



## 39<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 39<sup>ème</sup> Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

### Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting

held on 8 June 2021 at 1.15 p.m. via MS Teams

**Council members present:** ABDELLAOUI Naima; ALMARIO Francis; APOSTOLOV Mario; BALI Mohamed; BATAK Cecilia; CHANTREL Dominique; CHAOUI Prisca; COLANGELO Roberto; DUPARC Philippe; GAZIYEV Jamshid; HERMELINK Ursula; JOHNSON Laura; KALOTAY Kalman; KHAN Anjum; LEWIS-LETTINGTON Nicole MEYER Olivier; PECK ARIF Catherine; RICHARDS Ian; SMITH Brad.

**Council members absent:** ALEKSANDROVA Anna; ALLEK Meriem; DAN Lin; JACQUIOT Cédric; OUAFFO WAFANG Caroline; POPA Gabriela.

*The meeting began at 1:15 p.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 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting

The minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting were adopted without changes as recorded in the Council secretariat.

#### 3. Report of the outgoing Finance Commission

The FC reported that the 2019-2020 audit report was issued by the auditors, where the accounts were found to be in order and no recommendations were made. The balance sheet and income statements were shared with Council members.

On income, given the Covid situation and Palais renovations, SAFI was expected not to provide any income for the Council in 2021 nor in the next 2-3 years, with membership dues becoming the main revenue source for the Council. On expenditures, the FC highlighted that no travel expenses are currently envisaged due to Covid, nor a children's party in December 2021 (which did not take place either in 2020).

The cash position of the Council remained at the level of 2.1 million CHF. Banks informed that they would start introducing more restrictive conditions for the application of negative interest rates above certain thresholds given the economic policies of the Swiss National Bank. It was expected for the Council to have to face in 2021 approximately CHF 10'000 in negative interest rates. Due to the same issue, currently no short-term cash placements with positive interest were on the market. The investment officer from the Mutuelle had shared with the FC their insight on potential financial investments but participation requirements required much higher levels of investment capital than what was possible for the Council or were deemed too risky. The FC will continue to look at investment options, including real estate, and will report back at the next Council meeting.

Concerning the long-standing receivable from CCISUA (foreign exchange issue yet to be settled by the federation), a meeting would be soon organized with the recently elected CCISUA Treasurer to have it resolved as soon as possible.

The President called on Council members to actively invite colleagues to join as dues paying members.

#### 4. Report of the Executive Bureau

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

- a. **CCISUA-related matters:** Ongoing discussions concerning the ICSC's review of local salary scale methodologies, the application of the cost-of-living survey and the jurisdictional set-up on the UN Common System; withdrawal of the New York Staff Union from CCISUA.

CCISUA held its General Assembly in early June which provided an opportunity to discuss the current situation of CCISUA, housekeeping matters, contributions, ICSC and local salary and cost-of-living surveys, budget matters, national staff, and other issues. Elections of the new CCISUA Bureau took place and Prisca Chaoui was elected President by a wide margin.

- b. **Languages Service:** Several meetings took place with DCM senior management on the issue of translators' workload increase where staff representatives raised lack of trust on the handling of the issue by management, and ways they could bring staff back to the table and have effective dialogue.
- c. **Meeting with the SG on 29 April**, where Council leadership raised and sought views of the SG on various issues, e.g. gender parity and women leadership, the impact of an annual budget on the renewal of fixed term and temporary contracts, the failing of the staff management consultation framework (SMC) to work as a genuine consultative body rather than an information sharing platform, staff concerns about the potential introduction of new « agile » contracts, potential abuse of delegation of authority and the need for a more robust accountability framework, racism in the Organization, the ICSC cost-of-living survey, the Strategic Heritage Plan, staff concerns about health and safety in the hot-desking H building during a pandemic, some specific departmental issues in ECE and OCHA, as well as issues related to DCM and the new standard for translators. A summary of the meeting was communicated to staff on 12 May via broadcast.
- d. **Ongoing discussions at SMC:** Issue of various unelected and unaccountable interest groups being given opportunities to provide their views on various topics while elected staff representatives were not provided the same opportunity. Issue of flexible working arrangements and unfair application of remote working owing to ambiguities in the policy's definition and approval procedure. The mandatory learning programmes and their enforceability without prejudice to staff rights and entitlements.  
  
