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| **Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources Fifteenth meeting – 11 and 12 January 2022** |  |
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|  | **Document CWG-FHR-15/18-E** |
| **26 December 2021** |
| **English only** |
| Contribution by Australia and Canada | |
| PERSONAL STATUS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ITU ENTITLEMENTS | |

**Introduction**

Australia and Canada are pleased to submit this contribution to the ITU Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources (CWG-FHR) for its discussion and consideration during its 11-12 January 2022 meetings. Australia and Canada support the ITU in empowering the spouses of all ITU staff, regardless of their gender or marital status, to receive entitlements under the ITU Staff Regulations.

Australia and Canada consider it of fundamental importance that the ITU recognise gender equality and parity amongst its staff and their spouses. If the ITU seeks to become a model organisation for gender equality and inclusivity in its promotion of its global activities, then it must also adopt the same approach in its workplace. To this end, Australia and Canada support the Secretariat’s proposal at the October 2021 CWG-FHR to replace the term “husband and wife” with “spouses” in the ITU Staff Regulations.

**Discussion**

Australia and Canada strongly encourage the use of gender-neutral language in the ITU documents, and allowing all ITU staff and their spouses, regardless of gender or marital status, to receive ITU entitlements.

Australia and Canada support the Secretariat’s proposal to replace the term “husband and wife” with “spouses” in Staff Regulations 3.12, article 2) a), in regard to personal status of staff members for the purpose of entitlements, and for the term “spouse” to be consistently applied throughout Staff Regulations and related rules.

Adopting such changes in Staff Regulations aligns with the United Nations (UN) System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, which includes recommendations on the use of gender-inclusive language. Other UN organisations including the UN Secretariat, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, IOM and IEAE have also integrated the term “spouses” into their Staff Rules and Regulations. The proposed change will align the ITU with other UN agencies, and will support gender equality and inclusivity by empowering the spouses of all ITU staff, to receive entitlements under the ITU Staff Regulations, regardless of their gender or marital status.

**Proposal**

Australia and Canada propose CWG-FHR adopt the Secretariat’s proposal from the October 2021 CWG-FHR to replace the term “husband and wife” with “spouses” in the ITU Staff Regulations as a matter of priority. This gender‑neutral language will ensure that the spouses of ITU staff, irrespective of their marital status or gender, can receive entitlements under the ITU Staff Regulations 3.12, article 2) a). Australia and Canada also support the term “spouse” being consistently applied throughout Staff Regulations and related rules.