

ANNEX

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
WIPO STAFF COUNCIL
TO THE WIPO COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Chairman, Director General,
Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on behalf of the staff of WIPO. I will go straight to our main concern:

Almost 25% of the staff at WIPO are working on quote, unquote “*short-term*” contracts. Most of these “short-term” colleagues have been employed at WIPO for at least five years, and in some cases as many as seven, eight, even nine. These long-term “short-term” staff do not enjoy the same level of benefits or degree of stability as their fixed-term counterparts. This uncertainty, instability and inequality of treatment serves neither the staff nor the Organization. We are asking that these colleagues now be given the stability that they and their families fully deserve.

We are sure that the Organization would benefit greatly by alleviating the frustration and the de-motivation inevitably caused by the long-term use of these contracts. Just to give some examples, our short-term colleagues do not receive in-grade steps or family allowance. It is hardly surprising then, that they question whether there is equal pay for equal work. There is no doubt that this issue contributes to tension in the workplace.

We ask for your full support on this extremely important issue and respectfully ask delegates to approve requests by the Administration to create regular posts for our long-serving colleagues.

Distinguished Delegates,

Over the last year a positive staff-management relationship has developed. Meaningful consultation led to the establishment of a new system of internal justice, including the long-awaited return of the Ombudsman position. Now that this system is in place, we need to build up confidence in its impartiality. We need to ensure that the relevant parties continue to have access to all necessary documentation, and that the system is flexible enough to be adapted to varying circumstances. For all this, strong staff-management relations and full consultation need to be maintained.

We cannot ignore two other factors when considering the success of the internal justice system. Firstly, the fact that short-term contractual arrangements undermine this process, since some colleagues, fearing for the renewal of their contracts, feel unable to speak out. Secondly, we lack and urgently require an effective management policy that would oblige every member of staff in a supervisory position to undergo basic managerial training.

Distinguished Delegates,

The staff and the management of WIPO face a difficult year with the desk-to-desk assessment to be completed in June 2007. A positive staff-management relationship is vital to a positive outcome to this exercise. This relationship must be characterized by better communication, stronger participation, greater transparency, a sense of teamwork and, perhaps above all, mutual respect. Only with full involvement and consultation with the staff will the desk-to-desk assessment bring an outcome that will be understood and accepted by staff. The Staff Council has an important role to play, and we ask that we are informed and consulted throughout.

We sincerely hope that the desk-to-desk assessment will not be used as a tool to put our careers and hence, our lives, on hold. The development of policies on the regularization of staff, the promotion of staff and an effective staff and career development program must not be held back as we await the results of the desk-to-desk assessment.

Finally, while the staff welcomes the development of a human resource strategy, we sincerely hope that the concept of “staff flexibility” is not merely a green light for “staff instability”.

I wish to thank you for according me, as President of the Staff Council, this opportunity to bring the feelings and perspectives of the staff to your attention.

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