Preliminary Study on the Technical and Legal Aspects relating to the Desirability of Revising the 1966 ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel

Summary

In accordance with Article 3 of the Rules of Procedure, concerning Recommendations and Conventions, and covered by the terms of Article IV, paragraph 4, of the Constitution, the Director-General submits to the Executive Board a Preliminary Study of the Technical and Legal Aspects of the Desirability of Revising the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers and the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel.

This will enable the Executive Board to provide its observations and decisions thereon and to decide whether this matter should be included in the provisional agenda of the 43rd session of the General Conference.

The financial and administrative implications of this document are covered in document 42 C/5.

Decision required: paragraph XX.

A. Relevance of the Recommendations in the modern times

1. Having established an international frame of reference regarding the rights and

responsibilities of the teaching profession, across education levels and subject-areas, in both public and private settings, the 1966 and the 1997 Recommendations remain particularly relevant to this day. No other international Recommendation or Convention focuses specifically on educators. The 1966 and 1997 Recommendations cover a wide range of key topics concerning the profession, from initial teacher preparation to recruitment and working conditions. Furthermore, these two international normative instruments are meant to guide governments, employers, teacher unions, local governments, and school administrators, among other stakeholders, in the elaboration and improvement of national laws and policies. Likewise, they may serve as the basis of new teacher codes of ethics, teacher training programmes, guidelines for good practices, among others. The implementation of the Recommendations is promoted and monitored by both UNESCO and ILO, through the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel, also known as the CEART (ILO, 2016).

B. Contribution of the Recommendations towards the promotion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG Target 4.c

2. Both Recommendations are key tools for promoting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in particular, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.c, as well as related international commitments. With the adoption of the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, Member States recognized the vital role of teachers in ensuring quality education (UNESCO, 2015). Further, countries have committed to achieving the SDG Target 4.c, i.e., to "substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States" by 2030 (UN, 2024). In turn, the Education 2030 Framework for Action[1] was also part of the World Education Forum agenda[2]. The former asserts that teachers are central to the achievement of all SDG 4 Targets and, therefore, it is urgent to tackle the shortage and uneven distribution of educators, currently observed in many parts of the world. In this regard, teachers should be "empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, motivated, professionally qualified, and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems" (UNESCO, 2015).

3. There is therefore a consensus among the international community regarding the importance of teachers and the need to increase the numbers of qualified teachers. Both the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations contribute to this purpose by setting universal standards that promote a qualified, motivated, empowered and well-supported teacher workforce. These

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[1] The Framework for Action was adopted in November 2015, at UNESCO Headquarters, in Paris.
[2] Its purpose it to steer the implementation of the Incheon Declaration on-the-ground by mobilizing stakeholders, by proposing ways of ensuring the achievement of SDG 4, as well as by suggesting indicative strategies to be undertaken by Member States.

two normative instruments provide the groundwork for different actors to attain the above-mentioned international commitments.

C. Developments since the adoption of the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations requiring attention

4. Multiple changes have taken place in the latest decades and, therefore, make contemporary challenges different from those which characterized the times when the Recommendations were adopted as detailed below. They set the rationale for the need to update both Recommendations.

5. **Twin crises of equity and relevance:** In preparation for the Summit of the Future, and building upon "Our Common Agenda", the United Nations Secretary-General presented a policy brief (UN, 2023) in which he underlines the current twin crises of equity and relevance in education. According to this paper, unprecedented inequalities have been observed around the world. Discrimination is still present in schools, in its various dimensions. Personal and social circumstances, including the ability to afford the core and ancillary costs of education, the effects of poor nutrition and health, and the impacts of gender-based norms, can have a significant effect on both school attendance and outcomes. Educational exclusion can also be intergenerational and historic. A striking contrast in education financing is still observed between more and less wealthy economies. Amid rapid technological changes and global challenges, current education systems are increasingly seen as inadequate. For the most part, education systems remain geared to prepare children and young people for their adult life, rather than supporting them and learners of all ages to acquire the capacities to learn throughout their lives. To address these issues, teaching and learning should be transformed to develop meaningful knowledge and skills for the future. Teachers need to be repositioned as creative guides and facilitators, fostering active and collaborative learning.

6. **Equity and inclusion:** Social demography has been evolving due to the intensification of migration and displacement. Schools are reflective of societal changes, therefore, the classroom configuration has been undergoing considerable transformations as well (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021). In the school space, teachers have become key actors to promote tolerance and respect for diversity, as well as in tackling discrimination. Moreover, educators are increasingly expected to play the fundamental role to identify and remove all barriers to education to achieve inclusive education for all (HLP, 2024). Pedagogy is to focus on cooperation, solidarity and empathy, in order to strengthen the capacity for collective transformation, helping students to appreciate the diversity of experiences and unlearn prejudices. Schools and teachers are to create environments that celebrate diverse histories, languages, and cultures, particularly those of indigenous communities and vulnerable populations. Human rights and democratic participation should guide curricula, emphasizing dignity, non-violence, and peaceful societies.

