

Statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations

Mr Chairman, honourable members of the Executive Board, Director-General, Regional Directors, colleagues,

1. On behalf of the staff associations of WHO in the regions, at headquarters, and in IARC, we would like to congratulate Dr Margaret Chan for her election as the Director-General of WHO. We pledge our support and collaboration and express our commitment to working together to achieve the mission of the Organization. Within the framework of the Organization's mandate, we are prepared to engage in any dialogue that might be helpful to optimize operation and maximize resources for the smooth running of the Organization.
2. We would like to express our gratitude to the Executive Board for taking time to listen to the concerns of staff. As elected representatives of staff members of WHO worldwide and at IARC, we are very conscious of our role. In considering the conditions of employment, as well as in all matters related to staff welfare, we will do our best to make sure that each process is in conformity with the principles set forth in the WHO Constitution, Staff Rules, Staff Regulations, and all other provisions applicable to the staff.
3. In relation to the institutional integrity framework, we recognize that very important steps have been taken. We agree that it is important to establish and define an institutional framework. We believe that any outcome must ensure due process, fairness, and staff rights; we are committed to helping in the process of developing the instruments required in a comprehensive manner. We wish to point out that the complexity and interdependency of this mechanism and the number of actors and instruments require a holistic and comprehensive legal framework in order to define the domains, roles and interaction between the various participants.
4. In general, the staff associations are supporting this process and will make useful contributions along the way to institutionalize due process and set standards to improve the Organization's accountability and transparency. We would like to emphasize that, in addition to our interest to enhance and foster a culture of strong ethics, it will be important to have an open and consultative process on how the Organization is planning to facilitate channels to present complaints, while maintaining confidentiality during the investigation process and protecting staff against possible retaliation. This integrity system must also have a training programme in place to develop awareness, and must promote changes in behaviour and a code of ethics across the Organization. A communication plan is needed for all the staff in WHO, at global, regional and country levels to ensure the equal access of staff to these new mechanisms, services and legal resources.
5. We are pleased that the efforts of the International Civil Service Commission to streamline the United Nation's common system's administration of contracts have resulted in a framework which will help prevent the continuing use of "second class" contracts and ensure that staff will get equal pay

for equal work. All fixed-term posts – or, said in another way, all functions expected to continue for at least 12 months – will thus be included in the Organization’s human resource plan.

6. The question of rotation and mobility has been discussed for a number of years. Although staff welcome the effort to improve career development through rotation, it is important that such moves contain an added value not just for staff but also for the Organization. We look forward to receiving more information about the rotation and mobility communication campaign which is to be implemented, so that all staff are made more aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of the new policy. As already mentioned in our discussions in the Global Staff/Management Council, much advocacy needs to be done for staff to see rotation and mobility as a possibility for real career development, and not – as is often the case, for mobility in particular – as a punishment. The planned mobility pilot scheme will be a good way for staff to understand how mobility works in practice and how it might be amended and improved in the future.

7. Rotation and mobility are just two elements of the global framework for career development which WHO is now introducing; we are looking forward to continuing discussions on how this may be further improved. There is still much work to be done on this issue, both within WHO and also within the United Nations common system, if more interagency mobility is to become a reality.

8. In order to improve Staff/Management relations in the regions, we would like the staff associations in the regions to have the opportunity to formally address our respective regional governing bodies, such as the regional committees. By doing so, the regional staff representatives will have the possibility to exercise their sense of responsibility, independence, integrity and freedom of expression as clearly stated by the International Civil Service Commission.

9. Last but not least, we would like to express our wish to have the resolutions taken during the eighth Global Staff/Management Council translated into action, and are looking forward to a fruitful collaboration with the new leadership and management.

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