



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board
Hundred and ninety-second session

192 EX/16
Part I Add.

PARIS, 18 September 2013
Original: English

Item 16 of the provisional agenda

**IMPLEMENTATION OF 191 EX/DECISION 15
ON THE DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY (37 C/4)
AND DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET (37 C/5),
AND 5 X/EX/DECISION 2**

PART I

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE INCOME
AND EXPENDITURE PLAN AS WELL AS THE RESTRUCTURING PLAN
BASED ON THE EXPECTED CASH FLOW OF US \$507 MILLION FOR 2014-2015**

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS BY THE UNESCO STAFF UNION (STU)

Pursuant to Item 9.2.E of the UNESCO Administrative Manual, the UNESCO Staff Union (STU) submits its comments on this report by the Director-General.

1. STU takes note of document 192 EX/16 Part I and annexes, and hereby makes the following comments for the attention of members of the Executive Board.
2. STU notes that a whopping number of 285 posts need to be abolished, which represents 16.4% compared to the initial document 37 C/5 Draft and 23.1% (438 posts) compared to document 36 C/5 Approved. While the financial situation of the Organization warrants restructuring and realigning of programmes and resources, including staff, this large number of posts to be abolished at once represents a major demotivating factor for UNESCO's personnel. Moreover, nowhere in the document is it made clear precisely how this figure was arrived at or, more importantly, how it is justified.
3. STU's position is and has always been that employment security be the utmost consideration in any process of reform, restructuring and downsizing, and the Director-General, over the past biennium, made this her watchword.
4. As a first impression STU is concerned that the proposed reduction in posts is purely based on financial considerations and numbers rather than well-presented and cohesive restructuring and

redirection of the Organization's mandate, objectives, programmes, priorities and structure. In brief, no overarching reform element is presented, and it is therefore impossible to see the relation between the proposed reduction in staff and the overall reorientation and reform referred to but not explained.

5. STU would like to believe that senior management has developed a clearly organized and appropriate restructuring plan even though no programmatic, content or objectives-related elements are presented in the document. According to Recommendation No. 5 by the External Auditor (191 EX/28 Part II), *"the External Auditor recommends that there be no further delay in developing and implementing a comprehensive and strategic staff restructuring plan". What is presented in document 192EX/16 – Part I can hardly be interpreted as a comprehensive and strategic plan. Furthermore, paragraph 6 (i) of 5X EX/Decision 2 stipulates that "human resources should be allocated to the priorities in a strategic manner"*.

6. STU would like to highlight a number of specific issues which clearly demonstrate the above-mentioned incoherence and lack of planning and coordination of the restructuring plan referred to, but not actually presented in the document.

7. In paragraph 6 of 5 X/EX/Decision 2 the Executive Board, at its 5th special session, requested the Director-General to "submit to the Executive Board at its 192nd session, as stipulated in 191 EX/Decision 15 (II), paragraphs 14 and 15, a budget and restructuring plan based on the aforementioned priorities and the following principles: ... (e) where the available resources make it impossible to maintain a critical mass of programme activity, the Director-General shall make proposals ..." STU notes, however, that at no point in the document are any such proposals presented. How, in that case, can any staff savings be logically calculated?

8. In paragraph 13 it is explained that the budget reduction exercise towards the target of \$507 million is expected to result in the abolition of most of the vacant posts. Likewise, in paragraph 23, it is mentioned that in preparing for document 37 C/5, almost all vacant posts in non-programme sectors have been abolished. But there is no corresponding information given for vacant posts in the programme sectors. More importantly, no clear information is given on the number of current vacant posts throughout the Organization as a whole, how many of these are included in the 285 posts to be abolished, and, finally, what the savings to the Organization have already been achieved or are expected to be achieved from the abolition of vacant posts. From this regrettable lack of detail, it may easily be deduced that a large majority, if not all, of the 285 posts to be abolished are currently occupied, and that such a sharp reduction in staff is likely to have serious, if not critical, implications for the Organization's ability to execute its mandate and programmes.

9. This is particularly critical for the field, where human resources are already severely stretched, yet it is the Organization's and the Director-General's repeated objective to increase direct implementation from the field in order to have greater direct impact on the ground. This will become increasingly difficult to do if field staff (as well as Headquarters staff) are further reduced.

10. Of even greater concern to STU is the indication in paragraph 23 that in the current biennium, 86 posts are in the process of being filled, and have been approved as mission-critical posts. Again no information or criteria are provided on what constitutes a mission-critical post or on the timing of these recruitments, which, if carried out before the abolition of the 285 posts scheduled to be cut would severely limit the possibilities for redeployment of colleagues affected by the downsizing.

