

UNITED NATIONS STAFF UNION
SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES**45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL****Minutes/Actes**

Meeting No: 45/54
Date: 26 July 2018
Time: 1:20 pm
Venue: Room B
Quorum: 13/16 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate 1:27 pm, with Council Chair Camille McKenzie in the Chair and UNSU Secretary Aitor Arauz Chapman taking notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator. Units present were: 3, 7, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Unit 25 Rep. asked for the inclusion of an urgent item “Security” requested by Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) was added as item 6.

The First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth gave the Council an update on the situation of a journalist who had his access denied and had contacted the Staff Council. She recalled the rules governing the conduct of journalists and pointed out that his case was under investigation. Fátimazöhra Nouinou (Unit 10) appreciated the update and would not pursue the issue further until the outcome of the investigation was announced.

The Council adopted the agenda with the addition above.

2. Adoption of minutes

Minutes of meeting 53 were adopted with no amendments.

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

The Executive Board report remained pending due to discrepancies on how issues appeared on the minutes, which would be resolved at the following meeting. Unit 25 Rep. again called for prompt reporting.

The President had circulated her report and summary of communications and took questions from the Council. Second Vice-President Cristina Silva made an addition to say that the OCSS staff member in charge of Sustainable Management had contacted Leadership to discuss sustainability practices in the cafeteria services. A meeting would be scheduled. A meeting would also be scheduled with the new Director of OCSS.

The President added information on the SG's initiative on civility in the workplace, derived from a survey carried out by the Ombudsman's office that identified the lack of civility as a problem in the workplace. A working group was convened and would meet regularly. UNICEF had launched the VOICE, an initiative to empower staff to raise their voice on issues that affected their work. For NY the President proposed a series of listening sessions at HQ. The first would be held on 15 August.

4. Resolution on Legal Advisor

The Second Vice President introduced a draft resolution to regularise the contract with Carmen Artigas as legal counsel. She had continued to provide advice on a number of valuable issues despite the fact that her contract had expired. She quoted from Judgement No. UNDT/2010/107, which included a statement of high praise for Ms. Artigas from the Tribunal judges. She made the case for renewing the advisor's contract through to the end of the current Staff Council mandate. Unit 25 Rep. was surprised that she had continued to work without a contract. He reiterated his concern that the substantive content of her advice had not been shared. He recalled his concerns about the quality of her advice, including her opinion that by-elections were illegal. The Secretary asked if the President had resorted to Ms. Artigas' advice for recent complaints filed against members of the Staff Council and asked for a firm commitment that she would not be used against the Council or its members in the future. The President assured that Ms. Artigas had not been involved in cases before the Arbitration Committee. María René Luque (Unit 19) suggested that, once under contract, the advisor should report regularly. She felt it was dangerous to leave a legal vacuum at these times of reform when jobs were at stake.

The Council proceeded to vote section by section on the amendments submitted by Unit 25 Rep. All amendments were adopted. The draft resolution as amended was adopted as RES/STC/45/46 by 11 votes in favour, one vote against and no abstentions.

5. Meeting with USG DSS

The Chair summarised the message forwarded by Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) regarding an invitation issued directly from the office of USG DSS to the President. DSS staff representatives objected to this approach and called on the President to abstain from meeting their senior management without them and in particular without Mr. Rosario. Sherif Mohamed (Unit 27) identified two issues: Leadership meeting management without unit representatives, and Management not wanting to include representatives in meetings. In the second case, Leadership should decline any invitation and stand by the staff reps. Monica Grayley (Unit 20) inquired if there was a rule on the matter, and whether it also required that Unit reps notify Leadership of their meetings with senior managers of their respective Departments. A number of staff representatives recalled the relevant Staff Council resolution on the issue, which was binding on Leadership. First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth recalled SGB 274, which governs contacts between staff representatives and management. Sherif Mohamed explained, for the benefit of new members, the established steps for escalating issues: Department reps should liaise regularly with their managers and involve Leadership only if they required high-level support. There was a danger that the Administration would claim they had held "consultations" based on meetings with Leadership.

The President made it clear that she would not attend the meeting and apologised for the misunderstanding regarding the scope of the meeting and the implications of Mr. Rosario's attendance.

In closing, the President announced that the issue of Garage fees would be raised with the Administration at the JNC meeting scheduled for 13 August.

The meeting adjourned at 14:50.