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# 39 C

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Organización  
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### STAFF REGULATIONS AND STAFF RULES

#### COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

##### OUTLINE

In accordance with Item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) comments on the report by the Director-General on the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules. Document 39 C/33.

*"The Director-General proposes an amendment to Staff Regulation 9.5 further to the decision of the United Nations General Assembly to raise the mandatory age of separation to age 65 for staff recruited before 1 January 2014, following a recommendation in this regard from the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)."*

1. The proposal to postpone raising the mandatory age of separation to age 65 until 1 January 2020 is unfounded. According to the Administration, implementation of such a decision in 2018 would have a significant impact on human resources planning and would reduce opportunities for the review of staffing structures, for job redesign, and for skills renewal. It would also limit the possibilities for rejuvenation, and for the improvement of gender and geographical balance. However, according to the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) (Report 2013 A/68/30): *"with respect to the implications for human resources issues, such as performance management, rejuvenation of the workforce, gender and geographical balance, it was concluded that well-targeted human resources policies would be the most appropriate response"*.

2. The Commission was not convinced that postponing or leaving the mandatory age of separation for current staff unchanged would speed up organizational restructuring in the areas of



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human resources management. It considered that human resources issues such as performance management, rejuvenation of the workforce and gender balance should be addressed through the appropriate avenues.

3. International administrations and staff federations agree that the ICSC's recommendation will provide equal treatment for staff and will help maintain the stability of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). It will benefit organizations because it will retain staff with institutional knowledge and experience, leaving enough time to manage succession planning and knowledge transfer to younger generations.

4. With regard to the savings to be achieved by the Organization by postponing to 2020 the increase in the mandatory age of retirement, we are very doubtful that this could generate gains for the Organization, given the expenses relating to separations such as:

- up to 60 days of unused leave that are paid to each staff member upon separation;
- repatriation grants varying from 20 weeks for 8 years of service to 28 weeks for 12 or more years of uninterrupted service.

5. It should be noted that according to the report provided by the Administration, 112 staff members (13 category D and above; **52 P** category, 45 G category and 2 NO category) are due to retire in 2018-2019, and they have served on average for 18 years.

6. **The Administration's argument of the financial impact** would not be founded if this crisis situation, which seems to be a one-off, is resolved. In spite of the United States of America's non-payment of their financial contribution since 2011, the Bureau of Human Resources has not hesitated to recruit externally for 188 posts (including 74 in the D and P categories) and to grant 46 transfers with promotion to D and P category staff. This has a cost that the Administration does not quantify!

7. **The argument of cost reduction** generated by the hiring of entry-level staff, therefore external, is preventing a career promotion policy that is sorely lacking in the Organization.

8. In the hiring process, the Administration seems to be attracted by the "strategic vision" and "new blood" of external candidates, necessarily better qualified than internal candidates. However, if there was a suitable training policy, internal staff would also be competitive in addition to having the essential in-house experience. Ironically, very often, it is the in-house staff not selected for the post who must "train" the new recruit.

9. The argument that postponing the increase in the mandatory retirement age would allow further progress to be made with regard to gender balance (particularly at level P-5) is difficult to believe, since in recent years no improvement in gender balance at this level has been observed. On the other hand, there has been an upsurge in the recruitment of staff from countries in electoral Group I, denying the diversity that UNESCO is supposed to promote!

10. In view of the Commission's detailed recommendations, the Administration's arguments do not support the conclusion that a postponement is appropriate, as it would only shift issues that need to be addressed by specific and appropriate measures.