The staff unions held separate discussions focused on extending the President of the SMC for one year and met with the President to express grievances and concerns regarding the running of the meetings.
- e. **OHCHR issues:** Council leadership met with the OHCHR DHC on 5 May and discussed various issues, e.g. the onboarding of a Stress Counsellor and a Diversity Adviser, alternative working arrangements (AWA) and complaints from some staff that they felt pressured into coming to the office, cases involving abusive senior managers, the UNDT's decision which stated that the appointment of the Chief of the Women's Rights and Gender Section as Department Focal Point for Women was illegal, the positive steps taken regarding the career advancement of YPPs but highlighted that this initiative should focus on all NCEs/YPPs at all levels, and that career advancement for YPPs also ensures geographic diversity, the high number of staff on temporary contracts and their precarious situation, the roster exercise for recruitment of P posts, the issue of overly restrictive vacancy announcements, the delegation of authority to the Human Resources Section and the issue of oversight. A summary of the meeting was communicated to OHCHR staff on 19 May.
- f. **UNCTAD Gender Parity:** Meeting with the UNCTAD departmental focal point for women team to better understand the situation at UNCTAD and the challenges staff were facing vis-à-vis temporary special measures on gender.
- g. **Meeting with the DG:** Various issues were raised to the DG's attention, e.g. concerning SHP, ICSC cost-of-living survey, translators' workload in the Languages Service, tackling diversity and racism, issues in Security, and granting of Legitimation Cards.
- h. **Meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee:** Issues discussed with management included: UNOG's strategy to tackle racism and the creation of a working group (the Council draft TORs), the granting of Legitimation Cards to staff and their families in particular contexts (management agreed to organize a briefing for staff), the distribution of external magazines in the Palais des Nations, long-term service awards and the status of UNOPS contracts in UNOG.
- i. **ECE matters:** Staff representation met ECE senior management and discussed the broadcast of the meeting with the SG, where SCC raised alleged abusive management practices within UNECE. The ES of UNECE felt that SCC had overstepped its mandate in this regard. SCC informed the ES of UNECE of our mandate, that we had received numerous complaints from staff on various issues, including

recruitment, that it was our duty to raise these issues with management at all levels. It was agreed to hold a meeting on all the relevant issues.

A discussion followed on the approach of some of the issues covered in the Executive Bureau's report.

*For the full report of the Executive Secretary, which was circulated to all Council members prior to the meeting, please refer to Annex I to this document.*

## **5. Strategic Heritage Plan**

The Council recalled that the move of staff into the H building had already begun, namely concerning ECE, DOA, and OCHA. Staff were asked to provide their feedback via an online survey and many comments had already been received, noting serious issues with working conditions inside the building. Staff representation would coordinate with members of SHP working group to have a meeting with the SHP Transition Team once a full set of comments was compiled. Council members were invited to actively seek out feedback from colleagues moving into the new building in order to be able to raise the issues with management.

It was noted that the Sports Commission (club) met with the SHP Transition Team to coordinate their office space amidst the renovations and moves. A meeting would be organized with the Transition Team in the coming weeks for them to update staff representatives on temporary and permanent space for all the clubs.

## **6. Division of Conference Management**

Apart from what was mentioned in the Executive Bureau, a broadcast would be prepared to update staff on the legal action against the increase of translators' workload, and to inform staff that the Council is also considering other options to tackle the issue apart from the legal channels.

A concern was raised on the way the General Assembly introduced an increase of production standards for translators in a resolution concerning programme budget. It seemed questionable that a resolution on the finances of the Organization was used to change working conditions. The last time such an increase in workload was introduced (approx. 30 years before), a proper report was issued to Member States who held a proper discussion on working conditions, thus the General Assembly departed from established practice to increase workload standards. A suggestion was raised to contact Member States and reestablish lobbying efforts, however with the decision-makers being based in New York, such suggestion proved unattainable in the Covid context and did not gather support among Council members.

Concerning the meeting that DCM senior management held with global staff representatives on 1 April, Council members Naima Abdellaoui and Anna Aleksandrova, who are UNOG DCM staff, noted they were not invited to attend whilst other staff from the Division appeared in the attendance record. It was clarified that, as per normal practice upon discussions with the administration on substantive matters, it was the leadership of the Council (members of the Executive Bureau) that had been invited by management to attend (not all or any Council members). As for other two UNOG DCM colleagues who attended, it was further clarified that they had done so at the request of management to be notetakers given their background as language professionals – not in any staff representation capacity.

