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Human Resources Management

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FC170

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee is presented with major achievements in human resources management at FAO, for information.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Members of the Finance Committee are invited to take note of major achievements of human resources management.

Draft Advice

- **The Committee welcomed the major achievements in human resources management at FAO during the reporting period.**

Major Achievements

1. Following the request of the Members of the Finance Committee at previous sessions, the Organization is reporting on the major improvements in the area of human resources policy and management over the last reporting period. In managing human resources, FAO is continuing to follow a vision based on four main drivers: (i) recruitment and development of the highest caliber of employees; (ii) alignment of HR management to the strategic and programmatic needs of the Organization; (iii) reflection of FAO's nature as a United Nations system specialized agency; and (iv) increased efficiency in HR processes and procedures. This document reports achievements according to these drivers.

Recruitment and development of highest caliber employees

a) Employment of Consultants

2. In August 2017, the new policy on recruitment and evaluation of consultants was introduced and was presented to the Finance Committee at its 169th session, in the document Human Resources Management, FC 169/9.

3. The revised selection process requires the issuance of Calls for Expression of Interest, covering the most frequently needed profiles/fields of expertise, to populate Organizational Rosters of Consultants at Departmental, Regional and strategic team level. Candidates are validated regarding their educational background, knowledge of FAO languages and previous experience. Subsequently, a panel interviews the qualified candidates and submits a written report for the endorsement of suitable candidates to the relevant head of organizational unit. Candidates endorsed through this process are included in the Organizational Rosters of Consultants and can receive offers for assignments in FAO.

4. Thanks to this process, recruiting offices can now directly hire the suitable candidates from the Organizational Rosters of Consultants, without the need to undertake additional steps.

5. In February 2018, further refinements to the selection of Consultants were introduced in line with the considerations of the Council regarding the application of a flexible approach. The application of the policy, indeed, should consider the involvement of the Organization in a wide range of programmes and projects that implies the understanding of different working realities with different needs and requirements.

6. Therefore, the Organization has implemented a flexible approach especially for the language requirements and the use of short-term assignments.

7. In particular, for consultancies funded through voluntary contributions the setting of the minimum requirements could be more flexible, when considering in particular the duty station and the specific tasks to be performed. For national projects, moreover, the knowledge of local languages is considered an asset.

8. As for the use of short-term assignments, to allow the Organization to deploy consultants with a larger flexibility answering to urgent requests and unexpected events, a fast-track procedure was introduced for assignments of up to 100 calendar days in every 12 months.

9. Regarding the request by the FAO Council, at its 158th session in December 2017, to "take into account the need for geographical balance of consultants in the recruitment exercise, consistent with geographic distribution for staff members, for more effective delivery of programmes and activities, whilst retaining merit as the primordial criterion for recruitment"¹, the Organization is reporting on this subject in a separate document on Geographical Balance of Consultants.

¹ Report of the Council of FAO, December 2017 – CL 158/REP

b) Associate Professional Officers Programme

10. The Organization continues to collaborate with member countries through the Associate Professional Officer (APO) Programme to offer a structured learning experience to nationals from different countries through exposure to international cooperation activities, while enabling them to apply their technical specialization under the supervision of an experienced FAO staff member. Currently, 14 donors participate in the programme.

11. During the first months of 2018, six new APOs have joined FAO. The Organization is in the process of recruiting ten additional professionals in the coming months (funded by The Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and the People's Republic of China). In addition, a new call for proposals for ten additional APOs, following the agreement with the Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC) is underway. These efforts contribute to the rejuvenation efforts of the Organization and provide modern additional technical capacity in key priority areas.

c) Junior Professional Officers Programme

12. The Junior Professional Officer Programme (JPP) is a centrally coordinated, structured programme involving a streamlined recruitment process, which enables the Organization to recruit young, motivated professionals on a fixed-term basis and benefit from their skills and knowledge for the duration of their assignment. The JPP is an active mechanism to recruit entry-level professionals (at P-1 level) encouraging applications from female professionals and young candidates who are from non- and under-represented countries.

13. As it increases in scale and senior staff members leave the Organization, the programme assists FAO to rejuvenate its workforce through the establishment of a pipeline of talented young professionals suitable for future ongoing employment. The JPP also aims to support the Organization to achieve greater gender and geographical balance amongst its professional staff.

14. As of 1 April 2018, the Organization is employing 23 Junior Professional Officers (JPOs). Of these, 14 are young female professionals and 11 are from non- and under-represented countries.

