

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: 45/37  
Date: 8 March 2018  
Time: 1:15 pm  
Venue: CR 3  
Quorum: 11/16 Units

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

The meeting was quorate with 8 units present at 1:30 pm, with Deputy Chair Andraz Melansek in the Chair and Secretary Aitor Arauz-Chapman taking notes.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

In absence of Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39), item 6 was replaced with an item on “Preparations for ICSC protest”.

The agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Introduction of Ms. Aishawarya Bansal

Item postponed in absence of Ms. Bansal.

3. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

Minutes of meetings 36 were adopted with changes requested via email.

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

Executive Board report for meeting 25 was distributed by the Rapporteurs.

Camille Beydon (Unit 26) asked the Second Vice-President Cristina Silva if she had a written update on the suggestion of a UNSU Gift Shop, as requested at the previous meeting. Treasurer Ibrahima Fayé explained that staff associations in Vienna and Geneva had their own shops, run by the Unions and making significant income. He believed that the President's intention was to use the Union reserves to set up a gift shop for staff. Camille Beydon still wanted to understand what the President's plan on the matter was. Unit 25 Rep. recalled that this was raised in the context of a conversation between the President and Management regarding finding locations for the shop, which indicated she had moved into an implementation phase, with no consultation with

Council. Ibrahima Fayé reaffirmed that, as Treasurer, he would not support any further steps without consulting Council and without an adequate study of the pros and cons.

Second Vice-President Cristina Silva gave an oral presentation of the President's report and summary of communications. Hard copies were not provided due to a problem with the UNSU printer. The First Vice-President had taken part in ACPAQ meetings all the previous week. The President and Second Vice-President had met with the ASG for OHRM regarding some unresolved medical cases and had requested a list from OHRM to plan a Long Service Award for members with 20, 25 and 30 years of service. She would discuss the initiative first with the EB and then bring it to the Council. The last award had been given in 2005. The President and Second Vice-President also had a meeting with FPD regarding emergency evacuation for a national staff member, and with the ASG for OPPBA and staff representatives to talk about the reform and GSDM. They had held communications with staff members in Brindisi. Tuesday's EB meeting had been devoted to interviews with litigators, using questions prepared by the legal advisor. In preparation for the Interagency Games, the Second Vice-President had requested a welcome video from the Secretary General. She had held a meeting with the Ombudsman on a civility awareness campaign. She and the President had met with UNFCU on opening a facility in Entebbe.

Camille Beydon asked for further information on the meeting with OPPBA. The Second Vice-President had nothing to add until the three cities were announced on 15 March. Interim measures agreed at SMC were being applied. There was no new information.

Marie Delbecque asked for more information on the meeting with the PGA. The Treasurer replied that they had met with his Chef de Cabinet. They had a frank discussion on the SG's reform and GSDM, and how it is impacting staff morale. UNSU provided examples of the lack of clear communications – the SG is asking for carte blanche without details on implementation, nor consultation with staff. On GSDM, the SG is providing double language, saying that his intention is not to cut posts, but is in fact moving them to lower cost locations without giving staff an opportunity to apply. The PGA's team committed to ensuring that the 5<sup>th</sup> Committee and GA would ask pertinent question about why no adequate consultations had been carried out.

The Second Vice-President added that the night before the President had been invited to speak at the Town Hall on Women's day.

Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) asked what the Union's level of involvement was in the UNFCU opening a new branch in Entebbe. The Second Vice-President explained that it was one of the concerns expressed by staff members in Entebbe when they visited the year before.

Unit 25 Rep. asked who had attended the meeting with the PGA. The Second Vice-President replied that it was the President, herself and Treasurer. Upon further questioning, she explained that the President had received an invitation from the PGA. The First Vice-President had announced that she would be busy at ACPAQ, therefore the President had invited the 2<sup>nd</sup> VP and Treasurer.

The Secretary asked why the President was absent from the Council meeting. The Second Vice-President explained she had a conflicting meeting. The Secretary found it peculiar that the President insisted on scheduling meetings that clashed with the Council, which met predictably every week.

#### 5. UNSU Finances

The Treasurer spoke of the Interagency Games. Traditionally the Union provided support under the budget line for Staff Day, etc. A resolution would be submitted the following month, in order to fall within the new budget year. A resolution would also be submitted for a Long Service Award, along with a budget that was pending data from OHRM. He suggested using the funds recovered at the previous year's Staff Day to fund the IAG and Long Service Award. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) suggested using unspent funds for the current year, as considerable legal expenses were foreseeable in the coming budget year.

