

UNITED NATIONS STAFF UNION
SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS
UNIES

45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL

Minutes/Actes

Meeting No: 45/21
Date: 5 October 2017
Time: 1:15 pm
Venue: CR E
Quorum: 14/16 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 1:25 pm with new Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie in the Chair and the Secretary taking notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The draft agenda was adopted with the addition of a point under AOB regarding the description of Staff Council meetings as Closed on conference room signage, as raised by Unit 20 Rep. Union 6 Alt. requested a standing point for AFT updates. In the course of the meeting item 6 was considered before item 5.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

Minutes for meetings 19 and 20 were adopted unanimously.

3. Executive Board report and President's report and summary of communications

There had been no EB meeting due to lack of quorum.

The Chair submitted a motion to grant the President 5 minutes speaking time when introducing her report. The Secretary agreed as long as the oral presentation was not a substitute for a full written report. The motion passed.

The President apologized for not submitting a written report. She informed of a number of meetings, the most important of which on the Gender Strategy. There was nothing new in the Strategy, merely measures to implement decisions taken formerly. The working group on GSDM was in the process of finalizing an interim report to SMC, which would hold an ad-hoc meeting on the Gender Strategy in December and on management reform early next year. Leadership had met with the Presidents of the UNICEF staff union and UNISERV to discuss the HLCM interim report on the duty of care.

The Deputy Chair recalled a decision adopted by the Council at its third meeting whereby "the Council must receive a written report of the Executive Board and the summary of communications in order for a meeting to proceed". He called for the Council to abide by its own decisions.

Unit 26 Alt. commented on a recent broadcast update, which did not contain policy positions agreed by the Union. The broadcast gave the impression that the Union was merely updating staff on the administration's reform. Messages should always include references to the Union's positions on issues. The President replied that the email was merely for information purposes. Unit 6 Alt. agreed that the Union should be more forceful in presenting positions.

Unit 17 Rep. brought up a letter of 20 September by 14 staff unions regretting the lack of consultation on the Gender Strategy. Various members inquired about consultations between UNSU Leadership and the administration, as well as on coordination with other unions. The President went over her meetings with the two USGs successively charged with the strategy. She recalled that the special measures fell under the authority of the SG. Unit 39 Rep. pointed out that the gender strategy was a common system issue. The SG should not be allowed to use conversations with UNSU as an excuse for not consulting other unions. Unit 6 Alt. suggested that UNSU reply stating that a conversation with one union does not qualify as a "consultation". The Treasurer warned against falling into the trap of the administration trying to divide the unions.

Unit 6 Alt. tabled a motion to respond to the SG, which passed with 8 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

The Secretary would draft a resolution for the following week.

Unit 20 Rep. felt that the broadcast read as a validation of the strategy on the part of the Union. Broadcasts on policy issues should be consulted before publication. The President asserted that UNSU was an independent association and would interact with the SG on issues that affect NY staff, but should not be taken to be speaking on behalf of other Unions. She invited the Council to analyse the strategy and submit a position to Leadership.

4. UNSU finances

The Treasurer had no updates to report on.

5. Security

Unit 39 Rep reported that the SG had accepted an independent investigation on the events in DRC. If the Board of Inquiry sent out in June had been independent, there would be no need for a new one. The Council should make it clear to the SG that the irregularity had not gone unnoticed. He would prepare a resolution in consultation with Leadership and the legal counsel.

6. Update from Steering Committee of Statutes Working Group

Unit 25. Rep submitted the Working Group Terms of Reference and asked for them to be adopted the following week. Unit 39 Rep. called for the process to be expedited and Unit 6 Alt. for a deadline to be set. Unit 25. Rep invited all Council members to take part in the first meeting of the WG. Unit 26 Alt. moved to vote on the ToR straight away. The ToR were adopted unanimously.

7. Update on Field JNC by Leadership

The President reported on the Field JNC. UNSU had attended in representation of national staff, FSU international staff and FS categories. Most of the items covered affected staff represented by FSU. National staff were mentioned only on the issue of downsizing. The President expressed her concern that the promised policy on downsizing had not yet been published, while many of our represented staff members were facing downsizing.

Unit 39 Rep. pointed out that downsizing should always be conducted according to a procedure agreed with staff and recalled DT and AT rulings in that sense. However, in reality it was often left up to the SRSG to make decisions. The President drew attention to A/72/492 and Add 1., a report recently published. She invited Council to examine the matter and adopt a position. Unit 6 Alt. called for a statement on delegation of authority, which is fragmenting the organisation instead of tending towards One UN.

The Council adopted a motion requesting Leadership, in consultation with the legal advisor, to issue a communication to the Secretary General regarding the UNDT and AT's rulings on the matter of downsizing. (10 votes in favour, 1 against)

8. Special post allowance and UNDT rulings on equal pay for equal work.

Given the shortage of time, Unit 17 Rep. would submit an update in writing prior to the following meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Items remaining on the agenda for the following meeting were:

9. Suspension of 2014 continuous appointments exercise.

10. Conference Room signage showing Staff Council meetings as [Closed].