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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

CABINET DU SECRETAIRE GENERAL

5 July 2023

Dear Mr. Germain,

I am writing in response to your memorandum dated 21 May 2023, regarding the report of the Staff-Management Committee XI, which was held in Brindisi from 24 to 29 April 2023.

It is my pleasure to convey to you that the Secretary-General has approved the report, noting the constructive and collaborate spirit of the meeting and the unanimous adoption of the report. He has taken note, with appreciation, of the many agreements reached, particularly on initiatives to improve the staff selection system and the rostering process, as well as ways to streamline and simplify the management of contracts. He has noted that the Committee continues to address previous agreements reached by the SMC, as evidenced by the number of agreements that continue to be closed as action is taken.

The Secretary-General has carefully reviewed the areas where agreements were not reached, and has indicated his decisions as follows:

Staff selection: The Secretary-General has noted the two disagreements from Staff representatives under this item. First, on concerns from staff with the proposal to introduce flexibilities to facilitate the selection process by the Hiring Manager, the Secretary-General supports such flexibilities through the use of advance technologies, tools and services throughout the process, where this can enhance the timeline, transparency and quality of the selection process. Second, on Staff representatives' disagreement regarding the Hiring Manager's authority to establish the selection panel, the Secretary-General feels that there are sufficient safeguards in place and this authority must remain with the Hiring Manager, who is overall accountable for the proper management of the process.

Mr. Louis Germain  
President  
Staff-Management Committee  
New York

Resubmission of job applications: While noting the concerns of Staff representatives regarding mistakes made during the process of applying for jobs in the Inspira system, it is critical that applicants take the utmost care to ensure that such applications are correct upon submission. The Secretary-General is not supportive of allowing such applications to be withdrawn and resubmitted as it may affect the integrity of the process and emphasizes that all applicants must be treated equally. The Administration has committed to providing further guidance to staff members that it is advisable to submit one correct application closer to the closing date of the vacancy, than an early application which will not be looked at until the closing date.

Rosters: The Secretary-General has carefully reviewed the Staff representatives' disagreements with the proposals to: 1) put in place roster management procedures; 2) retain candidates on rosters for an established length of time; and 3) put in place criteria for assessing roster health (including gender, geographic diversity and age). The Secretary-General is supportive of these proposals as they will make the rosters more relevant and useful for the workforce planning needs of the Organization. On the Staff representatives' disagreement with the proposal to discontinue existing roster memberships after three years (five years for female members), the Secretary-General notes the concern of the Staff representatives and has decided that the existing roster memberships will rather be discontinued after four years (six years for female members). The Secretary-General has underscored the importance of having rosters that are trusted by managers and staff alike, and that remain current and fit-for-purpose. He has therefore further decided that the discontinuation of roster memberships should be accelerated and, therefore, as of the date of issuance of the policy, the staff members who have had roster memberships dating back four or more years (for male) and six or more years (for female) will have their roster membership discontinued.

Medical Director conflict of interest: The Secretary-General has noted the concerns of Staff representatives around the actual or perceived conflict of interest on the part of the Medical Director when conducting occupational safety risk assessments given the role of the Medical Director as Medical Adviser to the Advisory Board for Compensation Claims. However, the Secretary-General supports the management position that there is no actual or perceived structural conflict of interest on the part of the Medical Director when performing these functions, nor that mitigation measures are needed in this regard.

Management of appointments: The Secretary-General has noted the three disagreements from Staff representatives under this agenda item. First, regarding Staff representatives' disagreement with the increased use of fixed-term appointments limited to an entity, the Secretary-General has noted that such limited appointments are already part of the existing policy framework. Provided that they are used for time-limited functions only, he is supportive of the management position. Second, on Staff representatives' disagreement with the proposal to remove eligibility restrictions for United Nations Volunteers applying for temporary job openings, the Secretary General is of the view that UNVs constitute an important talent pipeline for the Organization and therefore should not be restricted in applying to TJOs.

Third, regarding Staff representative's disagreement with the proposal to institute a streamlined performance management process without rebuttal for future probationary periods, the Secretary-General reaffirmed that the establishment of such a probationary period is a key reform commitment. He has indicated, however, that in cases of separation due to an unsatisfactory probationary period, the staff member may submit a statement to the Head of Entity to be considered at the time of decision making.

Information technology: While Staff representatives have requested the establishment of an SMC working group on issues related to information technology frameworks, data privacy and personal data protection, the Secretary-General has noted that these issues have been discussed in previous SMC meetings, and that it was agreed that ICT issues would be placed on the SMC agenda as a standing item. As such, it was felt that such a working group would not be appropriate at this time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Rattray", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

E. Courtenay Rattray  
Chef de Cabinet

cc: Ms. Pollard  
Ms. Lopez