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FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THEIR PREVIOUS SESSIONS

PART IV

HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

Implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy 2017-2022

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS BY THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

SUMMARY

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.



Implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022 (Follow-up to 39 C/Resolution 76)

The UNESCO Staff Union (STU) welcomes the stated willingness to attract, retain and develop talent but can only note that, in the absence of career development, an increasing number of the youngest staff are leaving the Organization. The current working environment, which staff deem unsatisfactory according to the survey conducted by the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) in 2018, gives them little incentive to stay. It is therefore high time to improve it.

Recruitment

The STU is eagerly awaiting the outcome of the evaluation of the new recruitment process, which has been piloted and has led to many external recruitments, to the detriment of staff members who did have the necessary skills. The STU has renewed its request for the **restoration of internal recruitment, taking into account the UNESCO staff members who do not hold a fixed-term contract**, who always make up half of the Organization's workforce, before any potential external publication if necessary.

The increase in requests for post reclassification adds to calls for the restoration of internal recruitment. **After having revoked the internal recruitment process, 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 the reality.** Post reclassification requests should therefore be treated as an **acquired right** of the staff. In this respect, the suspension of post reclassification requests, as announced in a memo from the Deputy Director-General on 6 August 2018 (HRM/DIR/2018/52), is **unacceptable**. The STU, which was not consulted prior to the issuance of the directive, contrary to what was indicated, cannot accept anything less than **fair and equitable treatment of staff**, who have the right to a salary that reflects their level of responsibilities. It should moreover be noted that UNESCO has been repeatedly condemned by the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) in cases where post reclassifications were rejected, and that with this directive it faces additional condemnation.

Furthermore, since the establishment of the *Appointment Review Boards* (ARBs), staff associations have been completely excluded from the recruitment process, which has thus lost all transparency. Members of ARBs appointed by staff associations are prohibited from consulting them in cases of irregularities. There is now nobody to ensure that staff members' rights are respected during the recruitment process or that the rules governing the process are strictly adhered to. This is a major violation of Item 9.2., paragraph 5, of the UNESCO HR Manual, under which: ***“Representative associations are consulted on the establishment of joint committees and working groups dealing with the terms of employment and working conditions of the staff, and participate in their work.”***

The STU has brought this to the attention of the Director-General, who rejected its request on the basis that “the staff member concerned can always call on the staff associations, **once the process is completed**”. However, we all know that, once the decision on the appointment has been taken, any further action is futile. The STU does not intend to stop there.

Mobility

The STU welcomes the Administration's willingness to establish, finally, a genuine policy on mobility. Nevertheless, the proposed draft could still be improved, especially in the light of both current circumstances and UNESCO's strategic transformation.

In addition to the competencies required for a post subject to mobility, such a post should also have **a list of clear and established criteria associated with it. This list should be provided and overseen by the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM)** and should be attached to

the policy in order to guide the mobility review. The matter of mobility history (including classification of duty stations, number and duration of assignments, and the like) is an important consideration which should guide sector Assistant Directors-General (ADGs) and bureaux and institute directors when determining which profiles should be given priority. This cannot be left to the sole discretion of the field offices and sectors. **HRM must both steer and be the driving force behind** the undertaking, thereby ensuring transparency and rigour, especially given that since resources are limited, the number of posts subject to mobility will also be limited.

Moreover, at present, an assignment grant is terminated after five years if the staff member concerned does not change his or her duty station. Thus, although it is the Organization which, by not facilitating a change of post, is at fault in such a situation, it is instead the staff member who is penalized with a pay cut. In such a case, payment of the grant should be extended until the Organization is able to propose a new duty station to the staff member. The assignment grant serves, after all, as an incentive to rotation.

Finally, it is important to consider fellow staff members who have been working at the same level for 10 or even 15 years. It is high time to find a way to transition to other policies, such as merit-based promotion, for example.

Learning and development

The STU welcomes the Administration's willingness to offer staff upgrading training which broadens opportunities for career advancement.

However, the phrase "in order to implement the action plan, the Organization needs to **secure sustained funding**" raises concerns. What solutions does the Administration propose in this regard?

Performance management

The matter of performance management is closely linked to the previous subject. In order to be objective and credible, performance management processes must be coupled with proper training courses which make it possible to establish objectives and manage performance in accordance with the managerial skills defined in the UNESCO Competency Framework.

Although the STU is currently waiting to be consulted on the revision of performance-management policy and procedures, it already advocates the following:

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

Internal justice system

Troubled by the length of the internal justice process and by the consequent multiple condemnations which the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) has handed down against UNESCO, the STU welcomes the upcoming review of the system and looks forward to the establishment of a **justice system which is finally equitable**. We will very soon submit to the Administration our comments on the revision of the Appeals Board Statutes; we will be emphasizing the **need to minimize delays** through the prohibition of any extension requests so that proceedings will take no longer than one year.

Fixed-term contracts and “non-staff” contracts

The STU notes with interest that according to Annex I of the document discussed herein, the length of fixed-term contracts was to be reviewed “by 2018” and that “non-staff” contracts should be reviewed by 2019.

These points are not addressed in the core document. Can the Administration provide information on the progress made in these matters?

Systematic review of the Staff Rules

The same Annex I mentions such a review, but does not provide any details. The STU wishes to inform the Administration that it is prepared to cooperate on the project, but will be extremely vigilant with regard to the defence of staff rights.