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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 III

### MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### ADDENDUM

### COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

#### SUMMARY

#### **E. UNESCO's strategic transformation**

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 207 EX/5.III.E).

1. The succinct presentation of the reforms under way throughout the Organization may be welcomed. However, the document gives the impression of a rather thin catalogue that does not allow for an overall view. As we have pointed out before, it is surprising that restructuring is taking place in the programme sectors, as in the Culture Sector (CLT), at a time when many thematic discussions are under way and a high-level expert commission is expected to start work soon. This paradox must be questioned. Whether the imminent reform of the sector in no way affects, for instance, the current changes, or whether future transformations override current developments, resources will probably have been mobilized in vain, staff will have certainly been destabilized and time may have been lost.

2. The section of the document on partnerships does not reflect existing networks such as UNESCO Chairs, NGOs or National Commissions, on which the Organization must, however, rely in order to be in line with current developments in UNESCO fields of competence. Moreover, reference to these networks is important because these partners can contribute to the mobilization of resources for joint projects. The networks are a key asset of UNESCO, contributing to its reputation and credibility. Noting that the networks are mobilized at the level of sectors, it is important to underline the predominant role they must play in terms of partnership and resource mobilization, since they are, in the last instance, responsible for the projects.



Job: 201913072

3. We note in the section on communication that the communication strategy “*responds to the need to better capitalize on UNESCO’s brand*”. The way this is worded is thought-provoking. UNESCO, as an intergovernmental organization and as an agency for education, science and culture, is an institution with a public and universal vocation for which the notion of profit cannot be that of the strictly commercial sector. We wish here to draw the attention of UNESCO’s stakeholders to the fact that the notion of profit cannot be confused with the more appropriate notion of valorization, without a risk to the credibility of the Organization.

4. With regard to global presence, there is also concern about the consistency between field office reform in the context of the strategic transformation and that of the “Delivering as one” programme, of which UNESCO is of course a part. Logic would suggest that we wait for the recommendations of the “One United Nations” initiative, whose deadline is 2022, in order to avoid undoing the changes that will be implemented at UNESCO from 2020, thus minimizing the financial and human impact. According to the business strategy plan, it was planned to close some field offices and entrust their management to the Regional Coordinator. We would also like to recall the recommendation to close some offices and antennas made during the last field office reform. It should be noted that this last incomplete reform was not extended beyond Africa, because it was basically a total failure.

5. The section on pillar three mentions a large number of substantive and thematic consultations and meetings. This implies a genuine effort to strategically strengthen programmes. However, it is to be regretted that there are absolutely no substantive reports on the content aspects discussed at these meetings. This lack of information is surprising, particularly in the context of a strategic exercise whose stated values are transparency and openness.

6. Finally, ISAU notes and welcomes the fact that the group of experts has been set up in a timely manner to support the preparation of the next C/4 document. Nevertheless, in view of the remarks we have just made, we hope that this commission will work in good cooperation with the Secretariat, and in particular with the staff, because it is important to stress that the commission’s long-awaited reforms will, in the end, be implemented by the Secretariat. In conclusion, let us emphasize the sincere interest of the staff in the principle of demanding reforms to improve our Organization in a comprehensive way – it explains the challenging nature of our remarks.



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

### PART III

#### MANAGEMENT ISSUES

##### SUMMARY

##### **E. UNESCO's strategic transformation**

In accordance with [206 EX/Decision 5.II.F](#), the present document provides updated information on UNESCO's strategic transformation. It presents the main achievements, as well as the main proposals for transformation necessary to fully implement Pillar 2.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 48.



## **E. UNESCO's strategic transformation** (Follow-up to [206 EX/Decision 5.II.F](#))

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### **I. Background**

1. The rapidly changing global context requires the Organization to adapt further to meet the challenges of our time. In this regard, UNESCO's strategic transformation, proposed to Member States at the 204th session of the Executive Board, is in line with the vision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to modernize the United Nations system as a whole to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

2. This new direction for UNESCO should lead to improved internal working practices, increased efficiency and the adaptation of our programmes to the challenges of the twenty-first century. This organizational reform, driven by the Secretariat and implemented with Member States, is a testament to the Organization's ability to reposition itself so as to better respond to contemporary and future challenges.

