



40th Staff Union Council 2022-2023

Ref. SU-40-EB-4

Executive Bureau Minutes of the 4th meeting

held on 5 April 2022 at 9 a.m.
via MS Teams.

Adopted on 12 April 2022.

Members of the Executive Bureau:

ABDELLAOUI Naima	<i>Present</i>	JOHNSON Laura	<i>Present</i>
BALI Mohamed	<i>Present</i>	MEYER Olivier	<i>Present</i>
CHAOUI Prisca	<i>Present</i>	SMITH Bradford	<i>Present</i>
DUPARC Philippe	<i>Present</i>		

President of the UNOG SU:

RICHARDS Ian *Present*

Vice-President of the UNOG SU:

HERMELINK Ursula *Present*

The meeting began at 9:05 a.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with changes as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 2nd and 3rd meetings

The minutes of the 2nd and 3rd meetings were adopted without changes as recorded in the Staff Union's secretariat.

3. Date/time and agenda of next Staff Union Council meeting

All EB members agreed to convene the next Staff Union Council meeting on 21 April at 1.15 p.m. A proposed agenda to be circulated via email.

4. Programme of Work

Brad Smith noted that EB members were requested to provide comments on the draft work programme online document that was provided to that effect, where a number of comments had already been made. Any further comments were welcomed by Wednesday 6 April.

Naima Abdellaoui noted that the comments she submitted via email were complex and therefore requested the Executive Secretary (Brad Smith) to integrate them into the draft. Brad Smith stated that it was up to each EB member to insert comments into the draft. Prisca Chaoui volunteered to review the comments from Naima Abdellaoui and integrate them into the draft work programme, as appropriate.

Ian Richards asked Naima Abdellaoui to please refrain from putting non-EB members in copy of EB email discussions as had happened with the discussion by the EB on the work programme, as it made the work less efficient, prejudiced discussion, and was unconstructive. Ms. Abdellaoui agreed to refrain from doing so in the interest of building trust within the EB team.

5. Pension Fund

Prisca Chaoui informed the EB members that Catherine Pollard (USG DMSPC) replied on behalf of the SG on the planned outsourcing at the Pension Fund of its fixed-term portfolio, following CCISUA's reiterated appeals and a petition with over 12,500 signatures against such plan. In the reply, management agreed to suspend the plan's implementation only for three months but reiterated the arguments which supported the outsourcing that staff representatives refuted. The federation will be discussing the way forward.

Naima Abdellaoui agreed on the action of the petition, although raised concerns that it seemed not all unions in the federation were aware of such action. Prisca Chaoui, in her position as President of CCISUA, confirmed to Ms. Abdellaoui that ample discussion had been carried out among all CCISUA members and she as President of the federation led the creation of the petition in coordination with the sister unions. This was confirmed to be the case by Brad Smith who attended a CCISUA meeting in this regard. Ian Richards advised caution on misinformation spread by unauthorized sources. Brad Smith

added that the petition had shown its value and that its results were now evidenced in Ms. Pollard's reply.

6. Update on DCM SMRG

Brad Smith briefed the EB on the recent meeting of the Staff-Management Relations Group at DMC, which covered a number of issues, namely the budget which seemed in good shape and foresaw no reduction in posts; staff diversity and geographical representation and outreach to candidates to that effect; issues with the gData system that needed to be addressed including poor communication on its rollout, the possible impact of gData on performance appraisals, which management acknowledged; a number of staff reporting RSI health issues and increased sick leave.

Naima Abdellaoui supported the increase in diversity but bearing in mind the primacy that should be awarded to merit in any selection and/or promotion, which the Bureau agreed noting that language staff are not subjected to geographic representation. Prisca Chaoui raised a concern whereby LS staff seemed to be separated from others because of their type of work. Naima Abdellaoui asked where managers had the authority to come up with alternative definitions of professions and their responsibilities. Ian Richards noted that the SG was mandated to make sure the Member States' funds were used efficiently and that he did have the mandate to manage the workforce, and to that effect make change proposals where posts and responsibilities adapt to technology – but the problem laid on the fact that staff representatives were not always properly consulted, which is where intervention was required to hold management accountable for doing things correctly. Prisca Chaoui reaffirmed that while managers overall could take decisions, they were obliged to meaningfully consult the staff.

Laura Johnson noted on the reprise issue that information was received whereby it would be implemented only until September, at which time a new system would be implemented in detriment of staff. Discussions with other unions on the matter were ongoing. The EB mandated Laura Johnson and Naima Abdellaoui to follow-up on the matter as well as on ETES and report back.

7. Update on SMC

Brad Smith briefed the EB on the recent SMC ad hoc meeting which covered a number of issues, namely new policy on job classification and travel. On job classification, staff representatives thought the draft administrative instruction seemed coherent and brought improvements but were concerned about the change in wording from "post" to "job". Management confirmed the new wording did not affect in any way the budget or posts. Staff representatives requested that the terminology be clarified as there was a lack of consistency in the administrative issuances. Management stated that they would discuss with OLA how to best clarify the terminology. On travel, the item was postponed until after SMC X to give staff reps the chance to study the matter and raise questions.

