



39th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 39^{ème} Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

Minutes of the 2nd meeting

held on 27 April 2021 at 10 a.m. via MS Teams

Council members present: ABDELLAOUI Naima; ALEKSANDROVA Anna; ALMARIO Francis; APOSTOLOV Mario; BALI Mohamed; BATAC Cecilia; CHANTREL Dominique; CHAOUI Prisca; COLANGELO Roberto; DAN Lin; DUPARC Philippe; GAZIYEV Jamshid; HERMELINK Ursula; JOHNSON Laura; KALOTAY Kalman; LEWIS-LETTINGTON Nicole MEYER Olivier; PECK ARIF Catherine; POPA Gabriela; SMITH Brad.

Council members absent: ALLEK Meriem; JACQUIOT Cédric; KHAN Anjum; OUAFFO WAFANG Caroline; RICHARDS Ian.

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 1st meeting

The minutes of the 1st meeting were adopted without changes as recorded in the Council secretariat.

3. Report of the outgoing Finance Commission

The FC reported that the audit report of the 2019-2020 accounts was received from the auditors, circulated to staff and made available on the Council website. The FC was pleased to note that all accounts were found to be in order and no recommendations were made.

The Council was informed that the FC and EB met with an Investment Officer from the Mutuelle and discussed possibilities of investment of Council funds, who would come back with potential proposals.

It was noted that the FC did not hold meetings throughout the year but the FC did attend to all its business as required via email.

4. Election of Finance Commission members

The Council proceeded to the election of Finance Commission members for the period 2021-2022. Following nominations, the following Council members were elected: **Naima Abdellaoui, Francis Almario, Dominique Chantrel**. The Council took note that **Mohamed Bali** was previously appointed by the EB to the FC as per Regulations.

5. Report of the Executive Bureau

The EB reported on its various activities undertaken since the previous Council meeting:

- **SMC:** An SMC ad-hoc meeting on performance management and mandatory learning had been recently held. Staff representation raised that the number of mandatory trainings should be reduced or consolidated, and not tied to approval of leave by managers.
- **Internal justice:** Staff representatives met in April with the Internal Justice Council who solicited the views of staff unions on internal justice issues and needed improvements. Issues of concern raised at the meeting included the harmonization or merge of the ILOAT and UN justice systems, the need to be able to file class action suits and applications concerning institutional interests, and the ignoring of rulings by the

Administration. Geneva in particular raised issues concerning the need for a proper tracking system of cases, to address the backlog in cases, vacant posts in OSLA and the need to allocate more funds to OSLA. A broadcast was sent to staff on these issues and the EB would continue to follow-up.

- *Cost-of-living (COL) survey*: A communication was addressed to the DG and ICSC showing the disappointment of Geneva staff representation on the recent UNAT decision which upheld the pay cut, and expressing opposition to the COL survey due to the alteration of normal consumer spending because of the Covid situation.
- *Security and Safety Service (SSS)*: A meeting had been recently held with SSS management where the issue of rotation policy was discussed.
- *Investment of funds*: The EB, in conjunction with the FC, would continue to look into potential investment possibilities.
- *UNCTAD*: Following the issuance by the Acting UNCTAD SG on gender parity, the EB requested the disaggregated data on which new measures were taken to promote gender parity, to ensure the fair application of said policies. Follow-up would continue with UNCTAD management and the departmental focal point for women.
- *OHCHR*: A broadcast was sent on delegation of authority at OHCHR, on which a staff member won a case at the UNDT level. A meeting with the Deputy HC was being planned to address this and other issues. Coordination with the OHCHR Staff Committee was reinforced with a recent meeting.
- *G-to-P*: The EB would be soon sending out a broadcast informing staff of a workshop for G-to-P exam applicants under the auspices of the New York staff union.

6. Discussion and adoption of the work programme

The Council reviewed the work programme for the 2021-2022 tenure as proposed by the EB. The order of items was discussed but it was noted that such order did not imply at all any higher or lower priority. To make sense to the reader, the order of items reflected what would affect staff most directly but did not reflect an order of importance.

The Council adopted the work programme as proposed.

7. Performance management

The Council was briefed on the discussions of the SMC working group on performance management (WG-PM) which had submitted an interim report to SMC earlier in January. The Council noted that whilst agreements were not reached at SMC, management still decided to implement the new framework in April 2021, even though the corresponding administrative issuance was yet to be issued. The proposed new competency framework was still under discussion. Feedback from staff had been that much confusion was created with the rushed implementation of a new performance management system without an administrative issuance to govern it. In the meantime, the WG-PM still continued its work. The Council regretted that management would launch a new system whilst agreements were still to be reached at the SMC level.

