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Audit of Field Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Results:

IOS conducted an audit of field security to provide assurance that an effective accountability mechanism exists in UNESCO to ensure security of personnel and compliance with UNDSS guidelines in order to effectively mitigate security risks to field operations.

UNESCO field security arrangements are largely aligned with the UNDSS Framework of Accountability for the United Nations Security Management System. Recently established guidance on security of meetings and conferences outside HQ closed a crucial gap in the accountability mechanism. However, similar guidance is also required for meetings and conferences organized by the field offices. The Host Country responsibilities for security needs to be explicitly included in new seat agreements. Further, the HR Manual needs to be updated to reflect current responsibilities regarding field security.

Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) self-assessment, introduced in 2015 is a welcome step. However, there is a need to establish an IT enabled monitoring tool to track the security preparedness and challenges in field offices. Further, the budgetary control on field security budget needs strengthening. The audit also noted significant under recovery of security costs from the extrabudgetary projects. A conservative estimate of this under recovery amounts to over $330,000 per year.

The audit showed that significant improvements are needed on security awareness and training of personnel both in HQ and the field.

Background

1. UNESCO participates and cooperates with the larger unified security system of the United Nations, the UN Department of Security and Safety (UNDSS). United Nations Security Management System policies, procedures, standards and other arrangements apply to all personnel engaged by UNESCO.

2. The purpose, policies and accountabilities for field security are defined in chapter 17 of the HR Manual. The manual also contains a detailed Table of Delegated Authorities and Accountabilities and is based on the UN Security Management System.

3. Since 2014, the Field Security and Transportation unit (FSO) is directly responsible for the coordination of field security issues and is placed within the Security and Safety section. Since December 2015, the safety and security section was placed under the overall guidance of the Assistant Director General of External Relations and Public Information (ERI). The Security service ensures a safe and secure working environment at Headquarters and in the field with due regard to the United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standard to minimize related risks to the best extent possible.

4. The FSO unit comprises one professional category staff and one general category staff. It oversees a vast network of field, antenna, and liaison offices operating in various security levels globally. A non-exhaustive overview of the offices and corresponding SLS is provided in Annex A.

5. The continued presence of terrorism, coupled with the renewed attention to security for UNESCO meetings and conferences held outside the headquarters, is increasing pressure on security as such challenges evolve rapidly and dramatically. This led to the decision in August 2016 by the Assistant Director General (ADG) for ERI (ADG/ERI/16/84) to enhance coordination of security arrangements for UNESCO events away from HQ. UNESCO's ability to effectively respond to such security challenges would depend on the robustness of its security frameworks.

6. Given the fundamental importance of personnel safety and security, clarity regarding roles and accountability is necessary to ensure compliance and ultimately, to ensure an effective set of security measures for field locations and for all groups of personnel.

Scope, Objective and Methodology

7. IOS conducted this audit on field security in view of the increasing importance of field operations security for UNESCO's programmes and activities, and in line with IOS' risk-based internal audit plan, as well as the Director-General's priorities. This is also a follow-up to the audit that was conducted in 2010 on field security (IOS/AUD/2010/16).

8. The audit's objective is to provide assurance that within the overall UN Security Framework, an effective accountability mechanism exists in UNESCO to ensure personnel security and compliance with UNDSS guidelines in order to effectively address security risks to field operations, such as:

- Field Offices
- Antennae Offices
- Meeting and conferences held outside UNESCO HQ

9. The audit was performed in accordance with the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* and covered activities undertaken during the period 2014-15. It involved a walk-through of processes, document reviews, internal and external stakeholder interviews, and system data reviews.

10.   Seventeen field offices were selected for further study based on a random sample. This included a review of the implementation of UNDSS MOSS recommendations, MOSS self-assessments, security work plans for the last two biennia (2014-15 and 2016-17). In-depth interviews were also conducted with the Directors/Heads of Offices and AOs from 8 of the offices.

