



**Minutes/Actes:**

Meeting No: 46/09  
Date: 27 June 2019  
Time: 13:15 - 14:30  
Venue: Conf. Room A  
Quorum: 09/17 Units

## 46<sup>th</sup> Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 9 Units present at 13:35. Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 13, 14, 17, 21, 24, 27, 29, 31, 33. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> VPs were in attendance.

### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The 1<sup>st</sup> VP Aitor Arauz Chapman asked to remove item no. 8 of the agenda. The agenda was adopted as amended.

### 2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for meeting no. 8 were postponed to incorporate further changes. Minutes for the Council's 1<sup>st</sup> emergency meeting were still pending. The 1<sup>st</sup> VP briefed the Council on some substantive changes in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> minutes and asked the Council to approve them. The Council re-approved the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> minutes. The Secretary will re-share the adopted minutes with as approved by the Council.

### 3. President's Report and Summary of Communications

The 1<sup>st</sup> VP briefed the Council on the activities of the Leadership team mentioned in the circulated report and highlighted a potential training opportunity by a lawyer with extensive experience in cases before the Organization's justice system.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Francisco Brito briefed the Council on the details of their meetings with local businesses around the HQ to secure discounts for UN Staff. He is preparing a project on this matter with all the necessary technical and financial details to be presented to the Council. The purpose of this initiative is to increase the number of dues paying members of the Union. Sergio Pires Vieira (Unit 24) asked about the expected cost of the project. The 2<sup>nd</sup> VP tentatively expected less than a 1000 USD of printing and material cost. Further details will be shared with the Council at a later stage.

On a related subject, Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 31) updated the Council on her meeting with Equinox representatives regarding the status of the corporate membership which allows the Union's dues paying members special discounts from Equinox. The Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji brought up the idea of using some kind of a UN cash-card which can be recharged and gets associated with the desired discount program. Emir reminded the Council of some of the disadvantages of using such cards, including the possibility of abuse/counterfeit.

#### **4. Executive Board report**

No questions raised.

#### **5. Re-cap on General Meeting**

The 1<sup>st</sup> VP summarized the issues raised by staff in the General Meeting as follows: (a) the increasing use of TJOs, which is both punitive to staff and damaging to the organisation; (b) concerns about FlexSpace, in particular the need for bottle filling stations on each floor; (c) staff clubs should be exempted from costs for the use of facilities; (d) Delays in disbursement of education grants; (e) the SG's policy of applying voluntary and unsolicited budget cuts; (f) recourse to national law-enforcement in cases of sexual harassment and abuse; (g) concern about the location of the coming Inter-Agency Games and the accountability of organisers; (h) variations in the calculation of staff assessment between P and GS staff.

In the absence of regulations regarding the creation of Staff Clubs at the UN, Sergio Pires Vieira suggested that UNSU take part in addressing this matter, as it might be harmful to the interests of the staff. He also called for holding the officials of these clubs accountable, including the possibility a statement by the Union to clarify the ambiguous activities mentioned in point (g) above and called for the Council to take some measures in communicating the Staff dissatisfaction with how the inter-agency games, and any other unregulated clubs, run their activities and manage their funds.

The Assistant Secretary inquired about the headcount at the General Meeting. The Team Assistant, Marian Fadel mentioned that there were approximately 70 attendees.

Sergio Pires Vieira felt disappointed about the attendance rate and called for measures to motivate staff to attend these important meetings. He also mentioned that our Union can only be stronger by showing some concrete actions of the Union that would bring more interested members on board.

Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 31) suggested to agree on a list of talking points that Staff Reps can use to highlight the important activities of the Union.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> VP mentioned that one-on-one conversations with staff members have proven to be very effective. He also highlighted that when staff actually feel satisfied with the performance of their Union officials, they tend not to worry a lot about its work knowing that others are taking care of the work of the Union and that was the reason why staff eventually would stop showing up at the different Union meetings and activities. He reiterated the importance of one-on-one meetings to overcome this problem.

