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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 INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

A. Use of non-staff contracts, including those for consultants, in 2018

Pursuant to Item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) submits its comments on human resources issues (document 207 EX/5.IV.A)

1. ISAU questions the continuing preponderance of consultants from Group I. Thus, Table 9 shows that they represent **nearly one third (31%) of all consultants hired by the Organization** and **41% of the expenditure relating to consultant contracts**. This situation constitutes an unacceptable imbalance. It should be emphasized that there is no information to allow such a comparison for service contracts.
2. The document states in paragraph 31 that *“In 2018, non-staff personnel accounted for approximately 47% of the total UNESCO workforce in full-time equivalent (FTE) terms”*. This proportion is very high and must be questioned.
3. A first question is whether the large number of consultants and service contracts does not in fact correspond to staff management that is flawed because it is based on a lack of needs forecasting and resource planning.



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4. A further question is whether this lack of planning does not lead to a confusion of tasks corresponding to the different types of contracts. It must be repeated over and over again that these problems have a known cause, namely that these are contracts over which the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) has no real control. Both individual consultant contracts and service contracts are managed entirely by the sectors and services.

5. If we combine these remarks with those we have also already made on Project Appointments (PAs), we see that a very large proportion of contracts concluded by UNESCO with individuals are not subject to any effective control that would ensure a consistent staff policy. If HRM cannot impose consistency, the possibility is created, for example, for sectors to recruit the same people on different, successive contracts. Our purpose is not to conduct a campaign against these long-term staff, as the Administration sometimes does, but **to counter situations of precariousness and injustice**, which all too often occur, **particularly in field offices**. If a person is employed for similar tasks for years even on different contracts, it is because he or she performs a regular function of the Secretariat that requires regularization, including for the efficiency of the service.

6. The considerations we express here are moreover clearly stated in paragraph 32 of the document: *“The evolution of workforce distribution shown in the graph below reflects the continuous need to hire complementary and additional human resources, in a context of budgetary constraints, in order to maintain the existing level of support for programme delivery, while the number of individuals hired on regular fixed-term contracts remains stable”*. In other words, it is recognized that **situations of precariousness and inequality are directly caused by the fact that the Secretariat undertakes to carry out missions for which it does not have adequate resources**. This approach amounts to using non-staff contracts as an adjustment variable.

7. In this regard, we note that the Secretariat has begun an effort to comply with the recommendations made in 2014 by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). This effort has led to improved access to social security for these staff. However, our analysis of current data indicates that further efforts are needed **to ensure effective and fair overall management of UNESCO staff**.

8. We note that the service-contract policy is currently being updated and its publication is expected by the end of 2019. First of all, it is worth considering the timing of such an update, especially since the staff associations have not yet been consulted on an issue that falls directly within their mandate.

9. Paragraph 4 of the draft decision reads: *“Encourages the Secretariat to continue its efforts to ensure wider geographical distribution and improved gender balance in the hiring of consultants, where qualifications are equal”*. Such a recommendation cannot be simply encouraged. The current situation represents a violation of the constitutional principles of equality and justice. We hope that Member States will not be content to encourage but that they will **“strongly urge”** the Secretariat to ensure balance on these issues.