



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/72
Date: 21 January 2020
Time: 13:15 - 14:30
Venue: Virtual
Quorum: 13/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 13:25 with 10 Units present. The Deputy Chair Ramona Kohrs chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 06, 14, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33. The leadership team was in attendance.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with 9 items. At the request of Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06), the Pension Fund item was moved to become item no. 3.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the 70th and 71st meetings were adopted with editorial corrections introduced by Michelle Rockcliffe. Minutes for the 69th meeting remain pending.

3. Pension Fund

Michelle Rockcliffe continued explaining the draft resolution paragraph by paragraph and the rationale behind each of the raised concerns, including the board proposals in its report A/75/9, the Fund's management irregular changes to the funds rules and regulations to prevent staff members of the Fund to be elected as representatives of the staff on the Pension Board, as well as the decision of the 5th Committee that the Pension Board invest in "derivatives", among other issues that the draft resolution covers.

She finally called for the Council members to pay the Pension Fund issues their utmost attention to safeguard their rights and those of their families.

4. Reports by Units

Michelle Rockcliffe reported two articles posted in the *InstitutionalInvestor.com* (an Investments magazine) that in her view contains much propaganda by the Fund management and reiterated her call for the Council members to be careful with the fund related matters.

Regarding the proposed “disbanding” of the UN Yearbook Unit, the 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman stated that the GA had acknowledged the importance of the UN Yearbook as an authoritative reference work in its most recent resolution on “Questions relating to information” (A/RES/75/101). This constituted a clear mandate by the GA for the continued production of the UN Yearbook and called into question the Department of Global Communications’ decision to dissolve the Yearbook Unit. He informed the Council that the matter should be investigated thoroughly to understand on what basis that decision was made.

The Deputy Chair informed the Council members that she communicated with the staff of the Unit and informed them of the discussions that have been taking place in the Council regarding their Unit’s issue and that a draft resolution is being prepared to support them. She hasn’t received a response from them so far.

Karina Loktionova (Unit 33) informed the Council on the DGACM meeting with the USG and senior managers, which she found productive, and that a summary of the meeting discussions was being prepared. She also updated the Council members on a recent Global Townhall Meeting with all the language staff and managers from all duty stations, which she also found productive especially with the interesting Slido questions raised by the frustrated staff affected by the relevant decision.

A conversation regarding the preparations for the 2022 budget took place, in which different approaches to reduce the budget were discussed by the Council members. It was agreed to keep an eye on the budget preparations in the different Departments and ensure that staff representatives are included in this process.

The Council also discussed the feasibility of fighting against every single downsizing proposal made by management, and a discussion in this regard took place in which it was understood that planned downsizing by management might be better than sudden cuts by Member States and that the Union need to choose its battles carefully. The 1st VP gave an example of what happened in DGACM in the last budget when a sum of money was reduced with no basis which added unexpected burden on the Department.

5. President's Report and Summary of Communications

Michelle Rockcliffe asked the President to share the documents relevant to the downsizing policy with the Council members.

The Deputy Chair inquired about the newly discussed Gender Parity Policy. The President referred to the recording of the Townhall meeting regarding the Gender Parity Policy and called for the Council members to get back to it for questions and answers related to gender parity in the Organization.

The Council members discussed the different factors that affects gender parity in the Organization and the President referred to the measures enshrined in the Gender Parity Policy that requires written justification from hiring managers in cases when male candidates were selected in the presence of qualified female candidates for any given post. The 1st VP added that even though the Policy was good enough to achieve parity, the application remained problematic and called for the Council members to look at the bigger picture to correct the wrong application and ensure the proper implementation of the policy's principles.

Sergio Pires Riviera (Unit 24) inquired if there were clear statistics showing the number of recruited male and female candidates in the past 4 years. The 1st VP called for the Council members to check the Organizations gender parity website (www.un.org/parity) for statistics and numbers published by the Organization in this regard.

6. Executive Board Report

Nothing was raised.

7. Consultation on Phase 3 "Next Normal"

The President reported the different discussions that took place regarding the "Next Normal" and discussed the different points that the Union raised and the overall agreement that "guiding principles" should be put in place before we start reimagining the future of work in the Organization.

The 1st VP mentioned that the "Next Normal" discussions will cover a variety of areas, including, but not limited to: real estate, flexible working arrangements, travel, security, insurance, benefits, etc and called for the Council members to keep track of the relevant MS Teams channel and to meet regularly with their constituents to keep them updated and collect their views to help the Union deliver an accurate picture of the staff views.

The 2nd VP added that part of the conversations in this regard involved coming up with global guidelines that ensures similar implementation across the global components of the Organization and the difficulty of doing so given the implications related to real estate, medical insurance, benefits, etc. He also promised to add a summary of the conversations in the relevant MS Teams channel and asked the Council members to keep track of these summaries.

8. UNSU Finances

The Treasurer reported that the total number of Union members is currently 1,384. He asked the Council members to raise any questions regarding the financial statements that he shared. Michelle Rockcliffe thanked the Treasurers for the new financial statements which have addressed most of the areas that she previously raised. It was agreed that interested Council members will inspect the financial statements and direct relevant questions to the Treasurers at the Council's next meeting.

The 2nd VP acknowledged and praised the great work of the Treasurers and called for the Council members to show acknowledgement and support to them.

The President thought that the total number of Union members should be higher than that and asked to double check the numbers and report back to the Council.

The 1st VP praised the hard work that Emma did put in consolidating the different lists of dues paying members in a one spreadsheet that has more detailed information about each of the dues paying members and can be regularly updated.

9. AOB

Michelle Rockcliffe raised a question she received from a constituent regarding how to obtain a New York driver's license. The President advised that staff members may access the relevant DMV link in the Union's daily '*Situation Report*' for full information in this regard. The 1st VP advised that renewal of driver's license can be done simply online while obtaining a driver's license for the first time requires an in-person appointment.

Simona Chindea (Unit 24) reported her personal experience with renewing her driver's license and the difficulties she faced from unexpected office closures to having to run from one DMV office to another and indicated that renewals and issuance of driver's licenses in New Jersey was not possible online.

The meeting adjourned at 15:10.