



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/43
Date: 07 May 2020
Time: 13:15 - 14:30
Venue: Virtual (MS Teams)
Quorum: 17/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 13:20 with 15 Units present. Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 06, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. All members of the leadership team were in attendance.

1. Adoption of the agenda

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06) requested to add “SMC Update” as item no. 6. Winryck Ford (Unit 22) requested to discuss the situation with the temporary garage permits under AOB. The Assistant Treasurer Yogesh Sakhardande requested to add “return to campus” as item no. 7. The agenda was adopted with the requested changes with 9 items.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the 42nd meeting of the 46th Staff Council were adopted with edits introduced by Michelle Rockcliffe and Ramona Kohrs.

3. President's Report and Summary of Communications

The 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman updated the Council on the leadership activities during the week. On the meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), the 1st VP stated that the Committee discussed the situation of staff members who remained on temporary appointments as a result of the uncertainty of the implementation of the Global Service Delivery Model (GSDM). The administration agreed to convert the appointments of eligible staff members in this group to limited fixed term appointments. In this regard, the 2nd VP Francisco Brito also updated the Council on a recent meeting with the Controller who gave similar assurances regarding the above-mentioned conversion from temporary to limited-fixed-terms appointments.

The 1st VP also updated the Council on the deliberations regarding adherence to [ST/SGB/274](#) on “staff-management consultations at the Department level”. He explained that the Committee agreed to include this specific point in the induction of all new USGs

and that the importance of holding regular staff-management meetings was emphasized. He added that the Committee also agreed that invitations to such consultative meetings should be initiated by USGs to fulfil their commitment to proper staff consultation.

Michelle Rockcliffe thought the discussion which took place in the JNC regarding [ST/SGB/274](#) was not enough and requested that the Union write a letter to all heads of entities emphasizing the importance of adhering to that policy.

The 1st VP further updated the Council on the deliberations regarding the limited access of staff representatives to staffing tables and stated that the Committee agreed that access to staffing tables should be normally granted to staff representatives without necessarily granting them access to any confidential material. OHR agreed to create a template of the information that could be shared with staff representatives and share that template with all the Executive Offices (EO), in order to overcome their apprehensions.

Michelle Rockcliffe emphasized that it was the right of staff representatives to have access to staffing tables, and that management attempts to deprive them this right usually occurred to hide wrongdoings.

In his response, the 1st VP explained that no written rule existed regarding access of staff representatives to the staffing tables and that each EO was dealing with this matter differently. He further explained that staff side representatives on the JNC were trying to obtain standardised guidelines from OHR that would identify what exactly within staffing tables could or could not be shared.

On a different note, the 1st VP also updated the Council on the relocation process of the staff of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) amid the current pandemic and that the management side agreed that the issue should be looked into and addressed as a matter of urgency. Finally, he explained that the item regarding Culinart could not be reached and was therefore deferred to the upcoming meeting of the JNC.

On a different note, the 1st VP updated the Council on a meeting that he attended with the Internal Justice Council in which he shared the Union's inputs regarding the transition from full-time ad litem to part-time judges, the duration of the litigation process, applicants being subject to retaliation, along with other suggestions that could improve the internal justice system.

Answering a question raised by the Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs regarding the validity of the Staff Management Committee (SMC) working group on Internal Justice, the 1st VP responded that the working group was being revived.

Regarding staff with temporary contracts, the Assistant Rapporteur Shirley Abraham raised concerns about staff members in her area whose temporary appointments were not

converted nor renewed. The Secretary Sherif Mohamed explained that there should be a distinction between temporary appointments of staff affected by GSDM and those of staff on regular temporary appointments. He further explained that according to the agreement at the JNC, the temporary appointments of staff affected by GSDM would be converted to limited-fixed-term contracts. The 2nd VP explained that management was waiting for a decision by the Member States regarding GSDM, which was expected to be deferred to the 75th session of the General Assembly.

4. Executive Board Report

Michelle Rockcliffe requested more information regarding item 4 “Young UN”. The 1st VP stated that the leadership had several meetings in response to a pulse survey launched by the NewWork initiative, in coordination with Young UN and others. In this regard, the meetings focused on the principle of staff representation and the necessity for a clear distinction between the role of “Young UN” or any similar groups and the role of the Staff Union as the mandated representative body for all staff as per chapter 8 of the Staff Regulations and Rules. The various interlocutors acknowledged the Unions’ role as exclusive representatives of staff and both sides agreed to work more closely together in the future, respecting each other’s respective roles.

5. UNSU Finances

Michelle Rockcliffe reminded the Treasurers to share the summarized financial report and reminded the 1st VP to share the details of the legal services as promised. Notes were taken by the Assistant Treasurer and the 1st VP.

6. SMC Update

Michelle Rockcliffe requested an update on the status of the SMC plenary as well as the Deputy Chair’s request for a dedicated online space for SMC updates.

The 1st VP stated that SMC Secretariat was working on a Microsoft Teams/SharePoint page for SMC updates, which would include a public-facing record of decisions.

The 1st VP also updated the Council on the status of the plenary meeting of the SMC, which was planned to take place in April 2020, and was postponed due to the pandemic. He added that management proposed to hold the SMC plenary in a virtual setting, which initiated several discussions among the different Unions in which concerns such as the seriousness of setting such a precedent versus the importance of moving forward with important topics were discussed. Finally, the management side had dropped their proposal to hold a virtual SMC, so the face-to-face meeting remain postponed indefinitely.

The Secretary updated the Council on the work of the DoA working group and explained that all parties eventually agreed on the WG's terms of reference (TORs) and that the WG shall start the substantive deliberations in its upcoming meetings

6. Return to Campus

The President Patricia Nemeth referred to the live event which took place earlier in the day, which detailed the plans regarding the management's phased plan to return to campus.

Michelle Rockcliffe requested a Union position on this matter that the President should communicate to other stakeholders during different negotiations in this regard.

Sebastian Cervantes raised concerns regarding the live event on return to campus, and thought it was important to have a Union position regarding this matter as well as regarding the new-norm conditions which was mentioned several times during the live event. He condemned the top-down approach in designing such policies. He thought that the situation was a golden opportunity for the Union to shine by being actively involved in the planning process of such policies to eventually ensure that all concerns of staff were addressed to the most extent possible.

Commenting on Sebastian's point, Jesus Parado suggested to initiate a Union ad-hoc committee on the return to campus to collect the different views and craft a Union's position. It was decided to place this item on the upcoming week's agenda.

The President called for Council members to bring the concerns of their constituents in this regard to the Council meetings.

7. Reports by Units

Nothing was reported.

8. AOB

On the temporary garage permits, the Secretary explained that he was among the group who enjoyed these temporary permits and that he received an email from the Garage Administration with detailed plan to compensate staff who paid for these temporary permits in full. He explained that compensations were offered in extensions of the temporary permits from 30 April to 31 August 2020.

The 2nd VP mentioned that he wrote the chief of the Insurance Unit to explore the possibility to extend/carry over the remaining amounts for dental services to the upcoming insurance cycle (which will start in July 2020) to compensate staff members for their cancelled dental appointments in the period March to June 2020, given the impossibility of using these remaining amounts during the above mentioned period due to the closure of dental offices in response to the pandemic. Similarly, he explained that he also inquired about applying the same logic on the remaining amounts set for Orthodontics services.

The meeting adjourned at 15:10.