Overall, the Council noted that Languages Service colleagues were angry about the way management had managed the entire issue of the increase in translators' workload, and that there was deep dissatisfaction among staff. The Executive Bureau would continue to look into ways of exerting pressure.

## **7. CCISUA General Assembly**

The Council took note that the CCISUA GA had taken place the week before, where staff unions discussed the current situation of the federation in light of the exit of UNSU, various housekeeping matters, members' contributions, ICSC's local salary and cost-of-living surveys, future of work, budget matters, issues affecting national staff. The election of the new CCISUA Bureau also took place at the GA, where Prisca Chaoui was elected President of CCISUA by a wide margin. The report of the GA would be circulated to Council members when available. Lastly, the CCISUA GA expressed its support and solidarity with colleagues from the Special

Tribunal for Lebanon which due to budgetary issues was expected to close without completing its mandate, affecting almost 300 colleagues. A letter was addressed to the SG in that regard by the federation.

## **8. Update on SMC**

- a. The issue of non-staff union entities representing certain categories of staff (e.g. Young UN) being given a seat at the SMC table was raised by staff unions, who made clear said entities were unelected and unaccountable staff groups who could not represent staff as per staff rules and regulations.
- b. On flexible working arrangements and application of remote working policy, staff unions recommended to remove from the policy references to “personal circumstances” and rather base approval of special arrangements on the basis of the needs of service and satisfactory performance.
- c. On mandatory learning, management wanted to tie these programmes to annual leave, and this was strongly opposed by staff unions.
- d. On performance management policy, the Council noted that the new system was already in place with no policy accompanying it. Whilst other staff unions at SMC were not vocal to oppose this, it seemed no issues in general were being raised because of that. The SMC working group would be meeting to finalize its report which will have to be reflected in the revised administrative issuance. This, however, was noted to be a dangerous precedent in the functioning of SMC.
- e. On staff selection and mobility policy, the Council noted that the SMC working group changed co-chairs and it was not advancing in discussions. The Council would ensure follow-up as the working group resumes.
- f. The SMC staff unions held a discussion with the President of SMC to evaluate with him SMC processes and performance.

## **9. Election of Finance Commission member**

Following the resignation of Council member Naima Abdellaoui to the Finance Commission, nominations were called for to fill the vacancy. Kalman Kalotay nominated Anjum Khan. Seeing no objection, **Anjum Khan was elected to the Finance Commission for the 2021-2022 period.**

## **10. Any other business**

No other business was raised.

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

## **Executive Bureau Report**

Summary of meetings, broadcasts and other activities since the last Council meeting held on 27 April :

- **Meeting 28 April CCISUA :**

- The first point of discussion was the withdrawal of the New York Staff Union from CCISUA with various staff unions expressing disappointment with this decision. Following the departure of the New York staff representatives from the meeting, there was a call for unity and on how to cover various working groups that NY was previously active in.
- A discussion then ensued regarding the ICSC review of local salary scale methodologies, the cost-of-living survey and the jurisdictional set-up on the UN Common System. It was mentioned that the working group on the local salary scale methodology had not finalized its work. On the cost-of-living survey, the staff unions noted that the sister federations are willing to look into the survey and that if it goes ahead there may be gains for some duty stations but losses for others. UNOG SCC and others took the floor opposing any cost-of-living survey this year due to the disruption in consumer spending caused by the COVID19 pandemic. It was agreed to oppose any survey this year.
- On the harmonization of the tribunals, reference was made to the report of the harmonization of the internal system of justice. Points were made on increasing exchanges between the tribunals and that UNDT and UNAT had a lower number of cases coming out in favour of staff. Some staff unions expressed concern that the GA was imposing its will on those agencies that do not fall under the authority of the GA and underscored the independence of the tribunals. It was also noted that NY staff union needs to hand over documents pertaining to this issue. ILO stated that they prefer the status quo. It was noted that a draft statement is being prepared by the Legal Working Group on this issue.
- It was agreed to hold the CCISUA general assembly in early June. UNOG recommended that Ian Richards take part in discussions with ICSC as he has the background and in particular owing to the departure of NY from CCISUA.

