

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

**45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL**

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**Minutes/Actes**

Meeting No: 45/32  
Date: 25 January 2018  
Time: 1:15 pm  
Venue: CR A  
Quorum: 10/16 Units

**45<sup>th</sup> Staff Council Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was quorate with 9 units present at 1:25 pm, with Ondré Baronette in the Chair and Secretary Aitor Arauz-Chapman taking notes.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The Secretary suggested adding an item under AOB "Pending SGBs, ST/AIs for review". The Agenda was adopted with that addition.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

The President made a categorical statement to clarify, in reference to the previous meeting minutes, that the Leadership was not involved in delaying by-elections in any way. Once clarified, minutes for meeting 31 were adopted with no changes.

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

UNSU President Bibi Kahn ran through her report and summary of communications. She highlighted in particular the conversation had at SMC regarding the AI on Misconduct, Investigations and Disciplinary Action, which had been renamed by OLA after the final draft as "Unsatisfactory Conduct, etc.", in addition to other substantive changes. UNSU compiled comments and protested to the administration that due process had not been respected. Management alleged pressure from the GA to promulgate the ST/AI to avoid submitting it further review. Unsatisfactory conduct is a fundamentally different concept and has dangerous ramifications for staff. The other policy under discussion was the Administration's wish to adopt a policy on social media, which staff associations opposed because they could have the effect of censoring staff members' private use of social media. DPI already has a policy on the use of social media by staff and senior managers. Management agreed to update the existing guidelines and put the new policy on hold. The President and 2nd Vice-President Cristina Silva also met with the Medical Service on the draft AI on Occupational Health and Safety. The Chief Medical Officer agreed that a more proactive approach was needed to monitor and address trends in occupational health, a move that was partially covered by the new mental health strategy.

The new regional director of AFT had been invited to meet the Council. More news to follow.

The 1st Vice-President Patricia Nemeth had been nominated by CCISUA to represent the Federation on the panel to select the new Ombudsman.

Martin Pickles (Unit 29) asked about point 3) of the President's summary, regarding a meeting with DM and OHRM on "challenges faced by the Leadership in fulfilling their official mandate". The President replied that she had addressed ways to better communicate with Management. She had suggested to USG DM that she devise a better communication strategy to ease staff members' uncertainty and anxiety, in particular regarding GSDM. The USG was receptive and would try to do better in communicating. She would also meet personally with the offices and divisions affected.

Marie Delbecque (Unit 26) enquired about a letter regarding the unified salary scale from the Federations to the SG, and suggested that it be sent out to all staff in a Broadcast. The Secretary confirmed that letter would be attached to a coming broadcast on the matter (issue to be addressed under a separate agenda item).

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) expressed her disappointment that the Council's AFT Liaison Officers had not been included in the meeting with AFT. Meetings with restricted participation did not maximise the value obtained from our agreement and partnership. The President replied that it was an initial meeting to meet the new Regional Director. AFT had been invited to address the Council.

#### 4. UNSU Finances

No report in absence of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

#### 5. Resolution on Organizing a workshop on rules of UNDT and UNAT

No updates.

#### 6. Security

No update in absence of Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39).

#### 7. General Meeting

The 1st VP announced that a room had been booked for Wednesday 21 February. The date clashed with a Panel being organised by the President on Harassment. The 1st VP would check room availability for Tuesday 20 and Thursday 22.

The President hoped that the GSDM location assessment would be available by the next SMC. At that point, the impact of the changes would reach crisis level for staff. She would prefer not going to staff before having that information. She suggested holding off the GM until March. Michelle Rockcliffe felt the timing was good, as it was two weeks after the SMC. She was also concerned that the Union was not being proactive and would give the impression that we were merely waiting for news from the Administration. Unit 25 Rep. reminded the President that this meeting was a postponement of a General Meeting suggested for December. He felt the timing was right, and further recalled the Council resolution regarding by-elections, which should be submitted to staff. Mériem Harbi (Unit 28) believed it was a good thing for the Union to provide staff members with a physical presence. The President was still concerned that we would have nothing new to announce to staff, and explained to the Council the details of GSDM and its effects. Kathryn Kuchenbrod and Mériem Harbi (Unit 28) insisted that all this available information, including "I don't have all the answers", should be shared with staff. The 1st VP believed that that adding JNC issues would provide sufficient material for a meeting with staff. Marie Delbecque recalled that the meeting was a statutory requirement, and that listening to staff was also important.

Unit 25 Rep. called for the Council to agree on a preliminary agenda for the meeting, including who would lead on what. The Secretary would create a spreadsheet with items to be considered and leads.

#### 8. UNDT Geneva ruling on salary scale review

The Leadership had requested a standardised draft complaint from the Legal Advisor. A Broadcast would go out informing SMS of the Geneva DT ruling, offering dues-paying members support on behalf of the Union to file their complaints. Michelle Rockcliffe clarified that the DT had ruled in the past that the Union has no standing, so complaints would have to be filed individually by staff members.

#### 9. Update on the work with AFT

Camille Beydon (Unit 26) inquired if the Council still wanted to hold a retreat, as well as other training that could be organised with AFT. Valentin Stancu (Unit 14) shared an experience he had launched with Security: the UNFCU Investment Division had organised a training session on investment and financial planning. He inquired if AFT could offer a similar session. Camille Beydon felt that AFT was focused on helping us build a stronger Union. Michelle Rockcliffe recalled that AFT had an Investments Divisions that could help.

Kathryn Kuchenbrod supported the idea of a retreat. Camille Beydon wondered if the topics suggested for training were still relevant. The President felt the training with Mr. Hacking had been very useful. Attending the training was a display of good intentions on the part of Staff Representatives, which not always came through in the work of the Council. Camille Beydon offered to schedule another session if OHRM had funds to

pay for it. The President supported a retreat with a good mediator from AFT to promote a discussion. The Council voted unanimously to support the idea of a retreat.

#### 10. Unit reports

Ondré Baronette transmitted concerns from his Unit members regarding the new retirement age. Michelle Rockcliffe explained that those who began service after 2014 would retire at 65, those already in employment would be able to choose, but not to take buy-outs after they had reached retirement age.

Michelle Rockcliffe reported on the pension information session held with Unit 29, which was well attended. She offered to provide the same to others.

Kathryn Kuchenbrod raised the issue of telecommuting, for which there were no clear rules. The EO was recording telecommuting very strictly (and these figures were being used as metrics to determine factors such as space allocation) while staff were often confused. The President clarified that, according to the AI telecommuting should not be done on an ad-hoc basis, since it was governed by an agreement between staff and managers specifying expected output. Kathryn asked what the Union could do to avoid favouritism. Output requirements were clearly not respected. Assistant Treasurer Rosemary Lane pointed out that situations changed considerably from manager to manager and division to division. The President recalled that telecommuting is encouraged under the Gender Strategy. Marie Delbecque shared a number of concerns from her unit. Some managers felt that duties could not be performed adequately from home, while the organisation as a whole was promoting it as a cost-saving measure, or for ad-hoc situations such as snow days. Some divisions had a contractual arrangement but also resorted to it in ad-hoc situations, which were more problematic. She recalled it was dangerous to equate Flexible Workspace with Flexible Working Arrangements.

#### 11. AOB

Michelle Rockcliffe made reference to an ILO tribunal ruling in favour of staff member. She would distribute it to the Council.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.