

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

---

**Minutes/Actes**

Meeting No: 45/56  
Date: 9 August 2018  
Time: 1:30 pm  
Venue: Room A  
Quorum: 20/27 Units

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

The meeting was quorate with 18 units present at 1:28 pm, with Unit 29 Alternate Representative Martin Pickles 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, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38.

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) requested the inclusion of an item on the YPP exam and recent issues in the procedure. The item was added as number 9. The Council the agenda was adopted as amended.

Eugenia Beldo (Unit38) recalled that GSDM and Management Reform should be standing items placed high on the agenda.

**2. Adoption of minutes**

Minutes of meeting 55 were adopted with adjustments. Minutes for meeting 54 remained pending re-circulation after edits.

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

The Executive Board and President's report had been circulated via email.

The Second Vice-President Cristina Silva added that she had contacted UNFCU to follow up on a request from Valentin Stancu (Unit 14) for an info session on investment strategies for UN staff. They could not provide the session during summer but would be available in the fall.

Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) asked for AFT training for staff reps to be expedited. Camille Beydon (Unit 26) clarified that it was open to all Council members and invited them to express interest via a reply to her earlier email.

Ahmad Ismail asked for further details on item 4 of the President's summary, regarding the Staff Emergency Fund. UNSU President Bibi Khan clarified that she had been in discussion with the Staff Counsellor's office, Comptrollers' office and Management. The Union's position was that we did not want to take over management of the Fund given the sensitivity of private information that had to be examined. Fund management should remain with the administration. Only around USD 50,000 had been loaned over the last 10 years in small emergency loans to a regular group of staff members. The Comptroller had suggested developing software to expedite application requests and ensure confidentiality. The administration was also considering ways to repurpose the Fund in order to help staff on other issues beyond those limited strictly to financial difficulties. In reply to questions from Fátimazöhra Nouinou (Unit 10), the President explained that the Fund was established originally with contributions from the Union and the Administration and had kept growing over the years. Staff members could approach the Union for emergency assistance, which would be coordinated with the Staff Counsellor's office. The online application platform was work in progress. The President was also working with the administration to establish a Committee to ensure adequate oversight of the Fund.

In reply to a question from Unit 25 Rep., the President clarified that she has approached the ICSC to request an information session for all staff in order to improve understanding of the GS salary scales, salary surveys and the issues faced by staff. First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth added that she had coordinated with ICSC staff at the recent meeting in Bonn on the most relevant topics that should be discussed with staff. She hoped for a good turnout at the 5 September event she had announced in a broadcast.

The President added that the National Staff Associations would be meeting in NY at the same time. A briefing from the ICSC would also be relevant to National Staff. In reply to a question from Unit 25 Rep, the President clarified that National Staff are affiliate members of the Union and are represented by Leadership. It was not the first time that the UNSU facilitated a meeting of National Staff. The previous meeting was held the year before in Entebbe. Since then there had been developments and efforts to improve the way issues raised by national staff were addressed through DFS. Unit 25 Rep. recalled the statutory requirement for national staff to elect to be affiliated to UNSU via their own associations. Affiliation was therefore not automatic. He called for caution and asked for further information to be provided to the Staff Council on who had requested affiliation. The Treasurer recalled the history of NASA. Their first meeting was facilitated by the 44<sup>th</sup> Council in 2015, in view of the difficulties they faced. At that meeting they had expressed their wish to be represented by UNSU.

#### 4. UNSU Finances

The Treasurer reported on the Met Law enrolment campaign, which had been more successful than the previous year, with 316 enrolments. He also reported that UN Treasury had transferred USD 72,417 to the UNSU, earmarked for the maintenance and upkeep of the gym. He had no further details on the transfer. He expressed his disappointment at not being appraised of the negotiations between Leadership and the administration on the matter. Eugenia Beldo recalled that many staff had expressed interest in using of the gym and hoped that the funds could be used for that purpose. The President clarified that these funds were part of the initiative underway to repurpose funds for staff welfare.

