



**40<sup>th</sup> Staff Union Council**  
**2022-2023**

**Ref. SU-40-5**

**Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
held on 1 September 2022 at 1.30 p.m. via MS Teams

*Adopted on 29 September 2022.*

**Council members present:** Mohamed Assi, Mohamed Bali (*Deputy Executive Secretary*), Dominique Chantrel, Prisca Chaoui, Philippe Duparc, Jamshid Gaziyeu, Jean-Luc La Planeta, Dan Lin, Begoña Martínez Alfonso, Hilary Nwokeabia, Rowland Palairat, Catherine Peck Arif, Viera Pejchal, Ian Richards (*President*), Bradford Smith (*Executive Secretary*), Philip Thomas.

**Council members absent:** Naima Abdellaoui, Hélène Fabiani, Ursula Hermelink (*Vice President*), Laura Johnson, Nicole Lewis-Lettington, Olivier Meyer, Gerald Pioda, Maria Almudena Rueda Melendez, Radouan Toulbia.

*The meeting began at 1:35 p.m.*

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted with changes as reflected below.

The Council observed a minute of silence following a request by the President, in solemn remembrance of former Council member and colleague, Mohssen Touhiri, who had recently passed away. The Council recalled Mr. Touhiri's valuable contribution as a staff representative.

**2. Adoption of the minutes of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th meetings**

The minutes of the 2nd meeting were adopted with changes as recorded by the Union secretariat.

The minutes of the 3rd and 4th meetings were adopted without changes as recorded by the Union secretariat.

**3. Report of the Executive Bureau**

The Executive Secretary reported on a number of issues, including:

SMC: Discussions remained ongoing on compassionate leave and the inclusion of family emergency leave under uncertified sick leave entitlement. On continuing contracts, management was in the process of vetting the 2016 envelope which included the Professional category. A draft new downsizing policy and mobility policy was being reviewed by OLA. On mobility, staff representatives expressed strong reservations to a number of provisions that were not consulted and will prepare a paper to SMC. Discussions were expected to continue at an ad hoc SMC meeting in October.

SMC working group on staff selection and roster management: abundant discussions on various issues continued, namely concerning rosters, their limitations, transparency, proper use and efficiency. Staff unions would draft a paper to push back on any time limits of roster membership, where removing staff from the roster should be the prerogative of the staff except in cases of death, retirement or termination. Staff representatives will be looking at IT implications and issues.

SMC working group on administration of justice: The working group was briefed on the Report of the SG on administration of justice which will be published shortly. Preliminary discussions were held on the management policy paper on protection from retaliation. The staff side will be reviewing the related documents to prepare a response. The working group also agreed to hold meetings with independent entities within and outside the common system. The working group met in June and started discussions on the policy with many documents to review. Staff unions will discuss a consolidated position with the view to discuss again with management in the following weeks.

High-Level Committee on Management: The Union has been represented by CCISUA at the HLCM and was successful in stopping attempts to weaken the current contractual framework. Other issues discussed included working on a modern definition of "family" in the context of parental leave; addressing racism and sexual harassment in the workplace; and occupational health and safety, including mental health.

Post adjustment: staff were informed via broadcast of the increase in Geneva post adjustment; special thanks to everyone who worked on the campaign to have salaries increased after the pay cut 5 years prior.

GS salaries: staff should receive an increase due to inflation in line with methodology later in the year.

Staff engagement survey: the Bureau continued to follow-up with UNOG and entities to ensure they shared the results of survey with staff and worked on plans to address areas that needed improvement. All entities had shared the results and seemed to be on target.

OCHA: meetings had been held with OCHA staff and their management to address issues such as mobility, continuing contracts, fixed-term contracts, decentralization, maternity leave. The Union raised OCHA's inconsistent approach on the length of fixed-term appointments. OCHA confirmed they would put on hold their own mobility policy as they waited for the SG's policy to be issued, they confirmed that their decentralization process was concluded and would not be shifting any more posts to other duty stations, and would set up a fund to ensure coverage of functions during maternity leave.