Naima Abdellaoui suggested to raise at SMC a proposal to increase the release time given to staff representatives, noting that current duties now required more time compared to the time release that was granted by the General Assembly (GA) in the 1990's.

Prisca Chaoui expressed her opposition to the above suggestion, noting that a union such as Geneva's was already granted up to full-time release for two of its office holders, plus up to 32 hours per month for EB members and up to 10 hours per month for the rest of Council members. Not one of the sister unions had raised such a proposal and Geneva should not be the one to raise it. Ursula Hermelink agreed with Ms. Chaoui, raising caution on the perception of staff of the work of its staff representatives, as well the importance of remaining aware of the strain on the Organization – and its mandate delivery – by the release it already accorded for representational functions, most importantly in the context of extra budgetary programmes.

Naima Abdellaoui raised that it was not for the EB to take decisions for others regarding potential additional time release, nor to take a decision in place of the GA. Rationalizing the suggestion from the point of view of staff and staff representatives, time release was not a favour from the GA but the means it provided to carry out certain work.

Ian Richards expressed the opinion that the way in which time released was used was more important than how much of it was made available, and so was first of all important to ensure that the available time release was used properly. Prisca Chaoui suggested for each EB member to keep track of their use of time release. The Bureau agreed to this proposal.

8. UN Port

Ian Richards recalled that the UN Port facility, jointly managed by the UNOG Staff Union and UNOG management, was very much appreciated by staff and had gained more importance for staff welfare in

recent years. This was thanks to various changes implemented by the UN Port Committee which were mainly oriented to upgrading the premises from a simple buvette to a more professional establishment with more ample enjoyment options for staff and their families, including an overall upgrade of facilities which for years required renovation which was ongoing.

A request was therefore put before the EB to approve a zero-interest loan of CHF 50'000 for UN Port, to be returned within one year, that would allow UN Port to carry out various upgrades and safety works before the beginning of the summer season. UN Port would only generate cash as it produced income throughout the season, hence why a loan was required at such time. It was noted that the Staff Union had given to UN Port two loans in the past (2018, 2020) which were both paid back in full and on time.

Prisca Chaoui requested to know which improvements did the UN Port Committee intend to undertake with the loaned funds, to which Ian Richards confirmed approximately CHF 40'000 were intended to renew the deck next to the port, and CHF 10'000 to renew the locker rooms' rooftop.

Naima Abdellaoui noted that the UN Port Committee should ensure any required permits were obtained before embarking on any works and bear in mind any applicable Swiss norms.

Seeing no objection, the EB approved the request subject to confirmation by the Staff Union Council.

9. 40th anniversary of the UNOG Staff Union

Prisca Chaoui recalled that the UNOG Staff Union was due to celebrate its 40 years in 2022 and suggested to have volunteers in the EB and the Council to suggest ideas on how to mark the occasion, possibly with an event over summer. Ian Richards recalled the Staff Union used to hold summer parties as part of staff welfare before the pandemic, which could be planned for again for some time before the beginning of school holidays. Ian Richards and Mohamed Bali volunteered.

10. Latest Covid updated

Naima Abdellaoui raised the case of a staff member who asked about the mandatory requirement of Covid-19 vaccination upon official travel. Prisca Chaoui recalled that the UNOG Staff Union was to abide by the situation at UNOG, where there was no mandatory vaccination with only a few exceptions as justified by the Director-General. Concerning travel, mandatory vaccination actually circumscribed to destinations or transit countries that requires it. Ian Richards evoked that the measure had been in place since the previous year and was based on a precaution principle to preserve the Organization's mandate delivery, bearing in mind the various possible repercussions that non-vaccination could have on official travel. This included, as pointed out by Ursula Hermelink, avoiding possible quarantine issues.

Mohamed Bali pointed out that the staff member's inquiry derived from an official UNOG broadcast and that they were entitled to pose the question directly to UNOG management on the reasons and conditions for any mandatory vaccination (travel-related or otherwise); being UNOG management the competent authority to explain the rationale of its own decisions, to which the Staff Union was due to hold them accountable.

Brad Smith offered to follow-up with HR on the matter.

11. Finance Commission

As per the Regulations, and seeing no objections, the EB agreed to designate the Deputy Executive Secretary, Mohamed Bali, as member to the Finance Commission (2022-2023).

12. Any other business

EB members held a discussion on the particularities of a case raised at a previous meeting concerning a staff member whose fixed-term contract was not renewed. Brad Smith had reviewed the case and it was agreed that Naima Abdellaoui would work with the staff member to identify appropriate vacancies at all levels to apply to and that such application would then be forwarded to UNOG HR copying Naima Abdellaoui and Brad Smith. Naima Abdellaoui and Brad Smith would then follow-up with UNOG HR. Brad Smith wrote to the staff member about challenging the continuing appointment decision with OSLA to see if there were any grounds to challenge it and he offered to accompany the staff member to such a meeting if the staff member so desired.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.