Security Level	1 Minimal	2 Low	3 Moderate	4 Substantial	5 High
Total number of offices	2	8	4	2	1
Sample offices	Amman Apia	Abidjan Dakar Jakarta (and Dili antenna) Kathmandu New Delhi Ramallah (and Gaza antenna) Kingston Santiago	Abuja Juba Cairo Islamabad	Bamako Bujumbura	Kabul

Achievements

11.   UNESCO field security arrangements are largely aligned with the UNDSS Framework of Accountability for the United Nations Security Management System with some gaps identified.

12.   Monitoring of field security has improved due to introduction of the MOSS self-assessment.

13.   Implementation rate of MOSS recommendations improved compared to the prior audit.

Challenges and Opportunities

14. Meetings and conferences organized by field offices within and outside their respective office facilities need security and safety guidelines.

15. Human Resources Manual needs to be updated to reflect current accountabilities for the field security and the job descriptions of the staff concerned need to be updated.

16. An IT enabled tool is required to track the security preparedness and challenges in field offices.

17. In the last biennium, there was a significant under implementation of field security budget. Such situation can be avoided with better monitoring and improved oversight mechanism.

18. Greater integration of the field security unit within the security section is needed.

19. Formal coordination mechanisms between ERI/FSO and FSC need to be established.

20. Poor participation in SMT meetings in some offices and in particular for antenna offices.

21. No standard operating procedure for communication in event of a security emergency exists.

22. Low staff compliance to mandatory security trainings remains a challenge.

23. The cost recovery policy for the security costs of extrabudgetary projects is not working.

Table of recommendations

Recommendation 1: We recommend that (a) FSC in consultation with ERI and LA, revise host country agreement (seat agreement) template to include the security responsibilities of the Host Country and make it mandatory for all future agreements, (b) ERI/FSO in consultation with HRM update the table of accountabilities and HR Manual to indicate current accountabilities for field security.

Recommendation 2: We recommend that (a) ADG/ERI in consultation with HRM revise the job descriptions of the chief of security, field security coordinator and the field security assistant, and (b) ADG/ERI in consultation with FSC devise formal coordination mechanism to ensure that all relevant information relating to field security is made available to FSC.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that FSO (a) undertake an analysis on the self-assessment results to identify security weaknesses for individual offices and develop remedial action plans and (b) in consultation with KMI, install an IT enabled security-monitoring tool, once developed in collaboration with inter agency security network.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that ERI in consultation with FSC issue directives for the field directors/heads to (i) have periodic facility surveys conducted by UNDSS and (ii) report to the FSO on implementation of the recommendations of the DSS facility survey, at least on an annual basis.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that ADG/ERI establish a monitoring mechanism on the implementation of the field security budget. This may include a second level oversight on the field security budget decisions by the chief of security or the ADG/ERI.

Recommendation 6: We recommend that the ADG/ERI, in continuation of his memo dated 4 August 2016 on the issue of security for meetings and conferences outside HQ, issue an update clarifying the type/categories of meetings for which Designated Official/Resident Coordinator notification is required. Furthermore, the scope of such meetings should also include the meetings organized by the field offices.

Recommendation 7: We recommend that FSC in consultation with ERI/FSO develop a performance criterion (Expected Result) on the security management of field offices including attendance in SMT meetings, for the directors/heads of field offices.

Recommendation 8: We recommend that ERI/FSO (i) remind directors/heads of field offices of the importance of the tone at the top and of their duty to lead by example regarding compliance with all security procedures and instructions, (ii) through the directors/heads of field offices, remind staff about their responsibilities for ensuring his/her own security and safety by complying with all security procedures and instructions, including timely completion of mandatory trainings, and (iii) require field AOs to submit an annual report on compliance with the mandatory security trainings for their respective offices.

Recommendation 9: We recommend that ERI/FSO draft a standard operating procedure for communication in event of a security emergency in field. Furthermore, ERI/FSO should remind all directors/heads of field offices about the need to notify UNDSS of the staff travelling on mission to their duty stations, so that visiting staff are able to undergo UNDSS security briefings.

Recommendation 10: We recommend that the CFO review the cost recovery of the relevant security costs from extrabudgetary projects and issues necessary guidelines to the field offices in this regard.