United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

PARIS, 8 April 2019
Original: French

Item **5** of the agenda

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

PART II

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

ADDENDUM 2

COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

SUMMARY

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 206 EX/5.II.F).

Job: 201905315

F.   UNESCO's strategic transformation
(Follow-up to 205 EX/Decision 5.III.D)

1.   The progress report on the strategic transformation does not provide any essentially new information. However, two key questions arise from the report:

- On reading document 206 EX/5.II.F and the report on UNESCO's communications contained in document 206 EX/5.II.F.INF, it does not appear that there has been close interaction between the strategic transformation team and the authors of the report. The impression is rather that of working in parallel, the strategic transformation team apparently being satisfied with simply noting that a review has been conducted and recommendations submitted, which, however, do not reflect the concerns of the work on the overall strategic transformation of the Organization.

- It is regrettable that the work of the external panel of experts does not focus on one or two major cross-cutting themes decided upon jointly by the Director-General and Member States. This would have had the merit of reviving the impetus expressed in the global flagship reports through which UNESCO has positioned itself in the past, guiding the global agenda in its fields of competence.

2.   The report contained in document 206 EX/5.II.F.INF on UNESCO's communications strategy provides a diagnosis with which it is easy to agree. However, the proposed solutions do not appear to resolve the problems identified. The idea of a new directorate with a team of some 50 staff is not at all in line with UNESCO's current budgetary constraints. Furthermore, the precautions taken by the authors of the report do not dispel doubts over the risks of duplication that are bound to appear at the Directorate-General level between the Director of the Office of the Director-General (CAB) and the Director of Communications.

3.   We also cannot fail to question the absence in this report of specific reflection on the goals and targets of the communications strategy for an organization such as UNESCO. Indeed, the report does not say to whom the Organization must communicate in particular, and proposes, through the creation of a Directorate of Communications and Engagement (DCE), a communications strategy that is ultimately somewhat too generalized to meet the real needs of the Organization.

4.   While it is important to raise awareness about UNESCO in general, it is also necessary to highlight, better than the report does, that as an intergovernmental organization, UNESCO must communicate with the Member States and institutions concerned by its action, particularly at the national level. Communication to the Member States is essential, because it is upon them that the budget and the programme depend. Communication must also be aimed at other international and regional agencies.

5.   Furthermore, the Organization must communicate with communities of specialists and experts in its fields of competence. Finally, and in order to take into account the Constitution, it should also be recalled that UNESCO has an advocacy role to play among the public, in particular by using what the authors of the Constitution in 1945 called the mass media, which now includes the Internet and social media. These few remarks on UNESCO's targets are mainly intended to put into perspective the principle of communication, which is that it should focus on specific actions and topics. In this regard, the proposed strategy seems to focus communications on UNESCO as a global entity rather than on the Organization's specific actions, which are linked to the programmes and thus to the action of the sectors.

6.   In this respect, it is often noted that UNESCO communicates on a large number of subjects – and this is a reality that the communication strategy must take into account – rather than seeking to simplify it, as the authors of the report venture to do by proposing that the new Directorate focus on communicating mainly on four to six cross-cutting themes.

7.   The idea of focusing on a few themes is at odds with the fact that the Programme as adopted by the Member States covers a far greater number of themes and topics, which respond to their priorities.

8.   It is clear to ISAU, therefore, on the basis of the diagnosis given by the report, that a properly staffed central Directorate of Communications integrated into the Office of the Director-General will probably not be able to respond to the fundamental problem, which is rather a deficit in the programme sectors. A quick review of practices shows that the sectors actually communicate a lot with a number of their targets but on an ad hoc basis and rarely with appropriate resources and expertise. It is at this level that communication must be rationalized with a view to upgrading. While communication does indeed need to be reformed at the central level, and even at Headquarters itself, the fact remains that there is also a need to consider reforming the sectors towards more effective and efficient communication that is more in touch with the target audiences of the programmes. It is in the sectors that the teams should be strengthened, and a clearly defined sectoral strategy should be developed jointly with the relevant central services, primarily the Directorate of Communications.

9.   In conclusion, while a comprehensive strategy is needed for the better positioning of UNESCO, for such a strategy to be effective and efficient, it cannot be designed without being anchored in the programme sectors.

