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| Report by the Secretary-General | |
| PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN AND OF RESOLUTION 48 (REV. BUSAN, 2014) | |

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| Summary  As requested by Resolution 48 (Rev. Busan, 2014) on human resources management and development, a report is submitted annually in order to inform the Council of achievements and progress made regarding the implementation of the Human Resources Strategic Plan and of Resolution 48 (Rev. Busan, 2014).  Action required  The Council is invited to **note** the report.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  References  [Resolution 48 (Rev. Busan, 2014)](http://www.itu.int/pub/S-CONF-PLEN-2015); Council document [C18/INF/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-INF-0005/en) |

**Background**

The ITU secretariat’s actions in human resource management and development for the period 2015-2018 are shaped primarily by the following three pillars:

1. the Strategic Plan adopted by PP-14 in Resolution 71 (Rev. Busan, 2014);
2. Resolution 48 (Rev. Busan, 2014) on HR management and development, and in particular in its Annexes 1 and 2;
3. Decision 5 (Rev. Busan, 2014), on cost-efficiency and cost-reduction programme and options listed in its Annex 2, such as savings from attrition, review, and possible reduction of grades of vacant posts or favouring redeployment, and internal recruitment over external recruitment.

The Human Resources Management Department (HRMD) actively contributes to the implementation of these decisions. Despite challenges, it strives to meet the goals set in the Strategic Plan, namely the efficient and effective use of human capital resources, as well as providing a work-conductive, safe, and secure working environment.

This Report covers the implementation of those decisions and is structured as follows. The main document presents achievements and progress made on the various items listed in Annex I to Resolution 48, and is complemented by a series of information documents which are related to select topics.

Document [C18/INF/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-INF-0005/en) provides statistical tables for the years 2008–2017 as at 31 December of each year. The tables contain staffing data by category, grade, type of appointment, age group, length of service, gender, nationality, and geographical distribution. In addition, the tables provide projected retirement data over the next ten years for succession planning purposes, as well as statistics on short-term staff members, recruitment, internships, and ITU training activities.

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| **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN AND OF RESOLUTION 48 (REV. BUSAN, 2014)** |

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| 1. **Review of the human resources strategic plan** |

The human resources strategic plan is under comprehensive review to better support the mandate of the Union in the coming years, and in this regard focus will be on the following areas, *inter alia*:

1. Providing a diverse and fit-for-purpose workforce;
2. developing staff to ensure alignment with the needs of the Union;
3. providing an enabling work environment;
4. streamlining the delivery of HR services;
5. promoting an inclusive and respectful work environment;
6. managing and adapting the social responsibilities of the organization for long-term sustainability.

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| 1. **2016 activities and achievements** |

The sections below cover the main domains of activity and 2017 achievements in the area of the human resources management and development, including the items listed in Annex 1 to Resolution 48.

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| 1. **Relationship between management and staff** |

Chapter VIII of Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, PP Resolution 51 (Rev. Minneapolis, 1998), on ITU staff participation in conferences of the Union, and Council Decision 517, establish the framework for staff relations.

This machinery is been made effective through:

* Regular meetings and open dialogue with staff representatives for creating an efficient and open-minded partnership;
* Collaboration with staff representatives on matters impacting staff, through the consultation of the Joint Advisory Committee and the establishment of joint Working Groups;
* Regular presentations to staff on changes in policies as well as benefits and entitlements. A series of presentations was organized in the course of 2017 on:  
  - the implementation of the new e-PMDS, in French and English, for staff at headquarters and with the remote participation of staff in regional offices;  
  - the status of the Collective Medical Insurance Plan for active staff and retired staff; and  
  - the result of the International architecture competition for the new ITU headquarters building.

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| 1. **Improving delivery of HR services** |

Particular emphasis continues to be placed on improving efficiency and effectiveness by pursuing efforts to simplify and streamline workflows and processes as well as promoting paperless operations, which will be increasingly pertinent as ITU transitions to the new building. These efforts are being pursued while maintaining high quality of delivery from the different services of the HRMD to both internal and external clients and to support of organizational objectives and mandate.

