



## 42<sup>nd</sup> Staff Union Council 2024-2025

Ref. SU-42-EB-18

### Executive Bureau Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting

Held on 11 December 2024 at 1.30 p.m.  
via MS Teams

*Adopted on 14 January 2025*

#### Members of the Executive Bureau:

ABDELLAOUI Naima	<i>Present</i>	LEWIS-LETTINGTON Nicole	<i>Absent</i>
DUPARC Philippe	<i>Present</i>	MARTINEZ Begoña	<i>Absent</i>
JACQUIOT Cédric	<i>Present</i>	PUHALOVIĆ Janet	<i>Present</i>
JOHNSON Laura	<i>Present</i>		

#### President of the UNOG SU:

RICHARDS Ian *Present*

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

Catherine Louise *Present*  
Peck Arif

*The meeting began at 01.35 p.m.*

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as reflected below.

#### 2. Adoption of the minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting

Naima Abdellaoui asked to indicate her name under item 5 of the meeting minutes, as she was the one to voice the proposals on E building and parking space. The minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting had been approved as amended.

#### 3. Date of next Council meeting

The EB decided to hold the next Council meeting on Monday, 20 January 2025.

#### 4. ICSC training

The ICSC training opportunity on the compensation package that was discussed at the previous meeting involved an estimated cost of 2,800 CHF per participant, covering participation, DSA, and travel. Laura Johnson expressed interest in attending due to her experience and her role's relevance to the training with Naima Abdellaoui also volunteering.

It was pointed out that one spot per organization would be allotted if the number of participants was too high. It was agreed to seek the Council's views and approval on participation by email.

#### 5. Report from JNC and Transition Board

The recent JNC meeting mostly focused on SHP-related issues, with unresolved topics to be addressed in a follow-up on 23 December. Key points discussed:

- Clarification of Inspira's local recruitment question and improve communication for Switzerland-specific requirements.
- Holding a Union-UNOG DoA town hall meeting on 16 December to address building concerns, allowing staff to submit questions directly and anonymously.
- DoA agreed to improve communication through new building-specific distribution lists; create more touchdown space; service the vending machines; consider options for swapping out the older chairs in S1; review the chemicals used to clear the carpets; carry

out emergency fire warden training and improve emergency signage; fix the handicap lift in S1; pinpoint food options when the cafeteria closes in 2025.<sup>1</sup>

- An addition point was raised about the cold office temperatures which needed to be addressed.
- Concerns remained over SHP's lack of focus on staff needs, unresolved soundproofing, and relocation transparency for OHCHR staff.

## **6. OHCHR issues**

The OHCHR staff committee had declined a memorandum of understanding (MoU) proposed by the SU and instead sent its own version that restricts SU from engaging directly with OHCHR senior management without consulting the committee. It was pointed out that the committee was considered an informal entity without proper staff representation status under organizational regulations while the Union had an official mandate to represent OHCHR staff. The suggestion was to postpone discussions until the new OHCHR staff committee is elected, as the current one's mandate was ending. That approach would ensure proper engagement with the newly established leadership.

ES also reported on the OHCHR townhall meeting on restructuring process (2.0) that she attended, where she raised staff concerns collected via recent survey. The process involved dividing the Special Procedures Branch and merging staff into other units, raising concerns about lack of consultation. Staff expressed dissatisfaction at the townhall where their questions were not adequately addressed. In response, the SU had written to the High Commissioner requesting a meeting and planned to raise those concerns in an upcoming OHCHR general townhall.

EB discussed whether UNEP staff in Geneva could be also represented by the SU. While UNEP staff are administratively tied to UN Office in Nairobi, some are based in Geneva and face local issues that the Nairobi union cannot address effectively. Some noted that as per the policy, staff representation is tied to the duty station, allowing SU to represent them, while others highlighted that Nairobi retained administrative authority over UNEP staff. The need for further discussion after reviewing the Arbitration Committee decision(s) was highlighted.

## **7. Legal case support**

EB discussed a complex situation involving a staff member who, after receiving loans from colleagues for medical expenses, has not yet repaid them. There was concern about the repayment of funds and legal advice was needed. EB was requested to consider subsidizing the lawyer fees.

EB members emphasized that any union financial support should be limited to dues-paying members and that the Union guidelines allow legal support only for cases of broader interest for all staff. They suggested the affected staff members should try several strategies: consulting with a lawyer to explore legal options for recovering the funds; the possibility of withholding the individual's final paycheck as an administrative measure; seeking guidance from legal experts within the UN to determine the best course of action; and suggested utilizing legal aid services or other support mechanisms available to staff and putting the staff member concerned in 'poursuite'.

## **8. UN Today**

- The UN Today Editorial Board suggested changes to the magazine's terms of reference to clarify the board membership and content ownership to strengthen the Board's control over the magazine and ensure the integrity of its content. Proposed changes:
  - Since the current version of ToR didn't specify who can become a member of the board, it was proposed to restrict it to current and former staff of the UN Secretariat and agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> A complete list of SHP/move issues, which were addressed at both the JNC and Transition Board, were relayed to the Council on 15 December via email.

- Explicitly stating that the magazine's content cannot be reproduced for commercial purposes.

No objection was raised by the EB and the updated ToR would be submitted for the Council's approval.

## **9. AOB**

- An EB member informed about a staff member's case who was denied a request to telework 5 days per week after returning from a sickness despite a medical justification. The EB discussed the inconsistency between encouraging remote work and denying specific requests, especially when medical reasons are provided. It was suggested to seek a written explanation for the denial from the supervisor and follow up at the next meeting.

*The meeting was adjourned at 02.40 p.m.*

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### **Acronyms and abbreviations:**

SU: Staff Union of the UNOG

EB: Executive Bureau of the Staff Union

ES: Executive Secretary of the Staff Union

DES: Deputy Executive Secretary of the Staff Union

VP: Vice-President of the UNOG SU

UNOG: United Nations Office at Geneva

CCISUA: Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations