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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 this report by the Director-General.



Job: 20191285

B. Implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022 (Follow-up to 205 EX/Decision 5.IV)

Mobility

STU has expressed to the Administration and staff its many reservations regarding the **geographical mobility** exercise as it has taken place this year. The results of STU's staff survey on the subject confirm that, contrary to the Administration's claims, **the colleagues concerned are not on the whole satisfied**:

- they consider that the exercise took place **without serious preparation or genuine consultation** and deem it **improvised, arbitrary, stressful and demotivating**;
- they believe that the transfers were decided **in the absence of any precise, clear and transparent criteria** and denounce an **unfair Administration** and **opaque decision-making**;
- they regret that staff movements have **overlooked the skills of each individual**, in contradiction with the stated objectives of the strategic transformation to increase UNESCO's operational effectiveness and global presence, and thus conclude that **the exercise has not been beneficial to the Organization**;
- they do not believe that the exercise will be used for **career development** which, let us recall because the Administration seems to have forgotten, does not consist in **transfers at the same grade**;
- they want the process **to be suspended and evaluated before being renewed**;
- some colleagues denounce **unequal treatment** as the rules on deferment of reassignment for health, family or personal reasons have been violated, resulting in decisions to reject their requests that they consider arbitrary. The Administration has, however, agreed to review some of the cases of reassignment that have become problematic.

STU also regrets the considerable cost generated by this exercise: **moving and installation costs**, cost of **requests for early retirement**, etc. The cost of **the lack of skills transfer** is difficult to estimate but very real.

Finally, STU is concerned about the rushed launch of the **functional mobility** exercise, without consulting the staff associations. It will be particularly vigilant about its progress and will denounce anything that appears to be a dysfunction or a violation of the staff rights.

STU recommends postponing the launch of the functional mobility exercise planned for 2020 in order to better prepare it in the light of the lessons learned from the results of the 2019 evaluation of geographical mobility that it hopes very much will take place. The hastily-designed provisions governing functional mobility will be difficult to apply. Under these provisions, the Administration may impose on an Assistant Director-General transfers of the staff of the sector under his or her authority. It would be desirable, when the time comes, to test the functional mobility exercise within a major sector such as the Education Sector before extending it to other sectors/field offices.

Post classification

STU deeply regrets the Director-General's decision to **abolish Staff Rule 102.2** entitled "Compatibility with classification standards", which allows each eligible staff member to request the reclassification of his or her post. This decision follows the freeze on post reclassifications decided by the Deputy Director-General in August 2018. Despite the annulment of this decision in December

2018, requests have remained blocked for many months in the Office of the Director-General, resulting in a *de facto* or even *de jure* freeze.

The decision to abolish Staff Rule 102.2 was taken against the advice of the staff associations and the Advisory Committee on Personnel Policies (ACPP). While STU is aware that not all requests for reclassification were well-founded, the possibility of requesting a post reclassification was a last resort for colleagues in an Organization where career development does not exist. **This is one more right that is being taken away from them.**

Performance evaluation

STU **does not share the Administration's expectation** that the new annual performance appraisal cycle will increase confidence between supervisors and staff members, and is not convinced that the change in cycle is likely to bring about significant substantive changes to the performance appraisal system.

New provisions have been introduced to evaluate staff on probation.

The rating scale has also been increased from four to five as follows:

1. Exceeds requirements
2. Fully meets expectations
3. Meets expectations
4. Partially meets expectations
5. Does not meet expectations.

STU is of the opinion that the introduction of rating 2 ("Fully meets expectations") will be problematic because each staff member who "meets expectations" will be able to claim the "fully".

STU also regrets the **announced disappearance of the Reports Board**, which allowed staff members to challenge their performance evaluation before resorting to the already overwhelmed internal justice system.

Disciplinary procedure

STU notes with the greatest regret and lack of understanding the **abolition of the special advisory board** (Staff Regulation 9.1.1) established to advise the Director-General on cases of dismissal under that Regulation.

Even more surprising is the **abolition of Joint Disciplinary Committees**, which contradicts the practice in the United Nations system. As a result, staff are deprived of guarantees.

Internal justice

STU notes that, once again, **very few of its comments have been taken into account** in the revised Statutes of the Appeals Board as presented in Annex IV to this document. STU regrets in particular the change from five to three members, which automatically limits the sharing of views and the effectiveness of the Board.

The time limits for proceedings before the Appeals Board are currently unreasonable. However, **the time limits proposed to speed up procedures are still excessive**. Thus, 420 days, or 14 months, elapse between the filing of a complaint and the notification of a final ruling based on the Appeals

Board's recommendation. This 14-month period implies that the appellant and the Administration have not requested an extension of the period, for the detailed appeal or reply, respectively.

STU recommends a reduction in time limits **to restrict to a maximum of 12 months** the duration of proceedings before the Appeals Board, including deadline extensions. STU also requests the deletion of the words "as soon as possible" for the holding of Appeals Board sessions, which is a source of possible abuse.

STU further regrets that the two staff associations will now only act as **observers** if the appellant so requests. It would like the wording to be reversed to specify that **the associations are present at Appeals Board hearings unless the appellant objects.**

Finally, STU points out that the member appointed by the Director-General is not "representing the Administration" as the new Statutes claim: that is the role of the representatives of the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) and Office of International Standards and Legal Affairs (LA).