

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

Meeting No: 45/63
Date: 4 October 2018
Time: 13:15
Venue: Room 9
Quorum: 19/27 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 15 units present at 1:30 pm. Deputy Staff Council Chair Andraž Melanšek chaired and UNSU Secretary Aitor Arauz Chapman took notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator. Units present were: 3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 37, 38, 39.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair suggested considering a number of housekeeping issues under item 1.

The Secretary proposed the following motion:

The Secretary shall maintain a log of all resolutions, motions and decisions adopted by the Council and Executive Board. The log shall be available to all Council Members on Unite Connections. It shall include, where relevant: timeframes / deadlines, lead person/s, expected product / outcomes.

The motion was adopted unanimously.

The Chair recalled that he had sent an invitation to Unite to all Council members and asked them to contact him if they had difficulties connecting.

The Chair further suggested the following motion:

Every agenda item shall be accompanied by a summary of the problem and a proposed decision.

The motion was adopted unanimously.

Eugenia Beldo (Unit 38) reiterated her request that the number of agenda items be limited to something manageable. William Bly (Unit 23) recalled the requirement in the Statute and Regulations that agenda items be submitted via the Executive Board at least two days in advance. The Chair replied that flexibility was often justified and had become the norm when compiling the agenda. He suggested trying the new method to assess if it could streamline proceedings.

The agenda was then adopted with no changes.

2. Adoption of minutes

Minutes of meeting 62 were pending.

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

The Executive Board report had been circulated by email. There were no comments from the Council.

The President apologised for the absence of a written report, since there had been no external activity due to the GA high-level segment. She reported verbally that the current week had revolved around the ad-hoc SMC held that morning. The Staff Union representatives had asked for an ad-hoc meeting to address their dissatisfaction with the consultative process. OHRM agreed to circulate a list of the policies due for review within the first 5 days of each month. The current two-week deadline for submission of comments could be increased to three weeks in case of substantive policy changes. Many of the changes revolved around adopting gender-neutral language, though even these changes sometimes implied broader policy changes. An ad-hoc SMC would be convened on the issue of gender itself. Another VTC with OHRM would follow on the Staff Selection process.

Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) argued that a fair and transparent process between staff and management was required. The reviewed ST/AI on Security had been discussed between DM and DSS for three months before it was communicated to staff, who were only given two weeks to review. The process was uneven and the Unions should not accept it. On the staff selection process, he felt OHRM was enabling an absolute violation of the process. He provided an example of a case when three men were selected to interview one woman. He also called out suggested changes to the Staff Rules on gender neutrality that equated to changes in the Charter. These arguments should be brought forward. He also inquired when the consultation process had moved to email and why it was allowed. Specialised staff should always be present at SMC meeting, in the same way as the administration deployed their experts. He suggested bringing the issue to the Tribunals if the Administration did not respond.

François Charlier (Unit 3) called for real action to follow these heated conversations. Major issues were raised at Council meetings but never followed up on. Eugenia Beldo (Unit 38) supported Kenneth Rosario's statement on timeframes. She called for staff to be given access to drafts at the same time as managers. The change to the Staff Rules should be examined in detail, and if the change contravened the Charter it should be rejected.

Second Vice-President Cristina Silva pointed out that the current comments procedure was not a consultation. The Administration did not reply to comments nor justify why some were accepted and others dismissed.

The President confirmed that the issue of consistency with the Charter had been raised. The substance of the gender issue would be addressed at an ad-hoc SMC VTC. She encouraged Council Members to submit their comments within the day. In general, she encouraged staff reps to share drafts with their constituents, in order to establish a two-way pipeline. In reply to Kenneth Rosario she explained that a distinction was made between SGBs and ST/AIs in terms of the meetings at which they were discussed.

The Secretary reported that two Council Members had taken part in the morning's SMC VTC as Advisors. He recalled that the SMC President had denied a request for observers to take part in VTC meetings. However, there was a clear trend for substantive issues to be addressed via VTC. He had circulated a draft letter to the SMC President calling for observer participation at SMC VTC meetings. The President added that she had spoken to the SMC President, who felt that the involvement of observers was an issue that should be addressed by the SMC itself, as it affected all duty stations.

William Bly tabled a motion for the Council to endorse the letter and for the Secretary to transmit it to the SMC President.

The motion was adopted unanimously. The Secretary would also circulate the letter to sister unions for concerted actions. The Chair asked the President to report back on any developments regarding consultations in her next summary.

4. Update on UNSU Elections

The Chair of the Polling Officers had provided a generic reply to an inquiry on the status of preparations for elections. The Council instructed the Chair to thank the Polling Officers for their update but request further details.

5. GSDM/Management Reform

On Management Reform, Eugenia Beldo updated on a meeting of DM staff reps with USG Jan Beagle and OPPBA management. USG Beagle had sent out an email presenting three categories of staff, which left few staff members without placement. The meeting was suspended before she could answer more specific questions. Further information would be provided at the next meeting. The Second Vice-President reported that another townhall had been convened for 16 October. Francisco Brito added that a joint townhall had been convened with DM and DFS for the end of the month.

The Chair thanked Tun Khine (Unit 17) for his writeup on the DFS townhall. Sarah M'Bodji (Unit 31) alerted that the townhall had been dropped from the webcast half way through.

Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) had looked into the Transition Team, whose membership had not been announced publicly. All members of the team were from Europe except one from the US and one from Australia, in violation of diversity requirements. It appeared that gender parity was a blanket to suppress diversity: 25 out of 42 senior managers were from Western or Eastern Europe. Other previous SG's administrations had less gender parity but more geographic diversity. Many of the members of the team had no experience in the institution. This group was not in a position to promote decisions in the best interest of UN staff. The Chair invited the proponent to follow up with specific proposals.

6. Outstanding issues on Staff Day

No updates.

7. UNSU Finances

No updates in absence of the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer.

8. Selection of the Audit Committee

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) delivered the following statement on behalf of the Finance Committee:

In accordance with Staff Council Resolution no 45/37, a Finance Committee was established composed of Ms. Rosemary Lane, Mr. Francisco Brito and Ms. Michelle Rockcliffe. Nominations took place in July 2018 and the Finance Committee was provided with the CVs of 4 candidates who declared an interest in being on the Audit Committee of the Staff Union in mid-August. The Committee analyzed the candidates based on education and experience and arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Safronov and Mr. Bamuwayme would be best suited to be on the Audit Committee.

The Staff Council endorsed the Finance Committee's recommendation unanimously.

9. Status of the Press Release

François Charlier felt that we had to be clear on the message if we wanted to communicate on time. The drafting team had worked hard based on a clear mandate from the Council, but their draft had been modified beyond recognition by members who joined the conversation late. Messages needed to be crafted with a clear aim, based on facts and with consistent endorsement from the Council. Eugenia Beldo felt that a press release was not necessarily the best option in this case. She would be more supportive of a letter to the Secretary General. Sarah M'Bodji recalled the original idea to establish a communications team that could produce notes on short notice. She agreed to draft TOR for the group.

The meeting adjourned at 14:35