



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

# Executive Board

Two hundred and first session

## 201 EX/5 Part IV Add.

PARIS, 14 April 2017  
Original: French

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

The UNESCO Staff Union (STU) is satisfied with the **improvement in geographical distribution** and better representation of Member States.

The relaunch of the Young Professionals Programme is good, but STU still believes that the calls for applications for the Programme should be disseminated more broadly than just National Commissions and diplomacy circles, in order to target specialized communities and the best experts in every field. Efforts should also be made in order to guarantee that such a programme could be beneficial to field offices, which is not the case today.

We would nonetheless like to draw the attention of Member States to the fact that, while external recruitment can lead to the improvement of geographical distribution, it can also lead to blocking the career development of staff: a staff member of an underrepresented State can be stuck for years at the same grade, with no career prospects, superseded in the recruitment procedure by an external candidate.

In this connection, we would like to remind Member States that, in a report published in 2012, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system called on specialized agencies to work towards striking a balance between external recruitment and internal appointment/promotion.

With regard to **gender balance**, STU welcomes the fact that the gender parity goal has been achieved at the Professional level and above. However, we regret the uneven distribution at the P-4 and P-5 levels, where there are far more men than women. Two-thirds of the staff at the P-5 level are men, while the majority of women still hold P-1/P-2 category posts.

This should also not mask the **overwhelming majority of G category posts held by women** and the **injustice done to female colleagues on temporary assistance contracts**, which do not enjoy the same rights to maternity and nursing leave or family allowances.

## B. Progress of the After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI) working group and its recommendations

STU took note of the eight recommendations on **After-Service Health Insurance (ASHI)** made by the United Nations Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and submitted to the consideration of the General Assembly. It is essential that retirees benefit from this system and STU regrets that its implementation has not yet been finalized. It is high time for action and STU is concerned to read once again that “the work of the Working Group is still ongoing”.

More immediately, we are concerned about the impact of the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) judgments of 8 February on the Medical Benefits Fund (MBF) as a whole.

According to judgment 3761, the decision to amend the MBF Rules, established by Administrative Circular AC/HR/43 of 21 October 2014, did not comply with the provisions allowing amendments as stated in Article 7.1 of the MBF Rules, and is therefore **unlawful and must be rescinded. As a result, the amendments to the Rules are null and void**. In addition, as a result of this judgment, Information Circular IC/HR/73 of 3 November 2014, calling for nominations for the election of members of the new Advisory Board, was also considered to be **unlawful**. The Advisory Board therefore no longer exists and the MBF is without a governing body.

We expect the Administration to provide **clear answers** concerning the enforcement of the ILOAT judgments and their **repercussions on the participants**.

**C. Annual report (2016) by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC): Report by the Director-General**

The new salary scale for the Professional and higher categories was implemented at UNESCO on 1 January 2017, and a number of staff members, in their first pay slip of the year, noted **a decline in some elements of their salary**. Some staff members, in accordance with paragraph 7 (a) of the Statutes of the Appeals Board, requested the Director-General to reverse that administrative decision.

Moreover, there was no mention in this document of the implementation on 1 January 2018 of a raise in the **statutory retirement age** from 62 to 65 years. According to our information, this decision could be postponed to a later date. We are awaiting clarification from the Administration on this point.

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In general, STU is surprised at how few substantive issues relating to human resources are being addressed by the Executive Board at its 201st session. In our view, **the situation of UNESCO staff deserves more attention**, since many problems remain unresolved. Examples include:

- **lack of career development prospects**, compounded by the **almost systematic recruitment of external candidates** for more than a year;
- **large-scale use of temporary assistance**: more than half of the Organization's personnel consists of temporary staff, resulting in loss of institutional memory, discrimination between staff, and undermining of the independence of the international civil service;
- **lack of a proper training budget**;
- **long delay in the reform of the recruitment policy**;
- **lack of mobility or disability policies**;
- **failure to take into account the malaise of staff** (lack of a policy on stress management and burnout prevention, deterioration of the restaurant services and the premises, hygiene problems);
- **lack of internal justice**, owing to the unavailability of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Appeals Board;
- **delays in the payment of pension benefits**.

And the list goes on. **Must we wait for the next Administration to hope for progress to be made?**