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Workload Analysis and Human Resources Needs Assessment for the OHCHR

Human Rights Treaties Branch

*Achieving a Sustainable Workforce Balance*

Final Draft

*In response to the request by HRTB to provide an objective assessment of the current workload and human resource needs of the Branch*

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Date: 9 September 2019

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# Executive Summary

An optimal and dynamic workload balance is a strategic Human Resource process with a number of benefits that can be measured: higher organisational performance in terms of output, quality and focus; increased staff engagement, resulting in lower turnover and absences; greater organisational flexibility to adjust to changing requirements; and a sound basis for prioritising resource allocations and requests that add value.

# Background for the Study

The Human Rights Treaties Branch is responsible for supporting the human rights treaty bodies. The 10 human rights treaty bodies are independent committees established under the respective human rights treaties. They are composed of experts serving in their personal capacity who are nominated by States parties. Treaty bodies monitor the implementation of human rights treaties through a system of periodic examination of reports submitted by States parties to each treaty body. The human rights treaties contain optional provisions that enable the treaty bodies to accept and consider individual communications, inter-State communications, and-or to conduct inquiries regarding allegations of grave or systematic human rights’ violations. The treaty bodies also issue recommendations to States parties, adopt general comments on thematic issues and engage in other activities. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances has the competence to request the Urgent Action of States parties to search for disappeared persons and investigate their alleged enforced disappearance. The Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture undertakes visits to States parties aimed at preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and provides assistance and advice to States parties regarding National Preventive Mechanisms.

In addition to supporting the treaty bodies, HRTB is responsible for: 1) Managing the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) and the Voluntary Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (UNVFCFS); 2) Promoting the continued improvement and harmonization of the work of the treaty bodies through the annual meeting of treaty body chairpersons, including consistent follow-up with the individual treaty bodies; and 3) Preparing for the 2020 comprehensive review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268 on the human rights treaty body system.

General Assembly resolution 68/268 sought to strengthen the human rights treaty body system through a comprehensive review of the system and its requirements, in which significant savings from a more efficient use of conference services (including the limitation of languages for interpretation and translation of documents) were re-invested in the allocation of more meeting time and staff to support their work, as well as a capacity-building programme to increase State party compliance with their reporting obligations.

Resolution 68/268 explicitly provides for a biennial review of the treaty body system workload and reassessment of allocated meeting time for each Committee, with amendments as required at the request of the Secretary-General in line with established budgetary procedures, specifically requesting this to be taken into account in the future biennium budget submissions (paragraph 27). This is referred to as the “formula of resources”. The same resolution requests the Secretary-General to review and report on a biennial basis the actual workloads of treaty bodies and adjust the meeting time (up or down) to be able to meet workloads (number of submitted State parties reports and of individual communications) (paragraph 28).

HRTB is now implementing General Assembly resolution fo the 6th year in 2020 and is assessing the viability of the arrangements put in place, which may need to be adjusted. This report aims to quantify through empirical evidence the workload and human resource needs of HRTB.

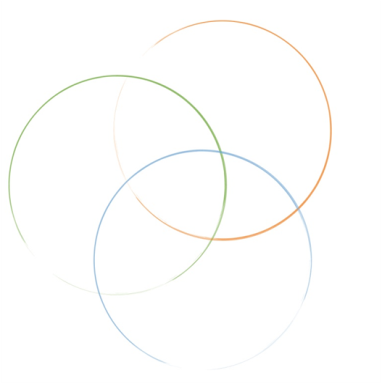
# Objectives of the study

The application of the “formula of resources” proposed by the General Assembly (GA resolution 68/268) and subsequent budget decisions have not resulted in an adequate number of staff to carry out the work and ensure support for the functioning of the treaty body system in accordance with the legal obligations laid out in the relevant human rights treaties. Several safeguards have been included in the form of the biennial Secretary General’s report and the 2020 review to address this gap but have not proved to be wholly sufficient. To create greater clarity around staffing needs, HRTB has decided to undertake an internal project to create a framework to identity ***actual workforce requirements*** for the ***current*** ***and evolving workload*** of the Branch. To support this project HRTB contracted with Optimis, an external organisational development company with expertise in workforce analytics.

