



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/31
Date: 13 February 2020
Time: 13:15 - 14:30
Venue: Room B
Quorum: 12/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 13:25 with 10 Units present. Staff Council Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 06, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 31, 33. All members of the leadership team were in attendance.

1. Adoption of the agenda

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06) made a motion to: **“move item (8) ‘Draft ST/AI on termination of appointments: draft resolution’ up in the agenda to become item no (6) and to change the order of the other items accordingly”**. The motion was seconded and **adopted with 10 votes in favor, no votes against and no abstentions**.

The agenda was therefore **adopted as amended**.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the **29th and 30th meetings of the 46th Staff Council were adopted**.

3. President’s Report and Summary of Communications

The Assistant Treasurer Yogesh Sakhardande requested more details regarding item no. 4 of the President’s report “the role of Young UN”. The President Patricia Nemeth explained that in addition to her meeting with USG/DMSPC, she sent two emails to the SG expressing her dismay that members of Young UN participated as full-fledged participants on various working groups in the HLCM Task Force on the Future of the United Nations System Workforce, including in discussions regarding “new sustainable contractual modalities”. To highlight the irregularity of this preferential treatment, the 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman placed the issue in the context of Chapter VIII of the Staff Regulations and Rules “Staff Relations”, which guarantees the effective participation of staff representative bodies in identifying human resource policies, as “sole and exclusive” representatives of staff on HR matters.

Other questions were raised regarding the sources of fund of the Young UN, their time release, and the status under which they participate in official meetings.

On a different note, the 2nd VP Francisco Brito invited staff representatives and staff-at-large to attend the information sessions offered by the Travel Unit and referred to their latest information session that he attended, in which he learned about a new online portal that staff should use to register travel.

In the same context, the 1st VP mentioned that during an information session on the new coronavirus, staff were urged to register all their travel in the TRIP online portal (*security clearance portal*), even if travel was for personal reasons as a precautionary measure to allow the Organisation to track and locate staff in case of border closures.

The Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs requested that invitations to such information sessions should not only be published on iSeek but should also be sent via broadcasts to all staff. **The 2nd VP will follow up with Travel Unit in this regard.**

4. Executive Board Report

Nothing was raised.

5. UNSU Finances

The Deputy Chair inquired about the status of the QuickBooks licenses. The Assistant Treasurer explained that the EB discussed the possibility of purchasing a new PC along with the latest version of QuickBooks to avoid using the Cloud version. **The President stated that she was liaising with different stakeholders in this regard and that she would update the Council accordingly.**

The Treasurer Jaime Garreta updated the Council on the progress of auditing the 45th Staff Council accounts and explained that the latest period of the mandate of the 44th Staff Council (1 January – 31 March 2017) was highlighted by the Auditors as an unaudited period. He further explained that upon his request, UNFCU shared the bank statements of the period in question, which showed financial activities. He also mentioned that he contacted the former Treasurer of the 45th Staff Council who confirmed that they faced the same dilemma when at the beginning of the 45th Staff Council's mandate and advised to contact the former treasurers in order to reach the relevant documents. The Treasurer eventually stated that the matter was being investigated and that he would **contact the Treasurers of the 44th Staff Council to work together on addressing the matter.**

6. Draft ST/AI on termination of appointments: draft resolution

The Assistant Treasurer referred to the President's email dated 12 February 2020 in which she shared updates related to the subject matter and requested not to rush the adoption of the resolution without due consideration to the recent updates of the situation.

The Deputy Chair, for the sake of clarity, summarized the history of the matter since the draft ST/AIs were received for comments, the comments made by the Council members, and eventually the letter which was sent by Vienna Staff Union to the President of the SMC requesting the suspension of the review process of the ST/AIs. She eventually requested information about the current status of the review process, and whether a response was received from the presidency of the SMC on Vienna's letter. **The President stated that she will request updates from the SMC Secretariat in this regard.**

The 1st VP explained that the proposed ST/AIs detailed the application of the relevant articles of the Staff Regulations and Rules: **article IX (Separation from Service) and article XIII (transitional measures)** and advised the Council members to make their comments on the ST/AIs in light of the mentioned articles.