The following concrete actions and projects were launched which already resulted in the implementation of a series of simple measures not requiring any modification of the regulatory or IT environment.

* **Rollout of electronic staff request workflow**

As part of the rationalization of HR processes, the Electronic staff workflow (E-staff Request) was launched in June 2015 with an enhanced version in 2016. All sectors are now using the electronic workflow as of end 2017.

* **Creation of an HR Handbook**

In its Report on the Review of the ITU, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommended that the Secretary-General should ensure that all human resources processes such as recruitment, appointment and promotion are covered by formal procedures included in the regulatory framework and are consolidated into a comprehensive HR handbook (Rec. 10).A draft structure of the Handbook was presented in document [C17/INF/14](https://www.itu.int/md/S17-CL-INF-0014/en) and a project plan has been established to develop an electronic platform consisting of an index list summarizing the main administrative categories, as a basis to integrate all existing procedures and HR documentation. While a number of procedures and HR documentation are being revised or developed, this electronic platform at disposal of staff will represent already a powerful search engine with the possibility of browsing as well as a means to improve HR service delivery. The HR handbook will be available on-line, on the HR intranet by Council 2018.

* **Continuing enhancement of the HR intranet**

The intranet is an important tool for all ITU staff in terms of internal communication and as the main platform providing information, forms, administrative tools, etc., both at headquarters and in the field. A major portion of the information on the intranet comes from the HR Department. Easy access to this information is key to the efficient delivery of HR services. The HR website therefore has been restructured and re-designed to make it user-friendly with useful information, using appropriate technology to make it accessible on different platforms (computers, tablets, smart phones). The model used by HRMD will serve as a model for the other departments. Continuation of the project will focus on facilitating administrative actions including approvals and notifications.

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| 1. **Workforce matters** |

The ITU workforce has been evolving in the past years in many aspects, as shown in document [C18/INF/5](https://www.itu.int/md/S18-CL-INF-0005/en), including, *inter alia*:

* the overall number of staff in service;
* the distribution in between the General Service Category and the professional and higher category;
* the distribution per grade;
* the age distribution; and
* the distribution per gender.

The organization faces many challenges in terms of adaptability of the workforce to the various current constraints, including being a highly technical organization operating in a very competitive and fast-moving industry as well as adherence to General Assembly Resolutions that the private sector is not obliged to follow.

This will require ITU to be agile and in a position to develop a workforce planning policy based on organizational projections, integrating planned contraction or expansion factors, skills inventories (gaps, potentials, and existing strengths), with a view to ensuring an appropriate workforce for business continuity, recognizing the contributions of serving staff.

Efforts have been made in ensuring that succession elements are embedded in the HR Strategic Plan, including projecting the number of positions which will be vacated by staff members retiring in the next ten (10) years, taking into consideration the introduction on 1 January 2018 of the Mandatory Age of Retirement (MAR) at 65. The new electronic Performance Management and Development System (e-PMDS) will allow analysis of the competencies to be strengthened and/or acquired through a learning and development plan. The e-PMDS will also allow the identification of organizational talent to meet the ITU business requirements as well as strategic and operational priorities.

In order to meet these challenges, the following areas were identified as priority for 2018 are:

* **Review of recruitment process and tools**

The development of a recruitment guide to serve as a reference progresses. Independent of this guide, standardized documents or templates to be used throughout the recruitment process will be developed in order to contribute to a transparent and consistent process. Inquiries have already been initiated to learn from and compare practices with other UN entities. The recruitment guidebook and any templates developed may be impacted by an exploratory project for 2018 to identify a new online recruitment system that is user-friendly, more reliable, and contains additional functions to further automatize and streamline the process. This is in line with the JIU Note on the recruitment process, which states that the electronic recruitment systems should be developed to fully automate the recruitment processes and improve transparency. A new system will also contribute to increased efficiencies, consistency and reduced error.

