

ORAL STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU) TO THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION (FA)

Madam Chairperson,
Representative of the Director-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address you in the hope that these observations by ISAU will be heard. First of all, ISAU would like to welcome the new management team and wish them every success, which will also be UNESCO's success. After years of crisis, we are very pleased that the Organization has recovered its financial health, which we are confident will enable it to refocus on its fundamentals for the benefit of the staff. We join the Director-General in her determination to invest in the human capital of UNESCO. In this sense, **there can be no redynamization of the Organization without an in-depth, concerted reform of human resources management in which the staff associations are fully associated.**

Indeed, the audit report on human resources points to **worrying dysfunctions**, in particular with regard to individual performance appraisals, which **do not reflect the reality of performance, and make a mockery of the very idea of distinguishing good marks from bad.**

While we agree with a number of the conclusions of the External Auditor, we are against some of the recommendations and replies by the Administration, as we explained in document 204 EX/21 Add.2. **We contest the proposals to deprive staff of the possibility of lodging appeals during the reclassification process** and to get the Administration out of its obligation to provide staff with training in appraisal procedures. On the other hand, we support the proposal by the External Auditor to put in place internal recruitment campaigns to facilitate staff mobility.

With regard to posts funded from extrabudgetary sources, we wish to recall that recruitment to such posts must not be completely delegated by HRM to the ADGs because of the risk of violating principles governing staff recruitment in general. We have in mind in particular the question of geographical distribution.

We believe that the recommendations on the reclassification of posts are unacceptable since they are counter to fair and efficient staff management! ISAU is strongly opposed to the application of those recommendations:

- Denying staff members the possibility to initiate a reclassification request is a violation of staff rights.
- Systematically opening internal competition for **occupied reclassified posts** will make every reclassification a moment of uncertainty and undermining of career advancement prospects.
- Making reclassifications subject to prior ascertainment of the availability of funds is tantamount to admitting that staff who should legitimately be reclassified are denied the most elementary right to be remunerated at their proper level.
- Not allowing the effective dates of reclassification decisions to be retroactive is tantamount to denying that all work deserves remuneration!

With regard to geographical distribution, ISAU notes that the objective of having 85% of Member States represented within the Secretariat is ever further away, with the current rate having dropped from 82% to 81%. While the Young Professionals programme is a useful mechanism, it is not in itself sufficient to improve geographical distribution. Other avenues need to be explored. **External recruitments, which should have helped to rebalance geographical distribution, have, on the contrary, boosted the imbalance in favour of Group I.**

In some sectors, there is a **continued imbalance at the level of heads of section in favour of the same regional group**. Furthermore, **Group II remains below the minimum index, which further aggravates the principle of geographical distribution.**

We regret that we have not received the information we requested from HRM on the geographical distribution of posts with extrabudgetary funding, which accounts for approximately one-half of all staff, and should not be exempt from the principle of geographical distribution.

The absence of clear and comparable information is a serious obstacle to the readability of the data and makes it impossible to monitor and review recruitment and promotion policies.

ISAU would also have liked the **report to present an analysis of the representation of regional groups at Headquarters and in field offices.**

The situation of P-5 posts is a cause for concern. A more fine-grained analysis would have shown that in the Education Sector, which has the highest percentage of women (61%), there is only one woman among six heads of section! The balance being sought should also be reflected at those levels.

With regard to the ICSC report, ISAU endorses the approved recommendations, in particular those concerning the use of non-monetary rewards and management of poor results. ISAU recalls that the importance of the human factor in the management of organizations is self-evident. Decisions concerning staff are crucial, both for the Organization and for the individuals concerned. In this field, mistakes are costly and give rise to demotivation among staff.

ISAU welcomes the idea that appraisal should form part of the responsibilities of managers. Training in this regard is more than ever necessary. The Administration should put in place **a transparent system of appraisal of the work of supervisors** in that connection. It is essential for the Organization to ensure efficient staff management and to prevent, at all costs, any risk of arbitrariness. Poor results in that regard should be penalized.

With respect to programmes for the recognition and reward of merit, ISAU urges the Administration to follow the recommendation of ICSC and to restore those programmes rapidly.

Thank you for your attention.