- **Meeting 29 April with DCM (Michele Keating and Kira Kruglikova) :**

- The meeting started with a discussion on whether to meet on an ad-hoc basis at SRMG level. SCC noted that this would be for management to determine but that it would be important to keep dialogue going.
- SCC raised the issue that staff have little confidence in the working groups, that there is a lack of trust, and staff feel unheard and disrespected. SCC stated that before we can get into technical details management needs to propose confidence-building measures that take into consideration the views of staff. We noted the high number of legal cases across duty stations, and that this crisis ultimately must be solved by management. Management stated that chiefs have been told to provide support to staff, that recycled text will be credited to all staff during first year as a mitigating measure, but that everybody will be expected to meet new workload standard.
- Management appreciated having an open discussion but noted that finding a way forward is a different challenge as policy comes from NY. Management noted that there is indeed a perception in NY that GVA is the problem and there is no issue elsewhere.
- SCC also clarified that the meeting did not constitute an official consultation and that it was an informal meeting. SCC also highlighted that this was not only a Geneva problem but cut across several duty stations.
- SCC stated that management should bring staff and their representatives back to the table and to have a conversation that addresses their concerns on the new standards, including an independent audit of eLuna. The staff should have this information upfront before agreeing to anything, in particular due to the trust deficit.

- **Meeting on 29 April with SG (DG, DCM, HR also present) :**

The UNOG Staff Coordinating Council (SCC) met with the Secretary-General and the Director-General of UNOG on 29 April to raise a number of issues of concern to staff. Prisca Chaoui, President, and Brad Smith, Executive Secretary, represented the SCC :

- While acknowledging positive initiatives, such as gender parity and women leadership, the SCC underscored that merit should be the paramount consideration in any selection decision that is being taken. We highlighted the impact of an annual budget on the renewal of fixed term and temporary contracts leaving some staff in precarious situations. He said he does not favour two-year budgets but agreed to adapt workforce planning in order to ensure greater stability for staff.
- We also noted our concern that the staff management consultation framework (SMC) is not working as it should and instead of being a genuine consultative body is rather an information sharing platform. We appealed to the Secretary-General to ensure that the views of staff are taken on board in these consultations.
- We noted concerns about the introduction of the new « agility » contract, which affects employment security. We noted that the current contractual arrangements already met the needs of the Organisation, when used appropriately, and that contractual stability is at the core of an independent international civil service. The SCC also highlighted that the current policy on flexible working arrangements (FWA) is sufficient to address the needs of staff and that FWA should remain a choice.
- On delegation of authority and decentralization, which the Secretary-General supports, we noted the potential for abuse citing specific examples. We highlighted the need for a more robust accountability framework. We also noted concern about the lack of follow-up on the part of the Administration regarding referrals of cases by the Tribunals regarding cases of corruption and maladministration.
- We also discussed racism within the Organisation, the Strategic Heritage Plan, the ICSC cost-of-living survey, and the introduction of new technologies and their impact on working conditions and health of staff. In this regard, the SCC raised the issue of increased use of remote interpretation and need to take preventative and mitigating measures to address the negative impact on interpreters' health.
- We reiterated concerns about health and safety in the hot-desking H building during a pandemic, and said the E-building should remain. He noted that the E building will most likely be demolished and suggested a rotation system to help with safety and comfort.
- We also raised issues linked to specific departments, including alleged abuses by senior management at UNECE and the decentralization process at OCHA. We also raised the issue of the increase in workload standards for translators and self-revisers, and the need for consultations, as well as the health concerns of interpreters resulting from remote interpretation.
- A summary of the meeting was communicated to staff on 12 May. In a follow-up letter to the Secretary-General dated 14 May (forwarded to the Staff Council), we additionally suggested some confidence-building measures that Management should consider to build trust and to move the Languages Service issue forward, including revising the new standards for self-revisers; conducting an independent evaluation of eLuna and maintaining the status quo until the efficacy of eLuna could be measures; establishing a new working group in line with ST/SGB/274 and the issue of new standards and performance management. We also raised the issue of health concerns of interpreters resulting from remote interpretation, the reply from USG Abelian and how UNOG would address this issue. He thanked staff for their hard work during Covid.

