



Mr Chairperson,  
Mr Representative of the Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

It is a great honour for me to address you and to take advantage of each of the valuable five minutes we have been granted to defend all the staff, **at Headquarters and in the field**, even though this calls for more time.

The presidents of the staff associations are elected and represent all **colleagues, who are the alpha and omega** of our Organization. The International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) defends their rights and speaks on their behalf to the Director-General on all human resources issues. Recognition of our mission should be consistent with the trust bestowed upon us. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, as you will have noted from our written comments.

I would like to raise some issues of concern in several areas:

Strategic transformation:

We consider the Director-General's leadership role to be paramount. However, it can only be fully effective if the Secretariat itself is acting responsibly. In this respect, it is alarming that despite extensive reform, the Secretariat struggles to implement all the decisions adopted by the Executive Board. It should be noted that some 600 recommendations of the internal and external auditors have not been implemented. This shortfall does not bode well for the strategic transformation process.

ISAU would like to emphasize that it was not **involved** in this process, contrary to what is alleged. This is regrettable for a process that is to be guided by extensive consultations. We consider that it is necessary for us to be particularly involved in the part to "enhance UNESCO's efficiency and effectiveness", which concerns human resources and affects us directly.

ISAU is also concerned about the potential consequences of the strategic transformation process for staff (such as the abolition of posts, increased workload, etc.). Staff **must not be used as the adjustment variable of any reform**. Strategic transformation should take into account human capital, which is essential to the Organization. The process should improve fairness, equity and diversity at UNESCO.

The question thus arises of what financial and human resources UNESCO will use to achieve its objectives in the current context.

Concerning the **Invest for Efficient Programme Delivery** initiative:

ISAU wholeheartedly approves plans to provide staff training. The financial aspect of this investment is important but **it is crucial to invest in the effectiveness** of the Organization. Effectiveness is, however, dependent on the staff – which is requested to make more efforts and take on new

functions. There is a need for **in-depth reflection on the effective correlation between the training provision and post and career development**. Moreover, ISAU requests that staff be allocated actual training time, in accordance with the Human Resources Manual.

Regarding the **Human Resources Management Strategy**:

ISAU concurs with the observations of the External Auditor on the shortcomings of the current performance management policy. This system, which can be reasonably described as convoluted, is so complex that neither staff nor supervisors can find their way around it. **We would welcome a comprehensive review of the evaluation policy** which, in its current state, fails to be relevant and to reflect the reality of competencies and performance in the Organization.

ISAU continues to struggle hard for the acceptance of its requests to Administration for **greater transparency and efficiency** in the Appointment Review Board (ARB) process. The lack of visibility and meaningful participation of presidents of associations is inconsistent with the rights of staff.

We deplore that HRM has not fulfilled its role with regard to the suspension of reclassifications. HRM **merely informed us of a decision that had already been made rather than consulting us beforehand!** We have challenged this suspension decision which violates three points in the Staff regulations and Staff rules. We are awaiting a working meeting promised by the Office of the Deputy Director-General and remain optimistic about its outcome.

In general, HRM must fulfil its role, namely:

- Ensure that the new mobility policy is effectively enforced;
- Address the sense of disconnect between personal development, for which HRM is responsible, and professional development – which is in the hands of the sectors, though not their primary competence; and
- **Address the growing number of cases of burn-out.**

ISAU calls for the establishment of adequate infrastructure for the wellbeing of staff, such as a space dedicated to sports activities at the Fontenoy site.

We also reiterate our request for the implementation of the Executive Board's decision to facilitate the **establishment of flexible working hours** – a measure no doubt easier to implement and more equitable than telecommuting, which is not applicable to all posts.

While ISAU welcomes the organization by HRM of meditation sessions, it would also appreciate that our many unanswered requests be meditated upon. It should be recalled that **our demands reflect real problems faced by our colleagues and require ongoing dialogue with the Director-General.**

We hope that the forthcoming arrival of the ADG/ADM will provide an opportunity for her to interact with all staff at Headquarters and in the field, **and to present the finally complete new team.**

Lastly, ISAU reaffirms its wish to assist the Director-General in the fulfilment of her mandate. We wish her every success in her mission and that she will successfully steer our UNESCO ship to safe port.

Thank you for your attention.