PARIS, 8 March 2019
Original: English

Item **5** of the provisional agenda

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AT THEIR PREVIOUS SESSIONS**

PART II

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

SUMMARY

F.   UNESCO's Strategic Transformation

Information update as at 28 February 2019

In accordance with 205 EX/Decision 5.III.D, the current document presents an update on the Strategic Transformation process and main actions taken between September 2018 and February 2019.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 34.

Job: 201902866

F. UNESCO's Strategic Transformation
(Follow-up to 205 EX/Decision 5.III.D)

I. Background

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development compels UNESCO to make a full commitment to coherence and unity of actions within the United Nations system. This engagement has been clearly expressed by the Director General of UNESCO in her vision for the Strategic Transformation of UNESCO at the 204th session of the Executive Board, which the Member States endorsed. The Secretary General of the United Nations has also launched an ambitious and comprehensive reform of the United Nations development system, which is driving profound changes. As stressed by the Member States, the need to continuing the ongoing reform process of the Organization is imperative to enhance its programme delivery and to secure a lead role, within its fields of competence, in the United Nations system.

2. The Strategic Transformation process will lead to three main outcomes, which will make UNESCO better adapted to address current challenges in the world: modernized leadership and management; enhanced operational efficiency; and focused multidisciplinary programmes towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and internationally agreed goals related to UNESCO's mandate. The first and second outcomes address internal processes, which are under the accountability of the Secretariat. The third outcome will be a comprehensive programme review leading to the approval by the Member States of the UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and associated Programme and Budget (C/5).

3. For this Strategic Transformation to succeed, the Organization will tap into its main resource, the wealth of expertise and knowledge of its staff, networks and Member States. Using the resourcefulness of the Secretariat, the Strategic Transformation will invest in empowering staff through learning and development, mobility, innovation in programmes, improved communication and change of management culture. As a result, the Strategic Transformation will ensure that UNESCO sustains a prominent place by leveraging its comparative advantage through focused multidisciplinary programmes in support of Member States' effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development thereby ensuring collective intelligence in action.

Extensive consultation process undertaken with the coordination of the Transformation Support Unit

4. Several topics that are tackled by the Strategic Transformation's thematic working groups have required broad consultations and knowledge transfer across the Organization. In this regard, the Transformation Support Unit organized a large number of consultations to engage Member States and ensure an effective information sharing and continuous input to the process. This includes two information sessions for Member States held in November 2018 and February 2019, and frequent meetings with Member States upon requests of the electoral groups. These meetings have generated exchange of perspectives and knowledge, provided an opportunity for dialogue and fed into the work of the working groups. National Commissions have been kept informed through dedicated sessions held during their events globally and regionally, as well as through a dedicated newsletter targeting National Commissions.

5. The Strategic Transformation can only be successful with staff involvement and their full engagement. A Town Hall meeting was organized in December 2018 for staff at Headquarters and field offices with the presence of the Deputy Director-General and all leaders of the working groups with an innovative online tool for direct dialogue during the event. The field offices are also consulted on a regular basis via frequent online meetings.

6. The consultations with the staff associations, initiated in the autumn of 2018, have resulted in frequent and regular dialogue with the working groups. The staff associations met the Deputy

Director-General, the leaders and members of the working groups. These meetings have given an opportunity to share views and provide feedback on specific issues, including human resource management, internal communication, partnerships and restructuring of the field network.

7.   In addition to the various stakeholders above, young colleagues have also been identified as a specific group that can contribute to the Strategic Transformation. An informal internal youth network has been established and has met with the Deputy Director-General and leaders of the working groups to discuss and exchange ideas for the Strategic Transformation. The young UNESCO staff elected representatives that integrated into the working groups to better engage with the Strategic Transformation process.

II.   Progress report for the period of September 2018 to February 2019

8.   Progress has been made on the Strategic Transformation, moving from an analysis phase to an action phase. To meet the Strategic Transformation expected outcomes, key transformative and interlinked actions have been identified as priority areas, namely: Change of management culture; strategic and targeted capacity building programme; digital transformation; and environmental management. These actions will also support the restructuring of field network and optimization of the Organization's rich networks.