15. With the aim to align the recruitment of Junior Professional Officers to the needs of the Organization, a recent Call for Expression of Interest for JPO positions was issued in April 2018. The purpose of the Call is to fill the JPP roster with candidates qualified for JPO positions (at P-1 level) in the following areas of priority:

- Agroecology
- Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR)
- Climate Change
- Food Security and Nutrition
- One Health

16. The Organization has also introduced the use of asynchronous video interviews through an online platform as preliminary assessment of the candidates. Due to the high number of applicants, the video interviews can better ensure consistency, fairness and transparency in the selection of JPOs and represent a cost-effective solution in terms of resources and time for the process, enabling the Organization to find and select the most qualified candidates.

d) Recruitment of short-term professional staff

17. The Organization relies on short-term professional positions to cover urgent needs in case of peak workload, absences of staff and areas requiring specific professional profiles for short-term periods. With the aim to ensure consistency, fairness and transparency in the selection of short-term professional staff, in March 2018 the Organization introduced more uniform and rigorous selection procedures to guarantee competitive and merit-based processes. The changes are aimed also to

strengthen the research of professionals worldwide and to increase the diversity and the quality of the individuals recruited.

18. The revised selection process requires the issuance of a Vacancy Announcement and the identification of a minimum of five candidates to be interviewed. Before starting the interview process, candidates are validated regarding their educational background, knowledge of FAO languages and previous experience. Subsequently, the qualified applicants are interviewed by a panel formed by professionals in the specialized area and a Human Resources Officer. Candidates endorsed through this process are included in the FAO Roster of Professional short-term Staff and the recruiting offices can directly hire the suitable candidates from the Roster, without the need to undertake additional steps.

e) General Service recruitment

19. The Organization continues to follow a new approach also for the recruitment of General Service staff, that is considered the most innovative and forward-looking in the entire UN system, by opening up the previous "closed shop" where all recruitment of GS staff was done only with internal candidates and without any possibility for external candidates to apply. From 2015, the recruitment of General Service positions in headquarters and Regional Offices is done with the use of Global Calls. This allows FAO to recruit the best possible candidates, with diverse backgrounds, from a global marketplace, fit for a UN-system international organization like FAO.

20. Table 1 presents the percentage of external applications to the Global Calls in headquarters, as well as the percentage of candidates in the GS roster. It can be noted that external candidates represent an average of about 48% of the candidates in the GS roster.

Table 1 Trends of external candidates for the HQ Global Call

	% external applicants to the Global Call	% external candidates in the GS Roster
2016	82%	47%
2017	89%	54%
2018	61%	42%

21. The revised procedures have not only resulted in a much faster selection process and considerable reduction of recruitment time, but also in greater transparency and competition, leading to greater diversity and the appointment of highly qualified candidates.

f) National Professional Officers

22. In April 2018, a revised process for the selection of National Professional Officers (NPOs) was issued, with the aim to ensure a competitive, transparent and merit-based selection process and to implement the use of the new recruiting platform (Taleo).

23. At the same time, further refinements were introduced on assignments as Assistant FAO Representative in Country Offices, limiting the duration to a maximum of five years.

24. The Organization is capitalizing on the knowledge and experience of Assistant FAO Representatives and as a result some of them have been appointed as FAO Representatives (FAORs) in other countries, enabling the use of this expertise in favour of other countries and providing means to support South-South Cooperation. This approach is designing a career path for the NPOs that have demonstrated high level of performance and a deep understanding of the work of the Organization.

Table 2 Number of NPOs appointed as FAORs per Region

	Africa	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and Central Asia	Latin America and the Caribbean	Near East and North Africa
Number of former NPOs appointed as FAORs	4	0	1	1	0

g) National PSA and National Project Personnel

25. To ensure a more consistent and rigorous application of the policy for the employment of National PSA (PSA.NAT) and National Project Personnel (NPP), as recommended by several internal audits at country level, an updated version of the related guidelines was issued at the beginning of 2018. The revised policy points out the need to implement a competitive and transparent selection process and to document the selection processes in a transparent manner.

26. The release of the revised policy is being coupled with the release of specific training materials and online courses in English, French and Spanish, with the purpose of supporting the progressive implementation in Country Offices.

27. As per other selection processes of the Organization, the corporate recruitment platform is now being used for these Vacancy Announcements, enabling all Country Offices to manage their selection processes autonomously and on a reliable platform.

h) PSA for editorial services

28. Specific guidelines were issued for the employment of Subscribers to Personal Services Agreements for editorial Services (PSA.EDI). The use of this contractual category was not properly documented and the new guidelines ensure a uniform and transparent engagement of individuals under this contract category. The new guidelines, issued in March 2018, identify the six working areas under the generic PSA.EDI assignment (technical writing, proofreading, graphic design, etc.), and for each of them specific minimum requirements and deliverables apply.

