

UNITED NATIONS STAFF UNION
SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES**45th STAFF COUNCIL/45ème CONSEIL DU PERSONNEL****Minutes/Actes**

Meeting No: 45/69
Date: 15 November 2018
Time: 13:15
Venue: Room F
Quorum: 24/27 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 1:25 pm with 13 Units present. Deputy Chair Andraž Melanšek chaired the meeting and UNSU Secretary Aitor Arauz Chapman took notes. The meeting was recorded and a copy deposited with the Administrator. Units present were: 3, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, 37, 38, 39.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The item “EB Elections” was moved to number 2.
The item “Status of Staff Emergency Fund” was moved up to number 3.
The agenda as amended was adopted.

2. Elections

The Chair announced the elections would be carried out by secret ballot. He called for further nominations beyond those that had been circulated in advance. He also encouraged members to keep their endorsement statements short. There were 24 units present and voting for all rounds, with the required majority being 13 votes. Brenda Reyes (Unit 8) and Sarah M'Bodji (Unit 31) served as tellers.

The position of Secretary had only one candidate: Aitor Arauz-Chapman (Unit 29)
He endorsed by Eugenia Beldo (Unit 38) and Shirley Abraham (Unit 37).
Aitor Arauz-Chapman was elected Secretary by acclamation without a vote.

The position of Assistant Secretary had two candidates: Daniel Burden (Unit 34) and Sherif Mohamed (Unit 27).
Unit 25 Rep. endorsed Sherif Mohamed. He asked when the incumbent had last taken care of the minutes of a Council meeting. He recalled a number of occasions in which other members had to fulfil this function.
Esteban Casin (Unit 34) felt it was incorrect to support one candidate by putting the other down.
Sherif Mohamed was elected Assistant Secretary by 16 votes to 7, with one invalid vote cast.

The position of Treasurer had two candidates: Ibrahima Fayé (Unit 6) and François Charlier (Unit 3).

The First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth and Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6) endorsed Mr. Faye, recalling his dedication and excellent work to date.

François Charlier felt the elections should not be taking place. He felt he was the only legitimate candidate because Mr. Fayé had not submitted a biography as requested in the Resolution.

The Chair asked Council members to abstain from recording the secret ballot on their phones.

Ibrahima Fayé was elected Treasurer by 15 votes to 9.

The position of Assistant Treasurer had two candidates: Rosemary Lane (Unit 23) and Thomas Chacko (Unit 30), nominated from the floor by Esteban Casin.

Thomas Chacko made a statement, recalling his long years of experience at the UN, as well as his experience in the corporate sector. He committed to support the Treasurer and facilitate his work.

Aitor Arauz-Chapman spoke in support of Rosemary Lane, praising her rigour and her role in uncovering potential wrongdoing in the Staff Day accounts.

Rosemary Lane was elected Assistant Treasurer by 16 votes to 8.

The position of Rapporteur had only one candidate: Camille Beydon (Unit 26).

The Chair called for additional nominations. There were none.

Thomas Chacko put forward an objection to this nomination, since Camille Beydon had spearheaded and presented the recall resolution to the Council. He felt she should recuse herself from the EB vote. By running, she was blocking a position on the EB that could be occupied by a new member.

The First Vice-President spoke in praise of Camille Beydon and recalled her active role in organising a number of events, including her organisation of the teach-in and her support in translating texts into French. Danielle Henripin (Unit 31) also endorsed her. Mériem Harbi (Unit 28) recalled that the resolution was passed by the Council, at which point it could not be attributed to a single person. She asked the First Vice-President to abstain from endorsing specific candidates.

Camille Beydon was elected Rapporteur by acclamation without a vote.

The position of Assistant Rapporteur had only one candidate: Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39).

The Chair called for additional nominations. There were none.

Eugenia Beldo (Unit 38) endorsed his candidature.

Kenneth Rosario was elected Assistant Rapporteur by acclamation without a vote.

3. Status of Staff Emergency Fund

Ahmad Ismail (Unit 20) related the case of a colleague who was repatriated from the field and seeking treatment in their home country. Given that he was away from his duty station, insurance would only cover specialised treatment on a reimbursement basis, but payment was required upfront for admission. The EO had been supportive, but referred him to the Union. He had spoken with Leadership, who informed him that funds were frozen and could only be dispatched in an emergency. He then addressed the Medical Service and Staff Counsellor, who both confirmed the funds were frozen and provided no further guidance. The staff member had lost their life in the interim.