Learning from practice as well as responding to users’ needs, initial conversations have started in terms of developing a SharePoint tracking mechanism for recruitment requests. Once designed, a trial period would be needed to ensure proper functioning, however upon release the tool is foreseen to improve transparency in the treatment of recruitment requests as well as enable users to quickly see the status of their request and any items missing to complete the request.

Supporting changes in recruitment will also be bolstered by HRMD’s intention to improve outreach efforts for regular posts, junior professional officers and internships. The outreach will be both physical and online and will require collaboration with the Bureaux and Divisions as well as coordination with corporate communications to amplify social media presence and to develop consistent and targeted messages. Monitoring of campaigns will be undertaken to assess the return on investment as outreach requires both financial and physical resources.

Following the release of e-PMDS, integrating the ITU Competency Framework into the various practices of human resources, such as vacancy notices, interviews and trainings will occur.

In order to bring more clarity to the practice of classification, minor revisions to the Service Order on Classification of Posts will be sought. To bring the classification practice in line with that in other UN Common System organizations as well as to continue to uphold paragraph 2 of Resolution 48 that states ICSC recommendations approved by the United Nations General Assembly should continue to be implemented, HRMD will advocate for the use of only one classification methodology for positions in the General Service category. Such a change will also facilitate the exchange of information and benchmarking across UN entities.

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| 1. **Introduction of new HR policies** |

In the course of 2017, the ITU staff regulatory framework continued to be reviewed in order to integrate decisions taken at the level of the UN common system as well as for reviewing practices and processes, with a view to maintain a sound, efficient, and fair regulatory framework that supports the priorities of ITU while ensuring the attractiveness of the organization as an employer in a fast-moving environment.

* **Implementation of the new compensation package for staff in the professional and higher categories**

Council 2016 adopted Decision 593 endorsing the elements of the new compensation package approved by the UNGA Resolution 70/244 based on recommendations submitted by the ICSC. The Council also endorsed the dates of implementation as established in the UNGA Resolution:

* 1 July 2016 for elements in relation with relocation of staff;
* 1 January 2017, for the unified salary scale, the dependency allowances, and the step increment periodicity;
* School year in progress on 1 January 2018 for the new education grant scheme.

The main challenges encountered in 2017 wasthe launch of payroll calculations in real situation validating configuration of the ITU ERP system (SAP-HCM) after integration of the new compensation elements and updates of administrative data. This exercise necessitated a major implication of all administrative teams in order to preserve high level of quality of computerized personal data (new salary and pension scales, matching table, new steps, new periodicity of step increase, etc.). Inconsistencies in the new system discovered after going live necessitated manual adaptations and use of old satellite applications which are still under review and replacement. An automation of Education grant calculation has been postponed from 2017 to 2018 and is planned to go live in 2018.

* **Mandatory Age of Retirement at 65**

The mandatory age of retirement (MAR) came into force on 1 January 2018, as approved by the ITU Council in Decision 594, and with the implementation of a voluntary separation programme launched to mitigate the financial implications of the increase in the MAR on the budget to be established for the biennium 2018-2019. Staff members with a normal retirement age (NRA) of 60 or 62 will retain the right to separate at that age or any time after with a full pension from the Fund even under MAR 65. However, in order to give the ITU management enough visibility for succession planning and organizational management, staff members who would wish to be separated between that age (60/62) and 65 have been invited to inform the Secretary-General of their decision with a prior notice of 12 months.

* **Implementation of a new ITU Competency Framework**

One of the strategic goals of the Human Resource Strategy is to build a competency framework that identifies specific measurements for success, manages talent, and tracks performance. The competency framework and skills inventory are an indispensable tool for workforce planning.