29. The revised policy points out also the need to implement a competitive and transparent selection process, validated by the Office of Corporate Communication (OCC), as head of profession for editorial services.

i) Rejuvenation of the workforce

30. The Organization is committed to ensure the recruitment of fresh talents and the application of an effective succession planning.

31. As mentioned above, efforts are being done to ensure the recruitment of high-level candidates with strong potential for the Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) and Associate Professional Officers (APOs). Additional efforts are required to ensure a high retention of JPOs and APOs, which are considered satisfactory based on their performance assessments.

32. In addition to the JPOs, the Organization identifies when needed qualified professional staff at P-1 level, from the professional roster, to join departments and regional offices in different technical areas. These new young professionals contribute to the rejuvenation of the workforce and the refreshment of FAO's technical knowledge.

33. In parallel, the policy on the employment of UN retirees was strengthened to ensure that the employment of retirees would be used as an exceptional temporary measure, based on specific and reasonable needs normally linked to knowledge transfer to new staff. The changes implemented avoid that the employment of retirees cause an adverse impact on workforce rejuvenation.

34. The Tables below present the average age of FAO's workforce in 2012, 2014, 2017 and April 2018, indicating the different contract types and locations.

Table 3 FAO' total workforce by average age as at 1 January 2012

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	54.60	55.10	54.75
Professional	46.33	49.30	47.25
General Service	45.87	43.99	44.96
National Professional Officers	/	47.23	47.23
Associate Professional Officers	31.37	31.86	31.57
Consultants	44.89	46.32	45.71
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	38.05	41.43	39.71
National Project Personnel	/	39.37	39.37
National contractors and other	47.54	45.18	45.71
Other	32.00	40.33	39.74
Total	45.27	43.09	43.93

Table 4 FAO' total workforce by average age as at 1 January 2014

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	54.62	55.32	54.88
Professional	47.02	49.21	47.79
General Service	46.66	44.91	45.77
National Professional Officers	/	47.66	47.66
Associate Professional Officers	32.25	31.23	31.85
Consultants	42.80	47.48	45.33
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	36.10	41.52	39.04
National Project Personnel	/	40.78	40.78
National contractors and other	49.31	43.00	43.50
Other	25.88	42.91	40.85
Total	45.55	42.97	43.63

Table 5 FAO' total workforce by average age as at November 2017

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	56.42	55.56	56.09
Professional	46.65	48.57	47.40
General Service	46.37	45.93	46.14
National Professional Officers	/	48.22	48.22
Associate Professional Officers	32.77	31.33	32.35
Consultants	39.25	46.54	42.94
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	36.57	44.94	40.96
National Project Personnel	/	40.83	40.83
National contractors and other	46.19	43.81	43.91
Other	44.01	38.84	40.28
Total	43.40	43.26	43.29

Table 6 FAO' total workforce by average age as at 1 April 2018

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	57.00	55.65	56.33
Professional	47.38	49.09	48.24
General Service	46.90	46.52	46.71
National Professional Officers		48.90	48.90
Associate Professional Officers	33.36	31.71	32.54
Consultants	38.80	45.70	42.25
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	38.99	45.51	42.25
National Project Personnel		41.46	41.46
National contractors and other	46.76	43.20	44.98
Other	39.62	40.61	40.11
Total	43.60	44.83	44.29

j) Professional Vacancy status

35. The Organization continues to consider essential to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in the vacancy rate for professional positions, so that the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 can be adapted in a dynamic manner to new circumstances and emerging priorities.

36. It is important to note that, while maintaining flexibility in professional vacancy rates, the Organization continues to pay careful attention to ensure that sensitive, critical and essential positions are filled.

37. Intensive efforts on the recruitment of professional staff continue, through effective workforce planning which takes into account forecasted vacancies due to retirement of incumbents or resignations/transfers. This involves the systematic reassessment of the continued need for the vacated posts, their re-profiling and, where appropriate, reclassification of posts at a lower grade (in addition to the transfer of positions from administrative to technical areas). To date, this process has produced, and will continue to produce, savings for the Organization and its Members, besides an increased technical capacity. It should be underlined, in this connection, that FAO is now able to attract young recruits, possessing a very high level of qualifications for positions at lower grade levels than

previously. Consequently, the process of issuance of Vacancy Announcements for professional positions continues at a regular pace, with ongoing recruitment processes.

