United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Item **33** of the provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE REFORM OF THE FIELD NETWORK

ADDENDUM

SUMMARY

Joint comments of the two staff associations, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) and the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) on the report by the Director-General on the reform of the field network.

A.   Coverage of countries

1.   In order for UNESCO to become a leading service provider in its fields of competence, it primarily requires a more solid and responsive network that can provide timely and effective support to its Member States, by drawing on the technical expertise of its regional and national units and desks, as well as that of its Headquarters, partners and Member States themselves.

2.   We share the vision behind document 187 EX/33 under consideration and intend to contribute to the achievement and success of the reform process of UNESCO's field network. We note, however, that the adopted approach does not include all the regions that cover all the Member States of the Organization. It focuses solely on Africa, where the locations of two (2) out of five (5) regional offices, and of the seven (7) national offices and eleven (11) desks remain "To be determined".

3.   Since the full and final configuration of the field network is therefore not yet clearly defined or established, we wonder whether it is premature to propose in the document under consideration an estimate of the costs incurred for Africa, and whether it would prove problematic to initiate this important section of the reform during the period 2012-2013.

B.   Management of Human Resources

4.   In any event, it is most regrettable that months of "ongoing further assessment" of the staffing requirements of the new field structure in Africa, in terms of both number and expertise, was conducted without prior consultation with the staff directly concerned or with the staff associations, thus creating a climate of uncertainty and unrest among staff.

5.   We consider that in order for this reform to be fair, equitable and embraced by the majority, without losing sight of its operational and cost effectiveness, it is essential to involve the staff and their representatives, so as to gather their views on the implications for human resources management.

6.   We would like to ensure that the staff associations are able to be partner to the major decisions that will have an impact on issues of security, short-term assignments, redeployment and staff separation, the estimated cost of which is presented in Table 4 of the document under consideration, so that these decisions are not made entirely behind closed doors.

7.   The Administration must show that it has confidence in its staff, by practising participation and transparency. To do this, it is essential that, on all human resources issues, the staff be fully represented from the beginning to the end of the Organization's field network reform.

8.   We hope that all this effort will be made jointly with the Administration, and that the latter will make a particular communication effort, in order to develop exchanges with the staff concerned by the reform, either through the staff representatives or through reporting lines.

9.   We also hope that the staff associations will not be informed of the network plans after they have already been implemented, but will be invited to examine them and participate significantly in their development, and will therefore be able to guarantee that procedure has been duly respected, since they will be able to verify its transparency.

10.   Only in this way will staff members be sure that they are considered as the Organization's main asset, to be empowered rather than exploited. Armed with this confidence, they will therefore be able, alongside their representatives and the Administration, to meet potential difficulties and benefit from a meaningful dialogue, to prevent each party from being deadlocked in mutual distrust.