The feasibility of the draft resolution was widely discussed among the Council members. **It was eventually decided to suspend the consideration of the draft resolution** to adjust its language and approach based on any further updates on the matter. The President stated that she would share updates with the Council when they become available.

7. Travel to SMC: draft resolution

The Council members discussed the composition of the Union's delegation to the 9th plenary meeting of the Staff Management Committee (SMC). The discussion included calls to increase the size of the delegation to better build the capacity of the Council members, the possibility of attending such meetings remotely given the high expense of the travel, and the principles on which the recommended delegation was identified.

The Deputy Chair explained that – based on the experience she gained through attending two SMC plenary meetings – it was very difficult to participate in such meetings remotely given the complexity and length of its deliberations.

The 1st VP stated that a new version of the draft resolution was shared with the Council, decreasing to the amounts of the DSA as requested. He also explained that the delegation was recommended by the EB based on the involvement of each of the recommended members in items on the SMC agenda.

The Deputy Chair suggested to **suspend the consideration of the resolution until the Council's next meeting** to inspect the list of members from UNSU on the different SMC working groups and the possibility of adding extra members to the delegation. **It was so decided.**

The President also called for the Council members who wish to join the Union delegation to the SMC to **send their expressions of interest to the Council prior to its next meeting.**

8. Training for Staff Representatives: update from the Learning Committee and motion on peer-to-peer training opportunities

The elected Chair of the Learning and Development Committee Sergio Pires Vieira (Unit 24) introduced the outputs of the Committee's 1st meeting and explained that a survey will be circulated to identify the exact learning needs of the Council members. He also explained the other learning opportunities highlighted by members of the Committee, including contracting external trainers to train the Council members as a group, and the possibility of peer-to-peer trainings to be offered either by current/former Council members or by any other experienced members of the staff, including the possibility of a budget training which he thought was necessary to enable Council members to better understand and therefore negotiate their Departments' budgets.

In this regard, the 2nd VP informed the Council that he **was coordinating a budget training for the Council members.**

The Council discussed the above proposals as well as other ideas including suggestions for dialogues similar to TED-Talks to be recorded and posted on online portals for the benefit of Council members and others, as well as suggestions to invite former staff representatives to lecture the Council to enable its members to learn from their institutional memory and experience.

In this regard, Sergio Pires Vieira made a motion to **"organize peer-to-peer presentations on urgent matters in the form of 10-minute presentations - at the beginning of meetings of the Council - followed by 15-minute QA sessions, once a month or more – if needed – given that the Council's agenda allows so"**. The motion was seconded **and adopted** with 12 votes in favor, no votes against and no abstentions.

The Deputy Chair (*also a member of the Committee*) mentioned that the survey will shortly be prepared and shared with the Council members **to finalize a full training plan by March 2020.**

9. ST/SGB on delegation of authority: draft resolution

The Council decided to **suspend the consideration of the draft resolution until the Council's next meeting** to allow its members to comment on the draft resolution. The Secretary Sherif Mohamed stated that **he would upload the draft resolution on the relevant Microsoft Teams space and share the link with the Council.**

10. Staff Day

The President informed the Council that the **Staff Day's date was not yet confirmed.**

11. Reports by Units

Michelle Rockcliffe brought the Council's attention to the proposed changes to the Staff Rules and Regulations of the Pension Fund which were not approved by the General Assembly.

The Treasurer mentioned that members of units 17 and 18 inquired about a pop-up messages on their PCs' screens regarding different subjects like harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination, among other things. He explained that they advised their constituents to communicate any misconduct to their managers through the proper channels, as well as to the staff representatives to take the appropriate actions.

12. AOB

The 1st VP requested the Council's confirmation on a farewell event for the Council's administrative assistant, Marian Fadel. It was decided to arrange the party on Thursday 20 February 2020. The Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and the 1st VP volunteered to plan the event and called for others to help set the event up.

The 1st VP also mentioned that the Council's new administrative assistant, Emmanuella Rene, will start her duties on Monday 17 February 2020, and invited Council members to visit the Union's office to welcome her.

Jesus Parado (Unit 33) informed the Council that the Secretary-General would share the results of the Staff Engagement Survey on Friday 14 February 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 14:50.