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## REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND GENDER BALANCE OF THE STAFF OF THE SECRETARIAT

### ADDENDEUM

#### SUMMARY

In conformity with Item 2805.7 of the UNESCO Administrative Manual, the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) submits its observations on this report by the Director-General.

STU was happy to learn from this document that UNESCO is doing fairly well compared to other United Nations agencies in terms of geographic and gender balance. The efforts made over the past years have borne their fruit, but we are still waiting to see a **real commitment** on behalf of the administration to achieve parity.

To illustrate our point, let us take an example of one of the main proactive actions taken by HRM to improve geographical balance. Paragraph 40 informs us that UNESCO participated in career fairs and events held in the following countries: China, the United States of America (with participants from Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New York University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cornell University and Yale), the Republic of Korea, Switzerland and France.

Of the above five countries, two are actually normally or over-represented (Republic of Korea and France) and three are in Group I, which is the best-represented group in the Secretariat. We understand that it is easier to attend an event in France than in, for instance, Tanzania or Viet Nam, but facility of access is not a good reason for HRM to invest time and resources in attracting more job applicants from that country. As for the impressive list of universities represented at the United States event, it is all very well to invite Harvard and MIT graduates to apply, but the truth is, most of the potential staff from under- and non-represented countries that UNESCO wishes to recruit tend to attend "slightly" lower-profile universities in their national capitals. Maybe that is where our HR colleagues should go?

Regarding the improvement of gender parity, we note with satisfaction obvious and commendable progress over the past years. However, much still remains to be done at D-level and above. We learn, for instance, that in spite of the recruitment target set by the Gender Action Plan (60% of D posts to be filled by women to achieve gender parity in this category by 2015), only 36% of vacant D posts were filled by female candidates between May 2008 and May 2009. Even for P-5 posts, the 50% target was not met over the past year, with only 35% of appointments/promotions going to women.

Why have the Action Plan targets not been enforced over the past year? Well, perhaps we should ask, who should have been enforcing them? Does HRM have the clear authority to do so?

The double challenge of improving both geographical and gender balance may appear daunting, but it does not have to be so. To achieve this twofold objective, all HRM has to do is to focus on actively seeking out good female candidates in under- and non-represented countries.

As simple as that.