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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

B. Human Resources Management Strategy

Section 1. Report on the implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy
for 2011-2016

Section 2. Proposals for a Human Resources Management Strategy for 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.

STU acknowledges what the Administration describes as “process improvements” achieved under the implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for 2011-2016.

We regret, however, that the financial crisis has prevented the Organization from meeting all the objectives that were set, namely **attracting and retaining talented staff, developing staff capacity** and **creating a positive work environment** (see document 186 EX/25).

The Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022 is, for the moment, a list of good intentions. As ‘the devil is in the detail’, we shall be particularly vigilant about the modalities for its implementation.

In general, the following subjects (recruitment, gender equality, mobility, training and work environment) should be dealt with separately according to whether they concern Professional category (P) posts or General Service category (G) posts, as the problems of the incumbents are very different.



Recruitment

The Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022 continues to talk about “**attracting and retaining the best**” and we look forward to the new recruitment policy prepared by the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM), which, we hope, will have taken into account our comments. In this strategy, however, we hope that “**retaining**” **staff takes precedence over “attracting” staff**. Indeed, since the advent of direct advertisement of vacancies both externally and internally, external recruitments have multiplied, **further reducing the career opportunities of existing staff members** (General Service category staff remain on average for nine years in the same post!). Yet external recruitment costs the Organization much more than in-house promotion.

Recommendation 6 of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) Audit of UNESCO’s recruitment process for international staff, which led to the direct external recruitment of vacancies, proposed this revision “**on a pilot basis**”. We therefore request that, after more than a year of its implementation, **this method of advertising vacancies be evaluated**.

In addition, this measure was officially introduced to reduce the length of the recruitment process. It is therefore time to evaluate whether this objective has been achieved or, on the contrary, has contributed to **delaying the recruitment for posts when the relevant expertise is available internally**. STU considers that the length of the recruitment process was not affected in the past by posting vacancies first internally and then externally, but rather by the **long and complex administrative procedures** that exist.

STU also requests that **a representative of HRM be present at all the stages of recruitment**, from pre-selection to appointment. We are aware of understaffing problems in the service, but recruitment is a fundamental task, which must be properly fulfilled.

Gender equality

STU welcomes the fact that gender parity remains a priority. For the moment, while statistics show an improvement in gender equality in our Organization, they mask the fact that **women are far more numerous than their male counterparts in the lower-grade posts** (G and P-1/P-2).

A small number of women in P-5 grade posts will lead to the systematic recruitment of external female candidates to D grade posts, thereby strengthening the **glass ceiling** for female in-house staff, or the appointment of male in-house staff, thus leading to **greater inequality in managerial positions**.

With regard to General Service category (G) staff, it should be noted that the central services hire a significant number of male colleagues, but that in the programme sectors, **most of the assistants are women**. Facilitating women’s access to P grade posts would constitute a “gender” recognition of their professional skills.

Mobility

STU welcomes any attempt to introduce into UNESCO a **real** mobility programme, insofar as it has never really been the case so far. We draw the attention of Member States to the fact that, in the implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022, there is **no indicator that mobility shall be a requirement for promotion to grade P-5**. If this indicator, which has never been applied, is introduced into the new strategy, HRM will have to ensure that it is taken into account by the recruitment panels.

Moreover, the most important factor for the success of any mobility policy is that assignment to the field is **clearly defined over time**. We note that currently this is not addressed in the new strategy.

Training

STU can only welcome the Administration's willingness to train staff. Document 202 EX/5 Part III (F) (*Invest for Efficient Delivery*) nevertheless mentions the **use of "consultants"** to define and implement such training for staff. STU fears that most of the resources earmarked for training will go towards defining these programmes to the benefit of external contractors, rather than internal staff, who are much more aware of the reality and procedures of our Organization.

Furthermore, **what is the use of training staff if they cannot use what they have learned?** Very often, these new skills are not used as they are not taken into account during recruitment. This is a **considerable waste of financial and human resources** and gives rise to the frustration of staff members.

Work environment

STU agrees with most of the measures aimed at creating "an engaging and enabling work environment" but will remain vigilant as to their implementation.

For example, "non-staff" contracts should not be used as a **discount** solution, and human resources partnerships, such as internships, should not lead to an **increase in unpaid staff**.

As to the "talent reviews" for "staff who have been in the same function for five years or more", we are counting on HRM to consult us to define the modalities for this. All members of staff, of any grade, must be able to take part in such exercises, which must be used for the **benefit** of the staff, and not as a threat that could adversely affect their performance.

Internal justice does indeed need in-depth reform. It is unacceptable that the proceedings are so long and dependent on external causes, such as the **impediment of the Chairperson of the Appeals Board**. Moreover, **since the session at the beginning of June 2017, no decision has been made yet and some recommendations are still lacking**. It is in the interest of both the staff members and the Organization that disputes be resolved quickly, allowing a **speedy return to a serene working atmosphere**.

Lastly, STU continues to campaign for **more flexible working methods**, beyond teleworking. In the survey conducted in 2016, 90% of respondents wished HRM to examine other flexible working arrangements. We would be happy to participate in defining such working methods.