



40th Staff Union Council
2022-2023

Ref. SU-40-6

Minutes of the 6th meeting

held on 29 September 2022 at 1 p.m. via MS Teams

Adopted on 6 December 2022

Council members present: Mohamed Bali (*Deputy Executive Secretary*), Dominique Chantrel, Prisca Chaoui, Philippe Duparc, Jamshid Gaziyeu, Ursula Hermelink (*Vice President*), Laura Johnson, Nicole Lewis-Lettington, Dan Lin, Begoña Martinez Alfonso, Olivier Meyer, Catherine Peck Arif, Viera Pejchal, Ian Richards (*President*), Bradford Smith (*Executive Secretary*).

Council members absent: Naima Abdellaoui, Mohamed Assi, Hélène Fabiani, Jean-Luc La Planeta, Hilary Nwokeabia, Rowland Palaret, Gerald Pioda, Maria Almudena Rueda Melendez, Philip Thomas, Radouan Toualbia.

The meeting began at 1:05 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 5th meeting

The minutes of the 5th meeting were adopted without changes as recorded by the Union secretariat.

3. Report of the Executive Bureau

The Executive Secretary briefed the Council on EB activities since the previous Council meeting:

- a. Follow-up with UNOG Administration on the requirement of a secondary badge for ITC staff to enter the Palais, as was the case for staff from all other international organizations. UNOG and ITC administrations were discussing the alignment of badge types to remove the requirement for ITC staff to get a secondary badge and access Palais premises more easily.
- b. Engagement with OCHA staff and confirmation of positive changes by management including the discontinuation of OCHA's own mobility policy and alignment with the Secretariat's.
- c. Review of staff cases namely concerning contract issues, performance appraisals, pension, education grant, medical insurance – from various departments, i.e. UNOG, OHCHR, UNCTAD, ECE.
- d. Engagement with UNCTAD HR to discuss and ensure the correct application of flexible working arrangements, which was under review by the UNCTAD SG, following a number of complaints from staff; follow-up would continue.
- e. Concerning the UN Geneva Working Group on Addressing Racism at the Workplace, a townhall meeting was held in September to present the SG's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) on racism and staff engagement continued through various forms. Recommendations for the DG to implement the SAP were being finalized. A meeting with the DMSPC USG was planned for November.
- f. Concerning the Working Group on staff well-being, discussions continued on the improvement of access to mental health services and townhall meeting was being planned to brief staff on available options and channels, in light of the upcoming World Mental Health Day.

Updates on other subjects would be provided under separate agenda items.

4. Report of the Finance Commission

The FC reported to the Council it had met the week prior and appointed Dominique Chantrel as Treasurer. The FC reviewed the status of accounts noting income and revenue was in line with the current budget. Noting the difficulty for the Union secretariat to execute payments on the FC's behalf through the corporate credit card, the FC agreed for the Union's Administrative Assistant, Froylan Silveira, to hold the card under his name and continue ensuring on behalf of the FC that Union expenditures were duly processed. The FC also agreed to continue with the opening of a UNFCU account.

5. CCISUA mid-term meeting

The Council was informed that the CCISUA mid-term meeting would take place from 8 to 11 November 2022 in New York. The plenary discussed the composition of the delegation and agreed with the recommendation of the EB to nominate the Executive Secretary, Brad Smith, and President, Ian Richards, to attend. It was further raised that the matter of the newly proposed mobility policy was too important and required strong lobbying with Member States, as was the case in the matter of the increase of the translators' workload, among other topics. To that end a proposal was raised to add over shorter periods two other members with lobbying experience and hands-on knowledge of the matters at hand, while paying due regard to diversity (global south, gender) in reaching out to delegates. All the proposed nominations and official mission dates were as follows:

Brad Smith, Executive Secretary, to attend the CCISUA mid-term meeting from 8-11 November.

Ian Richards, President, to attend the CCISUA mid-term meeting from 8 to 11 November and carry out lobbying efforts with Member States from 14 to 16 November.

