



Minutes/Actes:

Meeting No: 46/80
Date: 18 March 2021
Time: 13:15 - 14:30
Venue: Virtual
Quorum: 15/17 Units

46th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 13:25 with 09 Units present. The Deputy Chair Sebastian Cervantes chaired the meeting and Secretary Sherif Mohamed took notes. Units present were: 06, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. The Leadership team was in attendance.

The Council members and the Leadership team congratulated Sebastian Cervantes for being elected the new Deputy Chair of the 46th Staff Council.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes with 10 items.

2. Adoption of previous minutes

Minutes for the 79th meeting of the 46th Staff Council were adopted.

3. Reports by Units

Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 06) reported a Unit meeting of the Pension Fund staff in which Pension Fund staff from Geneva were invited. The meeting included discussions about the SMC matters related to the Fund and about the current misuse of the temporary appointments, among other issues. She also raised concerns related to work-life balance and burnouts at her Unit. She finally called for the Council members to place issues related to the wellbeing and work-life balance of the staff on top of their priorities.

Karina Loktionova (Unit 29) updated the Council members on the work of the WG on the implementation of the newly increased productivity for the translators. She expressed disappointment that some of the management proposals were not mutually agreed upon yet were still being pushed to the highest levels for approval. She will keep the Council updated in this regard.

Sergio Pires Vieira (Unit 21) joined Michelle Rockcliffe's point regarding work-life balance and referred to a similar situation in his Unit. In this regard, he informed the Council that he surveyed his Unit members to come up with ways and ideas to enhance their work-life balance, however, he has not received the expected input from his constituents and asked about the best practices in other departments that might help enhance the work-life balance of his colleagues.

The 1st VP Aitor Arauz Chapman informed the Council that he was aware of the updates regarding the increased productivity of translators and appreciated the work being done by DGACM staff representatives and other focal points in this regard. He also joined the voices that raise concerns about work-life balance, including burnouts at areas where hiring freeze was lifted and no solid steps towards new recruitments were taken. He invited the Council to consider dedicated discussions regarding work-life balance and workload management. In the meantime, he called for staff representatives to raise urgent individual cases which can be handled informally in a timely manner. The President Patricia Nemeth joined the call for the Council members to come up with individual cases for immediate intervention.

Michelle Rockcliffe stated that the Council does not take solid steps to solve issues other than raising these issues and discussing ideas. She called for the Council members to consider taking more solid steps towards supporting the rights of the staff and encouraged the Council members to consider adopting more resolutions indicating the Council's position, among other practical measures.

Sergio Pires Vieira thought that Council resolutions regarding issues related to work-life balance at his Unit – for instance – would not help much and thought that coming up with concrete ideas and properly communicating them to higher management was the only way to make a real positive change in the lives of these concerned staff members.

4. President's Report and Summary of Communications

Michelle Rockcliffe inquired about the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) meeting regarding "future of work". The President updated the Council on the work of the Working Group in this regard, including the intention of the leadership to ask management for more information other than the information presented in their current report. She will keep the Council updated in this regard.

5. Executive Board Report

Nothing was raised.

6. UNSU Finances

Michelle Rockcliffe raised technical questions related to income lines in the Union's budget and referred to the corresponding financial statements. She also shared her screen with the Council members to clarify the budget lines in question. The Treasurers Jaime Garreta and Yogesh Sakhardande and the 2nd VP Francisco Britto discussed the matter with Michelle Rockcliffe and will check the records and report back to the Council.

7. Resolution on Federation Affiliation

The 1st VP introduced the draft resolution and briefed the Council members on the three federations that have access to the meetings of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to represent the interests of the staff on several system-wide matters. The 1st VP further explained that UNSU is currently affiliated with the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations (CCISUA) and itemized the many issues behind the proposal to withdraw from CCISUA and join another federation, preferably the United Nations Civil Servants Federation (UNISERV).

The 1st VP also reminded the Council of a previous Council discussion regarding the lack in financial management of CCISUA which resulted in decreasing UNSU's pledged contributions. He also referred to the unfortunate fact that UNSU was the biggest contributor to CCISUA's budget and that the same concerns regarding the management of its funds remain unaddressed.

The 1st VP also referred to the current political atmosphere among the CCISUA membership and how the Geneva majority of organizations who are also members of CCISUA – *aka* Geneva Group – control the decision making of the federation, and the need to be disaffiliated from such illogical and unproductive decisions and to get rid of CCISUA's questionable governance system.