8. Future of work

The Council was updated on the issue of future of work (FOW). The EB had recently met with the external advisor on campaigns for assistance with communications. Broadcasts were sent and the results of the survey on the subject circulated, which will be shared with the High-Level Committee on Management. It was noted that the FOW contractual review was being paused as management was looking more into flexible working arrangements, although the issue continued to merit the proper attention. Geneva staff representation continued to liaise with the federations on this, who expressed reservations to management proposals on contracts. At one point management expressed their intention to add new contractual types rather than change the current ones. Staff would be informed of this via broadcast.

Council members noted that the Secretary-General would very soon be visiting Geneva and a meeting with him was requested to raise this and other issues impacting staff conditions of service.

9. Languages Service

The Council was informed that management's position was adamant in the application of the GA resolution that increased translators' workload to 5.8 pages. A lawyer in New York was contacted to explore legal options. Recently, 92 staff in different duty stations had filed a suspension of action request to the UNDT and were expected to submit an MEU request. Council members noted there was a serious lack of trust issue among many staff members vis-à-vis DGACM management.

The constitution of a sectoral assembly in the Languages Services was deemed to be of utmost importance. Polling Officers were already requested to proceed with elections, to be followed-up with them. Other means of advocating for staff interests were suggested besides legal channels, e.g. contacting Member States, the ACABQ, to request a freeze of the resolution. An independent audit of the eLuna system was also deemed important, as well as evaluating the impact on wellbeing and mental/physical health should the workload finally be increased.

An upcoming meeting with DCM management on the subject was said to be good opportunity to put forth the position of staff at this stage and how to move forward and reach a compromise. The aspect of health and wellbeing was also being considered in the context of remote interpretation; the joint body on health and safety at the workplace was engaging on it seriously.

10. G1-G4 review group

The Council was called upon to renew the composition of the G1-G4 review group for the period 2021-2022 (which reviews recruitment exercises at the G1 to G4 grades in the absence of a dedicated central review body – a group uniquely established in Geneva). The following Council members were elected to said group: **Laura Johnson, Dominique Chantrel, Catherine Peck Arif, Roberto Colangelo, Philippe Duparc, Gabriella Popa.**

11. UN Today

Following the termination of the contract of the previous graphic designer, UN Today's editorial coordinator would be able to assume the provision of graphic design services. A collaboration agreement for editorial support/coordination and graphic design would be put in place with the proposed fee for editorial support/coordination services of CHF 3'000 per month, and CHF 1'300 per issue for graphic design services, with 30-days notice for termination by either party. Said terms were vetted by the EB and thus presented to the Council for approval.

The Council noted that throughout 2021 so far the magazine was able to cover all its expenses despite the difficulties in the advertising market amidst the Covid situation. The Council agreed to above terms for a collaboration agreement regarding editorial support/ coordination and graphic design services for UN Today.

12. Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP)

Council members expressed their view that the SHP continued to fail in truly addressing staff concerns regarding the spread of Covid. The Council had been very vocal and opposed to the H building office layout for a long time. Management mainly stated that they followed Covid restrictions already in place in the Palais and that they reduced the density in the H building and encouraged staff to telecommute. This however remained not acceptable for staff representation as it was management's duty to provide staff with a safe work environment, not to send them to work from home. Concerning hotdesking which will be up to each department to implement, it will be for the Council to engage them directly. The matter nonetheless would be raised with the DG at an upcoming meeting with her.

A discussion followed. The Council recalled that HR had confirmed that staff could be exempted from working in the H building if medical reasons justified it. The issue of flexible working arrangements and health and safety

concerns would remain a priority during and after Covid, particularly pertaining to the H building. The Council agreed to send out a broadcast taking stock of the overall situation and raise it with management.

13. Any other business

- The Council agreed to try to avoid holding meetings during core working hours and agreed that meetings should be held during lunch time as had been the practice in the past.
- A brief discussion was held whether the release hours of Council members could be increased to work on particular subjects that merited more time. It was recalled that the release time for staff representation was already fixed and established by the relevant administrative issuance (ST/AI/293) and that all members of the council should share the workload.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.