



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/19
Date: 17 October 2019
Time: 13:15 - 14:30
Venue: Conf. Room F
Quorum: 10/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate with 10 Units present at 13:30. Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 06, 13, 14, 21, 24, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33. The 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents were in attendance.

1. Adoption of the agenda

Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji requested to discuss "UN Networks" under agenda item AOB. Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06) requested to add the following item to the agenda: "Treasurer's Report". The item "Treasurer's Report" was added as agenda item no. 5. Michelle Rockcliffe reminded the Council of her request to include "Financial Report" as a standing item to the agenda. Agenda was adopted as amended.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the 11th, 17th, and 18th meetings were adopted. Michelle Rockcliffe pointed out a few changes needed for the 10th meeting minutes. The Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs also pointed out a few changes needed for the 14th meeting. Minutes for the 10th, 14th, and 16th meeting are therefore still pending.

3. President's Report and Summary of Communications

The 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman briefed the Council on the activities mentioned in the President's report. He detailed their meetings regarding MEU cases.

On a different subject, he explained the Unions' work regarding the proposed change to the Staff Regulations and Rules. Management added an article that was not discussed in the SMC, which resulted in a letter from the Unions to the ACABQ to indicate the error.

Michelle Rockcliffe inquired about the progress of the Downsizing policy. She mentioned that the issue was discussed within the SMC and that she did not think the policy requires any substantial work. The 1st VP answered her question mentioning that after

management and staff had agreed on specific text, management had make further changes to the text, without consultation with Staff Unions, which resulted in another round of revisions and consultations to make sure all the agreements made in the SMC are incorporated in the new text. The 1st VP called for all Staff Representatives to look at the newly circulated Downsizing policy to identify any potential issues for discussion at the next Council meeting.

The Deputy Chair mentioned that Downsizing have been discussed in SMC1 and SMC2 and that the relevant working groups should have finished the work on it long time ago. The 2nd VP mentioned that work on the policy expanded into 2018, and now the text submitted by management looks like a totally new text which should be carefully reviewed.

Michelle Rockcliffe raised concerns about the jurisdiction of the UNDT/UNAT as changed in the Staff Regulations and Rules and the jurisdiction of the said tribunals on the Pension Fund.

Sergio Pires Vieira (Unit 24) inquired about the process that govern the work of SMC working groups, and what would these working groups do in case of disagreement between representatives of staff and management. The 1st and 2nd VPs briefed the Council on the process and clarified that any text should be agreed upon by both staff and management sides. They also referred to the fact that as per the regulations and rules, “consultations” should take place with Staff Unions prior to the issuance of any SG bulletins or administrative instructions. Sindhoora Leburi (Unit 33) inquired why would management change a text that was previously agreed upon in the context of the SMC. In answering her question, it was mentioned that management usually changes the text to incorporate editorial and/or legal changes, but sometimes substantial changes are also slipped in.

4. Executive Board report

Michelle Rockcliffe commented on the agenda item concerning the stipend payments being prepared for Staff Day volunteers. She explained that she shared all the necessary documents to support the payment and insisted that invoices should be paid as instructed. She also argued that the Staff Day budget was approved and that payments should have been paid without getting back to the EB, which she mentioned should not have been consulted in that regard. The 1st VP explained the frustration of the EB members when they learned of such amounts being paid without having their relevant decisions in any of the Staff Day official documents (minutes, reports, ...).

Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji further explained that it was the understanding of the EB members that volunteers usually ‘volunteer’ for such events, and she did not imagine that they are getting paid for their voluntarily work. She also questioned the absence of minutes or official document to support these payments and showed concerns regarding the fact that some volunteers will be paid, but not the others.

The Chair explained that the role of volunteers was very important, and she supported honouring the payments. She also expressed her gratitude to those who sacrificed time and efforts to help make the event a success.

The Secretary Sherif Mohamed condemned the lack of a regulatory framework that governs the finances of the Staff Day, and briefed the Council on the achievements made in this regard when the 45th Staff Council decided to keep the finances of the Staff Day within the Union's accounts, instead of the former practice which involved opening a new bank account exclusively for the purpose of financing the Staff Day activities. He called for the Council to consider establishing a regulatory framework to govern the finances of next year's Staff Day.

Patel Noble (Unit 14) supported the idea of having some kind of a regulatory framework given the reported disorganization during the preparations of the previous Staff Day.

The 1st VP explained that the EB's concern was to ensure avoiding such disorganization and called for the Council to consider planning and organizing this event differently next year.

The rapporteur Coralie Tripier mentioned that the payments issue was already resolved in the EB, and that moving forward we need to set lessons learned to avoid such mishaps in the Organization of the Staff Day in the future.

The Assistant Secretary supported the move towards establishing a regulatory framework to govern the organization of the Staff Day.

To end the debate, Ashley Rode (Unit 21) suggested changing the word "decided" to "agreed" in the EB report. It was ~~decided~~ agreed to proceed with her suggestion.

5. Treasure's Report

Michelle Rockcliffe expressed concerns about the format and the details of the financial statement and asked that the Treasurer share full financial reports. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chair decided to bring these concerns to the attention of the Treasurer when he is in attendance.

6. Reports by Units

Laurence Vaughan (Unit 20) introduced guests from DGC and mentioned that apparently the ongoing changes in DGC have resulted in some negative effects especially on those in DGC offices away from Headquarters.

One of the guests inquired about the composition of the Rebuttal Panels. He expressed concerns regarding the current composition, and he felt that staff were not properly represented on this panel. The 2nd VP explained that until a new Rebuttal Panel is selected from within management and representatives of staff, the older Panel usually continue its mandate. He asked the guest to inquire about the current composition of the Panel with their Executive Office. The Secretary explained to the Council the process of building the composition of different panels. He also mentioned that DGACM usually publish the composition of its panels on their iSeek departmental page. Patel Noble mentioned that EO/DSS do the same and that they send all the necessary information to the Staff Reps by the beginning of their mandate.

Karina Loktionova (Unit 29) raised issues regarding home leaves in language services being denied, in light of the current austerity measures. She also mentioned that other staff were asked to work on their leaves. She inquired if similar measures were taken in other departments.

Michelle Rockcliffe mentioned that the Controller ensured that all expenses related to staff entitlements were to be honoured.

Sherif Okasha (Unit 28) mentioned that translators at ATS were also asked to work on their leaves which was not well received by the staff. He also mentioned other issues related to the work of some of the self-revisers, which is sent back to senior revisers for further revision, and its connection to the current financial situation on top of the fact that the career of approximately 8 self-revisers in the ATS whose work is being re-revised is put in jeopardy because of the management reluctance to recognize their self-revised translations. He also mentioned that he tried to mediate between staff and management and explained the different views of each party. He eventually condemned the lack of the power of collective bargaining in the Council.

Michelle Rockcliffe mentioned that we don't enjoy a collective bargaining right and advised to include this matter to our discussions to push towards the establishment of such right.

The Deputy Chair mentioned that the best possible outcome in connection to bargaining rights was the establishment of the SMC. She also expressed concerns regarding the issues highlighted by the 1st and 2nd VPs about the working mechanism of the SMC. She mentioned the events that took place during the SMC meetings that she witnessed early after the Committee was established and also referred to the misunderstanding between staff reps and management on Mobility, which resulted in a disagreement that alarmed management to try to limit Unions' power in general terms.

7. AOB

After the Treasurer have arrived at the meeting, the Chair explained to him the concerns raised regarding the Treasurer's report and asked that he report back to the Council at the earliest.

The meeting adjourned at 14:50.