The Secretary mentioned that the most critical achievements in the work of the Union were usually done locally within the direct relationship of staff representatives with their constituents in their attempts to solve the constituents' individual problems. He therefore suggested that such local achievements be shared with the Staff Council and staff-at-large through a designated channel within the communications strategy. The Assistant Secretary, Karina Loktionova (Unit 29), and The Team Assistant Emir Husic supported the idea and its inclusion to upcoming Communications Strategy of the Union.

Patel Noble (Unit 14) also supported the idea to increase the moral of the staff as well as their confidence in the work of the Union and also emphasized the importance of having the one-on-one conversations highlighted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> VP.

## **6. Staff Day Committee**

The Assistant Secretary informed the Council that the Committee decided to meet two times a day. On the timing of the staff day she mentioned that there is no one-size-fits-all and supported a previous idea raised by Marian Fadel to have some sort of a fixed date for the Staff Day.

Sergio Pires Vieira inquired about the reasons why the staff day used to be celebrated in September of every year. The Treasurer Jaime Garreta responded that it was just a tradition to have a such a celebration right before the beginning of the main part of the GA.

Emir Husic suggested surveying the staff-at-large for their preferences on a fixed date for the staff day.

The 1<sup>st</sup> VP reported that he met with GDU to arrange reusing some of the previous Staff Day printed materials and asked the members of the Staff Day Committee to identify their printing/advertising needs to communicate share them with all the different stakeholders.

## **7. JNC on Friday 28 June 2019**

The 1<sup>st</sup> VP mentioned that the first JNC meeting was scheduled on Friday the 28<sup>th</sup> of June. He explained the work and mandate of the JNC and went through the circulated agenda and gave brief overviews about each item on the agenda, including highlights on the need

for more clarification regarding ST/SGB/2019/3 on flexible working arrangements, and the circumstances surrounding the offshoring of OCHA staff and finally the long-standing issues related to the representation of Secretariat staff away from headquarters.

## **8. Communications Strategy**

The 1<sup>st</sup> VP highlighted the critical need for a solid and well-organized communications strategy. He listed a couple of ideas previously mentioned during the preparation of the 1<sup>st</sup> General Meeting as well as the need to revitalize the website, the need for a Union's periodic newsletter. He volunteered to work as a focal point to steer this effort. The urgent need for a Union's Working Group with practical SOPs was discussed. Ashley Rode mentioned that from her experience in the communications field, a WG would be needed to strategize for the policy, share the recommendations with the Council, and ask for inputs from the Staff Reps. The 1<sup>st</sup> VP suggested to have a dedicated meeting on Tuesday 9 July to strategize and agree on a unified strategy. Marian Fadel suggested to survey staff to identify their preferred outreach and communications method.

## **9. Reports by Units**

Sergio Pires Vieira suggested that Reports by Units can be used to share experience on local matters addressed by Staff Reps in their units and suggested to change the way how we handle this agenda item, including pushing it a little up on the Agenda.

The Assistant Secretary reported that in Unit 31, a Chief called for a Unit meeting at the time of the General Meeting. Kathryn Kuchenbrod (Unit 31) mentioned that she had conversations about the matter and that she is looking into the best possible way to address such matters when they arise in the future, including reaching out to the above-mentioned manager in case such incidents reoccur.

## **10. AOB**

Sarah reported the issue of a staff member who resigned because of his struggle with the issues related to income taxes and staff assessments. She also mentioned that the Working Group on taxes and staff assessments will meet on Tuesday 2 July 2019 to further discuss this matter and called for Staff Reps to invite any experts they might know to discuss this matter and come up with some practical suggestions.

Aitor made tribute to Emir Husic on his last Council meeting and reminded the Staff Reps of the Union's event to celebrate Emir's farewell. Emir Husic thanked the staff reps for their work and emphasized his willingness to help the Union whenever needed.

*The meeting adjourned at 14:45.*