7. The OECD report "Equity and Inclusion in Education: Finding Strength through Diversity"

explains that considering the increasing diversity being experienced in the classroom, it is necessary to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills allowing them to provide students with learning environments that are equitable and inclusive (OECD, 2023). Only this way may educators ensure learners' sense of belonging and well-being at school. This approach is particularly critical for vulnerable groups, such as students with disabilities, those from marginalized backgrounds, and students with special educational needs, who may face additional barriers to learning and participation. It is therefore essential that initial teacher education and continuous professional learning prepare teachers to foster such an environment. Teachers must be trained to identify and address the unique needs of these students, employing inclusive pedagogies and differentiated instruction to support diverse learners effectively. In addition, the report underlines it is key to ensure that the composition of the teaching workforce is representative of the population's diversity. A diverse teaching workforce can provide role models for all students and bring varied perspectives that enrich the educational experience for everyone. The 2020 edition of the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM Report), under the theme "Inclusion and education: All means all", also confirms the importance of embracing heterogeneity in teaching and learning spaces. It highlights the need to prepare educators with the pedagogical capacity to teach students with special needs, students with disability, students from marginalized groups, among others. The report also notes that curricula should address the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity. This inclusivity in curriculum content ensures that all students feel seen and respected, fostering a more accepting and supportive school environment. Its main message is that "In inclusive education, all teachers should be prepared to teach all students" (GEM Report, 2020). Thus, both reports emphasize that comprehensive teacher preparation is essential to meet the diverse needs of all learners, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

8. **Rise of digital technologies and their pedagogical use in the context of the digital transformation of education systems:** One of the most prominent features of the past half-century is the emergence and proliferation of digital technologies. More recently, it also includes the rise of artificial intelligence, open and distance/hybrid learning systems (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021). Education institutions can leverage digital technologies and, increasingly, artificial intelligence to improve their internal governance, efficiency and public accountability, as well as to develop new data collection mechanisms (HLP, 2024). Digital transformation enables better tracking of student progress and institutional performance, contributing to more informed decision-making and policy development (GEM Report, 2023). Other advantages to the use of digital technologies in teaching are the personalization of instruction according to each student's needs, the promotion of collaboration among colleagues (e.g., through online communities of practice), and the facilitation of communication with parents and the community. This is particularly important in fostering inclusive education environments where teachers can share best practices and resources tailored to diverse learners (HLP, 2024). Technology also provides teachers with the opportunity of developing new educational resources and contributes to

the enhancement of professional training programmes. In addition, digital technologies have unlocked new possibilities in crisis and emergency contexts, in rural and remote areas, as well as for educators and/or pupils with disabilities (GEM Report, 2023). However, teachers need to be trained how to use them, including training on pedagogical aspects. This training should encompass not only technical skills but also strategies for integrating technology effectively into the curriculum to enhance learning outcomes (HLP, 2024). Moreover, teachers should be equipped with the knowledge to address digital equity issues, ensuring that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have access to and can benefit from these technologies. By fostering a comprehensive understanding of digital tools and their applications, educators can more effectively utilize these resources to support student engagement, motivation, and achievement (GEM Report, 2023).

9. There are also several risks associated with the latest technology developments, including the promotion of highly individualistic learning methods, the undermining of civic engagement, the definition of educational priorities according to the marketization of subject-areas, as well as the disruption of the teaching environment linked with an over-exposition to digital tools. The use of technology can inadvertently prioritize individual learning over collaborative efforts, potentially weakening the sense of community and shared responsibility within educational settings (GEM Report, 2023). Moreover, discussions leading towards certain national decisions regarding the selection and application of new digital technology in education have not systematically counted with the participation of teachers. Teachers' insights and experiences are crucial for the effective implementation of technology, and their exclusion from decision-making processes can lead to gaps between policy and practice (HLP, 2024). It is also important to note that, in lower income countries, educators are not able to make proper use of new technologies due to a lack of access to key infrastructure, such as connectivity, software and digital devices (HLP, 2024). This digital divide exacerbates educational inequalities, as students in under-resourced areas are deprived of the opportunities that digital learning can offer (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021). In turn, artificial intelligence raises its own risks, which include increased managerialism and surveillance trends, the de-professionalization of educators, as well as inadequate data and privacy protection (ILO, 2021) in education systems (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021). Furthermore, evidence of the impact of digital technologies on learning outcomes has major limitations. While some studies show potential benefits, the overall impact remains inconclusive due to varying contexts and implementation strategies. It is therefore difficult to conclude with certainty whether the use of these tools in teaching has a positive effect on the quality of education. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that an improvement in learning outcomes can be achieved using digital technologies together with adequate pedagogical practices (GEM Report, 2023). Effective use of technology in education requires not only access to tools but also ongoing support and professional development for educators to integrate these tools meaningfully into their teaching (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021).

