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Audit of UNESCO's Field Security Framework

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Results of the Audit

UNESCO has put in place an accountability system based on a common UN framework on field security. The field security budget was comparable to that of other UN agencies and the expenses were, in general, correctly charged.

However, significant challenges remain to improve security conditions in Field Offices. In a sample of 14 Field Offices, nine are not compliant with UN Guidelines and have at least five outstanding UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) recommendations each. UNDSS does not categorise an office as compliant or non-compliant to their security requirement, (except in cases where full Minimum Operating Security Standard (MOSS) inspections are done). For the purpose of this audit, IOS treated all outstanding UNDSS security recommendation equally and considers an office as non-compliant if they have at least five outstanding UNDSS recommendations relating to Office security.

Also, security awareness was generally poor with only about half of the Field Office personnel sampled having completed mandatory trainings.

Finally, more should be done to ensure that security costs associated with extrabudgetary activities are not borne by the Regular Programme budget.

Background, Scope and Objectives

1. UNESCO's field security framework is derived from the UN-wide security management system. The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) is responsible for providing leadership, operational support and oversight of the security management system to enable the safe and efficient conduct of the programmes and activities of the United Nations System. In UNESCO, the Bureau of Field Coordination (BFC) acts as the focal point for field security related issues.

2. Given the importance of personnel safety and security, clarity on roles and accountability is necessary to ensure an effective set of security measures for personnel in field locations. For UNESCO, a table of delegated authority and accountability on field security management has been established. Personnel Policies relating to field security are defined in UNESCO's Human Resource Manual chapter 17 on Staff Security.

3. The chart below illustrates the accountability and reporting lines for the UN Field Security Management System as specifically related to UNESCO.

Overview of UN Security Management System as it relates to
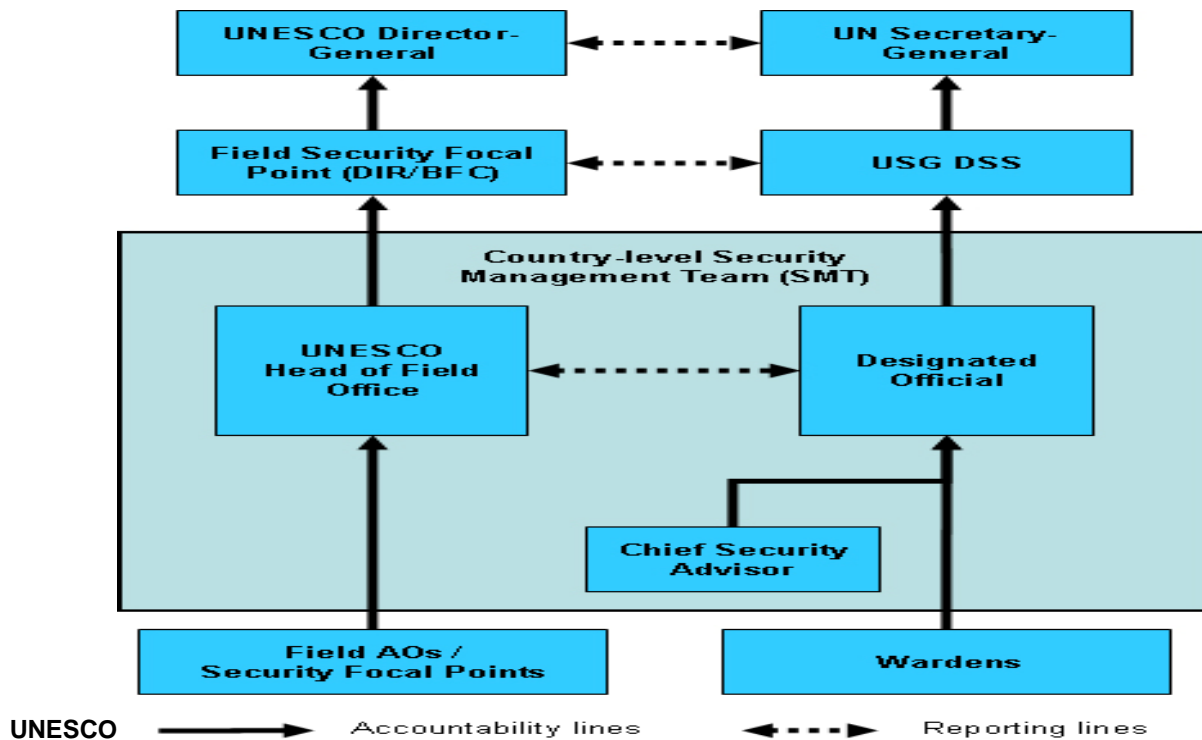
4. The five security phases applied within the UN describe security conditions in a given location. These are standard for all duty stations and are included in local Security Plans.

