



33nd UNOG Staff Coordinating Council
33^e Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

Le Bureau executive ≡ The Executive Bureau

Minutes of the 5th meeting

held on Monday 27 April 2015, at 5:30 p.m.

Members of the Executive Bureau	BALY, Mohamed Chiraz	Present
	DOUMBOUYA-FODE, Mohamed	Present
	GAZIYEV, Jamshid	Present
	NWABUOGU, Gloria	Present
	PECK ARIF, Catherine	Present
	RICHARDS, Ian	Present
	STANOVIC, Marko	Present
President of the Council	CHAOUI, Prisca	Present
Vice-president of the Council	JAMES, Elizabeth	Absent

Beginning of the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

Single item Situation of the Vice-President

The EB noted with regret that that Ms. E. James, Vice-President, had declined to attend the meeting.

Mr. Richards raised to the EB the issue of a memorandum issued by the Executive Secretary (USG) of the Economic Commission for Europe, Mr. Christian Bach, dated 2 April 2015, whereby an agreement is made to grant Ms. James a release of 50% in place of the 20% release (32 hours per month) applied to her as a member of the Executive Bureau through the legal framework (A/C.5/50/64, ST/SGB/274 and ST/AI/293). This release had been announced by way of the said memorandum detailing numerous functions ostensibly carried out by Ms. James as President of the UNECE Sectoral Assembly and as Vice-President of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council. The Bureau had no prior knowledge of this agreement, which it learned was now in its second year. The agreement came to the attention of the Bureau because the USG for ECE, in the interest of transparency, had copied the memorandum by email to the entire ECE staff.

It was noted that, following the circulation of the memorandum, there had been several informal discussions and meetings between several Council members and Ms. James during the month of April intending to encourage her to decline the additional non-prescribed release set out in the ECE memorandum, as (1) it is not the policy of the Council to seek any kind of benefit for its elected members from the Administration beyond what is prescribed in UN regulations; and (2) because it goes in detriment of the perception of staff representatives by raising questions as to why one of them is exempt from the established rules.

The EB expressed serious disappointment that Ms. James had refused to follow the advice of the Executive Secretary, who had drafted a suggested response to decline the agreement, choosing instead to send her own version by email to the USG of ECE (with a copy to all ECE staff) not declining the additional release but rather welcoming it. In that respect, the EB unanimously noted the dangers of such agreements as they open up to negotiation the right to release from official functions for all staff representatives. Furthermore, the EB in unison expressed surprise at the series of staff representation tasks described in the ECE memorandum, as it had never been made aware that Ms. James actually performed all the tasks listed.

The EB also noted that Ms. James had had several opportunities to decline the additional release and to rectify the situation personally. Similarly, that she had rejected several opportunities to amend the situation by resigning from the Vice-Presidency of the Council for personal reasons (yet remaining on the Staff Coordinating Council), thus providing the Executive Secretary with the justification to write to the USG ECE to decline the additional release agreement due to a change in functions of Ms. James.

Following discussion and based on the facts presented, the EB unanimously agreed:

1. That the abovementioned memorandum shows that Ms. James, on her own initiative and without endorsement from the Council, engaged in negotiations with the ECE Executive Office to obtain clearance for unprecedented additional release from her official work functions.
2. To reject the agreement negotiated by Ms. James to obtain additional release for herself from her official functions, which goes beyond what is prescribed in the relevant UN regulations.
3. To recommend to the Council plenary, in application of the principle of revocability set out in Article 9.6 of the Regulations on Representation of the Staff of the United Nations at Geneva and Article 15 of the Rules of Procedure of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council, to revoke Ms. James from her position of Vice-President as per the request that shall be brought up before it according to the relevant Council regulations.

End of the meeting at 6:05 p.m.