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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 FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

SUMMARY

B. Use of non-staff contracts including those for consultants, over the period 2019-2020

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 212 EX/5.IV.B).

1. The International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) must admit that it is divided on the Bureau of Human Resources Management's (ADM/HRM) report on the use of non-staff contracts. On the one hand, the report contains a certain amount of information on progress that we consider to be positive and that we wish to see continue, in particular with regard to the geographical distribution of non-staff personnel and the limiting of the number of retired staff hired, matters which often reveal a lack of management and planning. On the other hand, it also raises questions about the quality and relevance of the information provided to us. Although document 212 EX/5.IV.B is relatively detailed, it is striking to note that aside from its updated figures, some its passages reproduce sections of document 207 EX/5.IV.A (2019) almost word for word. This type of practice seems to indicate a relative lack of interest on the part of ADM/HRM in matters relating to non-staff contracts.

2. The issue of non-staff contracts is, however, important since, as the document notes, the holders of such contracts account for 49% of UNESCO's total workforce in full-time equivalent (FTE) terms. We must reiterate our request that management provide us with a summary document that would give the Organization's stakeholders an overall view of Professional category posts, project appointments (PAs) and non-staff personnel. In short, we need an analysis that includes all the



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people who actually work for the Organization, particularly from the standpoint of geographical distribution and gender equality, as well as that of distribution at Headquarters and the field offices.

3. We would like to underline once again the need to regularize the status of our colleagues who have been employed on temporary contracts for a long time, and who are therefore in a precarious situation. We must emphasize that we are talking about regularization for the benefit of the persons concerned and not against them, as was seen a few years ago when management simply dismissed a large number of employees so that it would no longer need to report on them to Member States. We must remember that these people are hired on a long-term basis because they perform essential functions for the Organization. They are therefore entitled to be offered regular staff member contracts, particularly since they are very regularly evaluated. If they are not regularized, that means that the Organization has failed to optimize the management and planning of its staffing needs.

4. For this reason, we should ask ourselves whether the significant number of service contracts, which are meant to address unforeseen circumstances, is not another reflection of faulty personnel management, since it is based on the absence of needs forecasting and resource planning. Here we find the same problems that both ISAU and the Internal Oversight Service (IOS) have pointed out several times, concerning the insufficient involvement of ADM/HRM in recruitment. We therefore expect more from ADM/HRM in terms of both recruitment and contracts for non-staff personnel.

5. Nevertheless, we must express our concerns about this matter. With regard to updating the policy on service contracts, we note that management is merely repeating exactly the same statements made in document 207 EX/5.IV.A. In 2019, ADM/HRM had announced that it would publish the policy in question before the end of 2019. However, no justification for the delay in publishing this policy has been provided.

6. With regard to the lack of progress on the part of management, we do not understand how the lack of progress in the inter-agency discussions currently under way has impeded ADM/HRM from starting its work on a short- and medium-term policy on the use of non-staff personnel, as required by 202 EX/Decision 5.IV.A. It should be noted that, at the 207th session, ADM/HRM had stated that inter-agency discussions were already under way. It should also be noted that while there is a certain vagueness surrounding this issue, ADM/HRM cannot use this as an excuse to delay its compliance with the obligations that have been undertaken before the Member States.