Table 7. Professional Vacancy Rates (May 2018)

	Posts PWB 2018-19	Total posts occupied	Total Vacant Posts	Vacancy Rate
Total headquarters	870	747	123	14.1%
Total Decentralized Offices (excluding FAOR)	259	225	34	13.1%
Total Decentralized Offices (including FAOR)	323	275	48	14.9%
Total	1193	1022	171	14.3%

Alignment of HR management to the strategic and programmatic needs of the Organization

a) Improved development and learning strategy

38. The Organization is implementing a revised learning strategy, based on clear identification of learning needs of staff and appropriate selection of training modalities.

39. Regarding the learning needs of staff, FAO is focusing its efforts on five main areas.

- Administrative training, strengthened following audit recommendations, to reinforce the knowledge of FAO's internal systems and procedures and improve the operational capacity of staff in carrying out their duties, particularly in decentralized offices;
- Results-based management (RBM), covering training related to RBM, management for results and strategic framework;
- Technical training, to maintain the technical competencies of staff and refresh their knowledge based on current trends;
- Language training, to improve the multilingual capacities of staff in the FAO languages;
- Personal Development, this includes courses to improve soft skills and practical guides on career development.

40. In particular, over the last months, and following internal audit recommendations, the Organization has focused its efforts in the identification, preparation and delivery of specific training for the use of functionalities in GRMS, related to procurement of goods and services, management of invoices, etc.

41. Moreover, the Organization is reviewing the delivery of the language courses, to provide high quality and cost-effective trainings to all employees, ensuring the promotion of multilingualism in the work environment. The Organization is increasing effort in providing a larger series of language courses available online.

42. As for the selection of appropriate training modalities, the Organization is following a strategic approach that prioritizes partnerships with academia and the use of e-learning courses. The Organization is implementing training programmes in partnerships with academia, to allow that the development of the curricula, its delivery and evaluation will benefit from the collaboration of experts in the learning area.

43. This approach also allows the Organization to take advantage of consortia of academic institutions working on e-learning activities such as edX (<https://www.edx.org/>), a consortium funded in 2012 by Harvard University and the MIT, now counting with 90 university partners worldwide

(<https://www.edx.org/schools-partners>). In line with this approach, the Organization has launched, through the online learning platform, a portal dedicated to online learning opportunities where all employees have access to a variety of online resources and courses. Through this portal, the Organization is also encouraging the use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), where the standard training material (video and readings) is integrated with an active interaction among students and professors.

44. As shown in Table 8, the Organization is reinforcing the offers of online training, promoting the use of this cost effective modality and reversing the trends in the attendance of in house and online training. In 2015, considering the overall courses attended, staff selected only 29% of online training; in 2017, 58% of courses selected were delivered online. The online modality allows the Organization to reach all employees in the various duty stations and to avoid replicating costs each year for the same course.

Table 8. Training per area and modality attended by staff in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018²

2015		Professional Staff	General Service Staff
Online	Admin/RBM/Technical training	743	683
	Language Course	-	-
	Self-development course	386	558
In house	Admin/RBM/Technical training	1567	1134
	Language Course	707	534
	Self-development	1385	510

2016		Professional Staff	General Service Staff
Online	Admin/RBM/Technical training	1337	1160
	Language Course	38	7
	Self-development course	767	983
In house	Admin/RBM/Technical training	1453	648
	Language Course	465	527
	Self-development	425	379

2017		Professional Staff	General Service Staff
Online	Admin/RBM/Technical training	2026	1114
	Language Course	19	0
	Self-development course	675	853
In house	Admin/RBM/Technical training	942	703
	Language Course	585	507
	Self-development	330	329

2018 (up to March)		Professional Staff	General Service Staff

² Staff can attend more than one course.

Online	Admin/RBM/Technical training	656	649
	Language Course	17	9
	Self-development course	259	180
In house	Admin/RBM/Technical training	146	52
	Language Course	125	185
	Self-development	80	73

45. Technical Training. FAO staff members take part in external training to improve their individual knowledge and contribute to the overall technical capacity of the Organization. The number of staff who participated in external training was around 112 in 2014 and rose to 171 in 2017, representing 1 062 and 1 098 days of training, respectively (Table 9). The proportion of participants benefitting from training in technical areas, such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry, economics, food security and climate change, increased from 46 percent in 2014 to 94 percent in 2017.

Table 9. Technical Training at FAO

Training Participants & Days	2014	2015	2016	2017	Changes 2014-2017 (Percent)
No. of Participants, all courses	112	102	136	171	59 (53%)
No. of Participants, technical courses only	45	51	78	155	110 (244%)
Participants who took technical trainings, % out of total	40%	50%	57%	91%	-
No. of External Training days	1062	1040	1258	1098	36 (3%)
No. of External Training days, technical courses only	489	390	663	1037	548 (112%)
Technical External Training days, % out of total	46%	38%	53%	94%	

b) Relations with Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs)

46. The Organization maintains a continuous and substantive engagement with the Staff Representative Bodies – Association of Professionals in FAO (AP-in-FAO) and the Union of General Service staff (UGSS) regarding consultation on all issues affecting conditions of service of staff. Formal meetings take place through the Staff Management Consultative Committee (SMCC).

