

PARIS, 6 October 2010
Original: English

Item 29 of the provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE REFORM OF THE FIELD NETWORK

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS OF THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

SUMMARY

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

Comments of the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) on document 185 EX/29: **Report by the Director-General on the reform of the Field network.**

Restructuring does not constitute reform. Restructuring the architecture of UNESCO's field offices cannot precede agreement on refocusing the Organization's programmes in education, science and culture. This must go hand in hand with leadership and governance commitment to ensure that the most seasoned and qualified personnel are enabled to carry out all core functions both at Headquarters and in field offices. We thus find the third option for reconfiguring field offices as unrealistic as the previous ones presented to the Executive Board at its 182nd session (also criticized by our Member States). It would not be prudent to engage further funds in any of the scenarios.

There has long been widespread agreement – as demonstrated by Member States, external and internal evaluations, External Auditor reports, the current IOS-commissioned independent external evaluation of UNESCO and years of staff experience – that our credibility has declined as a professional body, and that we lack rigorous management of human and financial resources, particularly at field level. This is not to say that valiant and committed staff members are not doing their utmost. But the response to our current state cannot be cosmetic.

We cannot expect to expand partnerships, extrabudgetary funding, political and commercial connections with individuals, companies or the heterogeneous world of civil society until we have cleaned our own house. The Organization has had great difficulty managing self-benefiting funds (Brazil Office), conflict and post-conflict extrabudgetary funding (Iraq: both "Oil for Food" and

current programming), and new post-disaster initiatives (Haiti and Pakistan), among others. The incoherence of contracting arrangements and monitoring has made matters worse.

Real reform will depend on effective oversight and management regardless of organizational structures. This does *not* mean layers of bureaucracy, but rather leadership by example at the highest management levels of UNESCO. Neither can we build our credibility in a sound manner with “mobile”, “flexible” personnel and contracting. Indeed, strong criticism has already been expressed at United Nations Headquarters of the concept of “mobility for mobility’s sake”. And all of our experience has taught us that our Member States want the highest level of professional expertise if they are seeking policy or technical services. They do not call for expatriate consultants or personnel who are young, inexperienced or with general qualifications.

The STU, along with all the other United Nations staff associations, stands for the reinforcement of an international civil service based on the highest standards of integrity, political and financial neutrality and professionalism. The location of field offices needs to follow clear agreement on purpose and the means necessary to carry out that purpose effectively. While many of the considerations in paragraphs 18 to 32 of the document are clearly relevant when taken as a statement of intention, they are unlikely to go beyond intention until we rebuild sound foundations for decision-making.