Phase I:	Precautionary
Phase II:	Restricted Movement
Phase III:	Relocation
Phase IV:	Emergency Operations
Phase V:	Evacuation

5. To enhance field security management, BFC is the designated focal point for the central coordinating and monitoring of safety and security in the field and is responsible for overall compliance with security policies and strategies. This function consists, inter alia, of (i) ensuring field offices' implementation of instructions and guidelines from UNDSS, (ii) administering, managing and monitoring the field security budget, (iii) assisting and advising on security matters to field offices and personnel travelling on mission and (iv) ensuring access to and implementation of UNDSS and UNESCO field security training programmes. These matters are handled by a dedicated field security coordinator (P-5) in BFC, who assisted by a part time G-5 secretary. The overall function of UNESCO Field Security focal point remains with Director, BFC.

6. During the audit of UNESCO Field Offices, IOS reviews office compliance with MOSS/other UNDSS recommendations.

7. The Internal Oversight Service (IOS) reviewed UNESCO's field security framework in May and June 2010 to provide assurance that UNESCO:

- Complies with the overall UN Security Framework and its requirements;
- Maintains an effective coordinating mechanism at HQ and in the field; and
- Effectively manages its security budget.

8. The review was performed in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*. Methodology was based on a risk assessment conducted during the planning phase and included review of implementation of UNDSS recommendations on Minimum Operating Standards on Security (MOSS) in 14 Field Offices. The samples of field offices were selected on a judgmental basis focusing on Offices in locations with higher security risks. In addition, a sample of 80 high-value transactions relating to field security was reviewed to provide assurance on proper use of the security budget. The auditors also interviewed staff in BFC, BB and HRM and selected field offices to assess whether the accountabilities of relevant services/offices, as defined in the table of delegated authority, are effectively discharged.

9. **Key achievements in field security management are as follows:**

- UNESCO's accountability framework for field security is in line with the UN inter-organizational security framework;

- Security budget was generally allocated based on security needs;

- Expenditure charged to field security budget was generally appropriate;

- Active participation of UNESCO in the inter-agency UN Security Management System mechanism achieved;

- An effective system exists to provide weekly advisory to Heads of Field Offices;

- Job descriptions of Heads of Field Offices and Administrative Officers reflect their roles and responsibilities relating to field security;

- The Heads of Field Offices regularly attend Senior Management Team meetings and provide necessary security briefing to their staff.

10. **Key challenges and opportunities in field security management are as follows:**

- The overall security status of Field Offices needs to be better monitored and improved;

- Effective security awareness through e-learning is yet to be achieved;

- Direct security costs relating to extrabudgetary projects should be funded through the extrabudgetary agreement;

- Management and reporting of the field security budget can be improved;

- Performance appraisals of Heads of Field Offices do not assess security responsibilities.

11. **Table of recommendations**

Recommendation 1: BFC to (a) require all Head of Field Offices to undertake annual security assessments with the support of local DSS and report the results to BFC. In addition, security assessments should be undertaken when there is a change in security phase; (b) to institute a centralized mechanism to monitor and ensure compliance with DSS recommendations.

Recommendation 2: BFC, in consultation with HRM, to implement effective controls to ensure completion of mandatory security trainings by all required personnel.

Recommendation 3: BFM to take necessary measures for effective implementation of cost recovery policy relating to security costs.

Recommendation 4: BFC to report periodically to the Deputy Director-General on the status of field security expenditure and on the security profile of each Field Office.

Recommendation 5: BFC to revise its policy on updating the database of field personnel and introduce risk-based criteria for interim updating.