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FOLLOW-UP TO THE INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNESCO (IEE), THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ROADMAP AND THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

PART III

ADDENDUM 2

COMMENTS BY THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

Pursuant to Item 9.2 of the UNESCO Administrative Manual, the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) submits its comments on this report by the Director-General.

1. STU is surprised to note that no specific information has been provided concerning the way in which each of the roadmap targets is being dealt with. The roadmap's ambiguous nature was moreover pointed out in the report by the External Auditor (section 4.4 of document 191 EX/28, Part II). Table 1 in paragraph 9 of document 192 EX/4 Part III, "Overview of the roadmap targets as at end June 2013", indicates only the progress made on each target ("achieved", "on track" and "proposed for completion"). Thus, the lack of information in no way allows the Executive Board to gauge, in particular, the actual impact of the targets in terms of programme delivery capacity or even budget savings.

2. Concerning **Target 4**, which deals with the **field reform in Africa**, although STU may not under its terms of reference comment on decisions concerning the structure and policy directions, this reform directly affects members of staff, including those already in field posts and those who will redeployed under this reform. STU supports the concept of mobility but remains concerned at the lack of information on various points such as the composition of the staff in the multisectoral regional offices, the criteria used to assign staff, and the future of the international and local staff in offices that are being or will be closed. On the latter point, STU reiterates its call for agreements to be negotiated, as far as possible, with other United Nations agencies in the field in order to accommodate local staff affected by office closures and for discussions with the Member State concerned in order to provide for the redeployment of the remaining staff. STU will keep a watchful eye on the award of compensation in accordance with United Nations system conventions.

3. As to **Target 10** on **a better balance between posts in programmes and in administration**, following the Director-General's decision to freeze 100% of vacant posts (not

necessarily applied to posts deemed “mission critical”), STU wonders whether action under this head is being taken clearly and transparently in the sectors and services with a view to maintaining a high level of competence.

4. Concerning **Target 11** (voluntary separation schemes), STU reiterates its call for the savings made to be clearly evaluated and taken into account in the revision downwards of the number of posts that might be abolished. The External Auditor’s audit report stated that **“the lack of certainty as to follow-up action on voluntary separations reflects a lack of focus in the strategic management of the scheme”** and “decisions to abolish or maintain posts are taken on a case-by-case basis” (paragraph 72, document 191 EX/28, Part II). Furthermore, STU will ensure that after the voluntary separations, the tasks of staff who have left the Organization are not redistributed in such a way as to generate overwork for staff at the same or a lower grade with no compensation at all (no special post allowance or reclassification), with moreover all the risks to programme delivery of working under constant pressure.

5. As to **Target 12**, STU is concerned about the falling staff numbers in the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) now that the management of the Organization’s human resources is crucial. In relation with the process of grouping together Administrative Officer (AO) and Executive Officer (EO) units and reducing posts in those units, several of their staff members who have knowledge and experience of human resources should be transferred to HRM to increase its support base. Moreover, STU reiterates its longstanding demand that **all staff management functions be recentralized from the sectors and services to HRM as the only means guaranteeing effective human resources management compliant with Staff Regulations and Staff Rules** and of having a **single human resources policy**.

6. As to the reform and cost-cutting measures in the Bureau of Financial Management (BFM), it is essential that they be carried out transparently in terms of its staff and conducted in a global framework that takes account of functioning between services so as to avoid the arbitrary abolition of posts.

7. In regard to **Target 13** on the **reduction by 10% of the number of posts in the Executive Office (EO), Administrative Office (AO) and secretarial services**, STU emphasizes in particular transparency and clarity in the process of restructuring these units and services in an overall approach involving genuine consultation among all those involved (including directors and programme specialists) in the organizational processes. This is not, however, the case today in the exercise under way, even though the restructuring was supposed to integrate in full all those involved in programme delivery in the Organization, and to be carried out on the basis of an in-depth and detailed study of all processes while taking into consideration past and future restructuring. This would prevent the arbitrary abolition of posts with disastrous consequences for colleagues, their careers and programme delivery. The External Auditor’s audit report stated moreover that **“the impact on the Organization’s regular budget, advanced as a postulate by the Secretariat, remains to be proven”** (paragraph 49 of document 191 EX/28, Part II).

8. Furthermore, the pooling of administrative tasks in particular for programme sector AO units must not be to the detriment of the quality of the work and expertise provided by these units, on the basis of mere bean-counting that results in false economies. The role of programme sector AOs may not be confined to the performance of interchangeable roles. As STU already stressed at the 190th session of the Executive Board, that would amount to losses on all counts, namely experience, expertise and advice to programme specialists, quality of work and enhanced skills. Accordingly, STU reiterates its position as to the vigilance needed regarding the overhaul of these units, which cannot be done in the same way as for central services’ AO units (an overhaul which is itself already in chaos, and without any genuine overview and transparency in relation to other service restructuring) since management of a programme sector’s activities implies familiarity with the programme, projects and activities and providing advice and support to programme specialists regardless of the level of function and certification.

9. In regard to **Target 15** on **the more efficient use of available office space**, STU wonders about (i) its feasibility in regard to its effects on the staff's working conditions (the staff of two sectors–the Natural Sciences Sector and the Social and Human Sciences Sector–are cut off from the remainder of the Organization, as are the permanent delegations) and (ii) the reality of the savings made. A **budget of €1.2 million has been allocated in the form of an advance from the Headquarters Utilization Fund** (HQF) to carry out refurbishment and removal operations when there is no guarantee that the buildings might be rented out and thus that the funds advanced will be reimbursed. No figure has been provided to the Executive Board concerning the savings an operation of this kind should generate, in particular by the rental of the freed space. To date, the premises are still empty and the disastrous consequence of this is that their condition is deteriorating. Are there indications regarding the possible rental of these spaces?

10. In addition, no report on the impact on use of the Miollis cafeteria and bar has been communicated.

11. As to **Target 17**, STU is particularly concerned about the future results of the **Administrative Reform Initiative for "Transforming Administration and Strengthening Client Orientation" (TASCO),** as STU once more deplores the fact that the proposals were formulated without consulting the staff concerned, from the bottom up, and that, inevitably, as all alternatives and ideas have not been explored, unforeseen additional costs will be incurred when the purpose of the exercise was to make savings. STU wonders how administrative processes can be reformed without questioning the daily users of those processes. Although the aim is to create synergies, STU stresses that to do so, all stakeholders must be included, otherwise there can be no synergy. Moreover, the External Auditor's audit report stated that **"the breadth of [TASCO's] remit raises some questions, especially as no details could be obtained about its actual organization and operation (which were not specified in the aforementioned Ivory Note)" [DG/Note/12/9]** (paragraph 55 of document 191 EX/28, Part II). It is also noted that "the group works on the fringes of the competencies of the Senior Management Team (SMT), which has been mandated to follow up the IEE recommendations contained in the roadmap. However, nothing can be absolutely sure in this highly implicit matter, since the SMT itself does not work to any specifications or (even informal) operational rules" (paragraph 56 of document 191 EX/28, Part II).