11. In addition to STU's concern about the absence from the document of any clear programme and structure resulting from the reform, STU expresses its severe preoccupation about the process proposed for implementing an eventual restructuring plan. According to paragraph 25, this was to take the form of contributions made by each programme sector or service coupled with a request from the Director-General to the senior management team *"to keep staff informed of this process and to seek their views and suggestions as much as possible, in order to ensure an informed and*

participatory approach". **STU hereby informs the Executive Board that no such consultations of staff have taken place.** In some sectors and services there have been no meetings with staff at all, and in others such meetings have been purely top-down presentations of general information by the senior management, on which no suggestions or comments from staff were solicited and much less taken into consideration. **If, as the Director-General and many others have repeatedly insisted, the staff is the Organization's greatest asset, what legitimacy does any reform have in which the staff have not only been completely side-lined, but as a result of which they stand to be the chief victims?**

12. Even without the participation of staff, the proposals presented by each sector are not explained in the document, and there is no information on what each sector has determined as a priority except for the number of posts they are expected to abolish. For example, paragraph 21 mentions planned adjustments in the senior management structure and a rationalization of the EO structures at Headquarters, although no details are provided. Likewise, paragraph 29 indicates that a number of structural adjustments envisaged as a result of downsizing in operational activities and staff as well as organizational redesign and more cost-effective arrangements to be taken in, but not limited to, SC, SHS, CLT, AFR, ERI and MSS. But again no details are provided in the scant information proffered, which is incoherent, opaque, and hard to understand in the sketchy context presented. Moreover, in Annex II of the document, staff costs are attributed to each expected result, but, since no organigramme for each sector and service is provided, the number of staff attributed to each expected result and hence the true staff costs are impossible to understand. To further complicate matters, very often an individual staff member is assigned to work on several different expected results. How can a particular staff member's cost be truthfully attributed to each expected result? Furthermore, no information is provided on the grades of the posts to be abolished; different grades naturally carry different costs. **If a figure of 285 posts has been identified, this calculation must surely be based on specific posts and grades, but this information is simply not provided.**

13. The document goes into great detail in paragraphs 27 and 28 about the identification of specific posts that could be abolished, what the redeployment possibilities of affected staff may be, and the possible voluntary separation schemes or other proposals for affected staff. Yet, these paragraphs also contain a number of contradictions within the paragraphs and with the rest of the document. It is stated that *"it is premature to identify how such reduction in the number of posts will be distributed"* and that *"there is a need to await the voluntary agreed separation exercise"*. Nevertheless, Annex V of the document presents an extremely detailed summary of regular-programme posts in all sectors and services in Headquarters and field under the \$507 million expenditure plan proposal. How is this possible, given the above statement?

14. Concerning voluntary agreed separations and terminations of staff, STU agrees with paragraph 28 that this will pose additional managerial and financial challenges, though not necessarily for the same reasons as those presented. Indeed, despite the indication that *"in September 2013 there will be a formal call for another organized round of voluntary agreed separations"* no information is provided on what the criteria for such separations will be, who will have access to them. Surprisingly, there is no mention at all of any other cost saving measures, such as the use of voluntary part-time work, post-sharing, leave without pay, etc., all of which were announced by the Director-General and by DIR/HRM in meetings with the staff in June and July 2013 as additional possibilities for reducing staff costs while preserving posts and employment to the greatest extent possible. Nor is there any clear indication whether forthcoming retirements over the next biennium (2014-2015) were taken into account in the total figure of posts to be abolished; this could help to reduce the number of posts to be abolished considerably.

15. The document also refers in paragraph 27 to a redeployment review and exercise for staff whose posts are to be abolished by means of the Redeployment Group established in Administrative Circular AC/HR/28 of 31 January 2013. The staff associations will each have one seat on the Redeployment Group; strict monitoring will be necessary to ensure that a maximum affected staff are redeployed to vacant posts rather than external recruits, whatever the ostensible justification. The only way to ensure this is through the **immediate and complete halting of all**

external recruitment (even for posts considered as mission-critical) **until all staff affected by post abolitions have been identified and offered a redeployment solution.** Current UNESCO staff have a range of qualifications, experience and abilities, plus institutional memory, which are very well suited for a wide variety of posts in the Organization. STU has long been demanding, and this is now more critical than ever, an assessment of competencies exercise by the Organization (not just self-assessment) for all staff members before any redeployment and/or abolition of posts is implemented. It is clearly in the interest of the Organization to know what the competencies of its staff are in order to match them appropriately with the needs of its programmes and objectives, particularly in this time of financial austerity and maximization of available resources. This was promised for September 2013, but has not yet materialized.

16. The Director-General has repeatedly assured staff that she would do her utmost to ensure that staff are affected as little as possible by the financial crisis.

17. STU believes that only the adoption of measures aimed at ensuring jobs will make it possible to preserve and strengthen the Organization's major assets.

18. STU would therefore welcome inclusion in the decision adopted by the Executive Board of a **clear statement that any restructuring will be guided, beyond programmatic and financial considerations, by the objective of preserving employment for all staff, and that any expenditure plan be not be endorsed purely on financial considerations without due concern paid to its consequences for the ability of the Organization and its staff to deliver its mandate.**

19. Likewise STU recommends that the Executive Board amend the draft decision to include a **request for the Director-General to present a revised figure of posts that would still need to be abolished, if any, after determining the savings that will result from forthcoming retirements, voluntary agreed separations, post-sharing arrangements (50%), solidarity part-time (80%) arrangements, and any other cost-saving measures** previously mooted by the UNESCO Administration, but unfortunately not cited in this document.

20. Finally, **it is essential that any restructuring plan in which abolition of posts and staff are included be fully justified and presented together with a restructuring plan which clearly delineates the new objectives, priorities, programmes, activities and, above all, the organizational structure from which the staff abolitions and/or redeployments emanate.** There can be no other way that the Member States, management and staff can have clear information other than the presentation of a comprehensive and fully justified and concise restructuring plan.