



42nd Staff Union Council 2024-2025

Ref. SU-42-2

Minutes of the 2nd meeting

held on 27 March 2024 at 1:30 p.m. via MS Teams

Adopted on 28 May 2024

Council members present: Marian Aggrey; Saba Al-Nadawi; Begoña Martínez Alfonso; Mohamed Chiraz Bali; Cíntia De Lima Cardoso; Philippe Duparc; Marius Gologus; Ursula Hermelink; Cédric Jacquot; Laura Johnson; Nicole Lewis-Lettington; Rowland Palairet; Catherine Louise Peck Arif; Janet Puhalic; Ian Richards; Bradford Smith; Marko Stanovic; François Subiger.

Council members absent: Naima Abdellaoui; Dominique Chantrel; Tigest Desta; Jean-Luc La Planeta; Pablo Gonzales Silva; Philip Thomas; Radouan Toualbia.

The meeting began at 1:35 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 1st meeting

The minutes of the 1st meeting were adopted without changes.

3. Report of the Executive Bureau

The Executive Secretary reported on behalf of the EB on its activities and recent developments:

- CCISUA General Assembly (GA): The EB nominated Laura Johnson (Executive Secretary, ES), Janet Puhalic (Deputy Executive Secretary, DES), and Ian Richards (SU Council President), to represent the Union to the upcoming CCISUA GA in May, to be held in Mombasa. Travel costs would be borne by the Union.
- Children with disabilities: Staff members who had children with disabilities reported difficulties in education: the special education was too expensive, and the amount of special education grant was not enough, which is exacerbated by limited offer. The EB met with UNOG management to discuss the possibility of supporting the parents. The management suggested discussing this issue with other unions and making a joint request since the issue was common not only in Geneva and the issue would be brought up by the federations at the ICSC. The management also suggested detailing the request at an SMC paper that would be discussed at an ad hoc meeting.
- SMC: The next Staff-Management Committee (SMC) meeting will take place from 15 to 21 April 2024 in Nicosia, where management covers the cost of two participants per staff union. The EB agreed to nominate Laura Johnson (ES) and Janet Puhalic (DES) to attend on behalf of the Union. A lot of papers had been submitted for the meeting and staff unions' papers had been submitted on behalf of the entire without reference to the specific unions. The papers drafted by UNOG staff representatives included those on the issue of personal status determination and, on Appendix D (Rules governing compensation in the event of death, injury or illness) of the UN Staff regulations and rules.
- Fifth committee: The ES had addressed the UN General Assembly Fifth Committee (Administrative & Budgetary) on various issues including the proposal to abolish the G to P barrier.
- SMC Working Group on staff selection: the EB attended meetings of this WG to follow the discussions on the implementation of the mobility exercise, which was going to be implemented despite the liquidity crisis, as it was a priority of the Secretary General.
- Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC): the management agreed to keep the previous pattern of holidays observed in 2023, as proposed by the SU. The management had also shared the draft proposal for

creation of UNOG's Special Mechanism to report racism and racial discrimination with the SU for feedback. The EB will share its consolidated comments with the management soon. During the previous JNC meeting, the management confirmed that SU representatives can restart attending the orientation programmes. The SU was no longer invited to this programme some time ago but after its request, the SU was reinvited.

- UNRWA fundraising: an appeal to raise funds for UNRWA was disseminated among staff the day before. The fundraising proposal was agreed at the last Council meeting.
- Tennis club: the club under the new management was up and running and its website was published recently. The staff members could become members and play seven days a week.
- OHCHR: the EB had met with the people responsible for the OHCHR 2.0 reorganization, who assured that no forced moves may be needed as enough staff were ready to move voluntarily. The reorganization would entail the creation of new management positions. The SU might meet them again to follow up on these issues. Another request came from the OHCHR representatives reporting that they received a lot of accusations of favoritism, micromanagement, abuse of authority and requested SU to conduct a survey on these issues similar to those carried out a few years back in other entities. The EB agreed to conduct a survey for all UNOG organizations as these issues were not unique to OHCHR and to identify the entities with more pronounced issues and develop tailored solutions.
- UNECE: a meeting with the UNECE Executive Secretary was being organized.
- Security Sectoral Assembly was established, and Philippe Duparc was elected President. ES and Mr. Duparc met with the Deputy Chief of Security who agreed on the issues raised by staff representatives relevant to security personnel, in particular on organizing a joint staff-management survey on changing the current night shift arrangements. A broadcast will be sent to inform security staff of these developments.
- OCHA: staff listening session on H building move was scheduled for Thursday, 28 March 2024 (but was subsequently postponed to April). Also, due to the resignation of OCHA Under-Secretary-General (USG), the SU agreed to send a letter to the UN Secretary-General to urge him to appoint a person to this position who would uphold and promote the UN values specifically duty of care and staff wellbeing at the same level as the resigned USG.
- DCM: the SU had a meeting with the Director in Staff relations management group and discussed Palais closure issues, leave restrictions that affected translators and interpreters. The director denied that there were leave restrictions put in place. The ES also informed that the translators were filling in a survey on whether they were prepared to take action against another upcoming rise in productivity standard.

4. Report of the outgoing Financial Commission (FC)

The outgoing FC noted that the resignation of the Administrative Assistant in August 2023 affected the FC's work, but it had been gradually overcome and the accounts of the SU were kept in order. The reports were being finalized and to be sent soon.

5. Elections to the Financial Commission

The Council was informed that, in line with the Regulations, the EB had appointed **Janet Puhlovic** as FC member.

Following nominations, the Council also appointed the following staff representatives as Finance Commission members and signatories to the Council's bank accounts: **Catherine Peck Arif**, **Dominique Chantrel**, and **Rowland Palaret**.

6. Work programme

The Council was presented with the draft work programme as reviewed by the EB. Following an overview and discussion, the work programme was adopted with some changes.

7. Palais closure

The EB informed the Council on the actions taken regarding Palais closure. The EB sent a letter to the UNOG DG to provide details and the DG invited the SU for a meeting. The issue was further discussed at the JNC meeting. The management agreed not to shut Palais for several months, but measures to reduce

operational costs would be implemented as were announced after these meetings. The EB presented 2 suggestions: to send the Language Services (LS) staff to the D building now (LS is supposed to move to D building after renovation) to reduce pressure on H building staff and to avoid noise, overcrowding and productivity falls; and to implement alternate working arrangements (AWA) instead of flexible working arrangements (FWA). FWAs are voluntary arrangements agreed between staff and managers while telecommuting 3 days a week, which was under discussion by the administration, was not a personal choice but would be requirement from the organization. The first suggestion was accepted by the administration, but the second was not. The EB sent a broadcast on these developments and would bring up these issues on the DG's townhall on the same day, where SU would be given a floor.

The Council members noted that SU broadcasts on the matter generated a lot of feedback and reactions, and the staff were urging the SU to push back on the Palais closure measures. The savings generated by the closure would be way lower than the deficit, while significantly deteriorating staff wellbeing. The members also called to hold a SU townhall after the DG's townhall to hear staff views and perceptions on the issue and, based on that, tailor SU strategy regarding Palais closure. The Council agreed to organize a staff townhall meeting the week after.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.