3. The strategic transformation process is intended to change the structure to modernize the Organization's management culture (Pillar 1), strengthen its means of action (Pillar 2) and contribute to the strategic adaptation of programmes for the 2030 Agenda (Pillar 3).

#### **Pillar 1: Changing the structure to strengthen management culture**

4. In the course of the past 12 months, the strategic transformation has been actively set in motion. The first pillar of the transformation was finalized under very good conditions and in a timely manner with the establishment of the Sector for Administration and Management. The Director-General had proposed to reorganize the internal structure by establishing a new sector responsible for bringing together the support services in order to strengthen management culture, improve the flow of the decision-making chain, foster greater synergy and make service delivery more effective. The Sector was established in October 2018.

5. The reorganization of the Sector into six entities will enable better integration and consistency across all the support services, namely the Bureau of Financial Management (BFM), Division of Knowledge Management and Information Systems (KMI), Security and Safety Section (SEC), Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM), Division of Operations (OPS) and Division of Conferences, Languages and Documents (CLD). In addition, the Executive Office of the Assistant Director-General of the Sector will enable more effective monitoring of risk and compliance, the Administrative Manual and the Contracts Committee.

#### **II. Pillar 2: Strengthening UNESCO's means of action.**

6. Pillar 2 of the strategic transformation promotes measures to equip the Secretariat with tools to design and implement interdisciplinary programmes. The actions taken to date, as part of the collaboration between the thematic working groups and various entities concerned within the United Nations, are:

##### **(a) Operational efficiency**

7. The Organization has undertaken a number of major reforms in the area of human resources management by adopting a set of best practices, with the objective of improving the quality of personnel management, increasing job satisfaction and ensuring better performance management and mobility. The main actions undertaken are set out as follows.

8. A new mobility policy was implemented, for the first time, in collaboration with the Assistant Directors-General of the sectors, senior management and staff associations. The new mobility policy should benefit all staff by promoting the better exchange of knowledge, the sharing of experience

and professional development. Staff mobility is essential for the creation of a more multi-skilled and experienced Secretariat that is able to meet the requirements of both Headquarters programmes and the complex mandates of fieldwork, thus making the Organization more flexible and responsive. It is a crucial element in effective human resources management, and all UNESCO staff should have equal access to opportunities within the Organization, both at Headquarters and in field offices. The Secretariat will assess the first mobility exercise conducted in 2019 in order to continue the implementation for next year.

9. A new anti-harassment policy and new harmonized disciplinary procedures have been implemented by the Secretariat. In addition, improved coordination between the bodies in charge of the internal system for the administration of justice will allow improved access to services, ensure the efficiency of case processing and reduce deadlines and other complexities of the process.

10. A new delegation of authority policy now provides more authority regarding recruitment to the Assistant Directors-General and senior management, and fosters faster and more efficient decision-making in the Organization.

11. A new performance evaluation policy has been approved. The annual performance evaluation cycle will be introduced from January 2020, and will be based on a more streamlined and updated system. The aim is to ensure greater transparency and clarity with respect to career development and improve the performance management process for all staff.

12. The implementation, for the first time, of a new strategic workforce planning initiative is intended to improve the identification of expertise within sectors so as to develop appropriate career plans. The initiative also seeks to better plan internal staff movement and reduce the risk of staff shortages so as to ensure the continued functioning of the sectors. Accordingly, a pilot project will start in September 2019 in the Culture Sector, and be rolled out to all sectors from 2020.

13. A new training module in leadership for senior management will be implemented. The training incorporates changes to managerial culture, proposed as part of the strategic transformation, and addresses key issues related to staff performance management. The training will have been provided to 76 senior managers in the Organization by the end of 2019, focusing on building their capacities to best support the ongoing changes and the development of new management tools. The training will also be provided to all staff, subject to funding availability.

