|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Document CWG-FHR-17/INF-6** |
| **24 January 2024** |
| **English only** |
|  |  |

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

**24 January 2024**

Honourable Councillors,

Esteemed representatives of ITU Member States,

Secretary General, and Elected Officials

Dear ITU Colleagues,

I am grateful for this opportunity to represent the voice of ITU Staff Council and to echo the sentiments and aspirations of our staff, united in our dedication to our collective mission.

Our conversation today revolves around pivotal decisions that will shape the future of the Union. In the spirit of shared responsibility, I would like to offer a few reflections for your consideration.

Dear Councillors,

Regarding the new ITU building project, we recognize the importance of optimizing the use of our financial resources, which are, for the most part, contributions from Member States. It is with this understanding that we approach this project. We need to be conscious in our commitment to a project of this magnitude which will be paid back for many years to come.

Recognizing the need for secure, ergonomic, and adaptable workspaces within available financial means, a careful re-consideration of the current design appears necessary. As presented in document [**CWG-FHR-17/4**](https://www.itu.int/md/S24-CWGFHR17-C-0004/en)**,** a second viable option is now on the table and that merits our Councillors’ thoughtful elaboration.

From Staff’s point of view, the ideal design is the one that is practical and flexible enough to cater to the current and future needs of Member States, ITU management, and ITU staff members. Most importantly, the cost of the new building needs to match the existing financial resources, and not jeopardise the financial stability of the Union.

We, hence, count on your wise judgement in moving forward with the option of your choosing after careful elaboration amongst those presented to you during this Council Working Group meeting.

In terms of the interim business continuity arrangements during the construction phase, we recognize the importance of finding risk-based solutions that are efficient, least disruptive, and considerate of staff working conditions. The temporary measures should be designed to minimize any disruptions in our operations. Leveraging other available premises in Geneva, we trust that our headquarters can continue to be the central hub for meetings in the interim period.

Dear Councillors,

On the topic of organizational transformation and ongoing internal change initiatives, ITU staff remains committed to play a central role. We will keep advocating for transparent and clear consultative processes that incorporate diverse perspectives for the transformation of the Union. We believe staff’s views and contribution will build a momentum towards process improvement and enhanced service delivery to ITU Members.

Throughout this transformation process, staff also expects better opportunities for career development, career planning and growth - critical areas which have not been effectively addressed for a long time.

Dear Councillors,

The last topic I would like to touch upon today relates to the implementation of ICSC decisions. We, ITU staff, are grateful for the Council's wise decisions on this matter during the last session and we appreciate the Management's commitment to fulfilling its duty of care in compliance with the Union's contractual obligations.

We recognize that this period is a transition, and it is managed in coordination with the ICSC, member states, and sister UN agencies. The anticipated 12-month review by the ICSC will be a critical step towards hopefully aligning post-adjustment levels across all UN agencies for smoother implementation. Our heartfelt thanks go to our member states and ITU Senior Management for allowing us this transition period, thereby safeguarding our welfare. This decision was a reaffirmation of the mutual trust between staff, management, and membership. We believe that such decisions strengthen institutional trust and reinforce our organization's unity and resilience.

Dear Councillors,

As you deliberate the path forward for ITU, we thank you for considering the collective voice of staff. We strongly believe that open dialogue and collaboration are key to discovering solutions that preserve ITU’s financial stability and uphold our commitment to ITU membership.

You can count on us! Please count on our dedication to serving you, our commitment to the mandate of the Union and our understanding of the *raison d’etre* of this organisation.

I thank you all for your attention.

*Delivered on 24 January 2024, during the session of CWG on FHR, by*

*Mr Onder Cetinkaya*

*President of the ITU Staff Council*