10. **COVID-19 pandemic:** The global health crisis sped up the introduction of technological

innovations in education. In some cases, governments provided special support to teachers during the pandemic by offering training for the development of digital skills, as well as by establishing standards in this area (GEM Report, 2023). At the same time, however, it was at the origin of an exacerbation of disparities in teachers' and students' accessibility to digital materials. In other words, the pandemic revealed an alarming state of the digital divide, with more than one-third of the population without access to the internet. The recent 2022 Global Connectivity Report speaks about digital divides as per different socio-economic characteristics such as country income, urban/rural divide, gender, age, and education level (ITU, 2022).

11. **Teachers in crisis-affected contexts:** Many parts of the world have recently undergone times of crisis, including armed conflicts and natural catastrophes. Education suffers significant repercussions during emergency situations, sometimes resulting in school-targeted attacks, or natural disasters damaging or destroying educational infrastructures, harming students and teachers (INEE, 2024). Crisis contexts are commonly characterized by forcible displacement, limited means of transportation, lack of adequate housing, and a wide range of security issues. Moreover, they tend to create job and financial insecurity. Livelihoods may be destroyed by the effect of climate change (particularly in agriculture or tourism for instance) or made unsafe/inaccessible by armed conflicts or pandemics. In such circumstances, children may drop out of school to work and support their families. In addition, the budget allocated to education is often decreased, and payment systems may stop functioning correctly. Crisis also tends to prompt very poor working conditions, including overcrowded classrooms and damaged facilities. As a result, situations of emergency often observe high rates of absenteeism and turnover in the teaching profession (TTF, 2022). Vulnerable populations are the most affected by such crises (UNESCO, 2023a).

12. **Growing enrollment and internationalization of higher education:** Higher education is evolving dramatically, and with it the role of higher education teaching personnel. Over the past two decades, enrolments have doubled to reach 254 million students, while international student mobility has tripled to 6.4 million (UNESCO, 2024b). These numbers are once again set to double in the next decade, placing an increased demand for qualified higher education teaching personnel. At the same time, the number of higher education institutions and the diversity of programme offerings has grown, together with new delivery modalities that have spread to increase access, including through digital means, requiring upskilling and new pedagogies for higher education personnel. An important trend has been for an increasing number of countries to adopt tertiary level standards as minimum teaching requirements to, not only raise the quality of education, but also improve the status and professionalism associated with the job (UNESCO and TTF, 2024). For these reasons, and bearing in mind the difficulties experienced by refugees and displaced persons when trying to have their qualifications recognized, particularly in cases where documentary evidence is lacking, it matters to rethink national policies and legal provisions regarding recognition through the ratification and implementation of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education and related "second generation" regional

recognition conventions.

13. **New considerations regarding the rights of higher education teaching personnel:** As pointed out in the Roadmap of the 2022 World Higher Education Conference, a key issue affecting higher education teaching personnel, particularly in countries with less robust governance models, is the threat to academic freedom as a fundamental professional right, which covers pedagogical freedom, freedom of research, and freedom of expression. Increased casualization and competitive funding models for research threaten academic freedom, as can the development of digital technologies in higher education due to intellectual property rights, increased surveillance. Other challenges are associated with increasing differentiation between teaching and research functions, with limited recognition of teaching activities in career advancement; poor access to pedagogical training opportunities; inadequate support to implement digital technologies in teaching and research; staff shortages and increasing workloads. As referred to by the special rapporteur on right to education, rights of higher education teaching personnel must be viewed in a holistic manner, ensuring that both their professional freedoms and their professional responsibilities are upheld and respected. The Global Dialogue Forum on Employment Terms and Conditions in Tertiary Education has also highlighted key principles and standards that need to apply to all tertiary education workers (e.g., social protection, gender equality, social dialogue) and that need to be considered (ILO, 2018).

14. **Considerations regarding gender equality:** Female educators are less represented in secondary and tertiary education than they are at early childhood and primary education. In addition, certain fields of study, namely TVET and STEM, lack women teachers. In the case of higher-education, recruitment and promotion mechanisms are often configured to select academics with "linear, fulltime and uninterrupted" (HLP, 2024) professional paths. For example, 43% of professors are female and only 30% of the world's university researchers are women. As such, there are also gender imbalances in senior and leadership positions and pay gaps between female and male academics persist in all regions (Galán-Muros *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, certain social and cultural norms still expect women to carry out unpaid care, maternity leave and domestic responsibilities. Therefore, female teachers tend to take longer breaks or to leave the profession more frequently when compared to their male counterparts, this way diminishing their chances of achieving senior academic positions. In addition, the Futures of Education reported highlighted that 'The gendered nature of teachers' work should also remain visible in the analysis of these tensions and demands, as an increase of women teachers in some countries has provided an excuse to decrease pay or widen gaps in pay equity' (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021).

