



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/44
Date: 14 May 2020
Time: 13:36 - 14:45
Venue: Virtual (MS Teams)
Quorum: 14/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 13:36 PM EST with 14 Units present. Staff Council Chair Camille McKenzie chaired the meeting and Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji, and Emmanuella René, UNSU Staff Assistant, took notes. Units present were: 06, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

All members of the leadership team were in attendance.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes with 8 items.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the 43rd meeting of the 46th Staff Council remain pending.

3. President's Report and Summary of Communications

The 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman updated the Council on the meetings and activities of the leadership team during the week from the 8th to the 14th of May 2020.

As a result of a meeting with the Young UN and the leadership team, it was agreed that both sides will work more closely in order to avoid overstepping boundaries on matters of staff representation and conditions of service in the future.

The President explained that the meeting of the three Union Federations was held with the objective of obtaining a follow up with the HR Network on topics including, but not limited to: work policies, guidelines for staff wishing to use accumulated leave entitlements, updates on MEDIVAC, issuance of PPE, preparation for any second or third waves of the coronavirus. The President also gave an update on hazard or danger pay, which she clarified would be non-pecuniary recognition or compensation, discussions were ongoing.

The Leadership team also attended an Ad-Hoc SMC, which addressed the following issues: Outsourcing and contractors, reviewing a paper by UN Staff Unions in Geneva, drafting the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Performance Management Working Group (PM-WG), the pending continuing appointment exercise, reviewing the extension of Delegation of Authority (DOA) to termination of appointments, and a paper on LGBT issues presented by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) union in Bangkok.

The Second VP informed that as of this week, Emmanuella René, UNSU Staff Assistant, will be drafting the “Summary of Communications”. He also mentioned that on May 8, the President and himself attended an informal consultation with Anthony Duncker, from Department of Operational support (DOS), in order to set out how the Management Reassignment Programme (MRP) will be conducted for the Professional level 2 category of staff (P-2) since it was initially designed for field missions.

Based on the discussion with Dimitri Gounaris, Advisory Board on Compensation Claims (ABCC), on Appendix D applicability in case of COVID-19, the Second Vice-President provided explanations on why it would be difficult for staff members to prove they’ve contracted the virus in the working environment therefore making any related claims invalid.

Mr. Brito also reported receiving daily updates from the NASA (National Staff Association in the Field) regarding the ongoing coronavirus outbreak issues in field missions. He will keep the council informed.

Responding to the Outsourcing (paper by Geneva), Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06) urged the leadership team to highlight the impact on the Pension Fund and Health Insurance when the organization hires more consultants than staff members since the consultants neither contribute to the pension fund nor to the insurance plans. The 1st and 2nd VP took note of the remark.

Ramona Kohrs mentioned that the issues of Outsourcing could be resolved by funding trainings for the staff members in order for them to build the missing expertise instead of hiring consultants. She suggested that the Union request HR to provide statistics on the hired consultants and the justification for it, she also reminded the 2nd Vice-President to discuss the role of the rebuttal panel during the Staff Management Committee (SMC) Working Group on Performance Management.

4. Executive Board Report

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) suggested that the Audit Committee should make a presentation to the Council as it had done in the past instead of working solely with the Executive Board (EB). The 1st Vice-President informed Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) that the audit is currently being conducted and once it’s finalized a presentation will be made

to the Council, he also mentioned that the focal point for the ongoing audit committee is Sherif Mohamed, the Secretary of the Executive Board.

5. UNSU Finances

Jaime Garreta informed that Sherif Mohamed has scheduled a meeting with the auditors on Tuesday, 19 May in order to review the drafts reports. Once the revision finalized, another meeting will be scheduled between the auditors and the council to present the report. He went over the updated UNSU report of expenses for April 2020 and the UNSU's April bank statement.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) requested the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to provide a (classified) Income and Expense statement, a Balance sheet and Cash Flow statement as required by the regulations. She stated that due to the drastically reduced number of transactions it would not be a laborious to export the last PDF statement and update the statements in Excel – as they had been done for many years prior to acquiring QuickBooks - it was unnecessary for anyone to travel into the City.

Jaime Garreta and Yogesh Sakhardande both explained that given the current circumstances and as the Secretary General (SG) has ordered all staff members to telecommute and avoid going to the office, the provided report of expenses and the month's Bank statement would allow the Council to have a brief summary of the current financial situation until we are allowed to go back to work. Once the required software and files can be accessed at work, the financial statements in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Council will be provided.

Sebastian Cervantes (Unit 22) thanked Jaime and Yogesh Sakhardande for their efforts and proposed a motion that would allow the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer a "temporary relaxation of the regulations of the Council" providing flexibility during the telecommuting period, and until possible to return safely to office.

The motion was seconded by Simona Chindea and was put to vote by the Chairperson.

The motion was passed with 12 votes in favor, 1 against and 1 abstention.

6. WG on Return to the Office

Jesus Parado (Unit 33) provided updates from a meeting organized by DOS. It was discussed that there are possibilities for staff members to return to work around the end of the calendar year – it was mentioned that the return to work would be conducted in phases.

He informed the Council that DOS would have a flexible approach for staff members with kids as the day-care and schools are not yet operational. He conveyed concerns from his constituents – some with pre-existing medical issues, concerns from constituents whose commutes are long, among others concerns about returning to work.

Jesus Parado (Unit 33) proposed to have a meeting between the Staff Representatives dedicated to the topic of Staff concerns about returning to the office, in an effort to share their constituents' concerns in order to build a matrix to be addressed and communicated to the leadership team. He also mentioned that access to the building should be granted to all Staff Representatives to survey the current working conditions. He underlined the need to support staff.

Camille McKenzie reassured him that access is granted to all staff with a valid ID card.

7. Report by Units

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) requested the leadership team to have a running list of issues from Units for COVID-19 response and return to work related concerns, and to receive weekly updates on the COVID-10 Operations Group (COG) and related working groups that the leadership is currently working on, suggesting this be done in a structural manner for the Staff Representatives to be able to easily access and respond.

She suggested there be more communication and dialogue between the leadership team and the Staff Representatives. She suggested a survey should be conducted to gather the staff members' opinion on the return to work process.

There had been a Unit 6 staff meeting held on Wednesday. Staff of the Fund were surprised and concerned to see that Janice Dunn Lee the former Acting CEO showed up on the TEAMS call.

The 1st Vice-President strongly encouraged discussions amongst all the involved parties, staff and their reps and with leadership. He underscored that staff concerns should be systematically gathered by the Staff Representatives. He urged the members of the council to discuss and gather real data from staff.

Karina Loktionova (Unit 29) informed that a poll was conducted in her Unit and service, around returning to work and stated that she would share the example.

8. AOB

No items raised.

The meeting adjourned at 14:45.