



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/04
Date: 23 May 2019
Time: 13:15 - 14:30
Venue: Conf. Room D
Quorum: 11/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 10 Units present at 1:35. Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 14, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33.

1. Adoption of the agenda

It was decided that item number 5 “draft resolution for payment of the voting company” is no longer needed and therefore the item was taken off the agenda.

The agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for meeting no. 3 were adopted.

3. President's Report and Summary of Communications

No report was submitted due to the participation of the leadership team in the CCISUA General Assembly in Beirut.

4. Executive Board report

No EB meeting took place and therefore no report was submitted.

5. Draft Resolution on Joint Bodies, Working Groups and Committees

Staff representatives were nominated to fill vacancies on joint bodies, working groups and committees as follows:

- Lucelenia Pimentel (Unit 32) was nominated as an alternate representative to the Working Group on Flexible Workspace.

- Coralie Tripier (Unit 30) and Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 31) were nominated as representative and alternate representative to the Working Group on Parental Leave.
- Sherif Okasha (Unit 28) and Jesus Parado (Unit 33) were nominated as representative and alternate representative to the Working Group on Downsizing and Restructuring.
- Simona Chindea (Unit 24), Patel Noble (Unit 14) and Sherif Okasha (Unit 28) were nominated as representatives to the Committee on G-4 Visa Issues.
- Sherif Okasha (Unit 28) was nominated as a representative to the Committee on Working Conditions of Language Staff.

Simona Chindea (Unit 24) inquired about the nature of the work of the Committee on G-4 Visa Issues. The Secretary Sherif Mohamed briefed the Council on the work concluded by the former members of the working group. He promised to share the final report of the group with the new members to enable them to continue from where the former members stopped.

The Council moved to vote on the draft resolution.

The resolution was adopted unanimously as RES/STC/46/6.

The Secretary made mention to the SMC Working Groups pending confirmation. A revised version of the resolution may be presented to the Council for adoption in the case any of the SMC Working Groups is discontinued.

6. Reports by Units

Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 31) mentioned that a member of her Unit inquired about the status of the freeze on the salaries of the GS staff. She requested that the Council look into the matter and get back to the staff representatives with information that they can share with their constituents.

Sherif Okasha (Unit 28) raised the matter of the DGACM G7 staff members whose contracts are under the risk of termination in 2020. The Secretary briefed the Council on the current status of the matter and that local efforts including planned meetings with the Director of the Documentation Division and USG/DGACM. The matter will be brought to the Council upon conclusion of these local efforts.

Jason Charles (Unit 13) mentioned that staff of the General Service and Related Categories are the main target of budget cuts at all times and more than any other category. He stressed that management need to stop this discriminatory practice and look for other options to satisfy the budget cuts while retaining the current staff.

Patel Noble (Unit 14) mentioned that even staff members with permanent contracts are subject to post abolishment as a result of budget cuts and that it is unfair to abolish older posts incumbered by older staff members while recruiting new staff and retaining the newly hired ones. He urged the Council to negotiate with management other sustainable solutions to the matter of budget cuts that does not affect the current staff.

Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji requested that any abolishment exercise start with the lower vacant posts before abolishing any higher level posts which are usually incumbered by older staff members.

On a different note, Jesus Parado (Unit 33) informed the Council that he received a request from the EO of his Department requesting nominations from the staff to complete the composition of the rebuttal panel. He inquired if anyone else received similar requests.

The Secretary informed the Council that DGACM just completed the composition of the Rebuttal Panel Group from the staff side and explained the difference between the three groups which form the Rebuttal Panel of each Department.

On a different subject, Jason Charles informed the Council that it is very important that staff representatives keep fighting against unjust administrative decisions. He gave an example of a recent case in which Security staff filed a request to the MEU (management evaluation unit) after almost 3 months of negotiations with management regarding a case in which Security staff were deprived the right to accumulate CT hours in case of early release. He mentioned that as a result of their evaluation request, management eventually retreated and decided to satisfy the staff demands.

Sherif Okasha raised the matter of the findings reported by GS staff that their staff assessments are higher than their colleagues from the P category, and inquired if the Council find it a good idea to establish a working group on the issue of the procedures on the determination of the staff assessments. The Secretary explained that this matter falls under the purview of the ICSC.

Lucelenia Pimentel (Unit 32) mentioned how local staff members (GS) suffer from the procedures governing the calculations of their staff assessments on top of the exceptional taxation procedures which put extraordinary financial burdens on their shoulders every year. She made mention to the fact that her husband who works in the exact same profession, yet outside the UN, makes more income than she makes, which is a matter of inequality resulted from the UN exceptional staff assessment/taxation system.

Sarah M'Bodji mentioned that a question was raised by the Staff Councillor regarding tax regulations and staff assessment during a previous tax-briefing session. At that session, the Staff Councillor questioned why the rules and procedures governing taxation/staff assessment remained the same while the taxation regulations have changed in the host country over the years. She also condemned the injustice derived from the fact that there are UN staff who pay taxes while other staff performing similar duties at the same duty station never paid taxes (international staff vs local staff).

Shirley Abraham made the following motion, which was seconded:

***To create a working group to reform the taxation
and staff assessment practices at the UN***

The motion was adopted unanimously.

7. AOB

No issues raised.

The meeting adjourned at 14:20.