15. **Exposure to violence and harassment:** The threat of violence against teachers has been growing. It may take the form of physical and/or psychological violence, from mockery to theft, from property damage to homicide. Recently, online harassment has been raising new concerns. In addition, there is a gender dimension in violence, such that women may be targets of different forms of violence compared to men. Violence against teachers results in

a heavily negative impact on the well-being of educators and their working conditions (UNESCO and TTF, 2024).

16. **Teacher shortages**: The lack of qualified teachers had already been recognized as a pressing issue before the adoption of the 1966 Recommendation. Nonetheless, the last three decades have observed a significant expansion in schooling demand caused by steep population growth rates, as well as by the massive expansion in access to education in low and middle-income countries. At the same time, education systems have experienced growing attrition within the teaching profession, accompanied by difficulties in the recruitment of new talent into the workforce (HLP, 2024). The latter issues also affected higher-income countries, which was not so pressing before. Together, these factors have resulted in teacher shortages around the world. Governments have often tried to compensate shortage crisis by hiring educators through temporary and precarious contracts or by hiring insufficiently qualified candidates for the job. At the same time, public investment has not been accompanying these needs and the supporting capacity of education systems has been strained. Consequently, the teaching profession has seen its salaries and working conditions deteriorate, in such a way that its perceived prestige, status, and attractiveness have also been decreasing (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021). The first edition of the UNESCO Global Report on Teachers[3], published in 2024, documented these and other related trends in great depth (UNESCO and TTF, 2024). Based on new data, it highlights that the 44 million primary and secondary education teachers are needed to achieve SDG 4.

17. **Teaching as a collaborative endeavor:** The UNESCO Futures of Education Report rejects the "one room" education model and advocates for teaching methods based on collaboration. It promotes the enhancement of individual teachers' abilities and professional opportunities, as well as the undertaking of collective action throughout the learning space. According to the Report, educators are at the very center of any education system and, while engaging with each pupil individually, they also carry out group work. Therefore, in a new social contract, the teaching profession should be reimagined as a collaborative endeavor that is also key to improve learning (International Commission on the Futures of Education, 2021).

18. **Decent and safe working conditions:** The first edition of the Global Report on Teachers explains that to curb the teacher shortage it is fundamental to ensure motivation and well-being among those exercising the profession considering their working conditions. This means implementing certain strategies such as promoting the mental health of educators, protecting them against different forms of violence, as well as diverting administrative responsibilities from their schedules, this way allowing them to focus on their pedagogical duties. Furthermore, the Report mentions that special attention should be given to teachers working in crisis and emergency contexts (UNESCO and TTF, 2024).

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[3] With the theme "Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession", this Report was the result of a joint endeavor between UNESCO and the TTF.

19. **The privatization of education**: While private education has expanded rapidly, public systems have been struggling with the persistent problem of underfunding even if governments are under obligation to provide free and quality basic public education (Special Rapporteur on the right to education, 2024). The teaching workforce employed in private institutions may not be adequately covered by national legislation. Consequently, if left unregulated, the privatization of education threatens the safeguard of education as a human right and a public good.

20. Other key developments include **climate change**, **sustainability** and related **greening education concerns**, essential role of **global citizenship education**, major risks created by **hate speech, fake news,** and **disinformation**, etc. It is key to acknowledge the expanded role of educators in relation to global citizenship and social issues such as health, entrepreneurship education, community-building, climate change, well-being, social justice and peace. Educators require adequate skills training, professional learning and development and support to fulfill these functions (ILO, 2021).

D. An expanding landscape of international norms

a) International normative instruments

21. Since 1966, Member States adopted several international normative instruments that directly or indirectly reflect the changing reality of education systems and the teaching profession. In addition, some instruments adopted before that date still hold considerable relevance in this regard. The following declarations, recommendations and conventions are among the most significant to have expanded the landscape of norms addressing key aspects of the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations.

22. Fundamental international human rights instruments (OHCHR, 2024) with implications for teachers and teacher unions are:

    a. The International Bill of Rights, composed by the 1945 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The norms established in these instruments concern, notably, the right to freedom of association, assembly and freedom of expression.

    b. Other core human rights treaties are the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The provisions established in these treaties address, in particular, the issues of equity

and inclusion.