## 5. Staff Day

The Second Vice-President reported on preparations underway for the Talent Show, Parade of Nations and Sports events. The Trusteeship Council would be available all day and the Promenade would be used for sports events. She asked for Council members to suggest entertainment options for the evening events. François Charlier (Unit 3) called for an environmentally sound car, in line with UN values. William Bly (Unit 23) recalled that electric cars had been donated to the UN for the Rio+20 Conference. Perhaps those sponsors could be contacted.

Unit 25 Rep. recalled that the Staff Day Committee was accountable to the Council, which in turn would be accountable for any irregularities identified in the audit of Staff Day accounts. He asked for detailed information on how and when and by who expenses were being made. He asked for written reports from the Staff Day coordinator. He asked for details on how ticket and drinks sales would be controlled. Eugenia Beldo seconded the request and felt it was rational to be accountable for the funds we were entrusted by staff. The Second Vice-President recalled that the Assistant Treasurer was treasurer for Staff Day. All expenses would be channelled through her and she could report on all financials. There had been no cheques issues to date. Ahmad Ismail came back to the issue of one grand prize vs. many minor prizes. He suggested diversifying the number of prizes for the same expense. He also pointed out that the previous years' parade participants were disappointed by the way it was organised. He hoped that this year people would not be made to wait around for a photo opportunity with the SG.

## 6. Time release for Staff Reps

Item deferred in absence of the proponent

## 7. Resolution on GS Salary Scales

Jesus Parado (Unit 11) introduced his draft resolution, in view of staff members' concern regarding the stagnation of GS salaries. The First Vice-President recalled that in November 2018 there would be further adjustments which would potentially bring positive changes for both scales. She asked for the proponents to clarify the intent of the resolution, namely the purpose of hiring an expert. María René Luque (Unit 19) said that their staff members did not understand what was happening. She therefore felt that the initiative was relevant. She regretted that information was fragmented and asked for a single reporting source from Leadership. She also supported training for staff reps. She felt it was necessary to hire an expert in order to explain the processes and also evaluate the effects of ongoing delays in salary reviews. Eugenia Beldo would not be opposed to hiring an expert, but she recalled the importance of the timeline. We needed more factual information on where the ICSC stood in their process in order not to hire an expert too soon. She felt that we did not need an expert to explain the processes and historical background; we had that expertise internally in Leadership. An expert should be hired when it was procedurally feasible to use them. In the meantime, existing knowledge should be shared internally.

The President recalled that Patricia Nemeth was CCISUA Vice-President for Conditions of Service. As President she had engaged with the ICSC regarding the interests of staff in NY. Part of the misunderstanding was that P

salaries are defined entirely by the ICSC. As for GS staff, it is the methodology that is revised by the ICSC. The methodology determines the perimeter for seeking comparators, the size of companies, the quality of indicators, etc. It was important to have an expert involved in the review of the methodology. Even the ICSC acknowledged that some of the existing criteria were unrealistic. Once the methodology is determined by the ICSC, it is OHRM who takes over the survey, through a local salary survey committee composed of staff and management. Review of the methodologies is about to begin. It was important to intervene straight away to ensure that the right information was going to the ICSC. At Monday's JNC she would be calling for the local survey committee to be established so that its members could be adequately trained.

The First Vice-President clarified that the methodology review was conducted on a tripartite level by the ICSC, staff federations and the administration. An expert was needed, but only at the point in time when they were able to help us. The ICSC was the stronger party and determined the timing. Currently there were only speculations on the timeframes. As a member of the Working Group she would be able to update the Council and staff at every step of the way. She would share her previous reports with the Council.

Ahmad Ismail submitted a motion to defer the resolution until the First Vice-President had shared the information she had available to the Council, in order to provide for an informed debate. The motion passed with 15 votes in favour, one against and one abstention.

William Bly had participated in a previous salary survey. He explained that finding comparators was easy, though obtaining information from them was trickier. The unfavourable results were purely an arithmetic effect of the economic situation at the time. It was unfortunate that a snapshot taken at a time of economic stagnation had such long-lasting effect on staff remuneration.

The meeting adjourned at 14:30. Pending items were deferred to the following week.