14. In order to promote inter- and intra-sectoral collaboration, a pilot programme of transversal teams is being rolled out across the Organization. A transversal team which has been trained in agile methodology, is already at work within the Education Sector.

15. Other initiatives are being developed to meet the ambitious objectives of Pillar 2. It is a question of improving environmental management within the Organization. The matter has been discussed with a view to adopting an environmental management system (EMS). The measures related to the establishment of an environmentally friendly management framework will have to establish effective waste management and anti-waste policies, while also reducing the use of plastics, better managing water consumption, and raising awareness of the need to improve local biodiversity. A study of the situation has been conducted, and it will serve as a basis for the preparation of the road map for the adoption of the environmental management system.

16. Finally, improving programme effectiveness depends on faster support and on the improvement of the procurement process. The new structure established within the Sector for Administration and Management (ADM) will help to speed up the procurement process while maintaining adequate control. The main lessons drawn from the Sector's analyses confirm that the field network requires additional investment and regional procurement experts to provide advice and supervision.

## **(b) Communication**

17. A new communication strategy has been developed. It seeks to make communication not only a tool for visibility, but also a means of engagement and advocacy and an effective tool for supporting the behavioural changes sought through the Organization's actions. This strategy responds to the need to better capitalize on UNESCO's brand and to consolidate the Organization's international influence by optimizing the use of its image.

18. Significant work has been done to improve internal communication, particularly through the establishment of the new Internal Communication Board, which aims to foster greater consistency and optimize overall internal communication at UNESCO. To date, the Board has taken concrete steps, including the launch of a new Intranet system and a new policy for sending emails to staff.

19. A new social-media policy has been finalized, following extensive consultations with other United Nations organizations. It has been published, along with a corresponding toolkit, for UNESCO staff. The policy will serve as guidance for the management of UNESCO staff accounts, while the toolkit will provide mechanisms for effective communication on social networks. These measures are aimed at helping UNESCO staff to communicate narratively, clearly and persuasively with all communities around the world.

20. The redesign of UNESCO's online presence in the field is progressing, with the implementation of a new digital platform and the development of a new editorial line, based on results obtained and activities conducted. The Arab States region is a pilot region: the websites of the field offices there are being migrated and redesigned.

## **(c) Partnerships**

21. A new partnership directorate, covering partnerships of all categories, has been created within the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) and will enable the eventual implementation of a comprehensive partnership strategy.

22. The integrated partnership strategy has been reviewed in a broad Organization-wide consultation process. The new strategy is presented in document [207 EX/11](#). It promotes a number of actions in order to expand the partnership network, to ensure consistency in partnership development, and to simplify partnership and resource mobilization procedures.

23. A UNESCO guide on resource mobilization has been developed, as has a private-sector fundraising plan.

24. UNESCO field offices will be launching different kinds of donor and partner meetings in order to test the structured-financing-dialogue approach. From September to November 2019, four forums will be taking place: in Angola, during the Biennale of Luanda, on the theme of the culture of peace; in Panama, on small island developing States (SIDS); on UNESCO's 50-year presence in Uruguay, and on national partnerships in Morocco.

25. The Organization is also working to implement a decentralized resource mobilization strategy by recruiting regional officers specialized in fundraising for the development of interdisciplinary programmes at the regional level. The officers are expected to be joining the Organization by the end of 2019.

26. The new funding and resource management section of the Bureau of Strategic Planning will simplify and expedite the processing of financial agreements. The section will be the sole provider of advice for programmes concerning the negotiation and management of voluntary contributions. In addition, several administrative measures will be introduced to streamline extrabudgetary processes, such as decentralizing the responsibility for certain agreements to administrative officers at Headquarters and in the field offices.

27. The strategic transformation process must also engage young people by involving them in the organizational changes under way. The Working Group on Strategic Partnerships is thus guiding the creation of a network of young UNESCO staff members aiming to give young people a role in decision-making processes. We must also maximize their potential in order to ensure the success of the strategic transformation process. It is also a question of further mobilizing young Goodwill Ambassadors and Goodwill Ambassadors who work on youth issues. In addition, UNESCO is developing a climate action network (YOU-CAN) to encourage young people to contribute to the Organization's climate-change strategy.