23. In 1960, UNESCO adopted the Convention and the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education. It is the first legally binding international instrument, entirely dedicated to the right to education. The Convention aims to guarantee that education contributes to the full development of the human personality, as well as to the reinforcement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It highlights the rights of minorities, as well as of historically vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, to access inclusive and equitable quality education. In addition, the Convention establishes countries' obligations to provide free and compulsory education, non-discriminatory training opportunities for teachers, and equivalent standards of education and conditions in relation to quality (UNESCO, 2024a).

24. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly in 2007. It is the most encompassing instrument on the rights of indigenous individuals and communities, establishing standards for their recognition, protection and promotion. Among others, the Declaration addresses the right of indigenous people to education, outlaws discrimination against them, and advocates for their participation in issues that concern them.

25. The revision of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers resulted in the adoption of the 2017 UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (RS|SR) (UNESCO, 2017). The main goals of this revised instrument are to put human well-being and inclusion at the center of scientific development, as well as to promote a safe and free environment for scientists. It is based upon the premise that science can reduce inequalities by ameliorating and facilitating access to basic services, such as education. The Recommendation also advocates that scientific research can provide solutions to tackle current and future social issues. As a result, it is particularly relevant for STEM teachers (UNESCO, 2024c).

26. In 2019, experts in international law and human rights adopted the Abidjan Principles on the Human Rights Obligations of States to Provide Public Education and to Reregulate Private Involvement in Education. States, teachers and education stakeholders recognize the authority of these Principles when discussing the duties of Governments and the Private Sector in the provision of education (The Abidjan Principles, 2024).

27. In 2019, the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education was adopted. It establishes universal standards for the worldwide recognition of tertiary education qualifications based on the principles of fairness, transparency and non-discrimination. Its provisions cover learners, professors, researchers and administrative personnel. It aims to facilitate access to higher education and professional opportunities, as well as to promote flexible learning modalities, student mobility and

cooperation in tertiary education. This Convention is particularly relevant when considering issues related to teacher pre- and in-service training and its modalities. Moreover, it has important implications for refugee teachers, as well as teachers who have been displaced during crises.

28. Later, in 2021, the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence was adopted. It acknowledges that new technologies and, in particular, artificial intelligence, may foster innovation in education. For this reason, the Recommendation reaffirms the importance of ensuring connectivity in schools, integrating technology in all disciplines, as well as preparing educators with digital and related pedagogical skills while respecting their autonomy. Moreover, it establishes that, as a global public good, digital educational content should be open and publicly accessible, and reinforces the need for social dialogue by stating that teacher organizations should be involved in decisions concerning the use of artificial intelligence tools in education. Its ethical use should also be considered. Furthermore, the Recommendation includes relevant provisions regarding the protection of teachers' privacy and intellectual property.

29. The result of the revision of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (UNESCO, 2023c) was the adoption of the 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace and Human Rights, International Understanding, Cooperation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development. It is a cornerstone document that aims to ensure that education systems promote, among other fundamental principles, the values of global citizenship and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2024d). It emphasizes the crucial role of educators in promoting these goals, recognizing that teachers are at the forefront of imparting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to address global challenges, foster mutual respect, and contribute to a peaceful, just, and sustainable world. By focusing on the pivotal role of teachers, this Recommendation seeks to ensure that they are not only transmitters of knowledge but also role models and leaders in promoting human rights, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

30. In addition, the International Standard Classification of Teacher Training Programmes (ISCED-T) was adopted in 2021 by UNESCO Member States. The purpose of this framework is to facilitate the assembling, compilation, and analysis of cross-nationally comparable statistics on teacher training programmes and the related teacher qualifications, in order to improve their data availability (UIS, 2022). Further, the 2015 UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education and the 2015 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), both contribute to supporting the development of education systems based upon a lifelong learning perspective.

31. In turn, relevant instruments adopted under ILO's purview include: the 1974 Paid

Educational Leave Convention (No. 140), which establishes adequate arrangements for workers to pursue their right to continuing education and training; the 1981 Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No. 155), that reaffirms employees right to benefit from safety and health standards in the working environment; the 2017 Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation (No. 205), that provides guidance on the role of employment and decent work in view of preventing and recovering from crisis situations, while building peace and resilience; as well as the 2019 ILO Recommendation (No. 206) and Convention (No. 190) on Violence and Harassment, which address various risks faced by educators, including verbal abuse, sexual harassment, gender-based violence, as well as other threats to their physical and psychological well-being.

1.   This expanding landscape of international norms sets up new expectations regarding the role, rights and status of the teaching workforce. In turn, those that already existed before the adoption of the 1966 and/or the 1997 Recommendations represent long-established principles within the international normative sphere. All these instruments demonstrate aspects that need to be reflected in the Recommendations focusing on teachers in view of ensuring their continued relevance.

b) International commitments and initiatives

2.   In addition to normative instruments, numerous international commitments and initiatives have shaped global discussions on teachers and illustrate other areas that need to be considered in the revised Recommendations.

