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FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THEIR PREVIOUS SESSIONS

PART III

HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

ADDENDUM 2

COMMENTS BY THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

A. Implementation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022

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 209 EX/5.III.A).

1. This document contains ISAU's observations and recommendations on the implementation of UNESCO's Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2021. We hope that our conclusions will be considered in the spirit of constructive and open dialogue that presided over their preparation and is at the heart of the mandate of our Association.

Recruitment

2. While the introduction of a tool such as Success Factors makes it possible to harmonize recruitment processes or shorten the time taken for recruitment, it does not, however, lead to the increased transparency which ISAU expects and constantly calls for, and which must be achieved through the genuine involvement of the Bureau of Human Resources Management (ADM/HRM) in such processes. In practice, the role of ADM/HRM continues to be limited to simply supporting the sectors in the recruitment process rather than truly managing the recruitment and careers of staff. It should be recalled that, while the sectors are indeed competent to determine the specialities they require, it is not their responsibility to manage the Organization's human resources.



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3. As it stands, in most cases, ADM/HRM simply endorses choices made at the sector level, which makes it difficult to implement the Organization's global priorities, in particular with regard to geographical distribution and gender equality. This situation also leads to a greater tendency for the sectors to favour external recruitment over the development of staff members. It should be pointed out here that there is a disconnection, for example, between the reality of this recruitment, which favours external candidates, and the policy of using generic job descriptions, which should make the profiles available within the Organization clearer and thus lead to better career management.

4. Moreover, the disconnection between the policies adopted by ADM/HRM and the reality of recruitment practices is also evident. As we have already highlighted on other occasions, there is no correlation between the individual evaluations of staff members and their advancement, nor is there any connection between the training policy and advancement, which formally consists of the internal recruitment of staff.

5. We cannot hope to encourage staff to sacrifice time and energy on training with a view to improving the efficiency of the Organization if such training does not in itself open up any form of advancement, which is subject to the sectors' assessment alone, without any real guidance from ADM/HRM. To conclude on this shortcoming of ADM/HRM concerning recruitment, ISAU continues to be astonished that the recruitment of non-geographical posts such as PAs, who are nevertheless staff members, is not subject to the Appointment Review Board (ARB), and therefore escapes any real supervision by ADM/HRM.

Outreach

6. While the efforts of ADM/HRM are welcome in the area of outreach to candidates to broaden the pool of suitable candidates, the evaluation of these efforts and their return on investment raise questions. Document 209 EX/5.III.A links the outreach activities carried out by ADM/HRM to the increase in the overall number of applicants but does not indicate how this result was measured. These outreach activities seem to comprise essentially the provision of generic information to potential candidates, without any link to specific posts, which would imply the active collaboration of the sectors or coordination of recruitment by ADM/HRM, which amount to the same thing.

7. Moreover, the presupposition of these efforts seems to be that the recruitment problems are due to an insufficient number of applications, which has not been demonstrated, revealing the problems of transparency, for example, which have been constantly highlighted by ISAU. The difficulty highlighted is so obvious that ADM/HRM, effectively, only has internal control over the recruitment of candidates for the Young Professionals Programme, the identification of whom is the prerogative of the National Commissions. As shown in document 209 EX/5.III.A, the outreach of ADM/HRM consists of collaborating with the National Commissions on logistical points that do not in any way solve the supposed problem of the pool of potential candidates, since that issue is a matter for the National Commissions and thus for the Member States.

8. In addition, ADM/HRM maintains that its outreach activities have a positive impact on gender equality in recruitment. However, it can hardly be expected that the increase in female candidates will solve the gender equality problems in the Secretariat, which are mainly related to inequality in policy-making and decision-making posts. The high level of experience of such posts does not correspond to the level of experience of the female candidates that ADM/HRM is aiming to reach, as those candidates are students.

Mobility

9. With regard to the mobility policy, ISAU wishes to commend the work of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS), whose conclusions and recommendations, which we uphold, are in line with the observations made by our Association, particularly on the shortcomings of a policy suffering from a lack of transparency and communication. Committed to the principle of mobility, ISAU reiterates its

position that geographical mobility cannot be decoupled from functional mobility; this dual mobility should be taken into account in the reform of the field offices.

10. On this point, it should be stressed that, in our view, while recruitment should be a matter of priority for ADM/HRM rather than for the sectors, mobility should be a matter of priority for the sectors, which are in a better position to assess their needs at Headquarters and in the field and to organize, on the basis of that assessment, a large part of the geographical and functional mobility of the staff under their responsibility. Furthermore, we believe that such a provision would be more likely to allow for more predictable, and therefore more effective, career management.

Training and development

11. ISAU is pleased that a budget of \$671,300 has been allocated to training and development and will pay particular attention to how it is used. While we believe that the involvement of the sectors is necessary for the implementation of this policy, we continue to deplore the total lack of connection between this policy and staff advancement.

Create an enabling and engaging work environment

12. ISAU takes note of the review of performance management but stresses that rationalization alone is not synonymous with fairness and justice. We continue to deplore, however, the lack of connection between performance evaluation and career management. The progress announced does not seem to us to be capable of reducing the feeling of arbitrariness that many colleagues express to the staff associations. In the light of this, we reiterate our request for a 360° assessment, which should include an evaluation of the ability of supervisors to value their staff and to establish a dynamic and supportive work environment.

13. ISAU considers it urgent to introduce an effective staff well-being framework, while stressing that it must not be limited to flexible working or occupational health. Spaces dedicated to well-being, which we have been calling for for years, should be established on the Fontenoy site, where all the staff work. We also insist on the fact that there can be no progress in this matter without a sincere consultation with the staff associations, which are competent to deal with these matters.

14. In view of the current situation, ISAU hopes that the Organization will be able to analyse in depth the experience of teleworking resulting from the measures taken relating to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and its subsequent lifting. While it is undeniable that the pandemic has imposed major constraints, and has perhaps reduced the Organization's capacity to deliver its expected results, it is nevertheless true that the staff has shown great adaptability in pursuit of professional efficiency. This is an opportunity to change the business culture of the Organization towards increased efficiency in terms of objectives, as well as savings and office space management.

Geographical distribution and gender parity

15. Our comments on geographical distribution and gender parity have been submitted separately in document 209 EX 5.III.B Add.