A new ITU Competency Framework has been developed drawing on the best practices of other UN organizations and incorporating elements from the competencies specific to ITU. Core and Functional Competencies necessary to support the mandate of the ITU have been designed and tested across the workforce, and then applied to staff development and performance management functions.

The new framework contains the first two pillars, the core and the functional competencies. The third one, the technical competencies, is being established through the analysis of all existing ones in ITU job descriptions, as well as those being identified in the e-PMDS of ITU staff. These technical competencies will be benchmarked with those of other international institutions and collected in a catalogue for integration in the ITU Competency Framework.

The ITU Competency Framework has been fully integrated into the new performance appraisal system which was launched to all ITU staff on 11 January 2018 (see section 6 below).

As a result, the new competencies represent a developmental tool that defines the requisite behavior in the different ITU roles. It is also a harmonizing tool that can be used for different human resources activities, including: vacancy management and recruitment, performance management and development, learning and development, workforce and succession planning.

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| 1. **Workforce diversity** |

* **Inclusion, Diversity and Gender**

ITU strives for an inclusive workforce and respectful work environment and closely monitors inter-agency developments in regards to these two areas. The United Nations *System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity[[1]](#footnote-1)* was released in 2017. It provides an assessment of the current situation of UN entities in terms of gender balance as well as suggests activities that can be undertaken to improve gender balance.

HRMD cautions that any activities initiated in relation to gender must be carefully considered to avoid inadvertent exclusion and should not be to the detriment of currently serving staff members. The actions taken should also complement efforts to improve geographic diversity. Furthermore, efforts made should focus on progress across levels and functions and avoid an over concentration of one gender or nationality in a certain field, Bureaux or Division. The increase of the mandatory age of retirement to 65 for all staff in service as of 1 January 2018 impacts the Union’s ability to significantly change the current workforce demographic as there will be fewer opportunities through retirement.

HRMD systematically reviews interview questions to ensure that they are free from bias and discrimination and provide an equal opportunity for all candidates to respond.

At the Appointment and Promotion Boards for professional and higher category posts, the number of female candidates at each stage of the recruitment process, i.e., application, pre-selection, shortlist, interviews is shared for each post.

HRMD is examining potential sources to improve the gender and geographical distribution of applicants into the Professional & higher categories and will develop outreach plans accordingly. In order to assess the success of such outreach, a systems change is needed so that ITU can track where applicants learned of the ITU vacancy.

In addition, the outreach will be targeted as the goal is not to increase the numbers of candidates, but to increase the numbers of **qualified** candidates. For this, HRMD foresees close collaboration with the Bureaux/Departments to identify any professional networks that may reach new audiences as well as liaise with corporate communications in order to ensure a recognizable and consistent image or to develop testimonials.

While the focus is currently on the professional and higher categories, many successful interventions can be applied to the general service category as well. Innovation and creativity remain key as concentrated financial and human resources are needed to improve and unify processes. The recruitment of a Senior Gender Affairs Officer with cross-cutting responsibilities will provide more guidance to HRMD and the Union as well as help identify priorities for a sustainable impact.

* **Participating in the implementation of the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming policy (GEM)**

HRMD continues analysing and monitoring gender distribution within the ITU while integrating the diversity component into the various existing ITU HR policies. Also, the HRM Department continues striving to ensure that the objectives in Annex 2 to PP Resolution 48 be achieved. It renews its commitment in investing in gender representation in the recruitment interview panels. A pool of female panel members has been identified that can be called upon to participate in panels across ITU and has been provided with Competency Based Interviewing Training. Gender is being also embedded in additional HR policies, including Recruitment as well as in job descriptions where Gender represents a critical component in long term. The composition of the existing ITU Committees is being critically revised towards a more inclusive and gender balanced approach.

