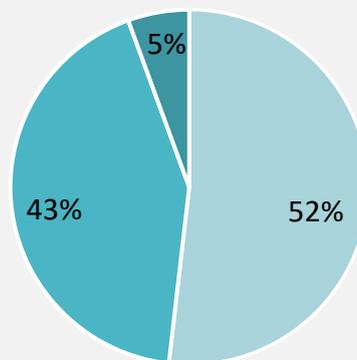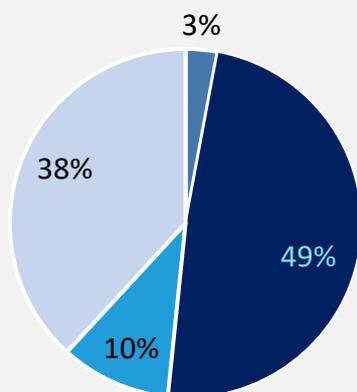
- Director & above level Staff (D+) : 74
- International Professional Staff (P) : 1234
- National Professional Officers (NPO) : 258
- General Service Staff (GS) : 968

- Consultants: 1309
- Service Contracts: 1077
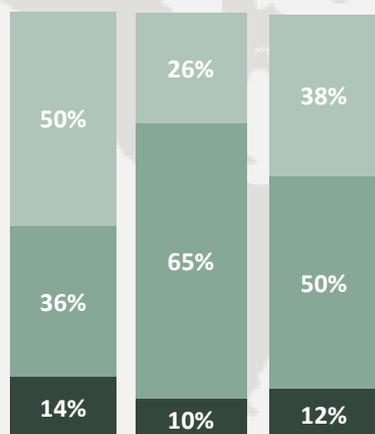- Loans, Stand-By-Personnel, Short-Term Contracts, UN Volunteers & Sponsored Trainees: 140

