

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

Meeting No: 45/62
Date: 20 September 2018
Time: 13:30
Venue: UNSU Conference Room
Quorum: 16/27 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 1:30 pm. Council Chair Camille McKenzie chaired and Fatimazohra Nouinou (Staff Representative, Unit 10) took notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with no following changes

2. Adoption of minutes

Minutes for meeting 61 remained pending.

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

The President apologised for leaving in the middle of the previous week's meeting. Leadership had left to attend the Joint Negotiating Committee. She recalled the structure of staff-management consultation, including unit representation (governed under SGB/274), the JNC for issues at the local duty station and the SMC for secretariat-wide issues. She had not requested inputs from the Council for the September 13 JNC because the ASG for OHRM had requested that the meeting focus exclusively on management reform and secretariat restructuring. She apologised for not making it clear the previous week. She also explained that Management had asked to reschedule the meeting over lunch because they were presenting before the ACABQ. She was aware of the clash with the Council meeting but had accepted since there were no other dates available to address the important matter of restructuring. While meetings had been held for over a year, Management had provided no concrete information. She felt this was a crisis for staff and feared that staff members were unaware. DPI was also undergoing an impactful restructuring, and she had called for staff representatives to be involved at the unit level via quarterly meetings. DESA would be next, with the merging of divisions and Integration. DGACM was the exception in holding regular meetings with staff reps. She called on unit reps to demand regular meetings and offered her support if the issue needed to be escalated. The Union was already under a deluge of staff seeking guidance. An SMC VTC with USG Beagle had been convened on October 4 to address the issue of consultations specifically. She asked Council members to submit their inputs on the matter.

Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) reported that USG Drennan was describing the reform as a “Realignment”. His issue was that the Secretary General was issuing “paradigms” explaining how the different aspects of reform should be managed. Mr. Drennan however had hired external consultants and had appointed himself “project manager” of his “realignment” project. There was a conflict of interest there, as well as a violation of Article 100. He also recalled an article stating that Jan Beagle was currently under investigation for harassment. If that was the case, she should be removed from her functions, including that of Chair of the Harassment Taskforce. He pressed the Leadership to clarify the matter on behalf of staff. The President asked him to forward him the article.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) asked what the President was doing to address the crisis she spoke of. The Secretariat was employing a piecemeal approach to reform in order to divide and conquer. The current situation required a unified response from the Union on behalf of all staff, including emergency meetings and demonstrations, if necessary. Eugenia Beldo (Unit 38) notified all DM staff that USG Beagle had agreed to hold a meeting with all Dept. reps. She invited all reps to reach out to their units. It was there that the relevant issues could be identified. She did not feel that demonstrations were the right response to the restructuring under way. What we required was vigilance and attention to detail in order to ensure that as many staff members as possible were matched to a post. Current estimates indicated that less than 10% of staff would have to seek a new position. Those were the staff members we should focus on supporting.

Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) believed that the whole reform process was driven by private external consultants. Not even Department heads knew where the reform was going. He advocated for making noise in order to bring light to the plan’s ambiguities. Despite the President’s reluctance to taking action, he believed unit representatives should give voice to their constituents’ concerns. Sarah M’Bodji (Unit 31) recalled that these “harmonisation” exercises had already been applied in DGACM, with IT posts transferred to DM against GA regulations. She agreed that action was required to demonstrate union amongst staff. She also pointed out that there was a lot of work to be done on the micro level in support of staff already affected by irreversible changes. Kenneth Rosario recalled the precedents of Publishing and Printing; cases that were won on appeal. On the matter of consultation, he insisted that the Union required a media strategy in order to exert pressure on the administration. He submitted a motion:

To charge a Media Committee with preparing a press release on the Secretariat restructuring to disseminated to all missions, media and staff before 4 October.

The motion was adopted. Five volunteers were designated to draft the statement.

Monica Graley (Unit 20) and François Charlier (Unit 3) rejected the notion that the reform was a done deal. The Union should be the voice of its constituents and be part of the conversation with the Administration and Member States.

4. Update on UNSU General Elections

Eugenia Beldo reminded the Chair that she was expected to contact the Polling Officers for an update on preparations for the elections. She also recalled the agreement that GSDM/Management Reform be placed as item 5 on the agenda.

5. Presentation by AFT: Viri Pettersen and Richard O'Brien

Viri Pettersen was invited to make a presentation on AFT's work with UNSU. She described the relationship with UNSU as a work in progress and outlined the concepts that AFT had implemented. The first was the assignment of Project Staffer Marian Fadel, with the objective of generating member engagement and growth. She offered the project staffer's expertise to unit reps on their work to engage members. She also recalled her offer of social media training, which would also improve member reach. She also offered additional training on member engagement and on Robert's Rules. Michelle Rockcliffe felt that Marian Fadel was underutilised in view of her experience and capacities. She suggested that she work in a hotdesking arrangement for Ms. Fadel to work more directly on capacity building with the units. Ms. Pettersen agreed with creating a form for requesting support, but insisted that it should go through AFT. She asked the Council to consider the use of her draft form. She would share it with the AFT liaisons.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51.