



Date: 03 February 2021
Ref. No. S_UNION/21/02/0002

Madame Vera Songwe
Executive Secretary, UNECA

Dear ES,

Warm Greetings and Happy Near Year.

Following the ECA town hall of 21 January 2021, Staff Management Committee meeting of 27 January 2021, and the SG Town hall of 29 January 2021, we the Staff Union thought we should come back to you and alert you on some of the critical concerns of the staff members regarding the following:

1) Recruitment and Gender Parity Issue

- **JO No. 120456**, Deputy ES, Programme: You mentioned in the last town hall meeting, that the selected candidate had turned down the offer because the reluctance of the candidate's national government. Were there any other recommended candidates? including women candidates? If yes, why were they not considered for selection? particularly when the post has been vacant for over 2 years now?
- **JO No. 122342**, Chief of Staff: You mentioned in the town hall meeting that the selected candidate turned down the offer to take up another offer in a Bank. You also mentioned that you might have to go back to the market. However, the recruitment matrix circulated on 22 January 2021 mentions the status as "*Pending selection*". The Staff Union hopes you will make the right decision and select from the recommended candidates, especially if any of the recommended candidates are women.
- **JO No. 138765**, Chief of Section, African Climate Policy Centre: The recruitment matrix mentions the status of the JO as "*Pending selection*". The Director, TCND mentioned in the Divisional meeting that he is in discussion with you and you wanted a female candidate in the recommended list for the position.

You also mentioned in the townhall that you have some recommended candidates on your desk that you might have to return back because there is no woman on the list. We therefore assume that no female candidates were recommended for that post. ST/AI/2020/5 on Temporary special measures for the achievement of gender parity states that when one or more women candidates meet the requirements of the JO and the head of entity intends to select a male candidate, the head of entity shall submit a written analysis, with

appropriate documentation, indicating how the qualifications and experience of the male candidate, when compared to the qualifications of the JO, are clearly superior to those of the women candidates who were considered suitable. In the case of this JO, if no women candidates were recommended in the first place, this clause does not apply.

Why are the recommended male candidates not being considered for selection when you have selected male candidates before and recently?

- **JO No. 112219**, Economic Affairs Officer, MGD: The recruitment matrix mentions the status of the JO as “*Awaiting EOSG approval*”. EOSG approval means that you intend to select a male candidate when qualified and recommended female candidates are available. I can attest to this because I was personally involved in the CRB review of this case and I endorsed two candidates, one who was a female, internal candidate. The ST/AI/2020/5 speaks about providing opportunities to internal women candidates for TJOs. However, when an internal female candidate is recommended for a JO at the higher level, what could be reason not to select her? and instead select an external male candidate?

On one hand you intend to reject a recommendation because there is no woman on the list, on another hand when the internal woman candidate is recommended, you are seeking EOSG help to hire an external male candidate. How is your action speaking to gender parity in this case?

Quoting from Section 3 of ST/AI/2020/5 of 6 August 202 Selection

3.4 Entities that have not reached gender parity as per section 2.1 shall apply the temporary special measures in subparagraphs (a) through (c) below to selection exercises within the scope of section 3.1 whenever the entity is selecting a candidate to fill a job opening from either a list of candidates endorsed by a central review body, a competitive examination roster or a list of rostered candidates who applied for a job opening:

- (a) The job opening shall be filled by one or more women candidates on the list or the roster, provided that the women candidates meet the requirements for the job opening and that their qualifications are substantially equal or superior to those of the competing male candidates.
- (b) In accordance with staff regulation 4.4, the fullest regard shall be given to the qualifications and experience of women already in the service of the United Nations;
- (c) In evaluating women candidates, particular emphasis shall be given to their potential to perform at a higher level, although they may not have been offered such an opportunity in their prior service.

The ST/AI is very clear, and we hope it will be applied in the above mention case

- **JO No 108567**, Economic Affairs Officer, RITD/NEPAD: The recruitment status provided in the "Q & A No. 12 with the ES" of January 2021 mentions the status as "Awaiting selection decision". In this case again, I was part of the CRB review process, and we endorsed 2 women candidates and 2 male candidates, including internal candidates. We hope you select not only a woman candidate but also an internal for this JO.

As per the global secretariat gender parity data, ECA scores at 33% parity in the international positions, and is listed last amongst the 5 Regional Commissions.

Although the Staff Union is committed to supporting your efforts to close vacant positions and improve ECA's gender parity score, which later feeds into your compact, the inconsistency in the selection decisions is confusing – where women candidates including internal women are recommended, you seek EOSG nod to select male and even external candidates. Where only male candidates are recommended, you want to cancel and re-advertise.

2) **Lack of full-time Directors in SROs and important Divisions:**

Presently 2 Divisions at Addis Ababa (MGD and PCKMD) and 2 SROs (SRO-North Africa and SRO-Southern Africa) are without full-time Directors. A division such as MGD which is a central pillar of ECA's work does not have a full time Director and not a single Section Chief for any of the three Sections. This Division is the most poorly staffed one, only 5 full time professionals, whilst it is central to our work and the current staff are overworked and over stretched.

Similarly, the SROs are our representative offices in the sub-regions. While P5 staff is officiating as OICs, their positions have not been filled by other or by internal P4 staff. This would have a negative impact on the performance of the SROs, especially when they are expected to spear head the areas of specializations. Temporary P5 should be open where P5s are doing OIC jobs.

We have been approached massively by staff members about things happening at ECA which they don't understand and the situation is enduring.

We really hope you are using all the elements to your disposal to choose women candidates especially in cases where women are already recommended. Selecting a male candidate while a woman candidate is recommended and especially an internal woman candidate in this gender parity era, can stir up a lot of controversy in the organization.

We thank you for your kind attention and action to these matters.

Best regards



Mahamadou Nassirou Ba, President
ECA Staff Union