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REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE APPLICATION OF RULE 59 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Address by the Director-General,

Irina Bokova

UNESCO, 20 November 2015

Security

Distinguished Members of the Board,

The devastating terrorist attacks of 13 November in Paris have prompted me to turn to you under Rule 59 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board, with a view to addressing the pressing needs that have emerged with regard to security as a result of escalating circumstances of unprecedented violence and terrorist attacks across the world. I am returning from the meeting of the Chief Executives' Board in New York, chaired by the Secretary-General, where I have made a short presentation on the security challenges following the recent events that occurred in Paris.

These are challenging times, not just for UNESCO, but for the United Nations system at large – when I believe we cannot compromise when the safety and security of staff, both in UNESCO premises and away from Headquarters, as well as Member States located in our premises, are concerned. Security is of paramount importance to ensure the protection of each and every one.

Let me remind you that the primary responsibility for the security and protection of staff members and their dependents and property rests with the Host Government as stipulated in Articles 7 and 8 of the Host Country Agreement. I am responsible for determining the nature and extent of security arrangements to be made by UNESCO based on our analysis of any given situation.

I am also responsible for all United Nations staff members located in France in my capacity as the United Nations Designated Official for France. This covers staff working in ICAO, ILO, IMF, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNEP, World Bank, WFP, UNIDO, WHO, United Nations Geneva-based staff residing in France.

Therefore, in the present circumstances of increased risk, I have decided to come to you today in order to inform you, on the one hand, about the immediate steps I have taken following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November, and, on the other hand, about my decision to engage an in-depth review of security at UNESCO.

The in-depth review will be conducted on the basis of the following surveys, documents and decisions:

- The Security Audit of the Headquarters Complex led by the Préfecture de Police and INTERPOL during the 2008-2009 biennium;
- The Medium-Term Security Plan for Headquarters that was submitted to the Headquarters Committee at its 174th session in June 2010 and to the Executive Board at its 185th session in August 2010;
- As well as the IOS audit conducted in 2010 and its follow up recommendations, which will need to be reviewed in light of the evolving security context of escalating threats and from a high house-wide risk management perspective.

Let me first review the immediate steps that I have taken following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November last.

I convened three Senior Management crisis response meetings, respectively on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 November 2015, to address UNESCO's immediate security response.

During these meetings:

- I instructed SMT members to activate the Warden System in line with the relevant United Nations guidelines. The Warden System allows for the headcount of the personnel and dependents in order to confirm information and identity of potential casualties as well as to inform about limitations of movement of staff or relocation if necessary. The Warden System has been closely supervised by UNESCO's Security Unit with the close cooperation of each and every member of the Senior Management Team.
- In my capacity as the United Nations Designated Official for France as regards security for all United Nations system staff members based in Paris and France as a whole, all United Nations system staff on French soil have been contacted in order to ascertain their safety and security. For your information, 12,301 United Nations staff are living on French soil (1,451 in Paris, 350 in Lyon and 10,500 United Nations Geneva staff living in France and working in Geneva).
- These actions have been undertaken in close and constant liaison with the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) in New York and Geneva.
- As part of immediate steps, a dedicated crisis communication was put in place by ADG/ERI and DIR/MSS through the activation of an emergency communication system as well as through the activation of a close Host Government liaison. Specific flash reports and messages were addressed to all staff and Permanent Delegations during the three days following the Paris attacks.
- As part of the crisis response mechanism, essential UNESCO staff were identified in each service, and I requested DIR/HRM to inform all non-essential staff to work from home on 14 to 17 November. The same information was sent to the other United Nations staff working in France.
- As part of the activation of a close Host Government liaison, additional reinforced security measures were applied at UNESCO's premises through the provision of armed Security guards from the French authorities at the Place de Fontenoy entrance. Such reinforced security was provided by the Host Government following the decision to maintain the Leaders' Forum, which I took in consultation with the French authorities.
- An additional reinforcement of security was provided by the United Nations Security in Geneva through the secondment of two additional security officers for the duration of the Leaders' Forum and the pre-sessions of COP 21.
- Lastly, I convened two meetings of the UNESCO Security Crisis Response Group in order to review existing security mechanisms in place at UNESCO's premises, notably regarding their effectiveness in emergency situations, as well as with regard to their compliance with the United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards (UN MOSS).

