

EB131 (28-9 May, 2012)

Item 7.1 Statement by WHO Staff Associations

The [Statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations \(EB131/INF.DOC./1\)](#) was read by the representative. The following discussion ensued.

KENYA: Struck by one element of the statement. Why the large number of consultants? Is it because WHO has lost its experts?

Secretariat's Response, (Dr. Chan, DG): thanks EB members for given so much time to the staff rep to articulate their views. Also it is important for me to give you more info on how we work with our staff. At the outset, let me make my gratitude clear to the staff of WHO for the understanding and maturity during this difficult time. As was said by the President, mgt has an open door policy to discuss with them; I meet with them all the time, and my ADG meets with them occasionally. Also Director for HR meets with them all the time. Consultation and listening happens but most of the time, we listen to so many countries that some of their views are not heard. Since this is a MS driven process it is not only the staff but also the managers. Sometimes we are also not happy when our suggestions are not taken but I like to assure you that our staff association is very vibrant in this organization. It sits on all appointments of this organization to ensure due process is followed.

Annually, all Staff Assns from HQ and regions hold a three day retreat. The org supports the work of the staff association up to half a million dollars a year. That also affects the association. Regarding the internal justice system, we have the whistleblower policy, ombudsman, boards of appeal, and ILO tribunal. All of these channels can be used. I agree with the staff system that the speed of this system is not good. I'm happy to hear from staff association about suggestions. We can learn from other UN agencies here in Geneva.

Regarding the downsizing, the roadmap consisted of post-holders, independent experts, directors of affected departments and staff associations to make sure that the down-sizing is done in a fair, transparent manner. Downsizing is being done because of the financial gap eg Human Resource Dep't and TDR are impt but had to go down. Part of the reason downsizing is required is that if funds come earmarked, I can't shift them. There's a 4 billion budget for every 2yrs and the DG cannot move more than 6m around.

APW staff are used for short-term consultancies, eg during the assembly; mainly for time-limited assignments, for expertise we don't have in-house, and for some of our collaborating centres in your countries. It is cheaper than using salaried staff. Average contract duration is 3months. I do agree that we need to review all ABWs, and I know the regional directors are doing so too.

Let me remind all my colleagues that the financial crisis facing this organization is real. We will do our best but call on our MS to do their part too. We are asked to do more with less; and this cannot continue forever. If it does, either the quality will come down or my staff will go down. I don't want either.

On the subject of appeals, lets be honest. It is the right of those losing their jobs to appeal. Most of them are not happy and I am not happy either. If their contracts were

renewed, there would be fewer appeals. Are staff committed? Yes, but I agree with the rep that we need more accountability. We have heard about the laxity in this house.

I have zero tolerance for sexual harassment, and that is a problem. In future I'll refer all such cases to the police; I don't have the capacity to do other than that. There are other harassments also. The proportion of staff that meets all expectations is wonderful. So too is the proportion that exceed expectations. This is a problem. Our staff are used to praise... and not used to constructive criticism. No staff, including the DG, is perfect. We are now making changes in our performance appraisal system (to a 180 degree peer review). We are getting ready for 360.

I promise to have an open door policy; and to do whatever within the organization but i have to be honest, I cannot meet all the expectations. I'll meet with them and come back to you (the EB).

On the points from the UK. I have town hall meetings with all staff of this organization. I want staff to hear from me personally. I hope that the financial situation will help provide more certainty to my staff. The Director for Human Resources is in regular touch with all staff.

Chair: Statement Noted