47. Starting 2017, a work plan of items for consultation is discussed and agreed between the SRBs and management at the first meeting of the year, with the objective of using it as a roadmap and consequently focusing the consultation process towards priority items. As of the beginning of May 2018, four SMCC meetings took place and the consultation process continues with regular meetings.

c) New professional positions

48. As documented in PWB 2018-19, the streamlining of the work of the Shared Services Centre (CSS), the Conference, Council and Protocol Affairs Division (CPA), and the Corporate Services Department (CS), resulted in efficiencies of about USD 4.5 million. These have implied the conversion of administrative positions to technical and programme positions. As a result, 51 new professional positions were created in the PWB 2018-19, for areas of work that include support of work on antimicrobial resistance, climate change, fisheries, geospatial information systems, statistics, SDGs, investment, partnerships and programme coordination.

49. The Organization has concentrated its efforts to identify the adequate job profiles for these areas and to proceed with the recruitment process as a matter of priority.

50. As of 1 April 2018, out of the 51 professional positions, 23 have been already filled and for 11 positions the selection process is ongoing and the outcomes are expected from mid-April to mid-June. For the remaining 17 positions, the Organization is defining the most effective recruiting strategy to be implemented in the next months.

Reflection of FAO's nature as a UN system specialized agency

a) Implement measures and track progress in achieving corporate geographic representation targets

51. In taking decisions on recruitment to international professional positions, the criterion of merit has always been followed to ensure that the Organization is able to fill all positions with the best qualified candidates.

52. At the same time, in line with guidance provided by the Governing Bodies, due attention continues to be given to ensure an equitable geographic representation of member countries in the Secretariat of the Organization.

53. With continuing efforts pursued in this regard, it has been possible to reduce, to a considerable extent, the number of non-, under- and over-represented countries in the Secretariat of FAO, thus increasing the number of equitably-represented countries.

54. Following the completion of the new recruitments, the percentage of non-represented countries is 12%, of under-represented countries is 10%, and of equitably represented countries 75.6%. In appointing the staff, and subject to the paramount importance of securing the highest standards of efficiency and of technical competence, the Organization gives priority to recruiting personnel on as wide a geographical basis as is possible, making particular efforts to recruit candidates from non- and under-represented countries.

55. Table 10 shows the number of Member Nations by representation status. From 2016 to 2017, the number of non-represented countries has considerably decreased. Consequently, the number of under- and equitably-represented countries has increased. For PWB 2018-19, the review of the factors affecting the calculation of the representation ranges has entailed the increase of the number of under-represented countries. It should be noted there are 9 countries marked as under-represented that are very close to the status of equitably-represented.

Table 10 Number of Member Nations by representation status

	At the end of December 2016		At the end of December 2017		May 2018	
Non-represented countries	29	15%	24	12%	24	12%
Under-represented countries	14	7%	17	9%	20	10%
Equitably-represented countries	147	76%	149	76.8%	147	75.6%
Over-represented countries	4	2%	4	2%	3	1.5%
Total	194	100%	194	100%	194	100%

b) Improved gender representation

56. The Organization continues its efforts toward gender parity in the workforce. Female staff accounted for 36% in professional positions at the beginning of 2012. In April 2018, thanks to continued and expanding recruitment outreach efforts to a plethora of professional institutions and universities within selected countries, as well as attention paid by the selection authority to gender balance, this figure rose to 43%.

57. Another notable improvement that should be observed is the increase of female staff in senior positions, that accounted for 20% at the beginning of 2012; now they encumber 27% of senior positions.

58. As FAO remains committed to continuing its efforts toward gender parity in the workforce, the Organization is aligning its approach with the UN System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. Given FAO's nature as a UN system specialized agency, the Organization is developing a customized implementation plan which is informed by the Organization's specific context and challenges., thus, pursuing recommendations outlined in the System-wide Strategy through its relevant pathway.

59. On the basis of the customized implementation plan, for FAO gender parity at professional level should be achieved by 2022, and for senior positions by 2024. In line with the System-wide Strategy, to accelerate the achievement of gender parity, FAO will further expand recruitment outreach efforts to a wide range of professional institutions and universities to attract female applicants. Furthermore, particular attention will be paid to the shortlisting and selection process to advance the representation of women at all levels within the Organization.

