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UNESCO RECOMMENDATION

A Contribution of OTC to the Revision of the UNESCO 1974 “Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers”

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) considers revising her “Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers” adopted in 1974 at the UNESCO General Conference. In view of this, the Director-General has requested contributions from worldwide organizations. This request has been channelled by the World Federation of Scientific Workers to her affiliated organisations.

Responding to the request, the Board of Directors of OTC has prepared a paper to be sent to the President of the World Federation expressing the position of the association on a number of aspects that we believe should be taken into consideration in a new revised version of the said *Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers*.

For many member states, the document adopted in 1974, is up to date in several aspects, particularly with regard to: (i) scientific workers’ rights; (ii) relationship between science and the economy; (iii) relationship between science and policy; (iv) the unique specificity of scientific activity when compared to other professional activities; (v) some ethical and social aspects.

However, we emphasize that it is of major importance to strengthen and update the provisions of the "Recommendation" in line with the evolution of society and the world over the last forty years, so we can take full advantage of advances in scientific knowledge for the resolution of the large challenges facing humankind.

In this sense we list some aspects and issues that deserve a stronger reference or, not being present in the *Recommendation* should be mentioned therein, correspondingly to their importance: (i) reinforce the workers’ rights nowadays; (ii) the need to effectively combat the insecurity of scientific jobs for academics and researchers; (iii) the need for appropriate funding for science and technology activities; (iv) the rights to have the means to the appropriate material, in particular, adequate equipment and facilities; (v) the right to freedom of scientific research and creativity; (vi) the right and freedom to communicate, establish international collaborations and interact with peers of all nations; (vii) promote better education in science and technology, especially at the undergraduate level; (viii) promote scientists in the community as useful and active elements for the progress of humankind and the development of social welfare; (ix) the

protection of rights in health, social security and the right to have a fair salary; (x) promote equal working opportunities for men and women and for all nations.

When revising the *Recommendation*, the OTC thinks that it should also be emphasized that the scientific workers have duties and responsibilities to accomplish, such as those linked to the moral and ethical issues in research activities, combatting scientific fraud, among others. It should be considered the exceptional nature of the scientific research and the importance of the adoption and implementation of the UNESCO recommendations, by the member States, giving them the support of law in their respective national legislation.

Additionally, some of our views go towards updating the *Recommendation* on the following: (i) the right for researchers to have access to the internet at work, an essential working tool at present; (ii) the right to have online access to the scientific information produced worldwide; (iii) the adoption of evaluation criteria to correct the harmful effects of uncritical and immoderate use of bibliometric sources in evaluating the quality of scientific work; (iv) promote performance evaluation and the possibility to change in their scientific careers; (v) the recognition that research fellows are scientific workers; (vi) to underline the importance of promoting public participation (society stakeholders) in the scientific activity; (vii) the need for an adequate planning in the creation of scientific employment and opportunities to avoid stagnation situations; (viii) promotion of R&D staff renewal in the research institutions; (ix) discouraging the "perpetual research fellowships" as a source of inexpensive labour in scientific research that is easily disposable; (x) highlight the respect for the environmental protection and biodiversity in research activities; (xi) to ensure uniform mobility and hosting conditions to develop scientific activities; (xii) the recognition of the right to establish international cooperation for the progress of humankind.

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