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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

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

PART V

HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS BY THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

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

A. Geographical distribution and gender balance of the staff of the Secretariat

Part I – Geographical distribution of the staff

The STU notes with regret that there is an increase of non-represented Member States and urges the Director-General to increase the global geographical representation within the Organization. The relaunch of the Young Professionals Programme in 2015 is a good step in this direction. However, the STU believes that the calls for applications for the Young Professionals Programme should be disseminated beyond National Commissions and diplomacy circles, in order to reach specialized communities and the best experts in every field.

Part II – Gender balance of staff

The STU is satisfied with the overall increase of gender balance but notes with regret that the percentage of female directors (36%) and professionals at the highest grade (P/5 = 35%) is still low.

Following the high rate of retirement (28%) at the Director level in the next two and a half years, the STU hopes that the Administration will seize the opportunity to remedy this imbalance at the Director level. The STU also hopes that during the recruitment of the current and future vacancies women will be given due priority at equal competence.

B. Report by the Director-General on the use of consultant contracts in 2014 and the implementation of the revised policy on individual consultants and other specialists

The STU regrets that the use of external consultants continues to grow, most particularly in Headquarters.

A 22% increase in the overall spending on consultant contracts is not coherent with the past and ongoing exercises of cuts in programme and staff and those of downgrading. It clearly indicates that the Organization does not have sufficient resources to implement its core mandate with its permanent resources and raises concerns about sufficient in-house expertise.

The total spending on consultant contracts financed by the Regular Programme between 2013 and 2014 rose by 73%!

The STU notes the decreasing figure provided by the Administration on the number of retired staff members awarded a consultant contract. However, in order to have a holistic view on this issue, the STU believes that the report should also include statistics on other non-staff contracts (e.g. service contracts, short term contracts, etc.), where there is also a significant proportion of retired staff.

The STU can only repeat that the abuse of non-staff contracts over a long term configures a violation of the international character and, consequently, of the independence of the international civil service.

Therefore, the STU requests the adoption of measures aimed at rectifying this alarming *status quo* and take back the international civil service to its core nature, to better serve our mandate and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The STU also requests that an audit be conducted by HRM without any further delay on the current use of non-staff contracts, in the Headquarters and the field, with the objective to identify those contracted assignments that cover the core functions of the Organization and take immediate measures to find a permanent long-term solution.

C. Report by the Director-General on the human resources management strategy for 2011-2016 – Priority issues and related action plan

Learning and development

The STU agrees that there is an urgent need to allocate funding for training programmes.

Although a request to finance a set of training programmes has been submitted to the preparatory group of the Executive Board in document 197 EX/5.INF.2 “Invest for Efficient Delivery”, it cannot replace a stable corporate training budget financed by the regular programme.

Therefore the STU regrets that zero US \$ is allocated for training in the \$518 million expenditure plan scenario for the next biennium.

The STU further deplores that promises made during the redeployment exercise in 2014, according to which redeployed staff would be duly trained on their newly-assigned functions, have not been kept.

Human resources planning

The STU remains deeply concerned about the lack of human resource planning in the Organization, which is crystallized by the fact that the Human Resource Management strategy is still at the development stage. The STU urges the Director-General to develop a real human resources management policy for UNESCO, with clear goals and mechanisms, in which all levels

of hierarchy become accountable for their responsibilities in human resources management, including knowledge and skills development, career development planning and transparent mobility and recruitment processes.

The recent Voluntary Mutual Separation Package has only confirmed this total lack of vision for human resources management in the Organization. In addition to the lack of any reasonable criteria for the motivation of departures, the exercise has been launched ahead of the foreseen HR planning exercise in 2016.

Most of the posts left vacant have already been advertised at the same level without any further strategic planning.

From a pure financial perspective, recruiting staff at step 1 of the same post grade will only generate insignificant savings after several biennia and may not generate any savings at all if the post is filled by internal recruitment.

From an intellectual perspective, the Organization is witnessing a loss of institutional memory as well as suffering from a severe “brain drain”.

If the objective of the Administration was to rejuvenate staff, this might have been achieved more efficiently through other means: e.g. a higher intake of Young Professionals in the current ongoing exercise would have contributed both to rejuvenating staff and improving the geographical distribution.

In addition to the above, the posts left vacant through the exercise are not likely to be filled by professionals any younger than those, most of them in their 40s, who left the Organization.

Annex III – Action Plan – UNESCO HR Strategy for 2011-2016 (Progress Report)

Recruitment process

The STU is surprised to see in “Annex III – Progress Report on UNESCO HR Strategy for 2011-2016” that “an efficient, rapid, cost-effective and transparent recruitment process” has already been implemented. The key performance indicator for this is the “average % of candidates screened in/out”. STU believes that this indicator cannot measure in any way the efficiency, rapidity, cost-effectiveness and transparency of UNESCO’s recruitment process.

Furthermore, the recruitment procedures should be revised in order to ensure equity, fairness and transparency at every step of the recruitment process. HRM should have dedicated and competent staff involved at all stages of recruitment (composition of the selection panels, etc.,) in order to avoid biased procedures which leads systematically to staff demoralization/demotivation.

Mobility policy

According to Item 5 of Annex III, an “Enhanced mobility (geographical, functional, and intersectoral)” has also been implemented and this since 2012! STU would like to recall that to this date no mobility mechanism whatsoever has been set up and that the majority of dispositions of the October 2013 Mobility Policy have remained unapplied. Transfers at equal grade between field offices or from Headquarters to field offices and vice versa are left to the discretion of sectors and field directors, and are decided on a case-by-case basis with completely opaque criteria.

Based on the above, the STU proposes that the following could be added to the decision to be adopted:

The proposed decision B.5 might then read as follows:

The Executive Board:

5. *Invites the Director-General to report to it at its 200th session on the use of consultants and other non-staff contracts and the implementation of the revised policy on individual consultants and other specialists*

And

Invites the Director-General to develop a human resources management policy for UNESCO including knowledge and skills development, career development planning and transparent mobility and recruitment processes.