9.   Efforts have also been made to enhance gender analysis in the Strategic Transformation process, including the participation of the Director of the Division for Gender Equality in the Steering Committee, introduction of gender indicators to the results frameworks of the working groups and participation of gender experts to the working groups.

10.   Risk management is considered as a crosscutting component of the Strategic Transformation process. In February 2019, a meeting was held between the Risk Management Secretariat (RMS) and leaders of the working groups, in the presence of the Deputy Director-General, to discuss integration of risk management into the Strategic Transformation. To strengthen UNESCO's means of action, additional activities are scheduled with the working groups to ensure that due regard is given to risk management during the implementation of the Strategic Transformation's initiatives.

Progress on Pillar 1: Changing the structures to strengthen management culture

11.   Pillar 1 addresses internal reorganization to strengthen administration and management and ensures that the Organization has a more agile and flexible structure. This vital first step has been completed with the creation of a Sector for Administration and Management (ADM), and the appointment of a new Assistant Director-General of this sector. The reorganization of six entities under the sector (BFM, KMI, SEC, HRM, OPS – Division for Operations and CLD – Division for Conferences, Languages and Documents), and the coordination and daily management of Risk and Compliance, Administrative Manual and Contracts Committee under the Executive Office of ADM, will lead to a better integration and coherence of all support services. The creation of a new Integrated Budget Unit (within BFM), to coordinate all budget administrative tasks, and a new Grant Management Unit (within BSP), to coordinate voluntary contributions, will also improve the effectiveness of the support and programme-related services. These initiatives will also enable the Organization to strengthen the collaboration with the field network on all activities related to ADM, whilst introducing sustainable and environmentally friendly practices in its policies and operations.

12.   Change of management culture is a key foundation of the Strategic Transformation. It aims to empower staff by promoting transversal collaboration, enhanced internal communication, improved accountability and responsibility, and innovation in programmes that will deliver optimal impact. It will be sustained by various policies and tools such as the mobility policy, delegation of authority, learning and development, performance management and agile methodology applied to transversal and interdisciplinary teams. This will support the restructuring of sectors, greater flexibility and adaptation to changing working environment.

Progress on Pillar 2: Strengthening UNESCO's means of action

UNESCO's operational efficiency

13.   A number of new initiatives have been promoted by the Strategic Transformation, including human resources policies, learning and development, management of voluntary contributions, and risk management:

–   A new delegation of authority policy will be providing more authority to the ADGs for recruitment and will foster faster and more efficient decision-making;

–   A new policy on mobility has been approved by the Director-General and it will be accompanied by planned management training;

–   Performance management and career development are other critical areas under review by the working group. A revamped talent management system was approved for implementation;

–   Aligned with United Nations harmonized policy framework, a new staff justice and grievance system will be in place in 2020 to address identified weaknesses in existing procedures, some of which were evident in the results of the 2018 UNESCO Global Staff Survey;

–   The working group has also reviewed UNESCO's publications process to improve the quality and relevance of UNESCO publications, and started to develop an Environmental Management System with relevant services, as per the Executive Board decision (205 EX/Decision 24);

–   The working group is promoting UNESCO's digital transformation. The overall purpose is to make working methods more effective, efficient and to promote collaborative work in teams. This will be achieved by making greater use of new technologies, full use of existing digital workflows, use of collaborative tools, among others;

–   Projects to strengthen UNESCO's procurement and contract management will be starting, and some of the larger contracts for services within Headquarters are being re-evaluated and re-tendered;

–   Concerning financial management, new procedures for tracking voluntary contribution proposals are under way. The Constituency Relationship Management system (CRM) has been launched to improve information sharing. Optimal use will be made of the CRM Tool to support initiatives such as, for example, the Structured Financing Dialogues.

UNESCO's communication

14.   Progress has been made during the reporting period with a comprehensive analysis of existing audits and other relevant documents, including UNESCO's Communication strategy devised to raise the visibility of UNESCO (2001, 161 EX/43) as well as the 2014 IOS Audit of UNESCO's Communications.

15.   In this regard, a thorough analysis of all communication aspects, approved by the 204th session of the Executive Board, has been finalized in February 2019 with the support and assistance of the Government and Public Sector Practice (WPP). WPP concluded its assignment with a change report to support the implementation of recommendations. These recommendations include a new proposed structure and workflow for communication delivery at UNESCO. The summary of the report is presented in an information document 206 EX/5 II.F.INF.