60. The Tables below show the percentage of female employees in FAO's workforce in 2012, 2014, 2017 and April 2018, indicating the different contract types and locations.

Table 11 Percentage of female employees in FAO's workforce as at 1 January 2012

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	21.98%	17.95%	20.77%
Professional	42.27%	22.13%	36.07%
General Service	71.01%	60.62%	65.95%
National Professional Officers	/	36.06%	36.06%
Associate Professional Officers	73.33%	61.90%	68.63%
Consultants	35.54%	29.75%	32.22%
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	55.18%	32.06%	43.86%
National Project Personnel	/	28.95%	28.95%
National contractors and other	33.75%	32.80%	33.01%
Other	33.33%	25.64%	26.19%
Total	52.11%	35.71%	42.01%

Table 12 Percentage of female employees in FAO's workforce as at 1 January 2014

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	30.26%	6.82%	21.67%
Professional	44.24%	23.23%	36.91%
General Service	72.27%	60.66%	66.36%
National Professional Officers	/	40.63%	40.63%
Associate Professional Officers	70.00%	46.15%	60.61%
Consultants	50.00%	24.15%	35.99%
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	56.56%	30.34%	42.32%
National Project Personnel	/	26.02%	26.02%
National contractors and other	62.14%	29.26%	31.87%
Other	60.71%	40.93%	43.32%
Total	55.98%	31.67%	37.88%

Table 13 Percentage of female employees in FAO's workforce as at November 2017

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	27.85%	22.92%	25.98%
Professional	50.97%	31.84%	43.53%
General Service	73.65%	60.32%	66.64%
National Professional Officers	/	40.95%	40.95%
Associate Professional Officers	77.27%	44.44%	67.74%
Consultants	55.63%	33.76%	44.57%
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	62.93%	35.79%	48.71%
National Project Personnel	/	30.90%	30.90%
National contractors and other	60.47%	36.24%	37.35%
Other	71.08%	51.13%	56.68%
Total	59.31%	36.24%	41.91%

Table 14 Percentage of female employees in FAO's workforce as at 1 April 2018

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	29.49%	23.91%	27.42%
Professional	49.72%	32.10%	43.01%
General Service	73.89%	60.22%	66.67%
National Professional Officers	/	42.42%	42.42%
Associate Professional Officers	60.00%	42.86%	56.25%
Consultants	59.32%	35.27%	48.41%
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	54.48%	39.92%	47.49%
National Project Personnel	/	31.26%	31.26%
National contractors and other	64.21%	38.67%	39.86%
Other	71.43%	49.08%	55.94%
Total	59.29%	37.11%	42.86%

c) Promotion of multilingualism

61. In the context of selection and appointment procedures, the language skills of candidates, internal and external, are closely considered.

62. In addition, the revised selection procedures for Consultants, Subscribers to Personal Services Agreements and short-term professional staff have introduced a more rigorous control on the language level requested. All applicants are requested to provide evidence of their language skills to be considered qualified for assignments in FAO.

63. To support the need of the employees to obtain valid certifications of their language skills, the Organization has strengthened the resources involved in the language examination sessions to manage the increase of the number of attendees. As shows in the table 15, in 2017 there was an increase of 189% in the number of attendees compared to 2016. FAO has also reinforced the language training options available online.

Table 15 Data on FAO language examinations

	Number of language examinations sessions	Number of attendees	Number of successful candidates
2016	6	584	338
2017	6	1696	1223
2018 (Jan to March)	1	523	399

64. The role of Member States is also crucial for adopting a clear position on multilingualism, expressed through their participation in the legislative bodies of the different United Nations system organizations, and for supporting its implementation by endorsing all the necessary measures to achieve it, for example by developing national capacities to promote language professional curricula up to the standards required by international organizations.

Increased efficiency in human resources (HR) processes and procedures

a) Implementation of the new recruiting platform

65. Over the last months, one priority of the Organization was the modernization of the IT recruitment platform. The new tool has been deployed for the recruitment process of General Service, consultants, PSA subscribers, national PSA, National Project Personnel and National Professional Officer.

66. As shown in table 16 and in table 4 in Annex I, the Organization has put efforts to guarantee a proper internal knowledge sharing about the new tool and progressive implementation, through the delivery of dedicated trainings sessions and the elaboration of a variety of training material (PowerPoint presentations, videos, FAQs, case study). A particular attention was reserved to the country offices that, thanks to the proactive support of the colleagues in HQ, are now using the new recruiting platform to manage their selection processes.