3.   Québec's Call for Action was launched through the Québec-UNESCO Conference on "Internet and the Radicalization of Youth: Preventing, Acting and Living Together", in 2016. Resulting from a debate among academics, civil society and Member States, this landmark initiative strongly encourages the international community to implement innovative and collaborative measures to prevent and eliminate youth radicalization leading to extreme violence (Québec, 2024).

4.   Education International (EI) and UNESCO developed the Global Framework for Professional Teaching Standards, which was published in 2019. The purpose of this framework is to support policymakers, teachers and their representatives in the establishment of teacher standards to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (EI and UNESCO, 2019).

5.   The Teacher Policy Development Guide, developed in partnership between UNESCO and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), was also published in 2019. It is to be used by education stakeholders in the elaboration and review of holistic national teacher policies. It includes guidance on the processes required and unpacks the

various dimensions affecting the teaching profession to ensure the development of an integrated approach (UNESCO and TTF, 2019).

6. The Transforming Education Summit (TES) [4] was convened by the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, as a response to the global education crisis that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing from the 2021 report "Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education" (also known as the "Futures of Education Report"), TES aimed at critically analyzing education in the 21st century with the goal of transforming education (UNESCO, 2024e). Five Thematic Action Tracks were developed during the Summit to mobilize commitments, highlight the best practices in policy-making, as well as leverage different initiatives and partnerships. The discussion paper under Thematic Action Track 3 was elaborated in consultation with various stakeholders and offers insights on "Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession" (UNESCO, 2023b). It approaches the prevailing issues of teacher shortages, initial and continuous professional development and pedagogies, professional status and working conditions, as well as educational leadership and innovation.

7. Established by the UN Secretary-General, and jointly supported by ILO and UNESCO, the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession (HLP) was built upon TES and focused on the challenges encountered by teachers and education systems around the world. The Panel discussions resulted in the publication of its Recommendations and Summary of Deliberations in 2024. Moreover, the recommendations elaborated by the Panel, where adequate financing and effective integration of technology in education were predominantly featured, aim at finding solutions to the issues mentioned above (HLP, 2024).

E. Global momentum and rationale for revision

8. Almost six decades have passed following the adoption of the 1966 Recommendation, while almost three have passed in the case of the 1997 Recommendation. As illustrated earlier, many developments have taken place since their adoption. As a result, the revision of these international normative instruments would be very timely, especially considering the recent establishment of the HLP, which created an important momentum to advance teacher related issues. This Panel has also recommended the adoption of an up-to-date international normative instrument, which could be a Convention or a revision of existing instruments on the teaching profession.

9. Both the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations carry great relevance in the international community. All ILO and UNESCO Member States need to be familiar with their provisions and, in consequence, have been invited to apply them. Nonetheless, revising these instruments would contribute to further strengthening their persuasive effect, as well as their

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[4] The Pre-Summit took place in Paris, in June 2022, and the Summit was convened in New York, in September that year.

influence in the development of national laws and policies. By updating their provisions considering the latest social, political and economic developments, their application at the domestic level would be encouraged.

10. Furthermore, the revision of the existing instruments is prioritized as compared to the development of new normative frameworks given the visionary nature and currency of the existing Recommendations, and because a Convention would require a long process of consultation and ratification by Member States, further postponing an urgent matter that can be addressed today.

1966 Recommendation

11. The adoption of the 1966 Recommendation took place through a Special Intergovernmental Conference on the Status of Teachers, convened by UNESCO in cooperation with ILO, in Paris, from the 21st of September to the 5th of October 1966. The Recommendation was adopted on the last day, which was later recognized as the World Teachers' Day. The Conference was preceded by separate UNESCO and ILO expert meetings and the draft text of the Recommendation was prepared by a Joint ILO-UNESCO Meeting of Experts on the Status of Teachers, that was convened by ILO, in Geneva, from the 17th to the 28th of January 1966.

12. According to Art. 2 of the 1966 Recommendation, it "applies to all teachers in both public and private schools up to the completion of the secondary stage of education, whether nursery, kindergarten, primary, intermediate or secondary, including those providing technical, vocational, or art education".

A. Improving the relevance and effectiveness of the 1966 Recommendation

13. Although the 1966 Recommendation's guiding principles remain remarkably valid, the technical guidance contained therein could be revised to address contemporary challenges that the teaching profession is facing. For example, gender is a key issue to consider. Although the Recommendation addresses gender to some extent by reference to female teachers, the issue could be featured in more depth especially as the language of the text is occasionally not adequately sensitive to gender. Moreover, issues such as pay equity, equitable career advancement and access to care services could be featured more prominently to promote gender equity within the teaching workforce.

