



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/63
Date: 29 October 2020
Time: 13:15 - 14:30
Venue: Virtual
Quorum: 15/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

In the absence of the Chairpersons, the Union's Assistant Rapporteur Shirley Abraham chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. The meeting was quorate at 13:25 with 13 Units present. Units present were: 06, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33. The leadership team was in attendance.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman welcomed a guest attendant, the Chair of Unit Chairs, Danielle Henripin, and thanked her for addressing the Council. He proposed to move the relevant item up on the agenda to become agenda item no 2. It was so decided. The agenda was adopted as amended with 11 items.

2. Report from the Chair of Unit Chairs

Danielle Henripin, The Chair of Unit Chairs, introduced herself and explained the purpose and the process of the designation of the polling officers, including the initial approval of 12 applications, rejection of 1 application, and the placement of 2 applications on a roster. She further explained that due to several reasons, only 9 polling officers are now ready, out of the maximum 12 officers as per the Statutes and Regulations. The Chair of the Unit Chairs stated that the 09 polling officers were available and were being briefed about their roles and responsibilities by the time she briefed the Council. She also mentioned that the polling officers were in the process of designating their executive body and asked whether the Council wishes to call for more polling officers.

The Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs in her capacity as the alternate representative of Unit 21, commented on the apportionment of units of the Department of Global Communications, and explained how these lists were previously prepared, which did not reflect the organizational structure of the Department properly, and asked that the DGC staff representatives be involved with the polling officers to discuss this matter.

The 1st VP explained that it was a common practice that polling officers share the apportionment lists with the staff representatives for their comments, however he highlighted the complexity of the apportionment process, and hoped that the polling officers will be willing to discuss this matter with the staff representatives to ensure the best possible scenarios.

Danielle Henripin explained that she was not aware of previous issues with apportionment lists, as far as she was concerned as a former staff representative in DGACM. She further explained that it was not her duty to address such concerns in her capacity as the Chair of Unit Chairs, and that addressing such concerns is the mandate of the polling officers, however she promised the Council to communicate these concerns to the polling officers.

The Assistant Secretary Sarah M'Bodji inquired about the possibility of holding by-elections by accepting uncontested nominations from interested units, and through a certain process, announce representatives for these units.

Danielle Henripin thought it was up to the polling officers to decide whether or not was it feasible to hold by-elections at this point of the 46th Staff Council mandate.

The 1st VP reminded the Council of the exact role of the Chair of Unit Chairs, which is primarily designating the polling officers, and that all questions related to the mandate of the polling officers should be directed to them, including the preparation of the apportionment lists, electronic voting, and the possibility of by-elections.

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06) said that it was possible to have by-elections for staff representatives of any given unrepresented unit, without the polling officers having to go through a full by-elections process for all units. She also thought that the process of creating apportionment lists has its own rules and if changes are to be introduced, it should be through a staff-management body (Staff Management Committee (SMC), for instance).

Sherif Okasha (Unit 28) thought that the big number of unrepresented units was a concern that is worth studying and called for a proper investigation in this regard.

The 2nd VP Francisco Britto explained that the performance of the past few Councils was not appreciated by most of the staff, which affected the overall reputation of the Union and subsequently demotivated staff to run for representation, let alone to even care about the Union's business in general. He thanked the current Council members for their efforts bringing back our Union to the level it deserves.

The Secretary Sherif Mohamed made a point of order to focus on the main subject of the agenda item and to discuss all the other matters related to the mandate of the polling officers under a dedicated agenda item.

The 1st VP thanked Danielle Henripin, the Chair of Unit Chairs, for her efforts and active participation in the designation of the polling officers, and for addressing the Council.

3. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the 60th and 61st, and 62nd meetings of the 46th Staff Council were approved with edits introduced by Michelle Rockcliffe and Aitor Arauz Chapman.

4. Reports by Units

Sherif Okasha reported that the DGACM staff representatives from several duty stations had a meeting with the USG and directors of the Department regarding a resolution adopted by the concerned language staff, and mentioned that the meeting was also attended by advisers, other than the staff representatives, as well as the 1st VP from leadership. He thought the meeting was relatively better than previous similar meetings, yet he thought staff representatives needed to be more strategic in their approaches with management, and to get into details of each concern, and most importantly to create a mechanism to follow up on the agreements made in such meetings. He called for a unified position by staff representatives well in advance of such meetings, to be able to negotiate proposals made by management. He finally called for the Council members to pay special attention to the importance of such strategic planning.

The 1st VP thanked Sherif Okasha for his briefing and supported his call for better strategic planning and congratulated DGACM staff representatives for their good work.