Mohamed Bali, Deputy Executive Secretary, to support both the CCISUA mid-term delegation and lobbying efforts between 9 to 11 and 14 to 16 November.

Laura Johnson, member of the EB and lead campaigner on the issue of translators, to support lobbying efforts with Member States from 14 to 16 November.

The Council noted that **Prisca Chaoui** was also required to travel on official mission to attend the mid-term meeting as President of CCISUA from 7 to 11 November (separate from the Union's delegation), where costs would be borne by the Union as required by CCISUA statutes.

The Council agreed by consensus on the proposed delegation, on the condition that all costs remained under the previously approved budget line of CHF 20'000 for this mission for which the EB was mandated to exert strict oversight.

6. Inter-Agency Games subsidy

Council members discussed the request from the Sports Commission to subsidize the participation of UNOG staff members to the 2022 IAG. It was recalled that the Council had traditionally subsidized not all participants to the games but its dues-paying members only, either at 50% of the cost with accommodation or 100% without accommodation. The Council agreed by consensus to adhere to the precedent and grant a subsidy to the 34 dues-paying members who were identified among the participants, at the level of CHF 310 (100% of the cost) per person which did not include accommodation. The expenditure was therefore approved as follows: CHF 310 x 34 = CHF 10'540.

7. Mobility policy

Staff unions were recently informed that a new mobility policy was being reviewed by OLA, where no consultations had been held with staff representation beforehand and management remained silent on many comments and concerns raised on the draft policy. The Union sent out a broadcast informing staff about this, as well as a survey on the matter which was picked up by other unions and became a global survey. Results of the survey would be announced to staff the following week. Engagement at SMC level remained active at the level of the Working Group on Mobility. Discussions included the negotiation of a transitional measure allowing staff who joined the Organization before May 2021 a period of 5 years before being locked into the new mobility scheme.

A discussion followed. The fact that other unions joined the effort to push back against the policy was deemed to be a good sign which prompted management to engage in discussions. It was noted that Member States had not approved the policy but management was still going ahead with it. Council members regretted that the Administration had already released a broadcast informing staff about the policy when discussions on the policy were still pending. However the policy would not be in effect until promulgated, for which management was aiming for the end of autumn. A transitional measure such as the one being negotiated would give time to Member States to really see how much this policy would cost the organization and the impact and difficulties for staff – which could encourage them to ask for its revision later on. The discussion continued on the way management was engaging with staff and the shortcomings of

management in taking into consideration the different elements around staff careers and impact on their lives.

8. Staff-Management Committee updates

Concerning the Working Group on Administration of Justice, a position paper was presented to management and the Working Group would be meeting again the following week.

Concerning rosters, meetings within SMC were temporarily suspended because discussion on mobility had overtaken the exchanges. The latest management position was to cap roster membership at 7 years arguing an unmanageable number of people on rosters and that the longer staff remained on a roster, the less attractive their profile was for hiring managers. Staff unions argued to maintain unlimited roster membership, which had in reality no relation to the manageability of rosters. SMC discussions on this issue would resume at the earliest possible opportunity.

9. Languages Service update

The Council was briefed on the ongoing campaign to preserve translators' conditions of service, which now benefited by the assistance of the external advisor as approved previously by the Council. Much advice had been given by the external advisor which helped the campaign put stronger pressure on management. At a recent meeting, management said they would postpone consultations until after they implemented the workload increase by stopping the inclusion of reprise in translators' output; a decision by which staff unions felt appalled. After showing management that staff was ready to resort to industrial action and decisive communications sent to the DGACM USG and the SG, management announced a delay to the reprise measure until early January. Staff unions were organizing actions for the upcoming International Translation Day and efforts would continue.

Council members applauded the efforts on the campaign and noted the valuable contribution of the external advisor. The need for lobbying Member States in New York on this issue was highlighted.

10. Any other business

No other business was raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.