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

- HQ
- Field Offices
- Cat. 1 Institutes

- Staff Members
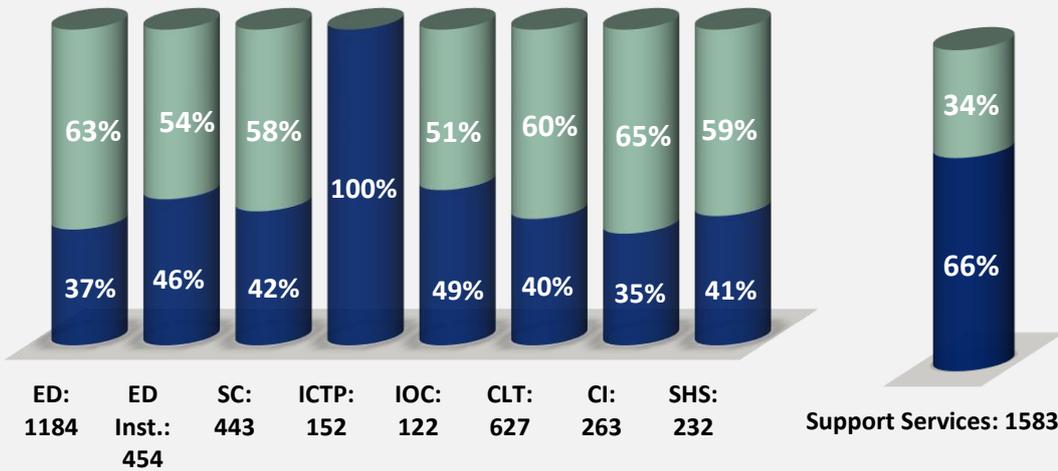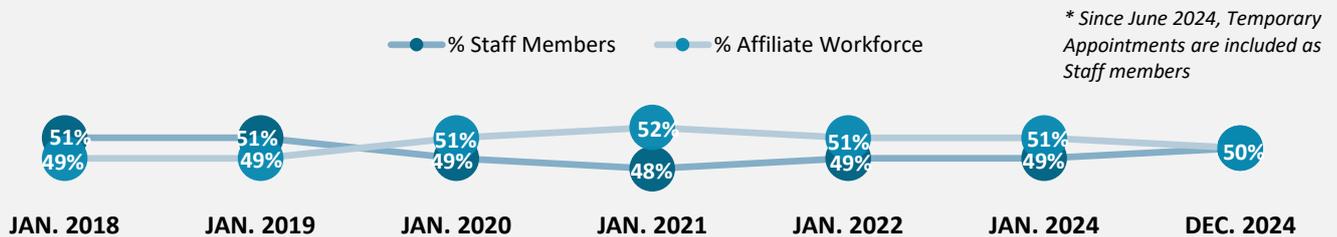- Affiliate Workforce
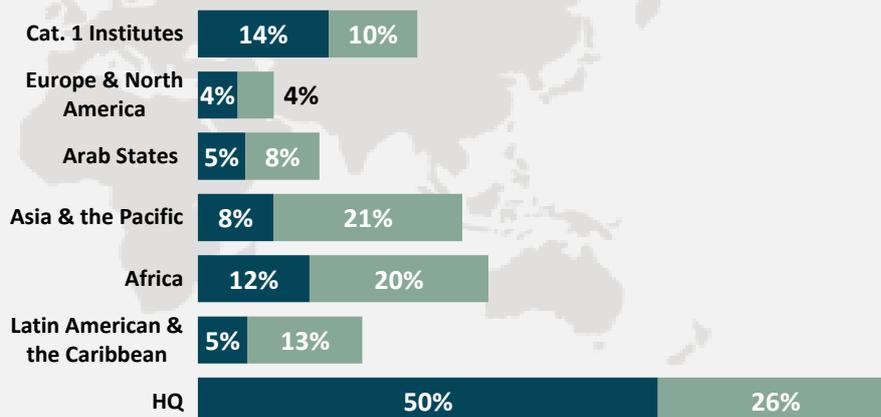
	Staff Members	Affiliate Personnel	TOTAL
HQ	50%	26%	38%
Field Offices	36%	65%	50%
Cat. 1 Institutes	14%	10%	12%

	Staff Members	Affiliate Workforce
Cat. 1 Institutes	14%	10%
Europe & North America	4%	4%
Arab States	5%	8%
Asia & the Pacific	8%	21%
Africa	12%	20%
Latin American & the Caribbean	5%	13%
HQ	50%	26%

WORKFORCE BY SECTOR

■ Staff Members
■ Affiliate Workforce

	ED: 1184	ED Inst.: 454	SC: 443	ICTP: 152	IOC: 122	CLT: 627	CI: 263	SHS: 232		Support Services: 1583
Affiliate Workforce	63%	54%	58%	—	51%	60%	65%	59%		34%
Staff Members	37%	46%	42%	100%	49%	40%	35%	41%		66%

EVOLUTION OF THE WORKFORCE SINCE JANUARY 2018

● % Staff Members ● % Affiliate Workforce

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

	JAN. 2018	JAN. 2019	JAN. 2020	JAN. 2021	JAN. 2022	JAN. 2024	DEC. 2024
% Affiliate Workforce	51%	51%	51%	52%	51%	51%	50%
% Staff Members	49%	49%	49%	48%	49%	49%	50%

DIVERSITY

2534 STAFF MEMBERS FROM 171 NATIONALITIES

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

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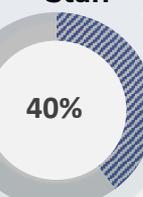[Geographical Professional posts only]

