



**Minutes/Actes:**

Meeting No: 46/24  
Date: 05 December 2019  
Time: 13:15 - 14:30  
Venue: Room 8  
Quorum: 09/17 Units

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

The meeting was quorate at 13:30 with 09 Units present. Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie chaired the meeting and in the absence of the Secretary and Assistant Secretary the meeting was recorded and was later transcribed into the current minutes by the Secretary. Units present were: 06, 13, 14, 17, 21, 22, 24, 26, and 33. The President was also in attendance.

### 1. Adoption of the agenda

It was agreed to add an item regarding a resolution on commissioning and audit of the accounts of the 45th Staff Council as item no. 7. The agenda was therefore adopted as amended with 10 items.

### 2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for meetings 21 (*version revised by the 1<sup>st</sup> VP*), 22, 23, as well as minutes for the Council's 2<sup>nd</sup> emergency meeting remained pending.

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

The president briefed the Council on the activities mentioned in the President's Report dated 05 December 2019. She informed the Council about the intention of several UN Staff Unions to initiate a petition to push the Secretary General to support the proposal on the abolishment of the G to P ceiling as soon as possible.

The Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs requested more information in relation to paragraphs 1 and 3 of the circulated President's Report. On the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, the President mentioned the matters discussed with the USG/DGC, including matters related to staff morale. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph the President updated the Council on the management's response to the staff side proposals regarding the special measures in the application of the gender policies and raised concerns regarding staff-management consultation mechanism.

#### **4. Executive Board Report**

No EB meeting took place this week as it was replaced by the Council's 2nd emergency meeting.

#### **5. UNSU Finances**

The Assistant Treasurer Yogesh Sakhardande mentioned that the financial statements up to the end of November will be ready before the Council's upcoming meeting. He also mentioned the importance of adopting the resolution circulated to the Council on the auditing of the 45<sup>th</sup> Staff Council accounts to move the auditing process forward.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) and the Deputy Chair highlighted the importance of maintaining proper financial statements, in which expenses were clearly aligned with budgeted resources, and that these statements should be submitted on a monthly basis to enable the Council to make informed decisions on the Union's expenses. The Assistant Treasurer mentioned that the delays to the financial statements were due to the backlog of the financial statements as well as the delays in the reconciliation process of the "Staff Day" accounts. He promised to bring updated statements to the Council at its upcoming meeting.

#### **6. Pension Resolution**

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Michelle Rockcliffe introduced guests from the staff at large and mentioned that the guests as subject matter experts had participated in the review of the draft resolution and that they were invited to answer any questions in relation to the draft resolution. The Chair requested the Council's permission to allow the guests to speak and her request was approved.

She explained the rationale behind the draft resolution, including the outcome of an information session that was on 13 November and included participants' representatives on the Pension Board and the Representative of the Secretary-General for investments of the Fund as speakers. She also mentioned that the rush in making changes to the current investment allocations was questionable in addition to other concerns, which made the basis of the current draft resolution.

The Assistant Treasurer inquired about the 45% of the Fund's assets being allocated to illiquid private markets and raised serious concerns about this point. One of the guests explained the risks associated with this percentage. The Assistant Treasurer also supported the paragraph on investments in fossil fuels.

The Deputy Chair proposed to add the following two preamble paragraphs to replace the paragraph on coal investments: (a) *“concerned about recent bankruptcies in the coal sector and that investments in oil and gas production and exploration may turn into stranded assets as consumption of fossil fuels will have to be curtailed drastically to prevent the worst impacts of climate change; (b) “mindful of the United Nations system’s commitment to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5° C as outlined in its recently approved “Strategy for Sustainability Management in the United Nations system” (CEB/2019/1/Add.1) as well as its leading role in calling for urgent climate action.”*

