

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: 45/42  
Date: 12 April 2018  
Time: 1:20 pm  
Venue: CR A  
Quorum: 14/16 Units

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

The meeting was quorate with 10 units present at 1:30 pm, with Council Chair Camille McKenzie in the Chair and Assistant Secretary Daniel Burden taking notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Unit 25 Rep. requested for item 10 “Resolution on Auditing Committee” be moved to position 5. The agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Adoption of Minutes of previous Council meeting

Minutes of meetings 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 had not been circulated to Leadership due to an error on the part of the Secretary. They remained pending for the following week.

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

UNSU President Bibi Kahn had distributed a summary of communications via email and took questions. Rosemary Lane (Unit 23) enquired about the gym for staff. First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth replied that final work was being done in order to open to staff the gym donated by the IOC.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) pointed out the absence of a reference to a communication from the HLIC. The President clarified that staff members away from HQ had complained about the Cigna insurance plan.

Sherif Mohamed (Unit 27) enquired about “preparations for a March on May First”. The President reported that staff had expressed interest in holding a workers’ march. The First Vice President, Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 28), Michelle Rockcliffe, Eugenia Beldo (OPPBA) and others were involved in organising the event.

The President made a statement saying that the Council had become fractious and acrimonious. She felt we were doing a disservice to ourselves as international civil servants with our behaviour, which went against the values

of the organisation we claimed to represent, and against the interest of the people we represent. She asked humbly that we focus on the reason we were here, which was to represent our colleagues. We should act in their best interest and work together in a difficult period to address the issues that affect staff. We should behave with the civility demanded of us as UN Staff Members.

Unit 25 Rep. assured the President that he spoke on behalf of his unit member. Members of his unit, which was the highest contributor to the Union, were outraged by the mismanagement of funds, the absence of training for staff and the inability to hold elections.

#### 4. UNSU Finances

No report in absence of the Treasurer.

Andraž Melansek (Unit 17) asked questions to the Treasurer: What was the status of our accounts after one year? How did our income compare with our expenditures? How did our current income match up to the predictions made by the Treasurer? Michelle Rockcliffe recalled that account statements were issued regularly, and that the allocated budget had so far been underspent. It was up to Unit representatives to reach out to staff and increase membership. Camille Beydon (Unit 26) felt that predictions were made on the assumption that elections would be held for unrepresented units. Some represented units were doing a good job of attracting new dues paying members, but it was hard to increase income in the absence of elections. Andraž Melansek announced he would propose an agenda item to rebalance the budget, as income predictions were not matched by reality.

#### 5. Resolution on the Audit Committee

Unit 25 Rep. introduced a resolution for the establishment of a Financial Monitoring Board. Rosemary Lane pointed to a potential conflict of interest if Council members were appointed to the Audit Committee. She also pointed out that we did not have a budget allocation for a Chartered Accountant. Michelle Rockcliffe supported the idea of establishing a Finance Committee but felt our accounts were far too simple to engage a CPA. She felt the draft needed to be reviewed. The Secretary felt that an intermediate layer between the Council and the Audit Committee was unnecessary. Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) asked about the repeated absence of the Treasurer, who was elected to deal with these issues.

Unit 25 Rep. submitted a motion to vote on the resolution immediately, which was defeated with 5 voted in favour, 8 against and 1 abstention. The item was postponed to the following week. Michelle Rockcliffe volunteered to review the resolution to form a Finance Committee, in collaboration with Rosemary Lane and Francisco Brito.

## 6. Security briefing

Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) stated that OHRM had breached the rules in order to accommodate the Integration process. He was concerned by the establishment of precedents that would allow managers to bend the rules at their will in the future. Minimum Operational Security Standards were established by the GA as a set of minimum precautions on a global level. The Standards had been abolished unilaterally by the Head of security. He asked the President to call for a JNC on the matter, request that was supported by the Council. The President reported that she was coordinating with the UNDP union on the matter. Kenneth Rosario recalled the urgency of the matter, as contracts were due to be transferred in June.

The Secretary tabled a motion to allow focal points for unrepresented units to take part on all items of the agenda and receive access to documentation. The motion passed with 10 votes in favour and 4 abstentions.

## 7. Resolution on Inter-Agency Games

The President introduced a resolution to provide financial support to New York teams participating in the IAG, along with the team's letters of request. Valentin Stancu (Unit 14) suggested that teams should carry the UNSU logo on their kit. A debate ensued about the use of funds and the best way they should be allocated to staff activities. It was decided that a total sum of USD 6000 would be provided to all teams as financial support for the purchase of kits. The draft resolution as amended was adopted with 12 votes in favour and 2 abstentions as RES/STC/45/31.

## 8. Resolution on Long Service Awards

The President announced that the Secretary General was available to take part in the ceremony on May 17. DM would provide facilities and certificates. UNSU would purchase plaques for staff members with more than 30 years of service and certificates for those with more than 25 years. The Council voted unanimously to hold the Award ceremony on May 17.

The Council agreed to meet the following Monday to examine pending issues.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm on April 12 and resumed at 1:20 pm on April 16 with 9 units present.

The Staff Council resumed its debate on the Long Service Award ceremony, on the basis of a draft resolution circulated by Second Vice President Cristina Silva. The Council debated the need for a reception in view of the expense. The Council voted against a formal reception by 7 votes to 1 and in favour of serving drinks and snacks by 6 votes in favour. The resolution as amended was adopted as RES/STC/45/32.

#### 9. Resolution on Staff Day

The Second Vice President withdrew the draft resolution pending adjustment of the final figures with the Staff Day Treasurer.

#### 10. Resolution on Legal Counsel

The Second Vice President introduced a draft resolution to retain the services of Carmen Artigas as legal advisor, underlining the many issues on which she was supporting Leadership's work, including the review of the Staff Rules and Regulations. Michelle Rockcliffe recalled a previous Council decision calling for Staff Representatives to have access to legal advice without sharing the details of the case with Leadership. She also recalled that the hiring of a litigator should be brought to the Staff Council in compliance with the established procedure. Rosemary Lane felt the expense on a permanent legal advisor was excessive and also that a duplication between a legal advisor and a litigator was unnecessary. She was disappointed by some of the opinions issued by Ms. Artigas. Unit 25 Rep. recalled a number of opinions from Ms. Artigas regarding the Staff Council which he felt were wrong. He did not feel she was offering valid legal advice and called for the Staff Council to end its collaboration with her. The Second Vice President recalled that Leadership had never refused to transmit requests for legal advice. She recalled the full list of issues on which Ms. Artigas had advised. She assured the Council that the EB would present three candidates to the position of litigator, but that negotiations on specific conditions were still ongoing. She felt it was advisable to combine a litigator with legal advice from Ms. Artigas, given her knowledge and institutional memory, endorsed by CCISUA's choice of her as its legal advisor.

A number of Council Members suggested renewing Ms. Artigas' engagement month by month. The draft resolution was amended to that effect and adopted unanimously as RES/STC/45/33.

The meeting adjourned at 2.30 pm.