67. The Organization is now planning to expand use of the new recruiting platform to the processes of professional positions and to introduce other functionalities to support the work of the recruiting offices and Shared Services Centres. The additional features will reduce manual and time consuming tasks, enabling the implementation of more efficient procedures and better monitored processes.

Table 16 Data on the use and training of the new recruiting platform from 1 November 2017 to 1 April 2018

Location	Number of requisitions issued	Face-to-face trained users (VC or classroom)	Online training
DOS	282	268	371
HQ	190	208	345
Total	472	476	716

b) consolidation of FAO Shared Service Centre (SSC)

68. During 2018, the process to consolidate the “back office” processing functions of all SSC hubs to the Budapest location without the addition of resources, took place. This was made possible through process efficiency gains realized as part of the SSC Budapest restructuring that took place in 2016. This movement of work from Santiago and Bangkok towards Budapest was to create additional capacity to strengthen the “front office” functions. This new operating model helped to provide extended services to all offices worldwide, accelerating the provision of services, improving hours of coverage, and provide a platform that can be leveraged to further generate efficiencies from both a cost and quality perspective in terms of administrative services delivery.

69. The implementation of this new model has generated significant results for FAO on multiple dimensions:

- a) the introduction of service level agreements (SLAs) for the provisions of services in RAP and RLC;
- b) improved access to support in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian with a coverage of 20 hours per day across all locations (e.g. Samoa is now covered for 6 hours instead of 3);
- c) an increased “front office” service book covering not only HR and Travel, but also Finance, Asset, and Payroll;
- d) improved policy compliance and facilitated the introduction of new policies and/or new processes;
- e) reduction of transaction processing costs of almost 20 percent;

- f) capacity to handle emergencies over a 20 hour day; and
- g) performance is measured against established SLAs.

c) Performance Management

70. A review of the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) took place during April 2018. This included a quality analysis of the implementation of PEMS in 2016 and 2017 (work plans, written comments and rating distribution) and a survey aimed at obtaining feedback from staff.

71. The PEMS survey was designed in collaboration with the Staff Representative Bodies and distributed in March 2018 to 2683 eligible staff members. The survey results showed that over 60% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the benefits of the PEMS process, and that the current PEMS policy clearly defines the process, roles, responsibilities and rating scale. The process in the you@fao platform was considered user-friendly by over 59% of respondents, and the various resources available on PEMS (system instructions, FAQs, process guides, system tutorials and e-learning) were seen as useful by the majority of respondents.

72. The PEMS survey collected also feedback on how to further improve PEMS. Therefore, the Organization is using these findings in the review of the PEMS process, with the aim to implement a modern and efficient approach to the performance management.

d) Review of the FAO Manual

73. In consultation with the Staff Representative Bodies, the Organization embarked on a process of review and updating of the FAO Manual. Several sections and units have been already updated and others are under review with the purpose to introduce adjustments reflecting real situations and new trends.

74. The revised FAO Manual will support the work of the Organization implementing a modern approach and introducing cost-effective practises. The adjustments already introduced are related to transfer, secondment, loan and exchange of staff; sick leave; special leave and dependency benefits.

75. To ensure more rigorous compliance with the criteria of consistency, appropriateness and greater alignment with national legislative requirements, the Organization has implemented a more rigorous control of the processes leading to the approval of the rental subsidy scheme in Rome and in the field. Following the introduction of the new procedures, the double level of control enables to better verify information, streamlining the analysis for the final approval. The Organization is liaising with the ICSC to ensure a consistent approach at UN level in Country Offices and it is promoting an implementation of the coordination among the RBAs on this subject.

76. Within the boundaries of the UN inter agency agreements, the Organization has reinforced the procedure for approval for staff secondments and loans, introducing a revised policy which foresees a higher level of approval to ensure alignment with corporate priorities. The adjustments have increased centralized control and evaluation of the proposals, allowing the application of a consistent approach and a better monitoring of these exchanges.

77. As for sick leave and special leave, the Organization has introduced new procedures, changes and adjustments to the related policies to avoid improper usages that could cause inefficiencies, wastage of resources and unfair treatment of staff. The revised procedures have implemented a more centralized control and enabled consistent approaches that guarantee fairness and transparency.

78. In line with the ICSC recommendations, the Organization has reviewed the policy related to dependency benefits, limiting these benefits to a maximum of six dependents.

Challenges

79. While human resources management continues to improve in the Organization, a number of areas for intervention have been identified and require attention and efforts to keep moving towards achieving a modern organization with sound human resources management practices.

80. One priority is the efficient implementation of the new recruitment platform. In the next months, the Organization will reinforce further the internal sharing of knowledge and will put efforts in implementing the recruitment procedures of professional positions in the new tool. FAO is also involved in the setup of additional features available in the new platform regarding onboarding and offboarding of employees, which will enable more efficient procedures and a better monitoring of the processes.