**(d) Global presence**

28. The reflection on the current status of the field network, and the ongoing United Nations reform, have encouraged the development of principles and criteria (206 EX/5.II.A). UNESCO is currently mapping its field network, which will make it possible to identify both the strengths of the current structure and the areas requiring adjustment in order to better meet Member States' needs and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Regional consultations with field office directors have been held in order to keep them engaged in the strategic transformation.

29. Other immediate actions are also being implemented to adjust and improve the current field network without changing its main structure. In that connection, regional representatives to the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group have been appointed to ensure UNESCO's full involvement in these strategic regional groups. Furthermore, the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector (PAX) has been rearranged to include the unit in charge of supporting the field network, leading to better coordination of the Organization's actions in the field.

30. Finally, senior management training, the redesign of field office websites and the measures taken in relation to mobility contribute to strengthening the Organization's field network and to better meeting the needs of Member States. The establishment of a section for cooperation with the United Nations within the Priority Africa and External Relations Sector (PAX) will improve UNESCO's effectiveness within the United Nations development system and enable it to better respond to the challenges of the ongoing United Nations reform (207 EX/5.III.D).

31. It is therefore necessary to ensure appropriate investment in the projects presented above for their implementation and application within the Organization. In this regard, voluntary contributions from Member States would be essential for the effective implementation of all the actions provided for under Pillar 2. These include ensuring the provision of training on performance management and leadership to all categories of staff, at Headquarters and in the field, implementation of the new environmental management system, improvement of UNESCO Headquarters and facilitation of digital transformation. It also involves implementing the Organization's partnership strategy, in particular by strengthening staff capacities and optimizing UNESCO's communication, for example by redesigning its websites and improving the digital dissemination of its publications. The voluntary contributions required to achieve this have been estimated at between \$6 million and \$7 million.

**III. Progress made in the implementation of Pillar 3**

32. Work has begun on the preparation of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4). Pillar 3 aims, by making greater use of synergies between UNESCO's fields of competence, to achieve greater efficiency and increase the impact of the Organization's programmes, including in the context of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

33. As part of the Organization's strategic transformation and reflection on its Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 (41 C/4), a series of unprecedented sector-specific dialogues have been held between Permanent Delegates and the Assistant Directors-General of the sectors on major trends, challenges and opportunities that will have an impact on UNESCO's work over the next ten years. This is an innovative and inclusive approach.

34. More than 60 delegations participated in these dialogues. The delegates were able to exchange views with the Assistant Directors-General on future challenges as well as on UNESCO's comparative advantages and the strengthening of its role, at the global, regional and national levels. These initial dialogues highlighted common policy guidance, such as the continuation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the goals of Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as the policy frameworks for UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029; the need for an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to effectively address challenges, and the importance of paying particular attention to Africa and gender equality, as well as to young people as agents of change.

35. These dialogues will be followed by meetings on cross-cutting and interdisciplinary themes with Member States, including their National Commissions, UNESCO networks, in particular those of young people, intergovernmental programmes, external personalities and all UNESCO's partners among intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

36. In addition, the programme review began, as a first step, with reviews of intergovernmental programme activity reports, internal reflection and exchanges within sectors with programme staff at Headquarters and in the field, and an in-depth review of programme audits and evaluations. Starting in the autumn of 2019, the sectors will continue this review by conducting a thorough analysis and review of the performance of each of the programmes according to the five criteria established by the Board (197 EX/Decision 5.IV.E), namely relevance, capacity to deliver, comparative advantage, tangible results and sustainability. According to the timetable for the monitoring report (EX/4), the results of this exercise will be presented to the Executive Board at its 2020 spring session in the strategic results report (SRR), a report intended to inform the Executive Board's discussions on future programmes, particularly with regard to the continuation, reorientation or strengthening of certain programmes.