Now let me turn, ladies and gentlemen, to the **medium- to long-term steps** I have decided to take in order to review UNESCO's security arrangements.

I have decided to initiate an integral assessment and review of security at UNESCO premises and away from Headquarters – building on the recommendations of prior assessments and audits, undertaken in 2008 and 2009 by the Préfecture de Police, INTERPOL and the Internal Oversight Service, that was the basis for the mid-term strategy presented to Governing Bodies, as well as in light

of the evolving circumstances relating to escalating acts of terrorism and violent extremism, both in France and across the world, that also impact on UNESCO's field offices. Today's attack at the Radisson Hotel in Bamako hosting a conference of the International Organization of Francophonie Bamako is one of such examples of the need to urgently address safety and security in field offices at risk.

To this end, I have decided on the following steps:

- Transfer the responsibility for safety and security at Headquarters and away from Headquarters, and the Section concerned, from the Bureau for the Management of Support Services (MSS) to the Sector for External Relations and Public Information (ERI), with a view to ensuring enhanced efficiency and effective synergies between the Host Country, Protocol Services and UNESCO Member States when it comes to the safety and security of staff members, their eligible dependents and of Member States located at our premises. I will be reporting to you in detail about this transfer of responsibility at the spring session of the Executive Board.
- I have equally requested to receive by 30 November a fully-costed Plan of Action for Security, which would include an assessment of gaps/shortcomings, including financial and risk management implications, as well as IT-related requirements, accompanied by relevant recommendations for the upgrading of our security services and also improving security measures at UNESCO buildings. This Action Plan will be developed in close consultation with the Department of United Nations Safety and Security in New York, as well as by building on best practices of Paris-based international organizations, such as the OECD. The Action Plan will be developed under the supervision of ADG/ERI, who will report to me, and with the active collaboration of DIR/MSS, DIR/HRM, DIR/LA, DIR/BFM, the CIO and DIR/ODG.
- I have instructed the Risk Management Group, which is chaired by the Director of BSP, to discuss broader risks to the Organization and how to prepare, manage or mitigate these various types of risks.
- I have also asked IOS to update the 2011 Review of the United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards (UN MOSS) compliance of UNESCO field offices, and this review will inform the longer-term investment plan for enhanced worldwide security.
- And, lastly I have requested that a business continuity plan (BCP) be developed by the spring of 2016, benefitting from the experience of the United Nations system so that this BCP will detail roles and responsibilities of key actors, a crisis management timeline, evacuation procedures, terms of reference for the UNESCO crisis management team, crisis management response (including checklists, communication protocols, medical protocols, shelter-in-place protocols) and other essential elements in order to make them more relevant to the present challenges.

The tragic attacks in Paris on 13 November showed that while we were able to take immediate security measures we need to be better prepared to face the new circumstances of potentially escalating threats to our security and safety.

To this end, we need to invest in security and in business continuity, as well as to build a culture of security across UNESCO, both among staff and among Permanent Delegations located in UNESCO premises.

It is my intention to present to you a fully costed business continuity plan that entails the investment necessary to ensure the safety and security that would also allow us to continue critical services at times of crisis.

Such a plan will be submitted to the Headquarters Committee and thereafter to the Executive Board at the spring session of 2016.

In order for such a plan to be fully costed, I will call upon Member States to provide extrabudgetary funding for its implementation.

Lastly, I will convene a special Information Meeting of the Executive Board on security at the end of January.

Thank you for your attention.