On the operative part of the draft resolution, the Deputy Chair suggested the inclusion of the following paragraphs: (a) *“Requests the Office of Investment Management to conduct an analysis of the exposure of UNJSPF investments to assets related to fossil-fuel production and exploration and to publish a detailed report with the results of this analysis on its website”; (b) “Encourages the United Nations Pension Board to follow the examples of major sovereign wealth and pension funds, as well as large university endowments that have taken measures to divest from fossil fuel assets”; (c) “Requests the United Nations Pension Board to urgently develop and adopt a policy that will direct the Office of Investment Management to phase out UNJSPF’s direct and indirect investments in companies engaged in fossil fuel production and exploration by 2025”.*

The Rapporteur Coralie Tripier agreed that there were concerns about the recent investment trends in the Pension Fund, and agreed with the additions made by the Deputy Chair, yet raised concerns about the lack of knowledge among the members of the Council in terms of the Pension technical details which she found very complicated and that while she did not feel that she could vote in favour of such a technical text without fully understanding it, she would not block the resolution, but would abstain.

Michelle Rockcliffe explained some of the technical terms included in the resolution to facilitate the process of adopting it and highlighted the importance of using the proper technical terms in the context of a pension related document.

The President thanked Michelle Rockcliffe for her efforts in this regard and made some general comments on the text of the draft resolution which she thought should be simplified. She further suggested that other more technical documents could be prepared and shared with the management of the Fund in the form of an open letter. For these reasons, the President did not support the draft resolution as introduced.

Michelle Rockcliffe mentioned that the President was not a member of the Council and had no voting rights. She mentioned that she consulted the 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Francisco Brito, who has a better financial background, before bringing the draft resolution to the Council. She complained that the Council hasn’t approved a single substantial resolution in almost a year and called for the Council to consider more serious and substantial resolutions.

The Assistant Treasurer commented on Coralie's point regarding the technical terms in the resolution and thought that with a proper explanation from a subject matter expert like Michelle Rockcliffe, the Council could be able to move forward with the draft resolution. He raised concerns regarding the investment policies and highlighted the importance of the draft resolution. He also thought that Ramona's additions were generic, and he believed that more detailed and precise language in the Council's documents and resolutions would be better.

One of the guests explained in detail the risks behind the proposed changes to the investment approach of the Fund.

The Rapporteur thanked the guest for his detailed explanation and stated that even though she realized the importance of the subject matter, yet she reiterated that she will have to abstain as she did not fully understand the technical details of the document.

The Deputy Chair suggested having two resolutions, one in technical terms, and the other in general terms.

The Assistant Treasurer suggested that Michelle Rockcliffe work on simplifying the text in question, to avoid adopting two resolutions on the same subject. He also supported the addition of the paragraphs proposed by the Deputy Chair. Michelle Rockcliffe agreed to make changes to the text in question to facilitate the adoption of the resolution given its urgency.

Patel Noble (Unit 14) mentioned that he attended the information session and that he did not understand most of the technical terms used there, however, he could feel the importance and urgency of the matter as it might negatively affect the UN Staff on the short and long terms. He called for the Council to consider these risks while considering the draft resolution.

A motion was made to change the text of the last operative paragraph to read as follows: *"Requests that the Leadership of the New York United Nations Staff Union deliver this resolution to the Secretary-General, the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the Chairperson of the Pension Board"*. The motion was seconded and adopted with 09 votes in favour.

The Council moved to vote on the draft resolution as amended. The draft resolution was adopted as resolution **RES/STC/46/17** with the additions proposed by the Deputy Chair and the other changes mentioned above with 08 votes in favour, 0 votes against, and 1 abstention.

**7. Resolution on commissioning and Audit of the accounts of the 45th Staff Council**

The Council moved to vote on the draft resolution. The draft resolution was adopted as resolution **RES/STC/46/18** with 09 votes in favour, 0 votes against, and 0 abstention.

**8. Winter Recess**

Item deferred to the upcoming Council meeting.

**9. Reports by Units**

Nothing was reported.

**10. AOB**

Nothing was reported.

*The meeting adjourned at 14:45.*

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