



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Two hundred and twelfth session

212 EX/5.III.C Add.

PARIS, 11 October 2021
Original: French

Item 5 of the agenda

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

PART III

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

ADDENDUM

COMMENTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

SUMMARY

C. Sustainability of the field network

Pursuant to item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) submits its comments on management issues (document 212 EX/5.III.C).

1. On the basis of the document provided, the reform of the field offices seems to have been conceived solely from the point of view of field office management, without consultation with human resources, let alone staff associations. It should be noted, for the sake of pragmatism, that a structural reform of this magnitude cannot achieve a satisfactory result if it does not take into account, from the outset, matters concerning human resources and staff. ISAU also wishes to reiterate that there is a need for management to regularly consult with staff associations on these points, in a transparent manner and in good faith.

2. In paragraph 9, for example, the reform principles listed under "Competency" only address the issue of human resources training for field managers. Apart from the fact that one may wonder why field managers would have more specific needs in this area than managers based at Headquarters, one might also wonder about the absence, in this passage and in the document as a whole, of any reflection on or reference to mobility policy. The same paragraph refers to a "clear and coherent decentralization policy of human and financial resources to the field across the sectors". Why mention only movement towards the field offices? Such an assertion is shocking given that it is not connected to an integrated and effective mobility policy. It would appear that there is no



Job: 202103428

communication between the Bureau of Human Resources Management (ADM/HRM) and the Field Coordination Unit. Let us not forget that working in silos is always detrimental to efficiency and detrimental to staff, who are treated here as a veritable adjustment variable. To emphasize this, it suffices to note that ADM/HRM has included in its future work the adaptation of its strategy to the office reforms, which sounds like a clear admission that these reforms are being developed without extensive consultation or any real strategic coherence.

3. Paragraph 15 refers to the possibility of financing new transversal functions either through extrabudgetary funds or the redeployment of staff. However, this hypothesis makes no reference to any mobility plan. Given the central role that these additional functions are expected to play in the reform of the field offices, one may wonder about the extent to which this issue has been prepared for. Without a link to the mobility policy, the allocation of these posts is likely to be problematic.

4. In general, the reform as envisaged will strengthen the regional offices. ISAU needs to know what management plans to do about staff management and the need to ensure that the directors of regional offices do not grant themselves unwarranted prerogatives in respect of the staff reporting to them. If the reform puts an emphasis on reviewing the reporting lines between field offices and Headquarters, it will also be necessary to ensure that information mechanisms are established upstream. For example, should decentralized control procedures not be integrated from the outset in the area of ethics? In view of the key role that the regional offices are called upon to play, we also ask that consideration be given to taking the regional representation of staff associations into account, which will undoubtedly make it possible to ensure free-flowing dialogue on a strategic level.