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## NEW AUDITS BY THE EXTERNAL AUDITOR

### SHORT-FORM AUDIT REPORT ON UNESCO'S INTERNAL HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

#### ADDENDUM

#### COMMENTS BY THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

Pursuant to Item 9.2.E.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) submits its comments on the reports by the Director-General.

STU welcomes this report as well as most of the conclusions and recommendations of the External Auditor, which only confirm the serious weaknesses of human resource management procedures that STU has been denouncing for years.

#### Performance evaluations

STU approves the appreciation of MyTalent by the External Auditor: this system is not user-friendly and could be greatly improved. The staff is overworked and has little time to complete the self-evaluations and objectives with such an unfriendly online tool. MyTalent should be a practical tool aiming at facilitating the evaluation and the feedback on it for both managers and staff members. It should also be mentioned that the decreasing number of performance evaluations can also be related to the non-submission of individual goal plans by managers.

The audit reveals that there is a low level of unsatisfactory evaluations (item 9) and makes the assumption that a larger number of staff should actually be in this category. The basis for this assumption is however not provided. Such assumptions have a demotivating effect on staff as they **question their professionalism and the results they have achieved**, and should be avoided when not backed with evidence.

STU welcomes the recommendations of the External Auditor on the audit on performance. However, for performance management processes to be objective and credible they need to be aligned with proper training on how to set objectives and on how to manage performance as stipulated in the managerial competencies identified in the Competency Framework. The 360-degrees evaluation is



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a current practice across the United Nations and should be adopted by UNESCO in order to increase transparency and accountability.

Since the redeployment, the learning and development unit has been reduced from nine fixed-term staff to three, with only one GS staff dedicated to performance management. In Annex II Part VI of item 21, the preliminary implementation recommendation plan says that in order for all 11 recommendations to be implemented, there is a need for a full-time P staff responsible for Performance management and a temporary staff to develop e-learning modules on performance. STU fully supports this recommendation.

STU advocates:

- Effective performance management linked to career development & opportunities;
- Objective and transparent performance appraisal at 360 degrees;
- Training for managers and human resources officers;

## Recruitment

This report confirms that **the internal recruitment procedure** discontinued in 2015 was never the cause of recruitment delays and that it **was unfairly suppressed for the wrong reasons**.

STU thinks that, based on the conclusions of the External Auditor, **the internal recruitment procedure should be reinstated**. Recommendations 15, 19 and 20 go also in the right direction and we can only encourage the Administration to implement them efficiently.

STU is in favour of improvements on recruitment processes so that they become more efficient in attracting the best talents while decreasing the length of time to fill vacancies. However, when seeking improved efficiency, processes should always remain fair and impartial and existing rules should be respected, as well as the need to provide career advancement opportunities to internal staff. Once more, STU demands an **evaluation of the current external recruitment procedures, which was only put in place on a pilot basis**.

It should be mentioned that human resource planning by Sectors and HRM is completely absent from the current recruitment policy, which only involves HRM only in the pre-selection stage. STU thinks that **HRM should be involved at all stages of the recruitment process**: from the pre-selection phase to the nomination. STU is aware that HRM is understaffed; it is, however, **one of HRM's core responsibilities to which it needs to abide**. Staff associations should also be involved in the procedure as observers, as it was the case in the past, to ensure a critical monitoring of the process. **In the current procedure, staff unions have been totally excluded from the recruitment process**.

For example, STU wishes that a coherent approach to field nominations be adopted, notably for Director's positions. Indeed, there are numerous complaints as to the mismatch between a field office Director's profile and the actual requirements of the position in the field. Field office Directors profiles are complex and their recruitment and appointment shall entail a more strict procedure given their level of exposure, responsibility and accountability. Their performance will affect rightfully or wrongly the Organization's credibility.

The STU believes that **the current policy needs to be evaluated and adjusted, in consultation with the staff associations**, in order to follow the recommendations of the External Auditor.

## Post reclassification

STU is cautious about recommendations 21 and 22. The high level of reclassifications requested these past years, and the number of cases lost by the Organization in Appeals (in 2017 only,

UNESCO was condemned three times by the ILOAT for refusal of reclassifications) reflect the house-wide need to adjust job descriptions to **real** levels of responsibility and structural changes. Failing to provide staff with a channel to request a review of the classification level of a post, on his or her own initiative, would certainly be a step backwards. The modalities of post reclassification involving competition should be carefully reviewed with staff associations in order to ensure respect for acquired staff rights.

Paragraph 27 states that between January 2014 and January 2018 all reclassified occupied posts were upgraded. This is simply **not true**. At UIS for example, three occupied posts were reclassified at lower levels (1 P-4 post became P-3, 1 P-3 post became P-2 and 1 P-2 post became G-7). Not all the affected staff were informed and some learned of the changes when a revised organigram was disseminated to all staff. At the same time, a staff member has been upgraded without any official communication to the rest of the staff.

In fact since the “Reform”, with its redeployment exercise and the consequent loss of workforce, the majority of staff have taken on new responsibilities, while their job descriptions (JD) are still reflecting a decade-old reality. Only a few have received revised JDs. This situation has also a direct impact on the staff evaluation as mentioned in the audit report, as supervisors often use outdated JDs to formulate current objectives for their staff.

After having revoked the internal recruitment procedure, and taking into account the lack of a real/concrete human resource strategy in the Organization, **post reclassification is the only available channel in the Organization to review the level of responsibility of a post and to adjust it to reflect reality. Post reclassification requests should therefore be treated as an acquired right of the staff.**

**STU refuses to accept anything other than equal and fair treatment for staff, who has the right to equal pay for equal level of responsibilities.**