The overall objective of this study is to provide an evidence-based analytical framework and process to evaluate the workforce requirements for HRTB to achieve its mandate. Accordingly, this study provides the basis for an ongoing effort to balance the workload and workforce in a long-term and sustainable manner. To achieve the overall outcome, the project is broken down into the following three objectives:

1. Conduct an **objective assessment** of the **workload requirements** and **resources** to better understand the mismatch between staffing levels and workload that currently exists
2. Develop a **workload analysis tool** or **formula** that can be used to define a sustainable, yet dynamic, relationship between staff and outputs
3. Prepare a **comprehensive report** that substantiates the validity and use of this tool to **calibrate workforce planning requirements**.

The workload analysis tool and process developed by this project can provide a solid basis for accurately estimating the ongoing workforce requirements in a dynamic environment. This will enhance management decision making with respect to resource requirements, requests and allocations. Organisational performance will also improve as the match between workforce and workload is optimised.



# Methodology

**Project Overview – Phases**

This project was undertaken by Optimis over the period May to August in 2019, during which a three phase plan was executed to achieve the project outcomes. An overview of the activities by phase is depicted in the following table:



Figure 1: Overview of Project Phases

**Phase I** focuses on the initial meetings to agree scope and key deliverables, and upon a thorough analysis of the secondary data to understand the current situation and context for the project. The key deliverables are creation of a workforce planning tool or analytic framework for HRTB and this report that communicates the staffing required to deliver the current activity requirements.

The secondary data considered in Phase I included previous workforce studies, the current organisational chart, relevant United Nations reports and documentation in connection with General Assembly resolution 68/268. Importantly, this phase also includes the development of a workload classification framework that was derived from the data collected via an online survey by HRTB on staff work activity.

**Phase II** includes primary data collection and workforce model-formula creation. Primary data is information collected for this specific study and Optimis made use of focus groups and meetings to supplement the data collected via the online survey. This was done to further establish reliability and validity of the online survey data and continued refinement of the analytical framework or model for HRTB workforce analysis.

**Phase III** is the deeper analysis of the full data set with the final HRTB workforce analytical model that was derived in Phase II. During Phase III multiple scenarios are simulated and tested to ensure the model is capturing the key variables and yielding reliable and valid results.

The final outcome is this report which captures our analysis, findings and recommendations to make analytical workforce planning an integral part of the strategic HR activities of HRTB.

**Overview of Analysis Methodology**

The initial versions of the HRTB workforce analysis model were built upon several key elements to enable clarity and comparison across the HRTB. The following concepts are essential to understanding the core model:

* **Workdays per person per activity** are calculated from the survey data
* **Work split %** is calculated for each person per activity
* **Yearly workload and number of Posts-FTE’s (full-time equivalents) per activity for the survey participants** is calculated (extrapolated) based upon the data collected over the 62 day survey period
* **Full annual workload and Posts-FTE’s** are calculated for HRTB
* **Activities are grouped in categories** that match work volume of HRTB
* **Workload and Posts-FTE’s per category** are calculated
* **Workload and Posts-FTE’s per unit of category** are calculated
* **The Post-FTE per unit of category** is used to calculate the **Post-FTE requirement for “X” amount of work by category**

To summarise, **workdays** is a key unit of analysis and can be split across activities for each survey participant. Yearly workload and number of Posts-FTE’s can be extrapolated from the data collected over the 62 day period. Then yearly workload and number of posts can be calculated for the entire Branch. To gain deeper insight, (related) activities are grouped or clustered into categories and this can be used as a basis to understand the workload and posts required per category and per unit of category. The per unit measure provides a number that is comparable across categories. And finally, the post per unit of category can be used to measure the post requirement for different amount of work by category and is a useful forecasting tool. The architecture of the model allows for current analysis and future forecasting. The accuracy is driven by the quality and level of specificity of the data, and in this case we are confident that the data collected is of sufficient quality to perform the workload analysis at the Branch level.