As regards to staff development, the gender and diversity perspective is being embedded in the new ITU Competency Framework. The new ITU Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) integrates gender and diversity perspective and will support and assess managers and leaders in their capacity to identify female talent in the organization. Further progress has been made in the area of learning and development; dedicating resources for training on GEM both focusing on behavioural skills and technical skills. The online training “I know gender” is being promoted as a requirement for all ITU staff. HRMD has been monitoring staff completion rate while continuing to propose a number of training initiatives on women and leadership as well as unconscious bias.

* **Ensuring geographic diversity in recruitments**

PP Resolution 48 establishes the need to achieve equitable geographical distribution of appointed staff of the Union. It resolves that, when filling vacant posts by international recruitment, in choosing between candidates who meet the qualification requirements for a post, preference shall be given to candidates from regions of the world which are under-represented in the staffing of the Union, taking into account the balance between female and male staff mandated by the United Nations common system. This principle is also embedded in Staff Regulations and Rules, in Staff Regulation 4.2, which establishes that due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible and preference shall be given, other qualifications being equal, to candidates from regions of the world which are not represented or are insufficiently represented, taking into account the desirable balance between female and male staff. Council Resolution 626 also provides that considering the difficulties that candidates from developing countries may experience with regards to the language requirements, although they may be otherwise adequately qualified, a relaxation of these requirements is authorized so that, when candidates from such countries possess a thorough knowledge of one of the working languages of the Union, their applications may be taken into consideration.

In 2017, 97 Member States, i.e. 50%, are represented in these categories.

Pursuant to the action plan established in 2017, the following actions were undertaken in this area:

* meetings with representatives of Member States at HQ;
* promotion of internship/JPO and secondment programmes in non/under-represented countries;
* publication of the list of non/under-represented countries on the ITU website with a link to that list in vacancy notices;
* increased social media presence in terms of advertisements and dissemination of vacancy notices;
* participation in job fairs, conventions, and scientific conferences.

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| 1. **Staff /talent development** |

The existing HR Strategy established the need to develop a streamlined and modernized suite of reward and employment strategies and policies, linked to the achievement of corporate objectives, which recognize staff performance and contribution, promote a diverse workforce from an increasingly international pool, engage and motivate staff and provide a fair and coherent strategic framework across ITU.

* **ITU Learning and Development**

Resolution 48 (Rev. Busan 2014) considersthe value of the human resources of the Union to the fulfilment of its goals as well as the importance of maintaining a well-trained, geographically equitable and gender-balanced workforce, while recognizing budget constraints. Staff development and learning represents an essential means to ensure continuous development of ITU staff towards the organizational goals.

Following organizational recommendations, HRMD has completed an extensive learning needs assessment across all sectors. Formal meetings were held by HRMD and each Bureau/General Secretariat (GS) Department in the last quarter of 2017, with the scope of: a) optimizing existing learning opportunities, b) identifying new business needs to be addressed through learning and development plans.

The result of this consultative approach has been reflected in the 2018 ITU Learning Plan which has been published to all ITU staff. The purpose of this plan is to provide a listing of all programmes that are on offer in the course of the performance cycle 2018 along with brief details of these learning initiatives (i.e., target population, scope of the training, learning curriculum, delivery modality etc.). The 2018 Learning Plan also takes into account global and regional priorities at the level of the United Nations System and ITU. In addition, Bureaux and GS Departments welcomed the upcoming 2018 ITU Management and Leadership Programme which will be launched through a pilot, targeting ITU staff members with supervisory responsibilities.

Each activity of the learning catalogue has been planned against the 2018 projected available budget which for 2017 represents approximately 1% of staffing costs, although Resolution 48 (Rev. Busan, 2014) establishes that the appropriate resources to be allocated for in-ser­vice training should represent to the extent possible, a target of 3% of the budget allocated to staffing costs.

HRMD will continue building on latest global trends as well as ITU needs and opportunities in the area of learning and development in order to establish an online Learning Management System (LMS) as a means to integrate learning, performance (see below paragraph on performance) and succession planning under a comprehensive ITU Talent Management Framework.

