

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

Meeting No: 45/65
Date: 18 October 2018
Time: 13:15
Venue: Room E
Quorum: 22/27 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 17 units present at 1:30 pm. Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie chaired and UNSU Secretary Aitor Arauz Chapman took notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the UNSU Administrator. Units present were: 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 37, 39.

The Chair appealed to members to hold an objective and adult debate, given the nature of the issues on the agenda.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with no changes.

2. Adoption of minutes

Minutes of meeting 61, 62, 63 and 64 remained pending.

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

The President had circulated her summary of communications. Assistant Treasurer Rosemary Lane enquired about item 4.2, which made reference to the SG's vision for a "talent pool". The President explained that this referred to the SG's report on the Global HR Strategy currently before the 5th Committee, which proposed a restructuring of HR to make the organisation fit for purpose. HR is being restructured into two parts. One will remain in DMSPC, described as a "talent pool" focussed on attracting the best talent from across the globe to the UN. The second would be charged with managing recruitment and would be placed under DOS. The Assistant Treasurer asked if the President had expressed support for that proposal. The President replied in the affirmative, since she believed it would ensure transparency and accountability in that the offices charged with selecting candidates would not be the same as the offices managing recruitment. The Secretary expressed his concern that the President was endorsing major reforms to recruitment policies with no prior consultation with the Council. On a separate issue, he asked the President to explain an incident where she had forwarded to USG DM, the CDC and other members of the Administration an email chain with internal debates between staff Unions regarding

gender policy. Sister unions were understandably dismayed and had lost trust in our Union. He asked the President how she intended to recover our colleagues' trust. The President explained that the email controversy had to do with statements made on the Gender Strategy that she disagreed with. Her action was motivated by that disagreement. She merely intended to let the USG know her position. The Secretary insisted that it was unnecessary and unacceptable for her to forward internal exchanges in order to make her own position known to Management. He asked her how she intended to fix the damage. The President provided no reply.

Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) recalled that the Union had passed a vote of no confidence against Jan Beagle in 2007. He once again raised the issue of the investigation for harassment weighing on Jan Beagle. He had asked the President several times to find out if this was the case. It was unacceptable for the person chairing the Harassment Task Force to be under investigation for harassment herself.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) recalled that the Council had already adopted a vote of no confidence against the President. She sought ratification of the vote from other members and called for it to be disseminated. The motion was seconded. The Secretary suggested placing the item on the agenda for the following week, so that all members could review the no-confidence vote. Sherif Mohamed (Unit 27) was disappointed that the positions the President was transmitting to the USG were hardly ever consulted with the Council.

Kenneth Rosario pointed out that the gender issue, regardless of the Secretary General's ideas, was being implemented subjectively by each manager, and there were real issues in each department. The Union's position had already been presented, how did we do damage control? He submitted the following motion:

Issue correspondence to the USG for Management indicating that the position taken on behalf of the UNSU was subjective and not representative of the Council.

Andraž Melanšek (Unit 17) asked why the F-JNC was not mentioned in the summary of communications. The President replied that she was not at the meeting due to other engagements. Mr Melanšek expressed his disappointment that nobody else had been notified. He or his alternate could have attended. He recalled occasions when the President had travelled half way across the world to support National Staff, to then neglect their major meeting held at UNHQ.

Sherif Mohamed (Unit 27) suggested adding to the agenda for the following week "*Breach of confidential information and the way forward*".

4. Financial Irregularities affecting Staff Day 2018

The Treasurer referred Council members to documentation circulated via email. He provided a brief summary of the events surrounding a suspected case of attempted fraud on the part of a Union officer. The case was flagged by a member of the Staff Day Committee and documented by the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. His priorities were, first and foremost, to get the money back. Additionally, we had to address the breach of trust and violation of the internal financial procedures and Staff Day 2018 guidelines. The Staff Day accounts could not be closed until all matters were clarified.

Mériem Harbi (Unit 28) pointed out that this was not only a breach of internal rules; if confirmed it was also a case of grave misconduct. She asked if this was an isolated case or if there was a chance that there were other undisclosed donations. Assistant Treasurer Rosemary Lane, as Treasurer of Staff Day, provided further details on the chain of events. She could not confirm that the suspected misconduct was limited to a single donation.

Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) underlined that these were serious allegations. The Council could not jump to conclusions. A complaint should be filed by the Treasurer to the OIOS for investigation. In parallel, the Council should pursue action before the Arbitration Committee. He submitted two related motions:

For the Treasurer to file formal complaint before the OIOS on behalf of the Council.

For the Treasurer to file a complaint before the Arbitration Committee.

Both motions were adopted by 21 votes in favour and one abstention.

The President expressed her appreciation to the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer for their diligence on the matter and for ascertaining the facts. She was disappointed and dismayed and would support due process for a full investigation. If the allegations were confirmed on the basis of the evidence, the actions were a disgraceful and unacceptable behaviour that she did not condone or accept. She was embarrassed by this turn of events affecting a member of the Leadership in particular. She proposed an extraordinary Council meeting on the issue on Tuesday 30 October to provide the officer a chance to explain herself before we proceeded with an investigation. Various staff members opposed any delay in reporting the facts to OIOS. The President added that, given the gravity of the allegation, she would not want the officer to continue in her current position. She was prepared to request the Administration to place her on administrative leave.

The President committed to requesting the Second Vice President to step down from her functions immediately, pending the outcome of investigations.

5. GSDM/Management Reform

The item was postponed due to the urgent nature of the following.

6. Retaliation against a staff rep/no contract renewal

The affected Staff Rep provided an update on their situation, including the process by which they had been nominated as staff representative, reason for which they claimed they were being retaliated against. A debate ensued, after which it was decided that the Council Chair and Secretary would transmit to the Secretary-General a letter with an urgent request for a meeting on retaliation against staff representatives.

Sarah M'Bodji (Unit 31) wished to raise the situation of four DGACM staff members whose contracts were due to expire within the month. Given the lack of time, it was agreed to place the item on the agenda for the following week.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 pm.