81. The Organization is resolute to continue implementing the outreach activities to attract target audiences, as female applicants and candidates from non- and under-represented countries for vacant positions. Particular efforts will also be dedicated to attract highly specialized profiles, to support the Organization strengthening both programme delivery and technical capacity.

82. The Organization is increasing efforts to redesign the corporate workforce plan, to determine what mix of experience, knowledge, and skills are required, and the best recruitment strategy to get the right number of right people in the right place at the right time. To elaborate and manage an effective workforce plan, the Organization is working on a dual level approach. The central coordination of the plan is crucial to ensure its alignment to the needs of the Organization, but a proactive involvement of the different departments is also important. In particular, the new workforce planning exercise will strengthen the procedures that allow the departments to accurately and promptly plan their workforce activities, in terms of identification of forthcoming needs, vacancy announcements to be issued and identification of effective recruitment procedures. As indicated in the *Independent assessment of FAO's technical capacity*, the workforce planning exercise will also give specific attention to the appropriate balance between staff on posts and consultants and other non-staff to retain the flexibility needed to meet specific specialized needs and changing priorities.

83. The Organization has recently implemented more rigorous procedures for the reference checks, applicable to all recruitment processes. Therefore, the need to find more efficient processes has arisen and the Organization is evaluating the possibility to join forces with other UN agencies, that are facing the same issues. The solution to create a single database of the reference checks for the applicants to UN agencies will reduce time and resources dedicated to the exercise, avoiding duplication of work and ensuring a consistent approach.

84. The Organization is committed to strengthen the collaboration with other UN agencies and will continue to maintain presence in the UN HR Network to create synergies and to learn about best practices and successful trends, with the objective to explore their application to FAO's needs and practices.

Annexes

1. The tables below present the data of annual progress in Human Resources Management, and complement the comprehensive analysis presented in the document FC 170/6, Human Resources Management.
2. *Table 1* and *2* present FAO's total workforce by contract type in November 2017 and April 2018. They include all employees divided by categories of staff and non-staff human resources.
3. The Organization in the last years worked in the review and update of the main selection processes applied to the different contract type to align them with the needs of the Organization, as shown in *Table 3*.
4. *Table 4* shows data on the use and training of the new recruiting platform from 1 November 2017 to 1 April 2018.

Table 1 FAO' total workforce by contract type as at November 2017

	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	79	48	127
Professional	879	559	1,438
General Service	687	761	1,448
National Professional Officers	-	210	210
Associate Professional Officers	22	9	31
Consultants	1,015	1,048	2,063
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	259	285	544
National Project Personnel	-	4,000	4,000
National contractors and other	129	2,704	2,833
Other	255	572	827
Total	3,325	10,196	13,521

Table 2. FAO' total workforce by contract type as at 1 April 2018

Category	Headquarters	Decentralized Offices	Total
D and above	78	46	124
Professional	881	542	1,423
General Service	655	734	1,389
National Professional Officers	-	198	198
Associate Professional Officers	25	7	32
Consultants	789	655	1,444
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	279	258	537
National Project Personnel	-	3,730	3,730
National contractors and other	95	1,947	2,042
Other	168	379	547
Total	2,970	8,496	11,466

Table 3. Review of the selection process per contract type

Contract type	Review of the selection process	Implementation
D and above	Completed	Completed
Professional PWB	Completed	Completed
Professional Project	Ongoing	-
Short-term professional	Completed	Ongoing
General Service	Completed	Completed
Short-term General Service (TAP)	Completed	Completed
National Professional Officers	Completed	Ongoing
Junior Professional Officers	Completed	Completed
Associate Professional Officers	Completed	Completed
Consultants	Completed	Completed
Contractors (PSA.SBS)	Completed	Completed
National Project Personnel	Completed	Ongoing
National contractors (PSA.NAT)	Completed	Ongoing
Interns	Completed	Completed
Volunteers	Completed	Completed
Fellows	Completed	Completed

Table 4. Data on the use and training of the new recruiting platform from 1 November 2017 to 1 April 2018

Department / Office	Number of requisitions issued	Face-to-face trained users (VC or classroom)	Online
AG	35	31	57
APEX	27	39	52
CB	8	7	21
DDN	1	0	1
DDO	23	36	43
DDP	30	36	77
ES	18	32	39
FI	32	6	38
FO	24	36	40
RAF	67	99	159
RAP	108	95	98
REU	61	28	44
RLC	10	15	23
RNE	28	16	24
Grand Total	472	476	716