



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

General Conference

39th session, Paris, 2017

39 C

39 C/33 Add.
26 October 2017
Original: English/French

Item 10.1 of the provisional agenda

STAFF REGULATIONS AND STAFF RULES

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS OF 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.



Job: 201702561

SECTION 1. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO STAFF REGULATIONS

Proposal for amendments to Staff Regulation 9.5 on the mandatory age of separation

The UNESCO Staff Union (STU) takes note of the proposal to raise the mandatory age of separation to 65 years only on 1 January 2020 and not on 1 January 2018, as stipulated by A/RES/70/244 of the United Nations General Assembly.

STU raises serious concerns that the Organization intends not to implement a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. STU wishes to remind honorable delegates that the issue of raising the age of retirement to 65 years was discussed at length and in depth by the International Civil Service Commission with due regard to questions of staffing structures, job redesign and skills renewal which are common to all United Nations bodies. The Commission also considered the fact that in most countries the retirement age is at 65 years or higher and that the buoyancy of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund heavily relies on continued contributions by active staff and their employers. **Distinct treatment of UNESCO staff compared to other staff in the United Nations system runs counter to the principle of equity under which staff is employed within the common system.** The common system remains the sole guarantee for staff to be treated indistinctively in all United Nations bodies and is a basic right of each staff member. A UNESCO 'à la carte' runs counter to such an acquired right of its staff. Therefore, the International Civil Service Commission has repeatedly urged the governing bodies of specialized agencies to observe their commitments to the coherent common system.

STU regrets that the document remains very vague on the staffing implications (cf. points 9 ff). In order to allow the General Conference to make an informed decision, information is lacking on the level of the 112 posts to be vacated, the duty station as well as the planned date of retirement of concerned incumbents. Also, the Director-General 'anticipates' that the majority of concerned staff would exercise the option of not retiring. None of the concerned staff have ever been approached by HRM or his or her administrative hierarchy to sound out his or her opinion. Therefore such a statement is misleading.

The argument is not valid that the Organization needs flexibility in the case that staff reductions have to be envisaged due to financial constraints. Besides, STU wishes to remind delegates that the **increased internal mobility that STU has continuously been asking for would offer such flexibility.**

The argument that staff would have to be renewed runs contrary to the argument of career progression of younger staff. The noticeable abuse of external recruitment without adding real value to the existing work force has already been denounced by STU on several occasions. No explanation is provided on what specific skills would have to be renewed and what would be the advantage of rejuvenation.

Even if savings were made, nothing in the proposal specifies how the Organization would use them. **STU requests that they be allocated to staff training and overdue reclassifications of staff members whose responsibilities have undergone a substantial change.**

Finally, as long as the Organization has not put in place a **sound system of succession planning** by which the much needed institutional knowledge and memory of experienced staff is not sacrificed, the fact that such staff would leave the Organization is to be considered as a risk rather than an opportunity. The bad succession planning is being exemplified by the fact that, according to HRM, in September 2017, the following staff worked beyond their retirement age: four ADGs, two D2s, four P5s, two P3s, one G7 and one G3. Besides, it can be expected that a significant number of those retiring will eventually be recruited to serve the Organization under another contractual arrangement, e.g. service contract or consultant contract.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENTS TO STAFF RULES

Rule 104.2 *bis* – Advertisement of vacant posts and eligibility to apply for internally advertised posts: *Deleted*

STU has already highlighted on many occasions that the direct external advertisement of vacancies was implemented “**on a pilot basis**”. We therefore reiterate our request that, more than one year after its implementation, **this method of advertising vacancies be evaluated**.

We are also alarmed by the growing number of candidates recruited externally as we know full well that there are **competent internal candidates**. This often reflects the desire of supervisors to appoint a person they prefer or to rule out a colleague they dislike, for professional or personal reasons.

This is why STU requests once more that **an HRM representative be involved at every stage of the recruitment process**, from pre-selection to appointment.

Comprehensive review of the United Nations common system compensation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories [39 C/33].

STU has also expressed its concern several times regarding the review of the common system compensation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories. We fear that this will lead to **significant salary reductions**, particularly for the most vulnerable members of staff (single mothers, for example).

The United Nations in general and UNESCO in particular must remain an attractive employer. STU will keep a watchful eye on the consequences of the compensation package review and invites the staff members concerned to come forward should they suffer a substantial loss as a result of the cumulative effect of these measures, which could justify refusal to work at UNESCO.