



Executive Council

101st session
Medellín, Colombia, 13 September 2015
Provisional agenda item 3

CE/101/3
Madrid, 17 August 2015
Original: English

Report of the Staff Association

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared by the UNWTO Staff Association. The Staff Association was established in 1977¹ and represents, in 2015, about 80% of the staff. Its objectives are, among others, to protect and defend the collective and individual rights and interests of its members, as well as to put forward proposals to the UNWTO Governing Bodies and the Secretary-General on policies relative to the staff and their welfare.

2. This report is intended to give a brief summary of the main items or areas that have been of particular interest and concern to the Organization's staff as well as implications to the successful well-being and harmonious functioning of the Secretariat as a whole, its working environment and its service to Members.

II. Advances and Priorities

3. At the outset, UNWTO staff recognise that it is an honour and a privilege to work for the UN system in general, and, for UNWTO in particular. Spreading the ideals and principles of the United Nations: eradication of poverty, equitable development for all, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and, the promotion of international peace and understanding, and, working to develop and promote tourism as an engine for socio-economic development and creation of sustainable livelihoods while contributing to the protection and conservation of the world's immense natural and cultural heritage – makes our work meaningful.

4. However, given that UNWTO has adopted a policy of zero nominal growth in terms of staff costs for the past years, we have faced, and continue to face, certain constraints in human and financial resources as we are stretched to do more with less, thereby running the risk of undermining the quality of services provided to Members.

5. At the same time, the Organization has been gradually harmonizing its working conditions with those of other UN agencies. While progress has been made in a number of areas, there are still some

¹ The UNWTO Staff Association is a member of the International Federation of International Civil Servants' Association (FICSA) since 1989.



outstanding issues which are also reflected in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in 2014 (JIU/REP/2014/5).

6. In this regard, the biggest gap which UNWTO faces with respect to other UN organizations is the **lack of an official policy on flexible working arrangements**. This was particularly highlighted in the 2014 JIU report. The Staff Association is firmly convinced that the introduction of a formal policy on flexible working arrangements would facilitate staff to better manage their human and time resources, especially taking into account the prolonged enforcement of zero nominal growth in staff costs.

7. Another issue which impacts on the quality of membership services provided by staff is the need to **develop an improved training programme for staff**. Investment in training of staff is investment in the quality of membership service. Although UNWTO has a budget for training, this is focused mainly on improving language and information technology skills. The Staff Association submitted a proposal in 2013 for the provision of intensive training programmes on a range of technical topics. It advocated the use of the UNWTO Knowledge Network and other affiliate members and consultants to provide this training – a recommendation which also appears in the JIU 2014 report. In addition, many staff members are pursuing advanced university degrees at their own initiative. The Staff Association is currently working on a proposal to develop a study policy which includes flexible working arrangements and leave options to facilitate staff who wish to improve their knowledge and skills in order to better fulfil their tasks and responsibilities. It will also update the 2013 proposal for training given that no action has been taken by Management in this regard.

8. In terms of gender distribution within the Organization, as per the Human Resources Report submitted at the 100th session of the Executive Council in May 2015 (CE/100/5(f)), approximately 62% of UNWTO staff are women. However, while there is parity between men and women in the Professional category, the number of women in General Service category practically doubles the number of men. **This implies that the majority of men in the Organization are Professional staff while the majority of women are General Service staff**. Furthermore, while several women have been promoted to P4 level and above in the last two years, it is still a fact that the senior management team is entirely composed solely of men.

9. One of the most significant achievements in the recent past was the introduction of the **Professional Growth Plan** which provides the framework for career advancement within the Organization. This included the formulation of generic job profiles. In its fourth year of implementation, the Staff Association identified a number of issues to be addressed which can be summarised as follows:

- Recommend that any new positions are advertised and filled through a competitive recruitment process in cases of reorganization of the organizational structure or reclassification of posts by the Secretary- General.
- When filling a post “in the Director and Principal Officer category”, (i.e. P5 or above) the Secretary-General is encouraged to apply rule 15(a) of the staff regulations by carrying out a competitive and transparent selection process. By doing so, he will secure “the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity” for these **key posts of the Secretariat** and ensure equal rights of application among staff.

10. The Staff Association is pleased to inform Members of the Secretary-General's agreement to comply with these recommendations in the implementation of the Professional Growth Plan.

11. Another issue of concern is the growing and extended use of collaborators who now number close to 50 (including interns) and represent approximately 40% of the entire UNWTO workforce. While

collaborators are usually recruited for short-term projects or activities, many have been hired for core administrative functions and have been providing core services for extended periods of time – in many cases, for over four years. The Secretary-General is in the process of standardizing the recruitment process of collaborators including limiting their contractual period in the Organization. However, it must be stated that there are Programmes who rely heavily on collaborators to provide core services, and, as indicated in the JIU report, **it is recommended that long-standing temporary employees should either be given fixed-term contracts or their temporary contracts should not be renewed.**

12. Amongst its many functions, the Staff Association strives to assist the Organization to achieve its objectives while ensuring the efficient functioning of the Secretariat. The cordiality of relations between staff and Management is strong and the Staff Association would also like to note its satisfaction in the recruitment of the new Chief of Human Resources who has already put into place innovative human resource practices in the Organization.

13. The ultimate objective of the Staff Association is to facilitate the creation of a conducive work environment where the staff can provide the best possible services to our Members.

III. Actions to be taken by the Executive Council

14. The Executive Council is invited to recommend to the Secretary-General:
- (a) To formulate a comprehensive policy of flexible working arrangements in line with UN practices and policies and in compliance of the 2014 JIU report;
 - (b) To implement a thematically diverse training programme for the Staff within the available financial resources so as to enhance their expertise and, thereby, the quality of service to the Members;
 - (c) To review the growing number of collaborators who perform core activities;
 - (d) To encourage the elaboration and implementation of a gender equality and empowerment of women policy for the Organization as proposed by the United Nations System; and
 - (e) To continue with the implementation of the Professional Growth Plan.