

44th Staff Union Council 2026-2027	Draft minutes of the 2nd meeting held on 6 May 2026 <i>Adopted on ...</i> Ref. SU-44-3
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Council members present: Ian Richards, Laura Johnson, Catherine Louise Peck, Janet Puhlovic, Nicole Lewis Lettington, Philippe Duparc, Philip Thomas, Nataliya Oliynyk, Cedric Jacquot, Dominique Chantrel, Begoña Martinez Alfonso, Clint O'Connor, Marian Aggrey, Cintia de Lima Cardoso, Rowland Palairat, Mohamed Chiraz Bali, Marie Araksia Gulsadian, Ysabel Fougary, Hee-Kyong Yoo

Council members absent: Naima Abdellaoui, Julien Bornon, Marko Stanovic, Anjum Khan, Radouan Tualbia, Jean-Luc La Planeta

The meeting began at 1.15 p.m

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with the addition of the report of the Finance Commission. One Council member noted that he wished to discuss another item under AOB.

Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were adopted without change.

Report of the Executive Bureau

The Executive Secretary briefed the Council on the latest developments that had been discussed at the Bureau. This included a CCISUA members meeting to strategize on an advocacy campaign related to maintaining UN salaries and benefits; a meeting with the US ambassador and a UK representative on the same points, including the issue of 'margins'; the Union's General Assembly, which resulted in the election of additional Polling Officers to allow the Board to function; the Union's townhall on flexible working arrangements, staff selection and performance management, which was well attended; several JNCs with UNOG, where the Union was informed of the establishment of a new occupational health and safety committee which will replace the current joint body on health and safety and the precarious status of the Staff Benevolent Fund; the lateral reassignment of a downsized staff member to the post of Union assistant, which is fully funded by UNOG until the end of 2026; the upcoming Transition Board meeting; the Green Mobility's group advocacy for cyclist and road safety; and meetings with administration and/or management at OHCHR, OSE Syria, UNOG Language Services, and IIMM. The Executive Secretary also gave a detailed account of the management and staff side papers discussed at the SMC in Valencia, which will be detailed in a broadcast to all constituents and in a report issued by the Secretary General;

this SMC also included two advisers from the Union in addition to the member and alternate, which was considered a good practice.

The Council took note of the report.

Report of the Finance Commission

The previous Treasurer reported on the draft internal audit for 2024, which detailed several recommendations to improve the Union's accounting and which the Finance Commission agreed need to be implemented. The internal audit will be shared with the Council before the next meeting, and the Finance Commission will now initiate the external audit for 2024. The audit for 2025 must be initiated soon. The President underscored that the lack of Union assistant has impacted negatively the functioning of the Union, including the auditing of its accounts.

The Council took note of the report. It asked the Finance Commission to elect a Treasurer for this Council cycle.

Flexible working arrangements (FWA)

The President briefed on the exchange of letters between the Union and the Chef de Cabinet, which confirmed that the SGB on FWA remains in force. He recapped the Union's townhall, which covered this issue, noting that staff do not support the limiting of FWA. However, Heads of Entity had a wide spectrum of positions on this issue, with management in UNDRR, DCM, OCHA Geneva and ECE being particularly inflexible. The Executive Secretary noted that Heads of Entity were reluctant to retract or provide further clarifications on FWA given the political pressures by some Member States.

Downsizing

The Executive Secretariat briefed on the upcoming activation of downsizing policies in UNOG, OAJ, IIMM and ECE; when the policy is activated staff will be duly notified by the Head of the Entity. She noted that UNOG's downsizing should include RB and XB-funded posts. While each entity will carry out a separate downsizing exercise, the Staff Management Group (SMG) members and secretariat will remain the same. The SMG includes three union representatives. While only a small number of staff remain on abolished posts, it is possible that more staff are included in the downsizing exercise based on how the scope is set.

Summer party

Since the last Council meeting, members of the social events committee had not yet met. The members agreed to meet right after the Council meeting and to establish a WhatsApp group to discuss next steps, and to develop a proposed budget and concept for a summer social event for staff. The committee was encouraged to nominate a chair.

The Council asked the committee to propose a budget and concept at its next meeting.

Incident of racism by a Council member towards other Council members

At a Bureau meeting the prior week, a Council member made racist remarks towards other Council members. The President noted that such behavior could not be tolerated.

The Council agreed to condemn the incident of racism and disassociate itself from the action.

Any other business

Council members raised four items under AOB:

- The UNDT decision to render the group roster appeal cases 'non receivable'. The leadership of the Union reported that they are meeting with the Chief of OSLA to discuss next steps.
- The perceived increase in the use of interns and UNVs to carry out staff functions following the abolishment of staff posts. Council members debated the value of asking security to provide the number of badges issued to interns, as there was no central office in the UN secretariat which tracked interns, and the type of work interns should be asked to do. Concern was expressed about the inability to find data to determine the extent of affiliate personnel in the UN secretariat in Geneva. The next report on the use of affiliate personnel for the entire UN secretariat will be issued in November 2026. A study commissioned by the GA on the options for the payment of interns may curb their overuse. A Council member briefed on his efforts to advocate with UNOG to create a website to provide interns with information; asked for clarification on whether the catering committee looked at the proposal for improved lunches for interns; and noted that the interns were developing a proposal for funding for consideration by the Union. Another Council member cautioned that interns were travelling on mission, which was not allowed and that a broadcast clarifying this may be warranted.
- The local salary survey in Geneva. Members of this committee reported that comparator data was being collected.
- The inability of children of UN staff to apply for internships in Switzerland due to the temporary residency card (CdL) status. A Council member agreed to liaise with the Swiss mission to see if a solution could be found.