



Summary of Conclusions of the 32nd Session of the Human Resources Network

16 – 19 February 2016
UNESCO, Paris

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I. Adoption of the agenda

i. Opening of the Session and Adoption of the Agenda

1. The Human Resource Network held its 32nd session from 16-19 February 2016, hosted by UNESCO in Paris. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Carole Wamuyu Wainaina, ASG for Human Resources Management, United Nations, Ms. Karen Farkas, Director, Division of HR Management, UNHCR, Mr. Mark Levin, Director, HR Development Department, ILO.
2. The agenda was adopted as reflected in the table of content
3. The list of participating organizations and their representatives at the meeting is provided in Annex 1. All session documents are available on the HR Network website at:

<https://www.unsceb.org/content/february-2016-0>

II. Open session

i. Updates from other Networks and CEB

4. The Network received updates on the recent discussions and decisions at CEB, HLCM, IASMN and the Finance & Budget Network. It was highlighted that CEB discussed HR and workforce management topics in the context of the new SDG agenda and concluded
5. During the discussions, the importance of regular and systematic HR representation and participation in the IASMN meetings was highlighted.

ii. Draft Mental Health Strategy

6. The Chair of the Medical Directors Working Group (UNMDWG) shared with the HR Network the preliminary results of the global mental health survey. The Chair of the UNMDWG requested the HR Network's endorsement of the list of members of the Mental Health Strategy Working Group. In addition, the Network was requested to nominate the HR Network representatives for the Working Group.
7. The HR Network expressed great interest in the topic of staff mental health. Organizations noted potential funding challenges and the need discussions on this with governing bodies. Staff Federations further highlighted the importance of the issue and noted that investments made to staff mental wellness would result in substantial financial savings for organizations.
8. *Decision: The HR Network thanked the Chair of the UNMDWG for the comprehensive analysis of the issue of mental health in the UN System and ensured its support to the work of the Mental Health Strategy Working Group.*

iii. Update from the Working Group on Duty of Care

9. An update on the work of the Working Group was provided to the Network. In December 2015 the Working Group completed the first of two phases and presented a draft report of the findings. The primary purpose of phase one was to identify key duty of care concerns for UN personnel and their family members and the draft report contains a summary of the identified issues. In total 54 duty of care issues were identified across four categories: medical, safety and security, psycho-social and administrative/HR. The issues identified in Phase One will be

addressed in Phase Two by proposing a number of recommendations. These recommendations will be presented to HLCM at its session in March 2016.

10. Staff federations noted a perceived 'undue pressure' on staff in high-risk environments and highlighted the competing interests of setting realistic security rules versus ensuring the "stay and deliver" approach to implement programmes and secure donor funding.
11. *Decision: The Network expressed appreciation for the work of the Working Group delivered and confirmed its commitment on devising and implementing adequate measures to ensure and enhance duty of care for UN personnel in high-risk environments.*

iv. Future positioning of the UN Cares initiative

12. At the 31st HR Network session in July 2015 the Network agreed to a comprehensive review of the UN Cares initiative. In response, a proposal on the future positioning of UN Cares was presented at the current session. With the presented proposal the UN Cares initiative will evolve from being a HIV programme to become a wider well-being programme, leveraging the solid project infrastructure and network of the current programme, in particular in field duty stations. The Network took note of a position paper presented by the UNMDWG in support of this change.
13. Organizations thanked UN Cares for the work and expressed support for a refocused UN Cares programme. In the subsequent discussion members noted the UN Cares project infrastructure and reach in to field duty stations, which could be valuable for the refocused programme. A particular discussion point was the need for clarity around the funding and governance of the revised programme.
14. *Decision: The Network agreed on the repositioning of the UN Cares programme and requested the project team to review for relevance the recommendations from the Working Group on Duty of Care, which will be presented to HLCM in March 2016. A proposal for a refocused UN Cares programme will be presented to the HR Network in summer 2016.*

v. TOR on Partial Disabilities / Return to Work WG

15. During the 31st HR Network session in Vienna the Network agreed on re-focusing and re-establishing the Working Group on the Employment of People with Disabilities. The draft proposal for revised comprehensive scoping was presented to the HR Network, beyond the initial focus on establishing a partial disability benefit. The presented proposal includes four thematic areas: a Policy framework (defining disabilities), Absence management (sick leave policies, work-life policies), Return-to-work (reintegration of staff, part-time employment), Benefits (in-house, external insurance provider).
16. The HR Network expressed appreciation for the proposal put forward and emphasized the importance of the issue. The Network highlighted the need for a holistic and comprehensive analysis of the employment of people with disabilities. To prevent overlap and assure effectiveness of the Working Group a comprehensive look into all relevant medical topics has to be taken. Staff Federations expressed support for a holistic approach of the issue and recommended the Working Group to focus on the social side of the employment of disabilities; how to integrate and keep the staff member at work.
17. *Decision: The Network acknowledged the importance of the issue and agreed to continue refining the scope of the Working Group by including finance, medical and social components. The Network requested the CEB Secretariat and the Leadership of the Working Group to present an enhanced version of the Terms of Reference at one of the next HR Network sessions, based on a comprehensive mapping of all related initiatives.*

vi. Zika topics

18. The Medical Directors Working Group presented the Administrative Guidelines for Offices in areas with Zika Virus Disease outbreaks.

vii. Presentation of UNDP JPO Service Centre

19. UNDP shared with the HR Network a presentation on its JPO Service Centre. Since 2001 the Centre provides day-to-day management of human resources matters to both organizations and JPOs. The Centre covers different lines of services; from recruitment to separation, depending on the needs of the partner governments. The UNDP JPO Service Centre provides an example of a lead agency concept for joint agency HR related services. Organizations expressed appreciation for the work of the center.

viii. Discussion of proposals for Joint Classification and Reference Checking initiatives

20. In response to the QCPR call for reform to make the UN more fit-for-purpose, UNFPA and UNDP put forward a proposal to create a Joint Centre for Classification and Reference Checking. Consolidating back office operations and moving to shared services, as well as minimizing duplication of effort and the sharing of infrastructure and resources, form the foundation of the proposal. The Center would provide a basis for further future expansion into other common system activities and processes, with the aim of achieving system-wide coherence and harmonization. In the UN System Reference Checking is a high volume transaction which would benefit, in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency, from centralization and streamlining. For Classification most organizations are currently relying on external classifiers and thereby missing the opportunity to effectively create and manage a knowledge bank. Both Classification and Reference Checking services would be delivered on the basis of a catalogue containing a buffet of services. Possible locations for the Centre could be chosen based on competitive bids from member states and to search for possibilities to integrate with existing shared service centers.
21. The HR Network thanked UNFPA and UNDP for the proposal presented. The Network expressed support for both joint reference checking as well as joint classifications. A number of detailed implementation questions were raised for further consideration. Organizations noted the issue of confidentiality and requested clarification on how the Centre will manage privacy sensitive information regarding staff. The Network also highlighted that the issue of funding needs further clarification, the majority of organizations indicated to prefer a pay-per-transaction model of funding. Staff Federations highlighted the expectations that the operation would be conducted with robust data privacy provisions in mind. They also highlighted the need for confidentiality agreements and the verified credentials of staff working at the Centre.
22. Organizations indicated that their preference would largely be for a “pay-per-use” model, thus avoiding general overheads and contributions. It was highlighted that this model will require careful resource planning, in order to provide a basis for sound financial risk management of the hosting entity.
23. *Decision: The HR Network endorsed the proposal and agreed to further develop it in order to allow for final decision making by organizations, following endorsement by HLCM. The Network highlighted the need for initial seed funding to two phases: the further detailing of the proposal and the preparation of the implementation upon final agreement.*

ix. Discussion of proposals for common initiatives to support geographic mobility of staff

24. At the 31st HR Network Session a proposal for the CEB Secretariat presented a proposal for common initiatives to support geographic mobility of staff. The proposal puts forward four confined areas of potential collaboration in supporting geographic mobility: intensified experience exchange and practice mapping to identify further “quick wins”, access to country-specific and other information, enhanced in-country support, and practical support for spouse employment.

