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**STATEMENT BY THE ITU STAFF COUNCIL  
TO THE ITU COUNCIL WORKING GROUP  
3 FEBRUARY 2020**

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Mr Chairman,

Directors of the Radiocommunication Bureau and the Telecommunication Development Bureaux,  
Councillors,

Dear colleagues,

It is my honour to speak to you today behalf of the ITU Staff Council.

It may be February, but following the remarks of the Secretary-General, in the spirit of goodwill, please allow me to start my address by wishing you all, a slightly tardy but, very happy *and healthy* 2020.

With this meeting we are opening not only a new year in the work of the ITU Council, but also a new decade. A decade that will most likely define the future of our global society, packed with ambitious agendas aimed at building a better future for all, in particular the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which aspire to advance a sustainable future by 2030, and the Connect 2030 agenda, aiming at expanding connectivity to all, within ten years from now.

ITU has a key role to play in supporting the achievement of these two very important and ambitious global agendas.

To do this, the Union must be well equipped in terms of staff, tools and facilities in order to be able to provide you with the services that you -our membership- require to address the challenges and opportunities provided by digital transformation.

We are here to support you, to serve you, to enable you and to provide advice to you.

This is why today I am taking the floor to raise a few issues that ITU staff have communicated to us and that we would like to bring your attention, so that we can build the ITU that we all want, and need, together.

**1) An ITU that is inclusive and equitable.**

ITU, an institution that embodies the principles of the UN charter.

The ITU Staff Council is pleased to see that there has been progress here on many fronts, in particular in the areas of gender parity, multi-lingualism and diversity. However, there are still a

number of areas where ITU's policies are falling short of the mark and are still not aligned with the rest of the UN family. As is the case in areas such as the definition of family and the revision of the policies for maternity leave.

The ITU Staff Council would like to invite this session to launch a review of ITU policies in the agenda and to consider launching a process to produce specific recommendations on this matter for the consideration of the next session of the Council.

## **2) An ethical , fair and transparent ITU**

The ITU Staff Council welcomes the progress that has taken place during 2019, in relation to the fraud case. We are pleased, with the steps taken by the administration to ensure that ITU becomes a safe working environment with zero tolerance to unethical behaviour including harassment and abuse of authority.

We further count on the ITU Administration to continue this process and to embrace this principle across all levels, including efforts to educate and inform both staff and delegates, of appropriate behaviour and standards, while preserving the right to fair and transparent investigation procedures.

We invite this meeting to include in your discussions the need to reinforce and ensure the good coordination between the staff support services, such as the ethics officer, the staff counsellor, the mediators and the medical staff. We would also like to invite council delegates to consider the establishment of the role of an ombudsperson at ITU, to take on a pivotal role in resolving conflicts and concerns and to be able to provide an independent and impartial service, as is common practice in a number of other agencies of the UN.

Only by collaborating together in full transparency, fairness, integrity and honesty can we ensure that ITU staff continue their good work helping to safeguard the reputation of ITU.

## **3) An ITU that is agile, modern and efficient**

To achieve this, we need to focus on concrete actions aimed at attracting and retaining new talent, boosting the capacity of ITU staff and introducing working methods, principles and tools, such as flexible working arrangements, including teleworking, which as we are sure that you are aware is becoming more and more commonplace across the UN system, and beyond.

This is why the ITU Staff Council would like to bring your attention back to the HR Strategic Plan 2020-2023, which was endorsed by the 2019 Session of the Council. We were surprised to see that this issue was not included in the agenda of this meeting, and would recommend that it is made a permanent agenda item, so that progress in the implementation of this plan can be reported and assessed regularly.

We would also like to remind you of the proposal that we made at that session of the Council, to include a provision in the ITU financial regulations and budget to allocate 5 -10% of the eventual savings made in the annual budget, so as to further support the implementation of the HR strategy, in particular in the area of staff development.

Budget allocated to staff is not a cost, but an investment in the future of ITU. We invite you to reconsider this proposal at this meeting.

#### **4) An ITU that is equipped to perform its tasks and to welcome the world**

We appreciate and thank the decision of the delegates to include the ITU Staff Council in the development of the new building, we sincerely hope that this collaboration will strengthen and continue; the ITU Staff Council would welcome and appreciate attendance at the Management Board meetings that have been taking place on a regular basis. There is no doubt that the process towards the new building will be long and arduous, there will be many challenges ahead in the coming years, and many decisions to be taken, but the more that ITU staff are consulted, included and informed, the smoother the acceptance and adoption of the many changes they will experience, will be.

The ITU Staff Council has continued to be active in its effort in facilitating open discussions between the Elected Officials and staff, organising ITU staff information sessions, where all staff have been able to ask questions, and voice their concerns directly to the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General and key members of ITU involved in the planning of the new building. These sessions have enabled, misconceptions or presumptions to be addressed and helped to also create a dialogue where potential issues can be discussed and highlighted. New information sessions are already being planned for this year and we thank the Administration for welcoming and contributing to these, and other information sessions, wholeheartedly.

Dear Council members

We would like to conclude our remarks today by thanking you for your continuous support to ITU. Your commitment and the support of your administrations is the best indication that the world believes in the power of collaboration, dialogue and multilateralism.

We invite you to consider the proposals made by the ITU Staff Council, so that together we can set the foundations for a fruitful decade of ITU.

A decade in which we should not... and we will not, leave anyone behind in our ambitious but crucial endeavour of connecting everyone for a sustainable future by 2030.

Only by working together we will stand the best possible chance of fulfilling this vision.

Thank you very much for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a long horizontal line.

Maximillian Jacobson – Gonzalez  
President, ITU Staff Council