16.   In addition, a new social media policy is being finalized, after thorough consultation with sister agencies in the United Nations, and will be issued in April 2019, together with a comprehensive

toolkit for UNESCO staff. The revamp of UNESCO's web presence in the field is also moving forward, with a new digital platform and a new editorial focus, based on results and achievements of implemented activities, to be delivered in April 2019, for implementation by all field offices.

17.   The overall revamp of UNESCO's web presence is considered a major aspect of UNESCO's digital transformation. While efforts have been made to integrate many of the costs within the budget ceilings, a significant revamp of the digital platforms calls for additional resources that are not available at the moment. Proposals for additional funding have been presented to the Executive Board (document 205 EX/23). The objective is to significantly update the technical infrastructure, the editorial strategy and the visual design of UNESCO digital tools.

UNESCO's strategic partnerships

18.   UNESCO's Comprehensive Integrated Partnerships Strategy and Resource Mobilization Strategy, issued in 2013, has been reviewed in close collaboration with the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) and through a broad consultation process across the Organization. The recommendations relating to the update of the Comprehensive Partnership Strategy are presented in document 206 EX/14. The final updated Comprehensive Partnership Strategy will be presented to the 207th session of the Executive Board.

19.   At the same time, the Integrated Comprehensive Strategy for Category 2 Institutes and Centres under the auspices of UNESCO is being revised. The goal is to create a global network of institutions of excellence in UNESCO's fields of competence, engaged in a privileged partnership with the Organization, which will contribute to the implementation of its priorities and programmes as a result. Proposed revisions are presented in document 206 EX/19 for the Executive Board's consideration.

20.   The working group has identified ways of simplifying processes linked to engagement with donors and partners. It is also reviewing new ways to enhance knowledge exchange and networking on innovative fund-raising techniques. Finding ways to empower field offices in resource mobilization efforts and its coordination presents an important action point of the working group. Strengthened collaboration with private actors is also being assessed in order to diversify partnerships and foster innovation in resource mobilization, through online measures for example.

UNESCO's global presence in the world

21.   The working group has taken stock of the current field situation through the comprehensive review of challenges and opportunities of the field network and has proposed new principles and criteria for UNESCO's presence in the world to be subsequently applied to the mapping of a UNESCO's field network. The analysis and rationale of the new principals and criteria are presented in the document 206 EX/5 Part II.A.

22.   Regional consultations with Directors and field offices were organized in January 2019, to introduce the field coordination modalities within the newly established sector of Priority Africa and External Relations (PAX) structure, as well as to present progress made and gather further inputs on the proposed principles and criteria for UNESCO's presence in the world.

Reform of the United Nations Development System

23.   The working group on UNESCO's Global Presence in the World is also responsible for the alignment of the Strategic Transformation process with the "Repositioning of the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda". It presented linkages with the United Nations reform progress during the information sessions with Member States on strategic transformation in November 2018 and February 2019.

24.   A number of work streams are under way within the framework of the United Nations Development System (UNDS), including the redesign of the UNDAF, the Regional Level Optimization Phase, the Multi Country Office Review, the implementation of common back offices,

etc. The working group on UNESCO's Global Presence in the World will continue to examine developments and ensure that UNESCO contribute and synchronize with the ongoing reform efforts. UNESCO can better position itself as a key player in its areas of competences in the framework of strengthened coordination and collaboration with United Nations agencies in countries.

25.   There are opportunities for UNESCO to have a more flexible structure and stronger linkages to the United Nations system where the Organization does not have presence. Ultimately, alignment with United Nations regional presence will lead to stronger UNESCO regional offices that can better support normative work at the regional level, implementing strategic programmes and backstopping to country offices. (See also document 206 EX/5 Part II.E on Reform of the United Nations System).