Chandana Mutucumarana (Unit 30) suggested setting up teams for the IAG, as participants were entitled to 3 days' leave. Camille Beydon recalled staff members' concern regarding the loss of jobs. She defended a low-cost approach to the Long Service Award, in order to avoid the perception that the Union was misspending funds. Michelle Rockcliffe recalled that motivation was important, even in difficult times. Unit 25 Rep. requested a specific agenda item on the Long Service Award.

#### 6. Protest against ICSC

Camille Beydon recalled a table she had circulated with options for a protest. The idea of a silent demonstration in small groups outside the meeting rooms was the preferred option. She called for a decision so preparations could be made. Michelle Rockcliffe felt that a march around the circle the first week was premature, but a demonstration at the beginning of the second week was feasible. It was important to mobilise. The Treasurer suggested a Council resolution with a vote of no confidence for the ICSC, to be forwarded to the President of the GA and SG. Chandana Mutucumarana supported the idea of a march.

Esteban Casin (Unit 34) recalled that his unit had mobilised 40 people out of 90 for the ICSC info session and called on other units to make a similar effort. Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 28) expressed her concern about turnout. The Second Vice-President felt that the info session was a success given the short notice. If we focussed and started mobilising, the turnout could be sufficient.

The Council agreed to mobilise a demonstration on 26 March and to prepare a statement for adoption at its next meeting. Ahmad Ismail suggested reserving some time at the following meeting to agree on clear and unified messaging.

#### 7. Resolution on trip to Brindisi

The Treasurer reported that a group of locally hired GS staff from Brindisi had contacted Leadership to request support after an announcement from the administration that their posts would be relocated to Valencia and

Bangkok but were receiving no support from the administration. Most had more than 4.5 years of service but fell short of 5 years to claim their pension. The administration said that they could not relocate to Bangkok but would help them relocate to Valencia. When they were hired, none of them had taken the GGST exam, which means they could not compete for the posts advertised in Valencia. They were being forced to take the exam, but some had failed. Sensitive information needed to be gathered in order to prepare a legal case. This would be a foreshadowing and a test case for GSDM.

Chandana Mutucumarana recalled a precedent where TC staff had been allowed to apply for GS jobs without the test. A second option was packages – DGACM staff had recently received 21 months' compensation. Kathryn Kuchenbrod asked how many staff were affected. The Treasurer replied that there were nine people in a desperate situation. Support from UNSU would also include training on pensions and UNDT / AT. Ahmad Ismail asked what the nature of the contracts was and asked if any steps had been taken at HQ to attempt to resolve the situation. The Treasurer explained that the administration had violated the terms of their temporary and GTA contracts. The President had reached out to OHRM, who replied that they had attempted to help staff members find a placement in Valencia.

Unit 25 Rep. asked what the two people travelling intended to achieve and how they were skilled and qualified to do so. The Treasurer replied that affected staff members had asked them to negotiate on their behalf. Sensitive contractual information needed to be gathered. The Second Vice-President had worked in the justice system, the Treasurer was a litigator at the DT and both were able to assist staff on site, while the President continued to lobby at HQ. Unit 25 Rep. remained unconvinced. Much could be done via email and VTC. He felt that OSLA was better qualified than the Second Vice-President and Treasurer to provide advice.

Camille Beydon felt that there was not enough information to determine there was a case. She felt it was more reasonable to know the details of the situation before sending a delegation out every time a group of staff members overseas faced job cuts. Ahmad Ismail recalled that if they wanted representation they should provide full information. The Second Vice-President took offence at the allegation that she was not capable of representing staff. She felt there were double standards in how the Council allocated funds. She was willing to travel under the cheapest option. Michelle Rockcliffe recalled that staff at all duty stations should be supported. She felt the Treasurer was experienced and qualified to support staff in cases against the administration. The Union's funds should be used to get things done.

The Secretary said he was convinced by the Treasurer's arguments but expressed his concern regarding Leadership's communication with the Council, which never received any feedback on the work that Leadership claimed to be doing with OHRM. If the intervention in Brindisi was meant to be a test case to benefit all staff, information and outcomes should be shared more effectively. Chandana Mutucumarana asked if the issue had been raised before the EB. Unit 25 Rep. suggested that a lawyer could be sent from Geneva. The Second Vice-President disagreed with sending a lawyer. It was staff representatives who had a mandate to negotiate on behalf of colleagues. When candidates ran for Leadership or Staff Representative positions, there was no requirement that they be lawyers or accountants – it was presumed that they knew how to get the job done.

A motion to postpone the vote to the following meeting passed with 6 votes in favour.  
The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.