14. In more general terms, the Recommendation could more substantially address issues related to equity and inclusion. The Recommendation should promote teachers' opportunities for professional development to work with different population groups and to support students with different needs. The reformed pedagogical training is needed to address systemic and attitudinal forms of discrimination, so that teachers are prepared to deliver an inclusive, learner-centered and gender-transformative pedagogy. To create a more representative workforce, equity and inclusion considerations should include the recruitment of teacher candidates from vulnerable and marginalized communities.

15. In addition, although the Recommendation broadly addresses issues relating to modern teaching, teaching methods, research and information resources, and international exchange of information, it lacks references to new digital technologies. This includes information and communication technology (ICT), open and distance learning (ODL) as well as artificial

intelligence (AI). This area of consideration would also include promoting digital media as means for blended and distant professional development and as a topic of study. In addition, this area would need to promote transparency, accountability, and regulation of artificial intelligence in education ensuring that it aligns with human rights and social justice principles. Another important element to consider is the need for the design and delivery of education technology to be tailored to local contexts. Teachers would also need to be empowered with training about new digital technologies and digital transformation in education. They should also be included in decision-making processes related to the use of digital technologies in the classroom through effective social dialogue mechanisms. What is more, Governments should ensure that all teachers benefit from basic infrastructure and connectivity in the school space.

16. Violence and discrimination against teachers are other themes that would need to be further addressed in the Recommendation. This would include guiding and supporting education leaders in the mitigation of the risk of violence against teachers. In crisis and emergency contexts, in particular, teaching personnel in difficult circumstances should be provided with basic resources, fair compensation, as well as psychosocial support. Security should also be emphasized in schools, since they are often used as shelters.

17. Although the Recommendation refers to health (in terms of social security, medical care, safety, etc.), more prominent attention could be given to mental health encouraging the development of the legislation to facilitate work-life balance. The Recommendation should also promote and protect educators' mental health and encourage a provision of psychosocial support, especially in situations of crisis.

18. The Recommendation would need to reflect the new social contract for teaching as defined by the Futures of Education Report. This would imply featuring the teaching profession as a collaborative endeavor. This would also link with encouraging teacher collaboration through networks of schools, partnerships with universities, professional communities supported by specialized education organizations, study groups, teachers' councils, pedagogical teams, peer mentoring, coaching, etc.

19. Featuring the recognition of alternative pathways into the teaching profession could also be considered. The Recommendation would need to feature teachers in emergency settings more prominently. It is important to ensure that, in crisis and emergency situations, teachers with foreign qualifications enjoy the same rights and privileges as those with national certification.

20. The Recommendation could also consider including additional guidance on the mandatory level of teacher qualification. Moreover, the Education 2030 Agenda has put significant emphasis on lifelong learning perspective that also needs to be reflected in the professional development of teachers and featured in the updated Recommendations.

21. Moreover, the Recommendation could further acknowledge that teachers do not work in a vacuum but rather as part of the 'ecosystem of actors' at school, regional, national, and international levels. It is also key to recognize the expanded role of education support personnel working interdependently with teachers in pedagogical teams. It should be further underlined that the administrative burden faced by teachers should be alleviated and that ancillary staff play a key role in it. Featuring the implications of these aspects in the Recommendation would be important.

22. The Recommendation could also acknowledge the importance of holistic teacher policies at national level.

B. A joint Recommendation between UNESCO and ILO

23. The 1966 Recommendation is a joint international normative instrument, falling under the purview of both UNESCO and ILO. Consequently, its revision process would be more intricate than usual and necessitate close coordination between the two organizations. Moreover, ILO has its own internal structures and mechanisms, making it essential to consult with its representatives. Its structure diverges from that of other UN organizations since it operates based on social dialogue and has a tripartite mandate that includes representatives of Governments, employers and workers.

24. Any decision to revise the 1966 Recommendation would also need to be approved by the ILO's Governing Body.

1997 Recommendation

25. As a result of close collaboration between UNESCO and ILO, the adoption of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation took place at the 29th session of the General Conference of UNESCO, on the 11th of November 1997, through 29 C/Resolution 11. The 1997 Recommendation complements the 1966 Recommendation by applying, according to Art. 2 of the former, "to all higher-education teaching personnel". In addition, according to its Art. 1(f), higher-education teaching personnel are "all those persons in institutions or programmes of higher education who are engaged to teach and/or to undertake scholarship and/or to undertake research and/or to provide educational services to students or to the community at large".

26. It is relevant to highlight the following General Conference resolutions and Executive Board decisions concerning the Recommendation: Document 27 C/41, Document 29 C/12, Document 27 C/Resolution 1.15, Document 146 EX/Decision 5.2.4 (Para. 5) and Document 149 EX/Decision 3.2.2.

