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Item 25 of the provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS OF THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

SUMMARY

In accordance with item 2805.7 of the UNESCO Administrative Manual, the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) submits its observations on the report by the Director-General.

1. Noting that UNESCO has had numerous human resources policies and strategies over the years, none of which have been consistently and transparently **implemented**, and recalling the following extract from the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit review of UNESCO's administration in 2000 for the last General Conference (35 C/26, Part I Add., 1 October 2009):

"The Organization has well-established staff regulations and rules for the management of human resources [...]. Significant deviations have occurred in recent years in the implementation of existing regulations and rules. [...] Only through a determined effort to respect the Organization's policies, regulations and rules fully will the administration regain the confidence of the Member States and the staff." (page v),

2. STU requests that these rules and regulations be respected fully at all levels, that their interpretation be harmonized within the Organization and not be left solely to the discretion of each sector or field office (see STU Info – STU/3eBE/10/041 and STU/3eBE/10/046 "Recruitment and career development at UNESCO – STU denounces the shortcomings and requests concrete measures").

3. The Executive Board has before it an External Auditor's report that lays out and confirms the lack of respect for existing rules and procedures for recruitment and end of service (186 EX/30 Part IV) and a specific report on the case of the Division of Basic Education (186 EX/30 Part III). At its 185th session the Board analysed the report on a division in the Science Sector. It has had several reports on field offices, the latest being the Jakarta Office (186 EX/30 Part II). The current report analyses the critical vacuum in which decisions are taken concerning the recruitment and

extension of service of senior management in particular. JIU has repeatedly tabled comparative and objective reports on these critical issues, which remain unaddressed by our governing bodies. The External Auditor states: “The independence of finance and administrative officers is nevertheless a key factor of the Organization’s internal financial control [...]. It would be compromised by a reporting line to sectors’ executive offices [...]. The situation of AOs in the field is often critical and the vacancy rate gives cause for concern. (In February 2011, 19 posts vacant).” *186 EX/29, page 6 English version.*

4. STU is also particularly concerned by the lack of serious attention paid to the role of the international civil service and UNESCO’s personnel conveyed in the independent external evaluation and also in document 186 EX/17 (follow-up by the Secretariat and Executive Board Working Group on the IEE). According to the Standards of conduct for International Civil Service, the concept of integrity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations embraces all aspects of behavior of an international civil servant, including such qualities as honesty, truthfulness, impartiality and incorruptibility. These qualities are as basic as those of competence and efficiency, also enshrined in the Charter. (cf. point 5. Standards of conduct for the International Civil Service of 2002 <http://icsc.un.org/resources/pdfs/general/standardse.pdf>) However, by putting the accent on mobility and flexibility as if they alone were sufficient for UNESCO in the 10 years ahead, the IEE and the Administration’s response omit this reference to core values of UNESCO’s personnel.

STU calls for increased partnership with the staff associations

5. STU is ready to assist the Director-General in restoring the core qualities that we all stand for: an international civil service bound by the highest standards of integrity, political and commercial neutrality and professionalism at all levels of our Organization. This will require a recentralization of authority and the firmest commitment by senior management to respect those standards. It will also require a reformed and independent internal justice system for all personnel and a rigorous ethics function.

6. STU considers that these core concerns remain the most urgent reforms for the Director-General to address. It will not be possible to “reposition” or “meet future challenges” based primarily on further visibility and public relations or increased extrabudgetary funding and flexible contracting. Modesty in our role will help enhance our credibility as a professional body at the service of all our Member States.

Ensuring more effective recruitment

7. Recruitment should not be geared solely to the supervisor’s perception of his or her service, but also be consistent with the global personnel strategy, as part of the Organization’s strategy. A professional recruiter or external recruiters under contract could support such a process objectively, and should be hired by UNESCO. On several occasions, STU has drawn the attention of the Administration to the denial of skills (STU Info – STU/4eBE/11/028 “Recruitment and career development at UNESCO, denial of skills within the Education Sector” practised by some sectors, and the virtually systematic use of external recruitment.

Promoting improved talent management, capacity-building and staff development

8. Training policy needs to be reviewed for certain professions (programme assistants, programme specialists, administrative officers (AOs), etc.) in order to encourage operational mobility and personal development. Consideration should be given to the development of an information network, a system of intersectoral exchange, and training which is better suited to the nature and professional requirements of particular post.

9. STU has been urging for many years, in accordance with practice in the United Nations, that an aptitude test be introduced with a view to upgrading the skills and abilities of General Service staff so that they may qualify and be eligible for Professional posts (pursuant to recommendation 9

of the External Auditor). “UNESCO should strengthen the link between training and promotion. To that end, the Organization could periodically validate professional experience, thus enabling internal candidates (in particular those in the General Service category) to compensate for the lack of a diploma by their professional experience when they apply for a post” and “the Bureau of Human Resources Management will undertake a study to determine the appropriate procedures for enhancing the links between promotion and training, taking into account the recommendation of the External Auditor” (182 EX/48, page 12).

10. The annual report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2010 recalls the key principles of an effective management system:

“For an organization’s performance management system to be viable, the following organizational requirements must first be in place:

- (a) a performance management culture;
- (b) a system of good governance;
- (c) useful, reliable data, backed up by appropriate technology;
- (d) effective processes;
- (e) a capable workforce;
- (f) identification of the roles and responsibilities of executive management, line managers, the staff member and other key players;
- (g) an understanding that the measurement of a staff member’s performance in isolation is not an effective means of improving poor performance or rewarding high performance, but can only be addressed through good quality management and;
- (h) investment in developing and promoting a culture of appreciation and engaging in everyday practices that encourage staff members to recognize their colleagues for outstanding work or behaviour.”

11. With a view to ensuring fairer and more impartial staff performance evaluation, STU would like to see the rapid introduction of 360° evaluation. Under the current system, no provision is made for the evaluation of supervisors by their staff. This type of information would nevertheless be very useful in order to improve supervisors’ performance and provide them with a better overall overview of their management duties (STU Info – STU/64eC/11/002 “Performance evaluation”).

Ensuring more valuable staff mobility throughout the Organization and at Headquarters

12. STU, like the United Nations Headquarters staff and oversight services, has denounced the notion of “mobility for mobility’s sake” in our addendums on decentralization policies. A major obstacle to functional mobility within the Organization is the fact that staff costs are included in the budgets of individual sectors since the management of the posts established in the C/5 document has been decentralized to the sectors. Even if a post is vacant, its budget is allocated to the corresponding sector. And given that staff management has been decentralized to the sectors, the sectors consider posts to be a kind of capital that cannot be shared with others. As a result, UNESCO is divided into bastions which do not cooperate sufficiently. This is inconsistent with a policy of mobility throughout the Organization and, in particular, at Headquarters. STU reiterates its wish that staff management be recentralized to the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) in order to increase intersectoral staff mobility.

Partnerships and the deprofessionalization of UNESCO: the end of the “honest broker” myth for UNESCO staff?

13. STU is worried by the increasing reference to “partnerships” with the corporate sector which are gravely unregulated at United Nations-wide level. STU wishes to draw the Board’s attention to the 2010 JIU *Report on the Global Compact. Its Role and Functioning*, in which the authors sound the alarm in great detail concerning “bluewashing” and its inherent risks. We note that the proposed human resources strategy as well as the Director-General’s plans for the implementation of the Independent External Evaluation include the use of private sector/corporate or foundation personnel within the Organization. There is no precedent for this evident conflict-of-interest proposal. And since UNESCO still has no obligatory financial and conflict of interest disclosure programme, which should have been in place since 2006 (either in a totally independent ethics function or with an independent external body), STU considers that we are heading for an even less accountable and transparent future. Indeed, the very concept of “conflict of interest” will have no place in the UNESCO Secretariat.

14. STU is deeply concerned that the proliferation of consultants and consultant companies, donor-driven activities and commercial partnerships are further weakening UNESCO’s previous role as an “honest broker” among conflicting or self-interested political or commercial agendas. This becomes more serious as the senior management are presenting their own “reform” and “human resource strategies” as follow-up to the IEE evaluation, and indeed as follow-up to the working group of the Executive Board’s recommendations (186 EX/17).

Ensuring more effective management within one UNESCO

15. We propose that the feasibility be studied of drawing up the Organization’s budget with a separate staff costs budget, the management of which would be entrusted to HRM with a view to strengthening its integrated human resources management strategy, as has always been urged by STU. Staff would benefit from no longer being identified with an established post within a sector, but rather with functions that would vary in accordance with staff priorities and the Organization’s requirements.

16. STU agrees that “a house divided against itself cannot stand”. However, we consider that a structural engineer and architect need to working together to rebuild UNESCO with reinforced concrete. The following need serious attention: (a) a rigorous ethics function and internal justice system for all staff; (b) leadership by example from the top to withstand political, financial or conflict-of-interest agendas; (c) a recommitment to the transparent, objective and professional standards at all levels of the Organization. We will then fulfil the unique role in education, science and culture with which UNESCO was mandated some 60 years ago, and still be relevant to all our Member States in an equal, neutral and effective manner.