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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

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS BY THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

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.



A. Use of consultant and other specialists' contracts in 2015

First, STU would like to express its deep concern about the **abuse of non-staff contracts over the long term**, many of them for performing core functions of the Organization.

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.).

The STU regrets that the use of external consultants continues to grow.

A 21% increase in the overall spending on consultant contracts between 2014 and 2015 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.

35% of these consultant contracts are financed on the regular programme budget, at the expense of the implementation of the programme. Indeed, the total spending on consultant contracts financed by the **Regular Programme** between 2014 and 2015 rose by **74%**, with a **91% increase in the Field!**

Loss of institutional memory is increased by the excessive and growing number of staff under precarious contracts, both at Headquarters and in the field. This will mean incurring irreparable losses in terms of continuity of service and competency of the Organization.

What is particularly alarming is that a significant part of non-staff perform functions that are part of the core mandate, priorities and regular programmes of our Organization, and that effective controls to avoid such a misuse of these temporary contracts have not been built by HRM, despite the numerous and repetitive demands of the staff associations.

This situation has to be halted, for several reasons including, *inter alia*:

- *Ethical reasons.* The existence of different categories of staff performing the same functions creates an unacceptable **discrimination**, contravening even fundamental labour rights and standards to fair remuneration, social security and other rights such as those to sick and annual leave. It also creates a permanent situation of instability that affects the staff morale and the organizational performance alike.
- *Mismanagement of human resources for personal reasons.* Furthermore, while the stated and reasonable objective of hiring temporary staff is to cover a need that for reasons of regular staff shortage or non-expertise is not available, in practice there are very numerous cases of managers hiring non-staff to perform regular **core functions**, even when the regular staff in charge of them are present and available and have the expertise, but for reasons related to personal relations or discrimination are sidelined and put to work on other matters outside of their post description or even completely marginalized. This has the double negative effect of having non-staff performing regular tasks and not being adequately compensated (as described above) and also of discriminating and destroying the morale and expertise of the regular staff marginalized from their duties.
- *Constitutional and governance.* The abusive use of non-staff contracts configures a **violation** of the international character and, consequently, of the **independence of the international civil service**. Non-staff colleagues do not enjoy the same rights and immunities established for the regular staff, whose purpose is to safeguard independence and loyalty to the organizations. Moreover, recruiting staff on these contracts does not meet the rules on geographical distribution and, *de facto*, favours local staff to the detriment of staff from countries with little or no representation.

- *Functional reasons.* The abuse of non-staff has a **destructive impact** on human resources management at all levels, since those colleagues are at a disadvantage for career, job security, and mobility, to cite just a few examples.
- *Financial reasons.* The abuse of non-staff gives Member States a false representation of the financial appropriations required to manage the human resources of the organizations, paving the way for **cheap labour**.
- *Legal reasons.* We are convinced that solid grounds exist for legal recourse, due to blatant and regular circumvention of the relevant rules and regulations, which should be more thoroughly appraised.

Moreover, as a consequence of the lack of staff resources, programme specialists spend most of their time looking for funds for temporary contractors who can implement the programme rather than implementing it themselves.

We believe that the break-even point for adoption of immediate measures to stop this malpractice has come. Therefore, we respectfully request the adoption of measures aimed at rectifying this alarming *status quo* and return the international civil service to its core function, 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**.

STU supports in this regard the recommendation of the External Auditor, demanding “that the Organization standardize the general review of service contract personnel in order to (i) ensure that the use of this type of contract is in conformity with the Organization’s administrative rules and reserved for the temporary situations for which it was designed”.

In the meantime, we shall make our best efforts to ensure that our colleagues defined as “non-staff” are granted access to the fundamental rights of association through the current representational structure.

In addition to the **abuse of non-staff contracts over a long term**, there exist abuses in the internship programme as well. The STU also believes that interns should be remunerated fairly, as is the case in many United Nations agencies, and that their tasks be clearly defined. Indeed, many of them regrettably carry out core functions, replacing staff members who are on leave, or assist an understaffed team.

Finally, if the number of staff reduces and the number of temporary contractors increases, who will contribute to the Pension Fund in the future?

B. Human resources management strategy

The STU remains deeply concerned with the lack of human resources planning in the Organization, which is manifest in the fact that the **2011-2016** Human Resource Management strategy remained at the development stage already reported in 197 EX/5 Part V and that no tangible outcome has been published since.

The STU requests that an evaluation be made of the 2011-2016 strategy before engaging a new strategy.

Concerning the **2017-2022** strategy, the STU would like to receive more details on the “consultative process” mentioned in the establishment of the strategy. Ten days to provide

comments to the next years' human resources management strategy can hardly be considered as such.

The STU strongly believes that the greatest resource of UNESCO is a “*skilled, motivated and dedicated workforce*”. However, the STU can attest that the staff is demotivated and is the entity which has suffered the most from the financial crises and the “Reform”. In fact, the STU agrees that there is an urgent need to allocate funding for training programmes. Although training programmes have been financed by “Invest for Efficient Delivery”, **it cannot replace a stable corporate training budget financed by the regular programme.**

Moreover, efforts in “invest for efficiency” are addressing mainly managerial competencies and are not programme oriented, where much improvement in competencies and skills is also needed to better contribute to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.

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 respected.

The strategy points to an alarming Gender Gap at the P5 level, while noting that the gap is smaller at the P4 level, whose occupants are not much less experienced than their P5 colleagues in terms of average years served in the organization.

The STU is alarmed at the lack of career development option for the GS staff with average time spent on the same post being 8.3 years in comparison with 6 years for P5 and 6.4 years organization wide.

The STU is deeply concerned that nearly **half** of the Organization's workforce is made up of temporary staff (see STU's comments in 200 EX/5 Part IV (A)).

The STU is deeply troubled by the fact that among the numerous and urgent needs in human resources management at UNESCO, the Administration's yearly response was to launch the **UNESCO Competency Framework**. Just to mention a few, the STU would give **priority to**: halting arbitrary firing, recruitment, career development, updating job descriptions, regularizing long-term temporary staff, etc.

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 a sufficient number of dedicated and competent staff involved at all stages of recruitment (composition of the selection panels, etc.) to avoid biased procedures which lead systematically to staff demoralization/demotivation.

The STU questions how UNESCO is able to attract and retain the best candidates in its field of competences as overall employment conditions will considerably deteriorate for professional staff following the implementation of the ICSC Review.

Furthermore, STU is worried that a part of the decision by the last General Conference on the recruitment of vacant posts (“*Staff members shall be given priority of consideration for vacant posts on the basis of equal competence*”) will not be implemented, and that acquired staff rights will not be protected. Should external recruitment become the norm, this will perpetuate a high percentage of demotivated staff with no prospects for career development.

STU would like to recall that to this date no **mobility** mechanism whatsoever has been set up and that the majority of provisions 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 a completely opaque set of criteria.

Concerning enabling and engaging work environment, the STU would like to stress that UNESCO **lacks a policy for disabilities** and means to allow disabled colleagues to perform their work. Moreover, UNESCO lacks a policy on stress management and burnout prevention. As far as the Security plan at Headquarters is concerned, the STU regrets that it is still at development stage after ten months since the 13 November attacks in Paris.

The STU urges the Director-General to develop a **real human resources management policy** for UNESCO for 2017-2022, 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.