The 1st VP reminded the Council members of previous incidents in which financial burdens were put on the Council's budget because of decisions made using the "Geneva Group" voting mechanism, and in particular he reminded the Council of the incident in which the Union had to pay extra fees for the President to be able to complete a mandatory quarantine period in Geneva in order to be able to attend important ICSC meetings in person.

Regarding the advantages of joining UNISERV, the 1st VP made a comparison to the Council members regarding the expected gains of joining UNISERV in some specific issues and listed the expected losses UNSU might score regarding the same issues if UNSU continues to be a member of CCISUA.

Michelle Rockcliffe thought that leaving CCISUA was a big decision to be made in one meeting and called for more time to study the matter. She reminded the Council of the history of the UNSU with the different federations, including founding CCISUA as well as UNISERV by UNSU and expressed concern about UNSU's moves back and forth between the different federations. She warned the Council members of the risks of moving between federations in terms of leadership and reputational risk, among other substantive issues.

She also inquired about the positions of UNISERV on the many issues that concern UNSU and highlighted the importance of ensuring that their positions are aligned with ours.

The President also raised questions regarding potential financial of the CCISUA's funds and expressed dismay towards the lobbying practices against UNSU among the membership of CCISUA and stated that UNISERV was aligning their positions with ours and called for the Council members to check UNISERV's website for more information.

The Secretary Sherif Mohamed thought, from his experience, that it was the right time for UNSU to take some courageous steps towards regaining its right weight. He thought that - given the UNSU's current political involvement - other unions should be keen to join any federation in which UNSU is a member. He finally supported the move from CCISUA to UNISERV in order to refrain from repeating the same mistakes repeatedly while expecting different results.

Michelle Rockcliffe countered that moving between federations was the mistake that the Union has been doing over and over and called to be very cautious when studying the different positions of UNISERV. She further questioned whether UNISERV would be able to handle issues related to Security or DGACM, for instance, given the composition and structure of the members of UNISERV, which is totally different from the composition and structure of HQ unions.

The 2nd VP raised serious concerns about the fact that voting inside CCISUA is usually controlled by the "Geneva Group" and that using this lobbying-mechanism harms UNSU's positions on many fronts. He further reminded the Council members that the positions of CCISUA do not necessarily align with ours at all times. He finally supported the Secretary's views that regaining the UNSU's right weight should attract other unions to join any federation in which it is a member.

Patel Noble (Unit 14) said that though he realizes the advantages of our affiliation with CCISUA, yet he did not accept the aforementioned lobbying practices which severely affect UNSU's rating and position inside such an important federation. He finally supported the decision to withdraw from CCISUA to put an end to such lobbying mechanism.

It was decided to continue the discussion on this matter next week and all the interested Council members were called to study the matter for further discussion and decision.

8. Consultation on Phase 3 “Next Normal”

The 1st VP updated the Council on a 2nd draft of an “*executive summary*” which was shared by the coordinators of the different work streams that basically summarizes the output of the conversations that took place over the past two months. He raised concerns about the content of this report and listed some of the issues that he found alarming. He will keep the Council updated in this regard.

9. Election Apportionments

The 1st VP informed the Council that the apportionment lists were received from the polling officers and reminded the Council members of the common practice of checking these lists and ensuring that they are properly apportioned. He also informed the Council members that the lists cover the staff members who work in regional offices away from the headquarters and not covered by other regional unions.

Michelle Rockcliffe inquired whether the apportionment lists were distributed and whether the membership of the Arbitration Committee was completed. The 1st VP promised to send the lists shortly after the meeting and asked the Council members to look closely in the apportionments of their units and to ensure they properly correspond to the structure of their different areas.

Regarding the Arbitration Committee, the 1st VP informed the Council members that a few signatures were missing for one of the candidates for the membership of the Arbitration Committee and asked the Council members to write to the Chair of the Polling Officers and offer help with the needed signatures. He concluded that once the needed signatures were completed, the Arbitration Committee would be up and running.

Finally, Michelle Rockcliffe asked about more information regarding the voting company and the expected date of the elections. The 1st VP informed the Council that once they complete examining the apportionment lists, the members of the Polling Officers would be invited to one of the Council meetings to discuss the elections. Michelle Rockcliffe asked to set a deadline for the Council members to complete examining the apportionment lists. The 1st VP suggested that one week would be sufficient to examine the lists.

10. AOB

Nothing was raised.

The meeting adjourned at 14:06.