* **ITU Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)**

A new ITU Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) has been launched to all ITU staff on 11 January 2018, consisting of new ITU PMDS policy documents and guidelines as well as a new ITU electronic PMDS (e-PMDS). The HR Strategic Plan makes reference to the current ITU Periodical Performance Appraisal (PPA), consisting of a paper-based form to assess staff performance and a regulatory framework as described in the Service Order 08/09 of 19 August 2008. The overall objective of revising the PPA is based on addressing stakeholders’ interest in strengthening the organizational Results-Based Management approach to programming, while ensuring greater accountability as well as improving individual and organizational performance.

The new ITU PMDS has been developed as a result of the above revision and best practices of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) Organizations of the United Nations Common (UN) System. It has been designed through a consultative approach between HR, staff representatives as well as representatives from Bureaux and GS Departments. In addition, following completion of the procurement process in 2016, the new electronic tool has been designed and implemented with the identified service provider: Cornerstone on-Demand.

The main principles of the new PMDS process are based on the importance of: a) a continuous dialogue throughout the year between the staff members and the supervisors, b) setting specific individual work objectives linked to the priorities of the Union, c) supporting staff and organizational development through learning and development objectives, which take into account the learning priorities of the Union as well as the learning programmes on offer as reflected in the 2018 Learning plan (see above paragraph on learning).

More precisely, the structure of the new e-PMDS includes: one (1) to five (5) work objectives based on a number of specific indicators to measure performance success – i.e., activities, performance indicators, resources and constraints, partners, timelines; six (6) core competencies, up to seven (7) functional competencies and one (1) to five (5) technical competencies[[2]](#footnote-2); one or more learning objectives to acquire or enhance some of the competencies and based on the same work objectives structure.

The new system will allow HRMD to run analysis on ITU staff performance results to better target learning investments and build on e-PMDS competencies to develop effective succession planning strategies and plans.

Building on ePMDS and the ITU Competency Framework will be the focus of 2018, in particular ensuring the integration of the competencies throughout human resources practices.

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| 1. **Measures to improve staff welfare and moral, occupational health and safety** |

Providing a safe working environment is a key component of ensuring a positive working environment. The organization promotes a safe working environment through its safety, health, and welfare policies, and all the various services rendered to employees.

* **ITU policy on occupational health and safety**

Initiatives are taken for proposing to staff members dedicated workshops or conferences, in collaboration with Geneva-based organizations, such as:

* Health promotion workshops, advice on how to stop smoking, guided relaxation sessions, stress management, etc., organized at the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG) by the UNOG occupational psychologist;
* Mental health promotion provided through Stress Management and Resilience Building trainings organized by the ITU Staff Counsellor in conjunction with UNOG Staff Counselling counterpart.
* **Medical Services**

ITU has been working for the last 10 years with UNOG, on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in October 2007, for a range of services which include medical examinations, consultation, emergencies and walking clinic, medical administrative services, nursing services, mission briefings and vaccinations, prevention and health promotion (ergonomics, screenings), and medical tests (blood, electrocardiogram, eye, etc.). Other agencies use similar arrangements. ITU was informed in December 2016 of the decision taken by UNOG to terminate the MOU effective 31 December 2017, due to the financial constraints and the reduction of resources that the UN is facing.

ITU originally examined a joint collaboration with WIPO to fully integrate the Medical Services of another Geneva-based organization, this option remains under examination as the extent to which ITU will integrate the Medical Service of the Geneva-based organization is established.

Due to the Union’s relatively small size, it would be more interesting for the ITU to have its own Medical Service, comprised of the part time Physician, nurse and administrative assistant. This team would examine all aspects of medical management of sick leave, promotion of workplace health, as well as case management. The Union could then partially integrate a more established Medical Service of another agency to acquire services related to laboratory medical tests.

While examining this option ITU has extended the MOU with the UNOG medical Service to enable a smooth and correct period of transition.

A future plan is being developed for having a Staff Wellness and Health strategic approach, through the close collaboration of Medical Services and Staff Counselling.