● **Meeting on 29 April SMC :**

- Issue of various interest groups (e.g., Young UN) being given opportunities to provide their views on various topics while elected staff representatives were not provided the same opportunity. The Staff Unions underscored that these groups are unelected and unaccountable groups of individuals that claim to represent staff views. The Staff Unions recalled Staff Rule 8.1 on staff representation bodies and in particular that "...formal contact and communication on [matters relating to staff welfare] shall be conducted at each duty station through the executive committee of the staff representation body, which shall be the sole and exclusive representative body for such purpose.
- Issue of flexible working arrangements and unfair application of remote working owing to ambiguities in the policy's definition and approval procedure which refers to "compelling personnel circumstances". Staff Unions recommended that policy be reviewed to remove references to personnel circumstances and that requests should be considered on exigencies of service and satisfactory performance. The Staff Unions also underscored that the fact that there is no right to flexible work arrangements and that these arrangements are defined as voluntary agreements between staff and manager are a source of friction. The Staff Unions stated that if the Organization's commitment to flexible working arrangements is genuine then this should be considered a right, albeit subject to oversight. In addition, denial of FWA

should be considered an administrative decision subject to management review. Staff Unions also stated that no medical evaluation should be required when considering FWA requests and that the procedure should be subjected to strict deadlines with escalation of cases limited to one or two steps up the chain of command.

- Further discussions were held on mandatory learning programmes and management agreed to take on board many of the concerns raised by the Staff Unions in the framework of its two year cycle for training content and review. Management noted that it is working on an integrated learning management system with a view to providing courses which are concise and relevant, that enhance user experience and accessibility and that are multilingual. Management had contacted course owners to further harmonize courses and they will try to group thematic trainings together for the next cycle. Again Staff Unions strongly opposed any linkages with completion of mandatory training requirements and discretion of the FRO to grant leave.

- **Meeting on 5 May DHC OHCHR :**

Staff representatives Prisca Chaoui, Cathy Peck Arif and Brad Smith met with the Deputy High Commission for Human Rights, Nada Al Nashif, and the Chief of the Human Resources Section, Kim Taylor on 5 May. The outcomes are below:

- We recognized the positive initiative of OHCHR in bringing on board a Stress Counsellor and a Diversity Adviser. With respect to the Diversity Adviser, we requested the terms of reference for the position and to include staff representatives in establishing a work programme for OHCHR. The DHC stated that OHCHR has set-up three working groups on gender, diversity and race to move the issue further.
- We raised the issue of alternative working arrangements (AWA) and complaints from some staff that they felt pressured into coming to the office. The DHC stated that the Office would not tolerate any such pressure with respect to AWA.
- We also raised the issue of cases involving abusive senior managers. The DHC stated that OHCHR is seriously looking at cases of abuse and misconduct and that much action has been taken by the Office in this regard. In one particular case, the DHC stated that management would await the outcome of the investigation and take appropriate action. Management also recognized that many staff fear speaking out and referred to the survey which also highlighted this issue. The DHC mentioned that management will work to address this problem.
- We raised the UNDT decision which stated that the appointment of the Chief of the Women's Rights and Gender Section as Department Focal Point for Women was illegal, and that the recent vacancy provided an opportunity to again have one Departmental Focal Point within OHCHR. We also mentioned that having two persons performing similar functions has caused some confusion. The DHC stated that management reviewed the judgement, that the decision was final and will not be appealed. The DHC regretted how the situation was handled. The DHC maintained, however, that the Chief of the Women's Rights and Gender Section would be the Departmental Focal Point. On this issue, we highlighted the need to appoint the Departmental Focal Point in line with the relevant SGB. The DHC stated that management was aware of the SGB and that we could revisit the issue once the mandate terminated.
- We acknowledged the positive steps taken regarding the career advancement of YPPs but highlighted that this initiative should focus on all NCEs/YPPs at all levels, and that career advancement for YPPs also ensures geographic diversity. Kim Taylor mentioned some of the initiatives that they were working on, including tracking applications, mentoring and coaching, and would have more information in six months. We requested statistics on NCE/YPP career advancement.
- On temporary staff, we raised the issue of the number of staff on temporary contracts and the precarious situation that such staff live with. We mentioned the need for more fixed-term posts and the need to look at the budget so that temporary posts are only used as intended and to offer staff more job security. The DHC stated that OHCHR is proceeding with the regularization of long-term short-term staff and they are looking into reducing multi-year short terms contracts being offered and other initiatives to address this issue. We also requested statistics on temporary staff, who have been regularized, and long-term serving temporary contract holders.