37. Finally, the strategic review process will be aligned with the main stages of preparing the next C/4 and C/5 documents in order to provide a solid basis for the preparation of the "Preliminary proposals by the Director-General concerning draft documents [41 C/4](#) and [41 C/5](#)". The Pillar 3 process will thus lay the foundations for strategic and future-oriented thinking.

#### **IV. Status report on the use, as at 28 June 2019, of the \$2.1 million approved budget for the strategic transformation process**

38. The following table provides an update on the use of the \$2.1 million which was approved for the strategic transformation process at the 204th session of the Executive Board:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Approved budget (\$ thousands)</i>	<i>Expenditure as at 28 June 2019 (\$ thousands)</i>	<i>Expenditure rate %</i>
Support Unit	1,203,600	1,172,873	97
High-level reflection group	739,500	82,738	11
Communication review	200,000	137,928	69
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,143,100</b>	<b>1,393,540</b>	<b>65</b>

##### **(a) Update on the communication review**

39. 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. A comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the Organization's communication was completed in February 2019 and the final WPP report was submitted to the Secretariat and subsequently shared in full with Member States, in accordance with

the Executive Board's decision ([206 EX/Decision 5.II.F](#)). It is partly on the basis of this report that the working group on UNESCO's communication developed the new communication strategy.

**(b) Update on the work of the Transformation Support Unit**

40. The work of the Support Unit has increased as its missions have expanded, starting with the supervision of the implementation of the actions proposed by the working groups, which requires increased coordination between the multiple stakeholders and responsible entities.

41. The Support Unit has facilitated discussions and decision-making in the steering committee. Since the launch of the process, 12 sessions of the steering committee have been organized by the Support Unit. It has also established an informal network of young UNESCO colleagues who support and contribute to the strategic transformation. In addition to supporting youth participation in thematic working groups, the Support Unit has organized meetings between young colleagues and senior managers in order to involve young people in the transformation process and reflect their voices and experiences.

42. The Support Unit has also stepped up its internal communication efforts by producing seven video clips dedicated to the strategic transformation, writing new newsletters and organizing nearly 40 information meetings with field offices. It has also ensured transparency at each stage of the strategic transformation through fluid communication between the Secretariat, the steering committee, the sectors, Member States and their National Commissions and all relevant partners.

43. The Support Unit has organized a large number of consultations to engage Member States and ensure effective information sharing and continuous input to the process. Two information sessions for Member States were held as well as frequent meetings with Member States at the request of the electoral groups. In addition, a series of sector-specific dialogues between Permanent Delegates and Assistant Directors-General of the sectors were organized, as part of Pillar 3 of the strategic transformation, by the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) and the Support Unit, in collaboration with the sectors.

44. The Support Unit also contributed to the organization of workshops that have stimulated the development of a number of actions and contributed to improving the Organization's internal management. It presented the progress made by the working groups during the sector retreats and organized a workshop dedicated to the results achieved under Pillar 2 with the Organization's staff directly involved in the process.

45. In addition, the Support Unit continues to support working groups that have held more than 80 sessions, linking the working groups and supporting the training of their members in the areas of results-based management, agile methodology and youth participation.

**(c) Update on the establishment of the high-level reflection group**

46. At the time of writing, the Secretariat has been in contact with potential members of the high-level reflection group. It will hold its first meeting in autumn 2019.

47. A budget of \$0.73 million has been approved for this initiative. Expenses have been incurred to initiate the establishment and coordination of the high-level reflection group.

**Proposed decision**

48. In 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](#), [205 EX/Decision 5.III.D](#) and [206 EX/Decision 5.II.F](#),

2. Having examined document 207 EX/5.III.E,
3. Welcomes the report of the Director-General on the progress made and the substantive proposals to finalize Pillar 2 of the strategic transformation;
4. Takes note of the progress report on the use, as at the end of June 2019, of the \$2.1 million approved budget for the strategic transformation process;
5. Requests the Director-General to submit to it at its 209th session a progress report on Pillars 2 and 3 of the strategic transformation process.