|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Document CWG-FHR-20/INF/3** |
| **17 February 2025** |
| **English only** |
|  |  |

**ITU STAFF COUNCIL’S STATEMENT – CWG on FHR**

Distinguished Chair,
Honourable Delegates,
Esteemed Secretary-General and Elected Officials,
Dear ITU Colleagues,

Good morning,

Following the recent election of the ITU Staff Council and with the renewed confidence of my colleagues, it is both an honour and a privilege to continue representing ITU staff at this Council Working Group.

Our commitment to the success of the Union remains as strong as ever, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share our reflections on matters that shape not only the well-being of our staff but also the efficiency and resilience of the ITU itself.

**Digital Transformation & ITU’s Role- making Staff the most valued asset**

We are living in an era of global digital transformation, with AI and emerging technologies rapidly reshaping every sector of society. ITU’s role has never been more critical. Our Union stands at the forefront of efforts to connect the unconnected, set global standards, and ensure that the benefits of the digital revolution are shared by everyone.

To remain at the forefront of this rapidly evolving landscape, our future success depends not only on visionary leadership but also on a strong, skilful and motivated workforce. This makes staff ITU’s most valued asset to ensure the successful execution of ITU’s mandate and delivering on the expectations of our Member States. To sustain this momentum, it is imperative to address key challenges affecting the workforce and ensure that the Union’s human and financial resources align with the scale and complexity of our evolving mandate.

**Financial & Resource Challenges leading to organizational difficulties**

Over the years, the scope of ITU’s work has expanded significantly—reflecting the increasing demands and expectations of Member States in response to the fast-paced digital revolution. On the other hand, while our responsibilities have multiplied, our resources have not kept pace.

* The financial contributions to ITU have remained nearly unchanged in nominal terms for the last two decades.
* Inflation and rising operational costs have eroded our resources over time.
* The organization has implemented efficiency measures, but we now find ourselves in a situation where many core services rely on single-person teams.

This has placed strain on ITU staff, leading to higher stress levels, burnout and difficulties in addressing newly assigned tasks. The ongoing separation programs and staff reductions, while aimed at cost savings, are leading to critical workforce gaps and putting additional pressure on remaining staff to maintain service delivery.

**Staff Well-being & Work Environment**

It is against this backdrop that the Staff Council has repeatedly brought staff well-being to your attention. We continue to call for a renewed focus on ensuring the sustainability of our workforce—one that is both sufficiently resourced and adequately supported.

In previous statements, we have consistently highlighted concerns related to increasing workloads, work-life balance, career growth, and psychological safety. We are pleased to see that our voices have been heard.   We appreciate the senior leadership’s intention to address these issues, and we welcome the ongoing Staff Well-being Action Plan.

The recent Staff Engagement Survey—launched in early January with our involvement in both design and implementation—marks a key step toward establishing a baseline on which concrete measures can be built. We look forward to receiving the results and, more importantly, to seeing tangible outcomes that positively affect staff engagement and morale.

Areas such as recognition, rewards, and career development opportunities still remain pivotal. We know that a well-defined career path is vital for motivating staff across all grades—and particularly for retaining younger colleagues who often leave if they see limited prospects for progression.

We also notice an increased reliance on consultancy contracts to meet critical needs; in many cases, the requirements are neither temporary nor peripheral. Creating new posts to address emerging organizational tasks will strengthen ITU’s capacity in the long run and help foster a sense of stability, belonging, and dedication among our workforce. We need to ensure that essential roles are recognized and provided with the necessary long-term structures to support ITU’s expanding mandate.

**Engagement of the Staff Council**

As the Staff Council, we see ourselves as an active partner contributing to the betterment of this organization. Our role is to be the voice of staff, raising matters that require attention so that together, management, Member States, and staff can find constructive solutions.

We stand for the principles of transparency, efficiency, justice, and the rule of law—values that, I believe, all of us share. Our approach is proactive and solutions-focused, founded on reason and facts.

We view our involvement as a collaborative effort. When staff concerns are addressed in a thoughtful, equitable manner, the entire ITU community benefits, including our Member States and other partners.

With this mindset, we have been actively involved in major discussions, including:

* + The ITU Geneva Campus project, where we continue to provide input on how the project will impact staff working conditions and operational efficiency.
	+ The redesign of the internal justice mechanisms, particularly the four service orders under review. We hope and expect that our comments will be duly considered in the finalization of these important documents.

We welcome the opportunity to work closely with both senior management and Member States, and we are hopeful that our contributions will be taken into consideration in these processes.

Distinguished Delegates,

The ITU staff remain committed to fulfilling our Union’s mandate and serving our Member States. At a time when the world increasingly depends on digital technologies for education, health, business, governance, and more, we are deeply proud to play our part in creating an inclusive digital future for all.

Thank you for your continued trust and for allowing the Staff Council to share its voice in this important working group of the ITU Council.

We appreciate the engagement with the Member States and ITU senior leadership and look forward to continued interaction in shaping a stronger and more effective ITU.

Thank you very much.

Delivered on 17 February 2025, during the session of CWG on FHR by:
Mr. Onder Cetinkaya
President of the ITU Staff Council

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_