- Regarding the roster exercise, we asked about the status of the project as progress has been slow. We also mentioned that many staff, who are not rostered, do not have an equal opportunity for posts filled from the roster and that guidelines for when to use the roster versus a full recruitment exercise appear to be lacking. The DHC stated that human resources capacity has been strengthened, that 3000 candidates at the P-3, P-4 and P-5 levels have been reviewed, and out of this number, 700 candidates have progressed to the second round. She expects the process to be completed by this summer. The DHC also stated that short-cuts would not be allowed and that JOs would be issued for the full time period. Kim Taylor stated that human resources is creating firewalls to ensure more fairness in the process and that human resources is doing the long list, short list, will administer tests, and will look at geographic distribution, promotion, gender parity, and staff serving in the field long-term with a view to providing opportunities for mobility.
- We also raised the issue of overly restrictive vacancy announcements, including requirements for field experience and even recent field experience, which prevent mobility for staff that would like to go to the field. We noted the potential gender impact of such requirements as well. We requested that this issue be looked at as there are many suitable internal candidates that are qualified for these posts.
- On the delegation of authority to the Human Resources Section, we raised the issue of oversight. The DHC stated that by taking care of human resources functions previously under UNOG, OHCHR will be able to deliver services on time with a savings to OHCHR. The DHC also committed to full transparency in these processes with the High Commissioner being responsible for oversight.
- A summary of the meeting was communicated to OHCHR staff on 19 May. We also wrote to the HC on 20 May regarding the appointment of the Departmental Focal Point for Women highlighting the need to follow ST/SGB/2008/2, which provides for staff-management consultations or secret elections.

- **Meeting on 10 May SMC Staff Unions:**

The discussion focused on extending the President of the SMC for one year and to hold a meeting with the President to express grievances and concerns regarding the running of the meetings. A subsequent meeting was held with the President on these issues.

- **Meeting 11 May UNCTAD Gender Parity (Departmental Focal Points for Women) :**

Following the memo of the ASG of UNCTAD regarding temporary special measures on gender and feedback from staff we decided to meet with the UNCTAD departmental focal point for women team (DFPWT). The aim of the meeting was to better understand the situation at UNCTAD and the challenges that are faced. We found the meeting useful and informative. Among the main points:

- Women constitute significantly less than a third of economics graduates globally. As a result of a collective effort women now account for a third of applicants to UNCTAD positions and half of selection recommendations.
- Based on the strong conversion data, the DFPWT felt that they had done what was expected of them, i.e. to review each recommendation case from a gender parity perspective, and more. They noted the importance of looking beyond the overall numbers and examining the entire hiring process to identify areas of challenge. The data analyses from the applications to long- and short-listing, written tests, to interviews and recommendations showed that the low proportion of female applications was a major limiting factor. Getting women applicants to come forward remains a challenge.
- They explained that their aim was to create a level playing field for women and achieve impact through, among other things, training courses on unconscious bias, divisional briefings, mentoring of junior staff, support from senior management on their selection advice, encouraging managers to make more efforts to identify women applicants, wider distribution of vacancies, and efforts to make vacancy announcements less specific. They felt that these efforts had led to real changes in attitudes although more needs to be done, especially on unconscious bias.
- There was a discussion on whether the requirement for economic experience made it difficult to find more qualified women candidates given the graduate numbers and about the lifting of PhD requirements. It was noted that they would not support the selection of unqualified candidates.
- They noted the importance of looking beyond the overall numbers and to also look at the details by division as gender parity could be affected by other factors, such as regularization exercises and field posts.



- In response to a question, it was noted that the DFPWT was not mandated to look into the situation of General Service staff and that the published gender data was restricted to P and D staff.
- We communicated a summary of the meeting to UCTAD staff on 20 May.

- **Meeting 11 May SMC Staff Unions on Languages Service :**

We agreed on the following points at the meeting in order to ensure a common position regarding DCACM :

- With respect to the SMC, it was agreed that the issues need to be separated out and that issues related to the current legal action (workload increase) will not be raised in the SMC so as not to prejudice the outcome of the legal proceedings. Other issues, such as managerial practices relating to the implementation of the GA resolution could, however, be raised at the SMC.
- The GA resolution should be interpreted broadly, which would allow for meeting the standard mandated by the GA as well as taking on board the views of staff.
- The standard should not be referred to in the performance management document to ensure consistency among duty stations.
- The new standard for self-revisers should be revisited to take on board the concerns of staff.
- An independent evaluation of eLuna should be undertaken and the status quo on reprise should be maintained until such time as an agreement can be reached on the efficacy of eLuna.
- A new working group, in which staff would have greater confidence, should be set-up and be comprised of people with concrete knowledge of the work of the Languages Service, namely the Chiefs of Sections, as well as Staff Representatives. This working group would review and consult on decisions and recommendations made by the task forces in line with ST/SGB/274.
- Independent mediators could be used to help address the current trust deficit.

- **Meeting on 12 May with DG (DCM, DOA, HR) :**

The Bureau of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council (SCC) met with the Director-General of UNOG (DG) on 12 May 2021. Here are the highlights of the meeting:

- SHP: We raised the issue of the open-space design of the new H Building in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to maintain alternative working arrangements (AWA) for concerned staff until the health and safety of staff could be ensured. The DG stated that UNOG was waiting for system wide guidance on open-spaces in all duty stations and that they would be looking at ways to further minimize risks. UNOG Management confirmed that AWA will not be lifted before the end of summer, but that staff may return to work on a voluntary basis. Staff whose presence is required on site but who are unable to work on site because of pre-existing conditions should submit a medical report that will be handled on a case-by-case basis. It was mentioned that while vaccinations remain voluntary for staff, it may impact official travel. A document has been prepared and will be shared with SCC.
- ICSC: We also raised the issue of the cost-of-living survey and our position that it should be postponed until consumption patterns return to normal and the DG fully agrees with this position as does the Secretary-General noting that the ICSC is an independent body. Management stated that the DSA survey was postponed until further notice.
- Language service: We also raised the issue of the increase in workload standards for translators and self-revisers, which goes beyond the GA resolution in this regard and the need for consultations. We reiterated some confidence-building measures that Management should consider to build trust and to move the issue forward, which were delineated in a letter to the Secretary-General (SG), including revising the new standards for self-revisers; conducting an independent evaluation of eLuna and maintaining the status quo until the efficacy of eLuna could be measures; establishing a new working group in line with ST/SGB/274 and the issue of new standards and performance management. We also raised the issue of health concerns of interpreters resulting from remote interpretation, the reply from USG Abelian and how UNOG would address this issue. The DG stated that it was possible to implement the GA resolution without compromising the quality and overall working conditions of staff. She also stated that the translation staff and management should work together. Management stated that they would revert on the issue with eLuna and that performance management requires a global approach as SCC raised the issue that some duty stations were requiring the new standard to be specified in

performance management documents while others were not. Regarding the health of interpreters, the DG stated that she regularly draws the attention of the situation to Member States and has discussed the issue with the SG. She has emphasized the need to Member States to also invest in technology to allow for hybrid meetings to take place in a way which takes into consideration the health concerns of the interpreters. Management also met to discuss occupational health and safety with guidelines to Member States on what is needed for quality hybrid interpretation. Management also has made clear to participants that if the sound quality is not up to ISO standards that interpreters will not be in apposition to interpret. It was also mentioned that staff with health issues should avail themselves of sick leave.

- Diversity and Racism: The SCC also raised the issue of diversity and racism in the workplace. In this regard, Management has asked for data for Geneva and will share it. Management also mentioned that sometimes the selection of candidates is not diverse and that more outreach needs to be done to identify qualified candidates. Management stated that they will implement the new strategy as actively as possible. On racism, Management supported a working group for Geneva and the need to send a clear message to staff that all cases of discrimination/racism in the workplace should be reported. Management also mentioned that the United to Respect training has been launched and will soon be available in French.
- Security: SCC raised a number of priority concerns of security staff. The DG suggest a separate meeting on this with Human Resources and the Administration.
- CDL: Lastly we raised the issue of the recent changes to the carte de legitimisation (CDL) and the need for the DG and her office to draw both individual cases and general problems regarding CDLs to the attention of the Swiss Permanent Mission, including suggestions for urgent issuance in case of force majeure, shortening of the waiting time, extending the validity of the CDL beyond the end of the contract, reinstating the system of certificates, and providing CDLs for children studying abroad but maintaining residence in Switzerland. The DG suggested a meeting with Human Resources. Management also confirmed that Human Resources continues to issue attestations if needed and that the CDL is valid for 2 months after its expiration. Management also stated that children up to 25 years of age who are studying are an exception and there a way of them being able to keep their CDL. French rules apply for those living in France, and Swiss nationals with family members of other nationalities should contact the relevant Canton Office for Immigration. Management also mentioned that individual cases should be brought to the attention of Human Resources and that the Swiss Mission holds information meetings monthly.

