



## 41<sup>st</sup> Staff Union Council 2023-2024

Ref. SU-41-EB-4

### Executive Bureau Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting

Held on 15 March 2023 at 9 a.m.  
via MS Teams

*Adopted on 29 March 2023.*

#### Members of the Executive Bureau:

ABDELLAOUI Naima	<i>Present</i>	GONZALEZ Pablo	<i>Present</i>
BALI Mohamed	<i>Present</i>	HERMELINK Ursula	<i>Present</i>
MARTINEZ Begoña	<i>Present</i>	JOHNSON Laura	<i>Present</i>
DUPARC Philippe	<i>Present</i>		

#### President of the UNOG SU:

RICHARDS Ian

*Present*

#### Vice-President of the UNOG SU:

SMITH Bradford

*Present*

*The meeting began at 9 a.m.*

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes as reflected below.

#### 2. Adoption of the minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting

The minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting were adopted without changes as recorded in the Union secretariat.

#### 3. Programme of work

EB members read out the draft programme of work and agreed to submit it to the Council for review and adoption.

#### 4. OHCHR review

The EB noted an email received the week before by OHCHR staff from their management informing them of an imminent organizational review process by the recently appointed High Commissioner whereby staffing changes were expected. This was considered to be essentially a restructuring process that should be consulted with staff representation. The EB agreed to discuss with the OHCHR Staff Committee on the joint way forward and to request a meeting with the High Commissioner to get more details.

#### 5. OSH committee

EB members were informed that HQ staff from New York who worked on the creation of what would become the Occupational Safety and Health Committee would be in Geneva to impart training on their subject, and they requested to meet with staff representatives. The ES and DES met with them and were briefed about the scope and nature of the future Committee which was expected to be a joint body with a particular composition, where the chair would be a Director with the power to make decisions. The HQ representatives indicated it was too late to join their training for OSH focal points in Geneva but it was still possible to participate in their upcoming training in Brindisi. EB members recalled that this future OSH Committee was the outcome of SMC discussions and a demand from staff unions.

The EB agreed it was important to join the OSH training as well as the working group making preparations in Geneva. Naima Abdellaoui and Philippe Duparc expressed interest in participating. Information would be shared with the EB members as soon as received.

#### 6. UNCTAD posts

The EB was informed of what seemed to be an increasing trend whereby posts in UNCTAD that became vacant were not being advertised and some of these positions were being used or filled arbitrarily. The EB agreed to approach UNCTAD on this matter to see why were posts not being advertised.

## **7. Languages Service**

The EB was briefed on recent events regarding the translators' campaign against their workload increase. A global townhall had been held last week to discuss next measures and stepping up the campaign. Staff representatives from the four concerned duty stations had written to the SG and relevant managers to inform them of the non-confidence vote held by staff against senior management, with no official response so far. Management's position insisted that the workload increase was not really affecting the health of many staff because they did not see an overall increase in sick leave. Staff were encouraged at the townhall to make use of USL whenever they felt health was affected, and specific dates were suggested.

Concerning the calculation of productivity, where it was up to staff to check if leave and production were correctly reflected in gDoc, it was raised that management should provide assurances in writing that they take the unreliability of the productivity figures into account when assessing staff performance if the system was not working properly. The importance of acting early vis-à-vis this system failure – before reaching a rebuttal phase – was raised. A discussion among EB members ensued on the scope of the issue.

## **8. Parental leave**

With regard to the issue of non-retroactivity of the new parental leave, which had been agreed to at SMC by management but then not applied when the actual policy was issued, a Union broadcast would be sent out encouraging concerned staff to seek out guidance from the Union should they wish to legally contest a potential refusal of retroactive parental leave. Staff unions would be meeting later that day with two specialised lawyers from Vienna and New York who would be providing insight on the legal approach to the non-retroactivity of the policy. Legal support was expected to happen under a cost-sharing scheme between unions. The EB agreed to set aside up to CHF 10'000 for this purpose, to be confirmed by the Council.

## **9. UN Today**

The EB was informed that an invoice issued to a French advertising agency who owed fees to the Union for the amount of EUR 6,922.50 remained pending since March 2022. The agency recognized the debt since the invoice was issued and offered to pay in instalments throughout 2022 but never complied. A formal notice letter was sent in early 2023, which so far remained without reply. The EB agreed to look into the possibility of raising the matter in Switzerland through the *Office cantonal de poursuites* and to look into the cost of hiring a lawyer in France to pursue collection through legal means.

## **10. Any other business**

- a. Following the question whether the staff selection system was under still review, it was noted that the policy was recently subject to changes as published in the reviewed administrative issuance ST/AI/2010/3/Rev.1.
- b. EB members were informed of the possible closure of one OHCHR field office and the G5 Sahel Project but noted it did not have the mandate to intervene if staff were not represented by the Union. Informal discussions were held with OHCHR Staff Committee on the way forward and the UNFSU was also informed.
- c. It was noted that management in New York and Geneva had recently admitted to errors while assigning steps within grade to a number of recently hired colleagues in Languages Service, and these were being corrected.
- d. Concerning reclassifications of G3 positions in SSS and CSS to reflect the evolution of functions, this was raised with the DG at a recent townhall meeting and should be raised at the next JNC meeting.
- e. It was clarified that the seventeen G3 job openings in SSS recently published were mainly meant to increase the number of security agents, not to allow current G3 staff to go through a central review body to be eligible for a continuing appointment. It was also noted that the experience requirement was expanded to include that of private security where previously only military and police service was admitted – which seemed like a downgrade in the level of experience. Past experience showed that when this happened in New York and their staff union raised it with management, such change in required experience was reverted. EB members agreed to raise it with SSS management.
- f. It was positively noted that there were no more G2 posts among SSS security guards.
- g. An overall comment was made whereby hiring managers were noted to have absolute power over job openings which created abuse, as well over the use of rosters, which was against the UN charter.

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.*