A. Improving the relevance and effectiveness of the 1997 Recommendation

27. Multiple elements mentioned above when illustrating ways of improving the relevance and effectiveness of the 1966 Recommendation through its potential revision are also applicable to the 1997 Recommendation. Nonetheless, the following elements apply specifically to the latter.

28. Although the 1997 Recommendation's guiding principles remain valid and relevant, the societal changes outlined above make the revision process necessary. Key issues to reflect during the revision of this Recommendation relate to equity and inclusion. Although it approaches terms and conditions of employment of women, people with disabilities and part-time higher-education teaching personnel, very little reference is made to other historically excluded and marginalized population groups. The Recommendation could feature more prominently the need for higher-education institutions to ensure a proportionate representation of students and communities among the teaching personnel. Moreover, equity and inclusion should also be guaranteed at the entry into the academic profession through the establishment of fair and adequate financial support mechanisms, such as scholarships and grants, targeting students aiming to pursue the career, as well as career advancement and pedagogical training opportunities to attract and retain personnel, particularly in light of growing enrollment and internationalization. In addition, tertiary-education teaching personnel should be prepared to deliver an inclusive, equitable, learner-centered and gender-transformative pedagogy and adapt to non-traditional learning modes, such as online and distance learning. Inadequate academic and research evaluation systems may also contribute

to a lack of equity and poor treatment of higher education teaching personnel and therefore deserves further analysis. Featuring these elements more prominently in the Recommendation should be considered.

29. The 1997 Recommendation does underline the importance of promoting policies and practices for the recognition, validation and accreditation of qualifications from foreign universities by referring to the 1993 UNESCO Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education. However, the latter, together with the "second-generation" regional recognition conventions, inspired the adoption and entry into force of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education. One of the key objectives of this first United Nations treaty of global scope, which also recalls the provisions of the 1997 Recommendation, is to is to "foster globally the optimal use of human and educational resources with a view to promoting education for sustainable development, and contribute to structural, economic, technological, cultural, democratic and social development for all societies." This objective and the provisions of the Convention should be considered during the revision process.

30. In particular, the recognition of diversified and alternative pathways for entry into the academic profession, as well as the promotion of flexible learning modalities, student mobility and cooperation among higher-education institutions, should be further explored. Moreover, the topic of the recognition of qualifications of higher education personnel working under crisis and emergency contexts should be specifically featured in the revised Recommendation, including in cases where documentary evidence is lacking in line with Article VII of the Global Convention. Concerns regarding the rights of the higher education personnel are also essential to consider, including those on academic freedom.

31. It would be important to further promote the idea that different subject domains (i.e., Social Sciences, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – also known as STEM) should benefit from the same level of recognition and appreciation. In addition, measures should be put in place to avoid gender segregation per subject-area.

32. The relevance of the "third mission" of higher-education institutions – that is, wider societal engagement – should be further recognized and enhanced. Universities should invest and capitalize on projects and initiatives embedded in this spirit. Moreover, activities carried out by higher-education teaching personnel fostering universities' "third mission" should be acknowledged in the form of appraisals and renumeration.

Reporting and monitoring mechanisms

33. Neither the 1966 nor the 1997 Recommendations are covered by UNESCO's reporting and monitoring mechanisms on normative instruments. Following the adoption of the 1966 Recommendation, the Executive board of UNESCO and the Governing Body of the ILO established the CEART. Since 1999, the CEART has the mandate to receive allegations made by teachers' organizations regarding the non-respect of the principles enshrined in the 1966 and/or the 1997 Recommendations by Member States, as well as to issue recommendations for their resolution[5]. This Joint ILO-UNESCO Committee is composed of 12 experts, specialized in subjects related to education, teaching and labor.

34. The revision of one or both instruments would necessarily entail a revision of the mandate of the CEART, which could provide an opportunity to strengthen the monitoring of the recommendations. In fact, in its recommendation 53, the HLP affirmed that the application of the revised 1966 and 1997 Recommendations "should be monitored through a strengthened mandate for the Joint ILO-UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel or a similar body" (HLP, 2024).Additional sources for reporting and monitoring could include surveys, reports by Member States, and the Global Report on Teachers recently launched by UNESCO.

35. Should this Joint Committee become the chosen reporting and monitoring mechanism, its visibility and transparency could be further enhanced. The CEART has been criticized for the time taken to examine allegations and provide recommendations, as well as for an excess of bureaucracy. This way, its mandate could also be revised in view of expediting the allegations procedure, while maintaining its integrity.

36. On the other hand, additional reporting and monitoring sources could include surveys, reports by Member States, and the Global Report on Teachers, recently launched by UNESCO.

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[5] Approved by the Governing Body of the ILO at its 276th Session, November 1999, by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 157th Session, October 1999, and by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 30th Session, November 1999.

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