* **Collective Medical insurance Plan (CMIP) update**

In the area of social benefits, focus was dedicated on the management of the medical insurance scheme (CMIP) administered by Cigna and the continuation, through the Management Committee, of the overall review of the scheme. The functions of the Executive-Secretary and the CMIP secretariat are assumed by members of the Department

In light of the Council recommendation (3/2014) to perform a full actuarial review in order to evaluate when the ITU financial health might be compromised by the provisions of the Health Insurance Scheme, the Human Resource Department in collaboration with the Financial Management Department and the Management Committee for the CMIP commenced the study in 2017.

The area of analysis, which remains underway, will lead to an eventual review of the current financing model. It is important to note that one of the key characteristic of the insured population is its relatively advanced age, both in terms of active staff and retired. The further aging of the population as a whole combined with the slow but steady decline in the active population will result in a high proportion of the population being in the higher age brackets and, consequentially, higher than average medical expenses. These above elements combined with the fact that most ITU retirees and staff are based in Geneva and the surrounding area will forcibly result in an increase in overall medical expenditure.

With insurance costs rising steadily in the wider insurance landscape ITU must be prepared to also address these increasing costs within the framework of the Plan. The aim is to secure the financial viability of the Plan whilst maintaining its social appropriateness.

In the area of well-being and preventive care, the secretariat, along with another UN agency, WIPO, continued to organize with the support of Cigna, joint preventive actions and information sessions on wellbeing issues, such as the influenza vaccination campaign for retirees.

* **Functions of Mediators, Staff Counsellor, and Ethics Officer**

A series of functions exists at ITU aimed at creating a conducive environment. Both the positions of Ethics Officer and Staff Counsellor are shared functions with the World Meteorological Organization.

**The ITU Staff Counselling Office**

It has been staffed at 50% since 23 February 2017after a gap. This post is shared with WMO at 30%, totaling 80% across both agencies.

The new function has particular focus on staff well-being and team productivity through the provision of confidential psychosocial support to staff (and retirees) facing issues related to work or personal life.

Another new function of the Staff Counsellor involves Critical Incident Management Response for staff facing grave urgent situations (such as risk of serious harm or sudden death). The Staff Counsellor, psychologist by trade, was called upon to assist on multiple emergency cases from the outset – setting out appropriate intervention plans to support staff and teams in coordination with management involved.

The Staff Counsellor also provides social services by directing staff to services available in the community specialized in services sought (such as CAGI and relocation companies for housing, legal experts, local authorities, etc).

The Staff Counselling Office has been very regularly solicited by staff during its 2.5 days weekly opening; staff can generally expect to have an appointment within 1-2 weeks.

Awareness of the service so far has been mostly through word of mouth, as visibility campaigns have so far not been possible due to time constraints. The vast majority of issues raised by staff relate to the workplace, mostly due to interpersonal difficulties such as perceived harassment and conflict management.

Through case management with key stakeholders, psycho-education and psychosocial support, the Staff Counsellor office focuses on prevention. One main area of priority is to curb long-term sick leave related to stress in the workplace, and providing a safe confidential space where staff can explore alternatives of action other than the formal complaints route.

A new focus on field-based staff was initiated – two initiatives were greeted enthusiastically by staff in the field (briefings with the Heads of Regional Offices in Geneva, and Skype briefings with the regional team in Cairo). Further briefings and expending Critical Incident Management Response support are planned in future contingent upon resource availability.

To address psychosocial wellbeing in the workplace, further focus on prevention would be welcomed, especially to address the most frequent sectors of support: interpersonal difficulties, notably through positive leadership support of management and Task Force involvement to prevent and address harassment in the workplace.

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1. [System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity](https://www.un.int/sites/www.un.int/files/Permanent%20Missions/delegate/17-00102b_gender_strategy_report_13_sept_2017.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. C17/INF/16. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)