



14 October 2021

Mr Chairperson,  
Representative of the Director-General,  
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I wish to express ISAU's gratitude for this opportunity to address the Executive Board on behalf of the staff we represent. I must insist on this right of expression, which is enshrined in our Basic Texts, as for some time now, we have been subjected to renewed attempts by management to limit this right to present to you the views of UNESCO staff on matters of direct concern to them. The technical ability to send bulk emails to delegations has already been removed, and just recently, we have had difficulties with the publication of our comments, which deal directly with staff management. These administrative manoeuvres seem to be designed to avoid any discussion; they do not honour the ethics of debate and consensus, which must remain the foundation of the working methods of our Organization.

We must also express our regret that our speaking time has been cut in half at this session of the Executive Board, as we can only speak before the FA Commission, whereas previously we could also speak before the joint meeting of the PX and FA Commissions. Yet the joint meeting addresses human resource issues such as the strategic transformation and the sustainability of the field network.

I must remind you that the interests of the staff associations are those of UNESCO; we are always willing to discuss matters in an open and constructive manner. Our disagreements with management are always limited to specific points, and we know how to recognize the progress made when it leads to a better UNESCO. We therefore welcome management's efforts in the area of staff welfare, for example concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccination campaign, flexibility in the postponement of annual leave, facilities offered for teleworking and the provision of a room for sporting activities. However, we stress that well-being depends above all on the serenity of the staff, which depends in turn on sound and fair management. However, we sense a growing frustration and lack of motivation among our colleagues, which often stems from the fact that professional careers are developing in an arbitrary manner and that there is no real human resources management policy in this area.

This lack of involvement on the part of ADM/HRM is regularly observed in recruitment, the decisive phases of which are almost entirely in the hands of the sectors, leaving ADM/HRM with only an ex-post compliance-monitoring role. In the eyes of our colleagues, this often results in a lack of transparency. Some stagnate at the same grade for years, sometimes decades, without seeing the experience and expertise they acquire recognized, while others are promoted several times over relatively short periods. Competence does not always seem to be the primary criterion for promotion. The same applies to reclassifications, which appear to be made in an arbitrary manner, in the absence of clear criteria. We also see temporary contracts, Project Appointments (PAs) and

consultants stagnating for many years in the precariousness of their status, even though they have proven their value to the Organization.

From this point of view, we do not hesitate to say that there is a performance management crisis in our Organization. We see, too, that the new performance management policy will increase the power of supervisors, and we have concerns about its potential abuse. We ask therefore that a transparent evaluation of this new policy be carried out within a year, involving the staff associations, in order to draw lessons from the findings and make any necessary revisions.

Transparency is the key to any staff policy, if it is to be effective and fair. We have pointed this out regularly on the subject of mobility. We note, moreover, that on the eve of the next mobility exercise, the sectors have already initiated circumvention manoeuvres aimed at excluding certain posts and colleagues, whether transferred or promoted; this raises suspicions of favouritism. In such cases, when questioned, management simply invokes the decision-making authority of the Director-General.

We stress that the mobility policy cannot be separated from the management of field offices. The proposed reform cannot be expected to be effective if it does not have the support of the staff. The new reform increases the role of the regional offices and the prerogatives of the heads of offices in human resources management. However, this increased delegation of authority is not accompanied by any guarantees that decisions will be taken in a transparent manner. The reform of the regional offices must include greater involvement not only of ADM/HRM but also of the Ethics Office, whose decentralized role should be considered in this regard.

To conclude, I would like to express my support for the conclusions and recommendations of your working group to ensure a more balanced geographical distribution of staff, and the remuneration of trainees.

Thank you for your attention.