III.   Status report on the use of the $2.1 million approved for the Strategic Transformation process as at 28 February 2019

26.   The following table provides an update on the use of the $2.1 million which was approved at the 204th session of the Executive Board for the following three elements of the Strategic Transformation process:

	Approved Budget (USD '000)	Expenditure as of 28 February 2019 (USD '000)	Exp. Rate %
1. Communication review	200.0	137.9	69%
2. Support Unit	1 203.6	1 038.8	86.3%
3. High-level Reflection Group	739.5	0	0%
Total	**2143.1**	**1176.7**	**54.9%**

Update on communication review

27.   In September 2018, UNESCO commissioned the Government and Public Sector Practice (WPP) to undertake a thorough review of UNESCO's communication as part of a wider project to create a new communications strategy for the Organization. The review and assessment phase was undertaken to identify the strengths and challenges of the Organisation's current system of communication. The recommendations of WPP are outlined in document 206 EX/5 II.F.INF.

Update on the work of the Transformation Support Unit

28.   The budget amount for this item is $1.2 million, which covers the staffing, consultancy needs and other supplies and materials of the Transformation Support Unit.

29.   The Transformation Support Unit has ensured the coordination and coherence of the Strategic Transformation process. It has facilitated discussions and decision-making in the Steering Committee. It has contributed to all thematic working groups (TWGs) by providing analysis and benchmark studies, developing of project proposals, ensuring linkages between working groups and trainings of members of the TWGs on results-based management, agile methodology, and youth engagement. The Support Unit has also actively engaged key stakeholders to the Strategic Transformation through special house-wide events, targeted meetings with Member States, and Staff Associations. It has also organized presentations of senior United Nations officials and experts

on specific topics, and it has established an informal network of young UNESCO colleagues that is providing support and input to the Strategic Transformation. Furthermore, it has published newsletters, video interviews and a web portal on Strategic Transformation with the support of the Division of Public Information.

Update on the establishment of the High-Level Reflection Group

30. As explained in the concept note related to the implementation strategy for the strengthening and strategic adjustment of the programmes in documents 205 EX/5.III.D, and 205 EX/5.III.D.INF.2, the Director-General is considering soliciting external personalities for the High-Level Reflection Group. The list of proposed candidates is under finalization. The Group is expected to be operational in June 2019. It will feed into the process of the elaboration of the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 that will also be starting during 2019.

31. This Group will advise the Director-General, within the Medium-Term Strategy process, to review the external environment, major trends and challenges and identify opportunities and threats to the work of UNESCO. The work of the group will then be part of and add to the process of preparing the Medium-Term Strategy.

32. The budget of $0.79 million has been approved for this item. Initial estimates included the costs of meetings; field visits; staff travel; consultancies and other miscellaneous expenses such as translations, documentation etc. for the High-Level Reflection Group. As at the end of February 2019, no expenditure has yet been made for this item.

33. The High-Level Reflection Group is part of the global consultations on strategic thinking (Pillar 3 of the Strategic Transformation). The provisional outline of Pillar 3 is presented in the Annex.

Proposed decision

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

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 204 EX/Decision 31 and 205 EX/Decision 5.III.D,

2. Having examined documents 206 EX/5.II.F and 206 EX/5.II.F.INF,

3. Takes note of the Director-General's report on progress in the strategic transformation process for the period of September 2018 to February 2019;

4. Notes the status report on the use of $2.1 million approved for the strategic transformation process as at 28 February 2019;

5. Requests the Director-General to submit to it at its 207th session a further progress report on the strategic transformation process.

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ANNEX

Provisional outline of global consultations on strategic thinking (Pillar 3 of the Strategic Transformation process)

Key activities and outputs	2019								2020				
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May

Key activities and outputs	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Activity 1. Launch of strategic consultations: *Participative approach to develop vision and medium- to long-term strategy* - Secretariat, UNESCO networks including youth, Intergovernmental programmes, and other UNESCO Partners.														
Activity 2. Launch of Director-General's consultations: *Participative approach to develop recommendations on major orientations of strategy and programmatic areas of focus* - Member States, including their National Commissions, and other UNESCO Partners; - High Level Reflection Group (HLRG)														
Outputs: Reports on programme reviews and strategic thinking - Secretariat background document to the Executive Board - Draft roadmap for the preparation of 41 C/4 and 41 C/5 - Strategic Results Report (SRR) 2020 - High Level Reflection Group (HLRG)														

207th Executive Board

40th General Conference

SRR

HLRG

209th Executive Board