25. The HR Network thanked the CEB Secretariat for the proposal put forward. The subsequent discussion demonstrated that organizations are struggling with the issue of spouse employment and how to support and encourage it. Staff Federations stressed that spouse employment should not result in creation of a low-cost labor force for the organizations. Organizations expressed broad support for replicating existing MOU with the World Bank Group on the subject established by some organizations. UNDP, UNICEF and the UN Secretariat agreed to support discussions with the World Bank Group to explore opportunities for further.
26. *Decision: The HR Network endorsed the presented proposal and requested the CEB Secretariat to implement the proposal with the available resource designated for the topic, requesting regular progress updates on the matter.*

x. Update on ERP Interoperability Study

27. At the upcoming HLCM, the ERP Interoperability initiative will be further discussed. Based on an initial draft report by an external consultancy firm, the functional Networks and individual organizations were requested to provide their input for a final report. The HR Network was presented with the input provided by an Inter-Agency HR expert team that focused on areas in which further functional inter-operability and collaboration were seen as beneficial and cost effective. The HR Network thanked the team for its work and endorsed the input to the HLCM report.

xi. AOB

Status update on the Working Group for measures against sexual exploitation and abuse

28. An update of the work of the Working Group was provided for information. The first meeting of the HLCM Task Force met on 14 December 2015. The Task Force so far has primarily been looking into measures for sanctioning staff members and the possibilities of establishing a trust fund. This trust fund would be funded by member states and the Terms of Reference for the proposed fund have yet to be defined.
29. Staff Federations noted that more thorough measures are needed to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by staff. It was proposed to look into measures such as whistleblower protection, besides looking at sanctions.

Intern policies

30. In 2015 WHO and the CEB Secretariat conducted a survey on policies and practices concerning remuneration for interns in different UN agencies. The survey results were presented for information. They show diversity in the remuneration organizations provide to interns, highlighting that some Specialized Agencies currently provide for cost of living assistance for interns. ILO presented their approach to managing internships, which was recognized by the HR Network as a good practice. The subsequent discussion focused on the different internship policies and practices throughout the UN System, including their impact on geographic and social diversity among interns

Dates and location 33rd HR Network session and other issues

31. Due to time constraints, the routine update from the Field Group could not be presented during the meeting. It was agreed to receive a more comprehensive update from the group at the next HR Network meeting. The HR Network thanked the Field Group for its ongoing work.
32. The deliberations in the closed HR Directors Workshop and related conclusions and agreed actions are documented in CEB/2016/HLCM/5.
33. The 33rd HR Network session will take place from 28 June to 1 July 2016 in Istanbul and will be hosted by UNDP.

List of participants

Full name	Organization
Monika Altmaier	FAO
Daniele Alesani	IAEA
Linda Comeau-Stuart	ICAO
David Flaherty	ICC
Susanne Seegers	ICC
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Regina Pawlik	ICSC
Yuri Orlov	ICSC
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Sara Rancati	IFAD
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Mark Levin	ILO
Thierry Bregliano	IMO
Dawn R. Butters	International Seabed Authority
Alison Holmes	IOM
Greet De Leeuw	IOM
Eric Dalhen	ITU
Andrzej Antoszkiewicz	OSCE
Laurie Newell	UN Cares
Carole Wamuyu Wainaina	UN Secretariat
Chhaya Kapilashrami	UN Secretariat
Fiona Bourdin Farrell	UN Women
Maria dela Luna	UN Women
Jonathan Ball	UNAIDS
Roger Salla Ntounga	UNAIDS
Ruth de Miranda	UNESCO
Annick Grisar	UNESCO
Henrietta De Beer	UNDP
Martha Helena Lopez	UNDP
Michael Emery	UNFPA
Sarah Rose	UNFPA
Arnab Roy	UNHCR
Karen Farkas	UNHCR
Eva Mennel	UNICEF
Stephan Grieb	UNICEF
Beatrice Rossi Y Costa	UNIDO
Fatou Haidara	UNIDO
Nasser Shammout	UNOPS
Tina Friis Hansen	UNOPS

Brian Glesson	UNRWA
Patrick Voigt	UNRWA
Filiz Aktas	UNWTO
Andrew Patterson	WFP
Penelope Curling	WFP
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