



10 August 2021

**ILO Recognition Awards. Why the ILO Staff Union Committee has decided to partially disassociate itself from this exercise.**

You have just received a broadcast from the Administration concerning the launch of the 3rd edition of the **ILO Recognition Awards**, in which the Staff Union's participation is mentioned.

Historical context of this Awards process:

- In the context of the reform initiated by the current DG, Mr Guy Ryder, when he took office, several surveys among staff had shown that they were extremely frustrated by the lack of recognition of the work accomplished and that merit was not given its proper value.
- In response to this concern, the Administration initiated a number of discussions for negotiation with the Staff Union to improve the overall recognition and merit system, but with the information that no additional budget would be allocated for its improvement. The proposals received by the Staff Union at the time were therefore more cosmetic or ad hoc improvements (such as lunch with your boss, a traineeship in another unit, etc.), rather than a genuine reform of merit grades and personal promotion for all categories of staff.
- The Staff Union considered at the time that the proposals were not serious enough to devote time and energy to them, especially since no additional budget was provided for.
- The Administration therefore decided to implement these Recognition Awards, in which all categories of staff, and in particular all the work accomplished in technical cooperation projects, are certainly recognized. However, the Award is very short-lived, more like the honour roll found in private companies, and has absolutely no financial repercussions for the lucky recipients. The civil service merit system, even the international one, is based on steps and grades to be climbed in a transparent and permanent manner.
- The Staff Union participated in the first two editions (the pilot and the next one) of these Awards because it felt that it might be bad for staff to practice the empty chair policy in this kind of process.

However, on the eve of the 3rd edition,

The Staff Union wishes to inform its members and the staff that, after careful consideration and collective decision, it will only partially participate in this edition. It will only participate in the panel

for teamwork, because it is the only form of work that is not recognized in the statutes or the performance evaluation system and because this form of work must be valued.

It disassociated itself from the other panels, concerning the best manager and innovation, for the following reasons:

- Having participated in the two previous editions, the Staff Union considers that it is not in a position to judge the degree of innovation in the nominees' work.
- Its participation in the panel for the best manager was not entirely satisfactory insofar as some of its assessments or refusals to endorse applications were not necessarily all taken into account.
- It therefore does not wish to endorse nominations with which it does not necessarily agree.
- Instead, it wishes to concentrate its time and energy on demanding a more egalitarian, transparent, permanent and above all applicable system of recognition and merit for all categories of staff, particularly for colleagues working on technical cooperation projects.
- It also asked for more detailed statistics and clarifications from the Administration on the granting of merit increments recently published. Indeed, it has been three years since these lists were published (the result of negotiations between the Staff Union and the Administration) and the Staff Union believes that it is time to make an assessment. In view of the feedback received from several members, the Staff Union has also realized that most staff have very little knowledge of how this exercise is carried out (Who decides in the end? On what criteria? How is this exercise transparently explained by managers in the units? How are granting decisions justified by managers?).

Always keen to explain the reasons for its actions, the ILO Staff Union hopes to have provided you with useful explanations and thanks you for your confidence, and will naturally continue to work for a fairer and more transparent statutory system of recognition and merit, applicable to all.

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