- ■ Normally represented (82 Member States) — 42%
- ■ Over-represented (26 Member States) — 14%
- ■ Under-represented (49 Member States) — 25%
- ■ Non-represented (37 Member States) — 19%
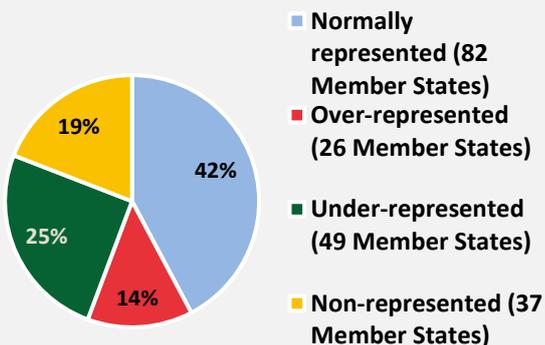
GENDER PARITY

- Women Directors & Above Level: 45%
- P-5 Level Women Staff: 40%
- Women UNESCO Staff: 57%

48

AVERAGE AGE

11

YEARS IN SERVICE AT UNESCO

12%

MOBILITY RATE 2023/24

7,6%

TURNOVER RATE (2024)
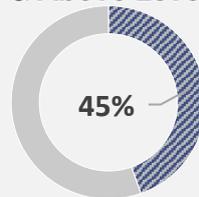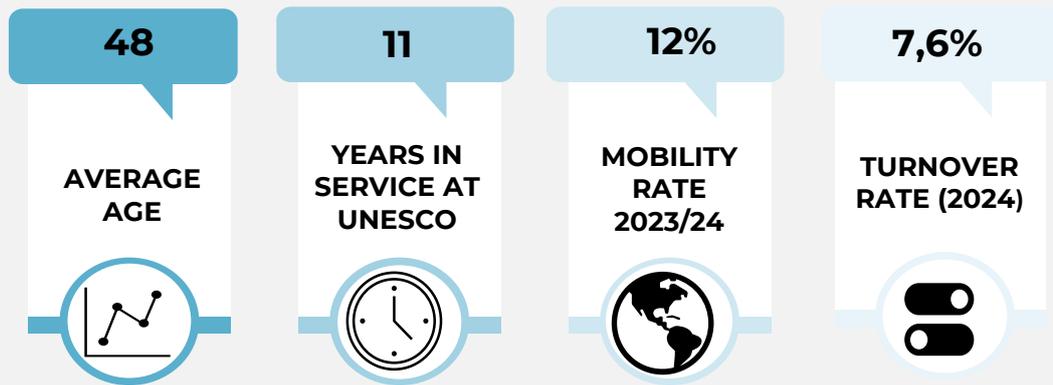
FUNDING SOURCE

1606 Staff on Regular Budget

| 63% | 37% |
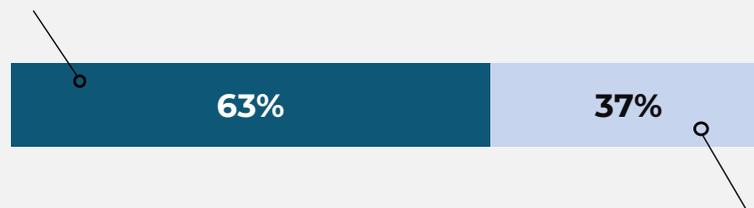
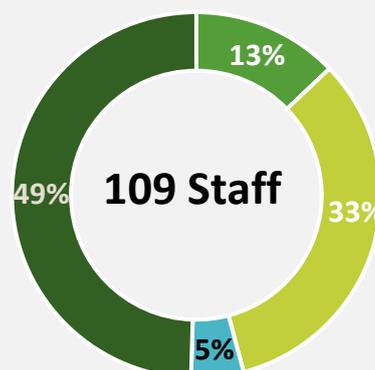**928** Staff on Voluntary Funding

ANTICIPATED RETIREMENTS OF STAFF ON ESTABLISHED POSTS BETWEEN 2025 & 2027

- Director & above level Staff (D+): 14
- International Professional Staff (P): 36
- National Professional Officers (NPO): 5
- General Service Staff (GS): 54

109 Staff

13%

33%

5%

49%

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