

6 July 2020

Mr Chairperson of the Finance and Administrative Commission (FA),
Distinguished representative of the Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

As Acting President of the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU), I am honoured to address you at the Executive Board's first session of the biennium. ISAU has always taken the approach of positive and constructive dialogue to deal with the difficulties encountered by our Organization.

I take this opportunity to commend the work accomplished by all colleagues at Headquarters and in the Field to ensure that UNESCO responds to the challenges posed by the global health crisis, providing rapid solutions in its fields of competence.

Freedom of expression, dialogue and transparency are the foundations on which our Organization is built. ISAU deplores the fact that the Administration has decided unilaterally to withdraw from the two staff associations the possibility of sending emails to all representatives of Member States via the global list that we had been using until now. This decision prevents us from communicating effectively with Member States and contravenes the request of the General Conference, which had recalled the need for the Administration to maintain good relations with the staff associations.

In my statement, I will address **five points** essential to personnel management and the Organization's major strategic directions.

1. Geographical distribution

We have for years deplored the persistent imbalances in geographical distribution in posts subject to this distribution as well as in Project Appointment (PA) and temporary posts. These imbalances are to the benefit of nationals of one group. Moreover, the tables we have provided in our written comments show that the proportion of Group 1 nationals in non-geographical posts is much higher and that with a weighting system, the same imbalances remain, a sign that these imbalances run deep. How can the world and its cultural diversity be represented when UNESCO's staff does not reflect it?

We welcome the publication of information on non-geographical posts but regret that the information provided by the Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) is not as precise and does not provide Member States with a clear picture of the problems relating to geographical distribution.

2. Recruitment

We continue to call for the genuine involvement of HRM, whose role at present is limited to simply supporting the sectors in the recruitment process rather than truly managing recruitment and careers.

The disconnection between the policies adopted by HRM and the reality of recruitment practices is also evident in the fact that there is no correlation between evaluations and advancement, nor is there any connection between the training policy and advancement, which formally consists of the internal recruitment of staff.

3. Training and development

ISAU is pleased that a budget of \$671,300 has been allocated to staff **training and development**. We would like HRM to ensure that this system is effectively managed alongside the sectors in order to help improve staff performance and advancement.

4. Mobility

ISAU commends the work of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS), whose conclusions and recommendations, which we endorse, 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 detached from functional mobility; this dual mobility should be taken into account in the reform of the field offices. Furthermore, it seems to us sensible that mobility should essentially be the responsibility of the sectors, which are better able to assess their needs at Headquarters and in the field and to organize the geographical and functional mobility of staff on the basis of that assessment.

5. Work environment

ISAU invites the Administration to analyse in depth the experience of teleworking resulting from the measures taken relating to the pandemic lockdown and its subsequent lifting. While it is undeniable that the pandemic has meant major constraints, it has in no way prevented the Organization from surpassing itself to achieve the expected results. The staff demonstrated a great capacity to adapt with efficiency and professionalism. This is an opportunity to change the culture of the Organization and to reflect on the well-being, welfare and health of UNESCO's staff.

In conclusion, I should like to inform you that ISAU, which holds the posts of Vice-President and Executive Secretary of the United Nations International Civil Servants' Federation (UNISERV), will continue to work closely with the entire United Nations family and in particular with the work of the International Civil Service Commission in the interests of all staff members at Headquarters and in the field.

Thank you for your attention.