

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

45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL

Minutes/Actes

Meeting No: 45/31
Date: 18 January 2018
Time: 1:15 pm
Venue: CR A
Quorum: 10/16 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 9 units present at 1:30 pm, with Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie in the Chair and Secretary Aitor Arauz-Chapman taking notes. Eugenia Beldo attended as focal point for OPPBA staff.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda was adopted with no changes.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

Minutes for meeting 28 and 29 were adopted with no changes.
No minutes were available for meeting 30, as the meeting did not reach a quorum.

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

First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth reported on a meeting held with OHRM to review the JNC Rules of Procedure. Suggestions were made and a revised version was expected. January 30 was the tentative date for the next JNC. Units were requested to submit issues of concern to be included on the agenda.

1st VP also reported that the ad-hoc SMC, held via VTC, could have been more productive. Minutes would be distributed once received. Second Vice-President Cristina Silva added that the item on Pensions was not considered due to lack of time. The next SMC was scheduled for 6 - 8 February.

2nd VP reported on her meeting with the Medical Unit in relation to staff members affected by malaria. She had also taken part in a meeting on Flexible Workspace. The SMC Working Group was finalising its report.

The 1st VP and Assistant Treasurer had attended a workshop on the review of the Mobility framework.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) expressed concern regarding the last SMC and its report. She and 1st VP had been rapporteurs for the April meeting. The draft was completed, but now the Administration wanted to reduce it. The 2016 SMC report was never completed. 2017 SMC might face the same situation. 1st VP explained that the Administration wanted to cut back on exchanges and limit the report to decisions. She suggested elevating the issue to the 3x3 group.

The Council Chair addressed OPPBA focal point Eugenia Beldo to clarify that OPPBA focal points would be given the floor on issues that affected their staff directly. Eugenia Beldo questioned the utility of her participation if she was relegated to only specific issues. She also expressed her concern that some people seemed determined to avoid by-elections from happening. Though she disagreed, she accepted the Council decision and would transmit it to her constituents.

The Secretary expressed his concern regarding the President's factually incorrect statement at the previous day's Town Hall meeting SG, where she had erroneously attributed a call for an external hiring freeze to the 5th Committee. He called for the President to pay more attention to the details of her statements and invited others in the Union to accompany her more closely in crafting her public messages.

4. UNSU Finances

The Assistant Treasurer referred Council members to the accounts for 2017 that the Treasurer had circulated via email. Michelle Rockcliffe inquired about the payments due to CCISUA and AFT, which should appear in financial statements as of December as amounts due, even if the invoices had not been issued. It seemed unusual that "accounts payable" were exactly zero.

5. Relief Committees

The Assistant Treasurer presented the Draft Resolution in support of Relief Committees. She specified that the expenses were covered by the budget. The resolution was adopted unanimously as RES/STC/45/23.

6. Security

Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) reported on plans for Flexible Workspace on the 7th Floor. USD 52 M had been spent to refurbish the Secretariat after CMP. All that furniture would now be thrown out.

The Secretary General has frozen the Mobility scheme. Why is Integration going forward if it relies entirely on Mobility? Management must be held accountable for their use of funds.

7. General Meeting

Unit 25 Rep. recalled the decision adopted by the Council to hold a General Meeting. He called for the meeting to be put back on the agenda in order to reschedule and prepare adequately. Thomas Chacko (Unit 30) recalled major events coming up in March. The Council agreed tentatively on Wednesday 21 February if there was a room available. Leadership would report at the following Council meeting. General Meeting would be included on the Agenda of all Council meetings until then.

8. Working Conditions in Albano

Guozhong Cao (Unit 25) reported on Albano staff reps' interaction with DM in order to address working conditions in the Albano building, with regards to deficiencies in the heating system. USG DGACM had reported at a meeting that DM was negotiating with the landlords in order to find a durable solution to a problem that went back over 10 years. A working group had been established to follow up on the issue.

9. Resolution on Organizing a workshop on rules of UNDT and UNAT

Unit 25 Rep. introduced a resolution carried over from December. The resolution invited the Council to organise a workshop to bring an expert to train Council Members and other Staff Members on procedures before the UNDT and UNAT. The majority of Council Members objected to the suggestion of providing training to other Staff Members and considered that the training should be provided only to Council Members.

Valentin Stancu (Unit 14) supported the workshops, suggested extending it to cover not only UNDT and UNAT but also work with the ICSC in view of the future salary surveys and adjustment of the ICSC methodology. He felt there was a considerable communications gap with the ICSC. 1st VP suggested keeping the issues separate, and asking ICSC for training options with them. Valentin Stancu would prepare a draft. Kenneth Rosario suggested approaching ICSC issues through the Federation.

2nd VP expressed concerns that FICSA could have objections to a CCISUA member hiring their trainer. The Assistant Treasurer suggested verifying the trainer's base, and called for a due procurement process. 1st VP would inquire with FICSA to clarify the apprehensions, and inquire about other trainers in order to submit a slate of 3. Chandana Mutucumarana (Unit 30) suggested combining a full training for Council Members along with a lunchtime information session for staff at large. Unit 25 Rep. would rework the draft and circulate it at the next meeting. The EB would follow up with a list of names.

10. Clarification on the policy for snow days and telecommuting

Rosemary Lane reported on situations faced by staff members' whose occupations do not allow them to telecommute on snow days. Many faced difficulties getting to work in view of the mixed message sent by the Administration. Some had been invited by their managers to take Annual Leave if they couldn't make it to work. Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 28) called for a specific policy on snow days. 1st VP reported that the decision was made by the EOSG. DM had refused to get involved on the issue of AL and SMs should address it through their chain of command. She supported drafting a policy to submit to DM. Kenneth Rosario called for accountability for the way decisions were taken. He suggested a letter from the Leadership calling for an explanation on how the decision was made, and if the NYC state of emergency had been factored into the decision. 2nd VP would raise the issue at the JNC. Rosemary Lane stressed the need for the Union to communicate better to staff on the work we're doing to support them and to listening to their concerns. Michelle Rockcliffe referred the Council to ST AI/1999/13. Kathryn Kuchenbrod pointed out that the ST-AI was drafted before telecommuting, which needed to be covered.

11. Working group on the conditions of service of language staff

Guozhong Cao raised his concern regarding the suggestion of raising translator workload from 5 to 6 pages, floated in the course of 5th Committee budget negotiations. Even though it had been dropped, there was still a possibility that it would be reintroduced in future. He had requested opinions from colleagues, who believed that the ideal workload was 4.5 pages ESP (English standard page = 330 words in English).

12. Update on the work with AFT

Michelle Rockcliffe reported on the pension info session held with Unit 34, which was well attended. An info session would be held with Unit 29 the following week.

13. OPPBA Staff Members

The Assistant Treasurer asked who was following up with the Polling Officers. The Council Chair would reach out the chair of the POs for an update. Eugenia Beldo said that OPPBA staff felt that what was lacking was the will to hold by-elections.

14. Unit reports

Unit 6 reps were meeting with the RSG for Pension fund investments.

Kenneth Rosario requested that Leadership follow up on the case of the Staff Members who had assaulted a security officer in October, requesting that this person be placed on special leave pending investigation. DGACM Staff Reps had met with their USG on Tuesday to examine the outcome of the budget negotiation.

15. AOB

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.