- **Meeting 27 May SMC :**

Discussion continued on non-official groups representing staff and their interaction with management. Staff unions made it clear that duly elected staff representatives represent staff views in accordance with ST/SGB/274. Management reaffirmed this principle. At same time, in the staff views management had breached this principle regarding High Level Committee on Management and HRN (Network of Directors of HR on Future of Work where a non-UN staff entity participated expressing views of staff.

- **Meeting on 31 May JNC :**

We discussed UNOG strategy to fight racism and a Working Group was proposed. SCC was tasked with drafting the TOR. We also discussed the rights of international civil servants in Geneva (CDL), in particular regarding temporary staff and dependent children studying abroad. Management agreed to organize a briefing for staff. We also discussed the distribution of external magazines in the Palais des Nations, long-term service awards and the status of UNOPS contracts in UNOG.

- **Meeting on 2 June with UNECE Executive Secretary (Olga Algayerova):**

- The meeting was called by UNECE to discuss our meeting with the SG at which we raised allegations of abusive management practices at UNECE. The Executive Secretary raised the issues of mandates (including our mandate under Art. VIII of Staff Rules and Regulations), suggesting that we overstepped our mandate and of us publishing in a broadcast unsubstantiated allegations of abuses of authority by senior management at UNECE. SCC informed her of our mandate, that we look at the implementation of AIs to ensure that policies are being implemented correctly, that we advise on policies to be adopted

to ensure that staff views are taken into consideration and that we listen to the concerns of staff, provide advice and follow-up with management, etc. SCC referred her to our plan of work.

- Regarding UNECE, SCC mentioned that we have received numerous complaints relating to a number of matters, including recruitment. SCC mentioned that we have the duty to raise these issues with management at all levels, including with the SG. SCC also asked her to provide us with specific instances where she thinks we have overstepped our mandate.
- The Executive Secretary argued that these are unsubstantiated claims and that it was irresponsible to publish. She requested a retraction and apology. SCC told her that we do not have an investigative unit, that we gather information from the staff and review it and take action accordingly, and that we have a duty to keep staff informed, including through broadcasts. SCC told her that we qualified the message by clearly stating that these were allegations and we did not name individuals.
- SCC suggested that in order to move the issue further that we have another meeting to discuss specific issues and that we could issue another broadcast on that meeting where hopefully something positive would come from it.

- **CCISUA General Assembly (1 to 4 June):**

The CCISUA General Assembly took place from 1 to 4 June and provided an opportunity to discuss the current situation of CCISUA, housekeeping matters, contributions, ICSC and local salary and cost-of-living surveys, budget matters, national staff and other issues. Elections of the new Bureau took place and Prisca Chaoui was elected President by a very wide margin.

*Other activities:*

- SCC provided an update to the staff of the **Languages Service** on 28 April regarding legal action taken by staff in DCM, including information on how to file legal claims. Another update was sent on 14 May, in which we informed staff of the legal claims, as well as the meeting with the SG and DG, the meeting with the DG, and the meeting with DCM.
- Regarding the SMC, we are coordinating action with other staff unions on a way forward, including the referral of the matter to the SMC.
- SCC transmitted a broadcast to staff on 5 May on the **Future of Work** highlighting concerns relating to “agility” contracts and FWA and the long-term ramifications on conditions of service and entitlements.
- Through a broadcast (14 May), we invited staff to take part in an informal discussion on **racism in the workplace**. We received confirmations from about 30 staff and will have the first discussion on 16 June.
- Through a broadcast we requested feedback from staff on the move to the **H building** (27 May). We can then follow-up with UNOG as appropriate based upon the feedback received.
- In a letter dated 27 May 2021 to the **Executive Director of Office of the Administration of Justice** (copying President of UNDT), we raised concerns about notice to applicants to amend their pleadings within 10 days as well as to show how their cases were distinguishable from recent cases on the same subject matter regarding the new post adjustment multiplier in Geneva. We expressed the view that this order placed a very high burden on staff which frustrates their ability to access justice. We have placed the matter on the agenda on the International Justice Committee (IJC).
- On **Security and Safety Section**, discussions continue on a number of issues regarding the rotation, overtime pay and lack of promotion for G-3s and other issues.