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Statement by the representative of the UNAIDS Staff Association

Document prepared by the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association

Additional documents for this item: *none*

Action required at this meeting: *none, this document is for information only*

Cost implications for decisions: *none*

INTRODUCTION

1. The UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association (USSA) welcomes this opportunity to address the Programme Coordinating Board, both as a mechanism to update the Board on the work of the USSA over the last year but also as a dialogue between staff and the Joint Programme's key stakeholders. 2007 was a busy year for the USSA as we set ourselves a number of challenging priorities:
 - Mobility and Rotation policy: the USSA worked closely with the administration on the revision of the existing mobility policy and provided a series of inputs on how to make the policy more understanding of, and adaptable to, the needs of UNAIDS staff members. The revised policy will be rolled-out in 2008 and the USSA will continue to follow its implementation closely.
 - Work Life Balance Policy: following an unsuccessful attempt to agree a policy in early 2007, the USSA has been working with the administration to identify the best mechanism to provide staff and management with a number of tools and options that would enable all colleagues to find balance between work and life priorities. The aim being to provide UNAIDS with a cadre of staff who are able to optimize their time at work in delivering quality products and services. This work will continue into 2008 with the production of a business-case highlighting the UNAIDS-specific need for such a policy. In the meantime staff are already able to request some flexibility in working and USSA supports such cases on an individual basis.
 - Environmental Policy: the USSA created the Geneva Environment Working Group with the aim to make UNAIDS more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. The Working Group's recommendations were presented to senior management and adopted as the UNAIDS' environmental policy. Issues addressed in the policy include: sourcing of office paper, printing, electricity usage, recycling, and, transportation issues including air travel. The administration is now leading on the implementation of this policy and is working with other UN organizations to ensure the adoption of best practice. Dissemination and awareness-building of the policy remains a priority for the USSA.

RESTRUCTURING OF THE SECRETARIAT

2. This was a difficult period for UNAIDS staff at Headquarters and the USSA is pleased to recognize that the administration agreed to two key requests from the Association: participation as full members of Department Implementation Teams; and, participation in meetings of the Management Support Team for restructuring discussions. The role of the USSA was to relay staff concerns and to promote equal and consistent treatment of staff throughout the process. Nearly all staff at Headquarters received new or updated job descriptions as a result of the process and a small number of colleagues were reassigned to new positions as a result of some jobs being abolished while new ones were created. The USSA pressed for maximum transparency in all processes and acted as a conduit to the administration for the concerns of staff affected by the restructuring.

WHO CONTRACT REFORM

3. Regrettably this continues to be an issue of ongoing concern for UNAIDS staff. UNAIDS was committed to implement contract reform at the same time as WHO on 1 July 2007 given that the majority of UNAIDS staff sit on WHO contracts (with much of the remainder – staff in the field – on UNDP contracts). A number of exceptions to WHO contract reform were proposed to WHO by the administration on specific issues related to UNAIDS. The USSA will continue to lobby for equity in contractual status for all staff, irrespective of which body administers such contracts.

UNAIDS GLOBAL STAFF MEETING

4. With the support of UNAIDS senior management the USSA organized a two-hour mandatory session for all UNAIDS Country Coordinators and Regional Support Team Directors on the UN Ethics and Code of Conduct. The session was introduced by the Executive Director and facilitated by the Ombudsperson, with the aim of helping our field leadership to better understand their duties and responsibilities as managers and supervisors of UN staff. A number of other information sessions were also organized and well attended. The USSA also ran an information kiosk with UN+ and provided a room for staff requesting confidential meetings with Executive Committee members.

SECURITY

5. The USSA condemns the attack on the UN offices in Algiers and, in particular, the senseless loss of a valued UNAIDS colleague. The Association is committed to working to increase recognition for, and alleviate the difficult situations of colleagues in the field. We are pleased that the administration recognizes the issues of the security of its staff as paramount and we will continue to work with management to ensure safe work environments for all.

WELCOME DEVELOPMENTS

6. In conclusion, the USSA would like to highlight two welcome developments in 2007. Firstly, in July a contract was signed to provide legal insurance, assistance and coverage to staff as and when required, and secondly, we are grateful to the administration for formalizing and funding participation of the USSA in all UNAIDS Regional Management Meetings. This is an important initiative that not only increases the outreach of the Association to all staff but also further legitimizes the role of the USSA in making UNAIDS an employer of choice.