Patel Noble (Unit 14) requested support from the Council members as well as legal assistance from the Union's legal advisor regarding a situation that has been taking place in the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) involving changes made to the shifts of the security officers in light of COVID-19, which involved shifts of 12 hours for 3 days and a leave of 6 days. The problem occurred when security officers realised that calling in sick for one day means that they call sick for 12-hours, and accordingly management calculated the leave as a day and a half instead of 1 day. He thought that because of this system the security officers were adversely affected, and that Management Evaluation Unit (MEU) requests were made by several security officers, which resulted in readjusting the past leave requests, however the practice continued to take place after that, and that's why they decided to escalate the matter and call for a legal opinion. Patel Noble's introduction and approach were supported by the President Patricia Nemeth.

The Assistant Secretary raised concerns forwarded to her by members of her units regarding cleaning procedures in the headquarters, including some concerns from staff who have been asked by delegations to clean podiums and/or tables in conference rooms and also highlighted some concerns regarding behaviours such as hand shaking and talking without masks. She added that her constituents called for the following: (a) a solid cleaning procedure in the HQ, (b) automatic thermometer at the entrances, (c) system to trace movements in the HQ for better actions in case of any confirmed positive COVID-19 case, (d) more plexiglass in conference areas and around document desks (including the

first basement accessibility area), (e) portable UV room air purifiers, (f) plastic face shields, as well as (g) laptops to be able to work from home and properly upload eStatements given that most of the staff work from home.

Regarding the case of 1.5 days being charged when security staff took a day off, Michelle Rockcliffe stated that it seemed a cut and dried case whereby rules were being and called for escalating the matter to the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC).

Patel Noble asked what output could be expected from a JNC process, and whether it is worth suspending a tribunal case. The President thought that a JNC process would not be effective and called for the DSS staff representatives to keep track of time limits related to the litigation process, and that JNC process should not suspend any intended legal process.

The 1st VP thought that the best plan of action is to raise the issue through MEU and after that we get JNC involved, not before that, for the cause to have greater leverage. He thought that the Union's legal advisor would be helpful in identifying the cases within the time limits and what can be filed as well as the expected outcome. Patel Noble will reach out to the leadership team for further action.

5. President's Report and Summary of Communications

The Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs asked about the report's point on the Internal Justice system and called for a briefing by the 1st VP about the progress in this regard.

The 1st VP briefed the Council on the process of designating members of the Internal Justice Council, including that Staff Unions designate half of its members and explained the new requirements proposed by the Secretary General to the General Assembly without consultations neither with the Staff Unions nor with the Internal Justice Council members themselves, and that the proposed requirements were criticized for limiting the opportunity for staff representatives to be nominated for its membership, and assured the Council members that this matter is well covered by the Staff Unions.

Jesus Parado (Unit 33) asked if there was a way to give exceptions to the limitations of movements enforced on certain nationalities, given their status as United Nations staff. The 1st VP recognized how frustrating these limitations were, yet he explained that every time these issues were brought in the context of JNC the same answer was received and that the issue was directly related to the host country and that neither the Union nor management were successful so far in addressing them.

6. Executive Board Report

Nothing was raised.

7. UNSU Finances

The Treasurer updated the Council that MetLaw sent the final invoice for the legal plan for 325 registered members, and that the payment was made to the company.

The Deputy Chair requested that the Treasurers plan a meeting with the auditors to present their report, which was supported by Michelle Rockcliffe. The Secretary reminded the Council that the report of the auditors of the accounts of the 45th Staff Council has been completed and published in the Union's annual report and explained that a meeting with the auditors is being planned to initiate the process of auditing the first year of the 46th Staff Council mandate.

The Deputy Chair Called for the Secretary to share the changes made by Council members on the report of the auditors.

The 1st VP didn't recall the circumstances that led to not having a meeting with the auditors to present their report to the Council, and thought that at this point it wasn't feasible to go back to the audit of the 45th Staff Council accounts, which is already way past due, and to focus on paying what we owe, and initiate the process of auditing the 46th Staff Council timely, to ensure maximum accountability.

Michelle Rockcliffe reminded the Council that if it was not possible to get the auditors, then we should have the opportunity to interview the Audit Committee as soon as possible.

8. Workplace accommodation in satellite buildings - draft resolution

Karina Loktionova (Unit 29) briefed the Council on the issues with the UNITAR and Albano buildings, including lack of consultations with staff representatives about issues related to these buildings, and through the resolution she called for management to consult with the staff representatives before making any changes to the these buildings.

The Deputy Chair suggested several edits to the presented draft resolution.

The Council decided to vote on the draft resolution the following week after introducing the suggested edits.

9. Resolution on Staff Legal Assistance

Item was deferred to next week.

10. ICSC 90th Session Debrief

Item deferred to next week.

11. AOB

Nothing was raised.

The meeting adjourned at 15:15.