The first versions of the basic workforce analytical model for HRTB were built upon the secondary data that was available, plus primary data input from the online survey. The next step in the methodology is to subject the basic model to a focus group review by staff members.

# Recommendations

**HRTB Staffing Recommendation**

The range of FTE-posts required – from 16.8 to 19 FTE-posts – has been established by the integration of the analysis outcomes for Panel A - Scenario 3 (Survey Data) and Panel B - Scenario 2 (HRTB Management adjustments) in the Analysis chapter. This recommendation accounts for underreported time across the staff population and we believe is the best estimate of the range for the Post-FTE gap.

Based on the multiple scenario analysis in the previous Analysis chapter of this report, the feedback received during our interviews, the assumptions made and our experience with analysis for similar clients, we conclude that there is a

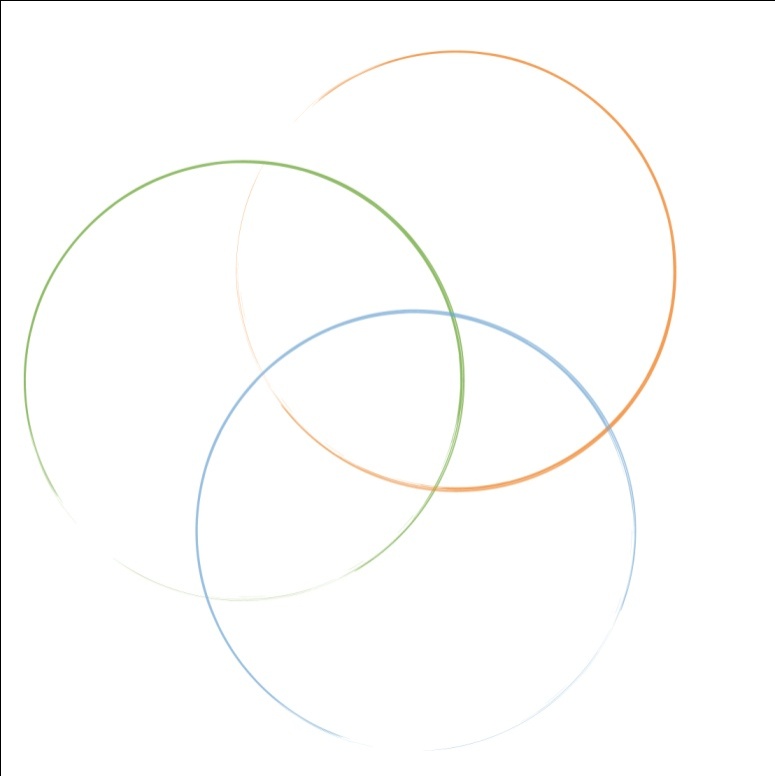
***Minimum Post-FTE gap of* 17 FTE-posts at HRTB currently**

Note that this recommendation does not include the required staffing levels at higher workload levels, although these can be calculated with the HRTB Workload Analytics Model. Also, this estimate of FTE’s does not specifically account for the backlog although some analysis of the implications of work backlog are included in Annex II.

**Integration of the Workforce Analysis Process**

A workforce analysis process is often treated as a one-off or ad-hoc process to gather the necessary data to support staffing requirement estimates and staffing requests during a budgetary cycle. We believe that there is much more that can be done to leverage this initial investment.

The model and process that has been created with this project can be used on an ongoing basis to help management calibrate the staffing requirements for a particular workload scenario. We believe that this will allow HRTB to capture the full value of the study undertaken and the resulting HRTB workforce analytics model.



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