UNCTAD: The Bureau tackled the matter of a division in UNCTAD where blanket restrictions on FWA were established, contrary to the rules that provided for personal assessment of FWA requests. The matter was referred to the UNCTAD SG in light of the lack of response from the concerned Director.

OHCHR: Meetings were held with staff representatives from OHCHR to discuss the staff engagement survey and individual cases.

DCM Staff-management relations group (SRMG): Discussions with the SRMG included several issues affecting staff, notably remote simultaneous interpretation and its health implications (a survey was being drafted). The matter of the increase of translators' workload would be reported as a separate agenda item.

UNOG working group on addressing racism at the workplace: The SG will soon appoint a Special Adviser to address racism and promote dignity for all in the Organization. UNOG was among the first entities away from Headquarters to appoint an anti-racism advocate, Ms. Marie Diur, the current chair of the UNOG working group, where new recommendations to the UNOG Director-General were being prepared.

UNOG working group on staff well-being: The working group discussed the need to raise awareness of the SG's Strategy on Mental Health as well as insurance issues related to mental health and an information session in October would be organized. The SG's Strategy on inclusion and visibility was also discussed, notably the indicator of reasonable accommodation where Geneva was setting up a board to review reasonable accommodation matters with cost implications. Discussions also continued on work-life balance and stress management issues evidenced in the staff engagement survey.

The report was adopted by consensus.

#### **4. Report of the Finance Commission**

The FC reported it would attempt to meet soon to discuss a number of issues, e.g. Union accounts, budget and upcoming expenditures.

#### **5. eVoting expenditure**

The Council was presented with a request from the Polling Board to cover the costs of USD 1'000 for the management of electronic voting for joint bodies and arbitration commission elections. The Council approved this expenditure by consensus.

A suggestion was raised to inquire with the Polling Board about the future of electronic voting and, in case they chose to maintain it, try to find ways to reducing its costs.

#### **6. UN Today matters**

The Council took note of a new advertising agency that would be in charge of selling UN Today advertisement on behalf of the Staff Union. The terms of the relation were presented to the Council, which did not represent any financial obligation for the Union. The Council agreed by consensus to contract with this agency.

## **7. Campaign on the translators' workload increase**

Following management's decision to increase translators' workload and consultations with DGACM management that were still ongoing, the Executive Bureau was of the view that the union's campaign could benefit from professional advice. To that end, an external advisor was asked to submit a proposal; the same external advisor that had assisted the Union with previous campaigns (equal pay, future of work, telecommuting).

It was noted that momentum for such a campaign was growing with the recent positive UNAT judgment which remanded the case to the UNDT for full review on the merits (after being denied receivability). Pressure on management was deemed important as in any campaign, which included a well-thought and planned communication strategy that also required clear objectives.

Following the discussion, the Council approved by consensus an expenditure envelope of CHF 5'000 for the campaign on the translators' workload.

## **8. ICSC**

Council members recalled that an important ICSC session was held in July, for which a report would be broadcast. Main achievements included recommendations to the General Assembly for increased and more equal parental leave; a positive change in the calculation of travel hours that grant premium economy and business class entitlement (as a pilot project at first); increased secondary dependent and child allowances; an improved GS salary methodology that settles for only one (the highest) salary scale.

## **9. Pension Fund**

The Council recalled that the staff unions partially won the argument against the outsourcing of the fixed-income portfolio of the Pension Fund, bringing down the outsourced percentage from 75% to 22%. It had become known at a certain point that the Board had the intention to force CCISUA to leave its observer seat as retaliation for the campaign, alleging breach of confidentiality and ethics rules. CCISUA pulled out from the July Board session, avoiding a decision on its future participation in Board sessions. Attempts by the Board to change its ethics policy, which would have aimed at further restricting participant representation, were also averted. At the time of the next session CCISUA will reevaluate the conditions of its participation. The federation was considering next steps of the campaign, including possible lobbying of Member States in New York.

## **10. Delegation of Authority**

This item was closed down as the requestor was not present.

## **11. Any other business**

No other business was raised.

*The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.*