Ahmad Ismail stated that we needed to immediately establish a mechanism for the funds to be available in emergency situations. He also called for the Union to support the family. He was launching a collection in support and hoped the Union could contribute.

The Chair asked Ahmad Ismail to present a resolution or workable plan for the following week. He also encouraged the new EB to address the issue at their following meeting.

Francisco Britto recalled that Guy Canduso had been the focal point for the emergency fund until his requirement. There was no coordinator in his absence. François Charlier recalled that there was a motion in place to review the management of the emergency fund. It was essential to have a specific conversation on the issue. He recalled cases in his own experience where the situation had been resolved on an ad-hoc basis, but we needed a structural approach to the matter. Michelle Rockcliffe recalled that we needed a due process for all issues that affected money. We should make time for the health insurance representatives to inform staff on a regular basis. The information was available, but needs to be shared. KR commended the staff rep for doing what he could. He pointed out that Mobility added to the uncertainty surrounding health insurance. Rosemary Lane suggested asking the President. She recalled a debate at the EB where the Counsellor's office was claiming to be understaffed and refusing to manage the fund. There had been an initiative to transfer the Fund back to the Union, but that was unrealistic. Jaime Garreta, who works in the insurance section, recalled that the insurance and claims and compensation sections had a number of mechanisms intended to help staff in these cases. He proposed organising a briefing for all staff reps to be fully informed on how insurance works in the organisation. The Council thanked him for the offer and encouraged him to move forward with the proposal.

4. Adoption of minutes

Minutes of meeting 68 were adopted.

5. Executive Board report, President's report and summary of communications

The Council had received the Executive Board's report for 1 November. There had been no EB meetings in the previous two weeks. No President's report was received.

William Bly (Unit 23) asked what committees were active and reporting. Michelle Rockcliffe called for regular and streamlined reporting from all existing committees. Eugenia Beldo asked for the list of committees to be re-circulated.

The Secretary reported on his first meeting of the recently elected Audit Committee. They had requested a set of documents and would be meeting with the Treasurers. The Audit Committee would start working on hiring an audit company and would bring proposals to the Council. They also encouraged the Executive Board to develop a risk management framework and were willing to provide support to that end. Michelle Rockcliffe recalled that the AC should submit suggestions for an audit company, from which the Council would choose one.

Kenneth Rosario recalled the case of former UNSU Vice-President Tim Kennedy, who was facing accusations of misconduct that he considered this to be a retaliation for his Union activities. He recalled that the actions were being taken by the USG for Management. He suggested that she be asked to recuse herself on any issue affecting the Union, based on the motion of no confidence adopted against her by the Council in 2007. The Chair asked Kenneth Rosario to submit a specific proposal for the following week and encouraged the EB to take up the issue. Michelle Rockcliffe insisted on the need for a process whereby people requiring legal assistance to could approach a Committee. She asked for an immediate vote on a committee to review legal applications for litigation. Sarah M’Bodji suggested a “Staff Legal Support Committee”.

The Staff Council voted in favour of appointing a Staff Legal Support Committee at its following meeting.

6. GSDM / Management Reform

Sarah M’Bodji reported on the 4 DGACM staff members that had received separation notices. They had met with the Ombudsperson, who believed they had a case for mediation. Unfortunately, DGACM Management had refused. She recalled promises made by former managers that nobody would lose their jobs in the restructuring of Publishing. Clearly the new management had lost the institutional memory. She accepted that change was inevitable, but as a human rights organisation we had the responsibility of ensuring that changes happened in a way that put people first.

The Secretary reported on the statement made before the Fifth Committee that same morning by Mr. Martin Njuhigu, President of the United Nations Staff Union in Nairobi in his role as single representative for staff before the GA. Mr. Njuhigu had deviated from a statement agreed by all Unions and, amongst other things, described GSDM as being “in line with modern best business practice”, which could be construed as an endorsement. A number of Unions had already disassociated themselves from the statement.

The Staff Council adopted the following motion:

The United Nations Staff Union in New York disassociates itself from the statement made by Mr. Martin Njuhigu before the Fifth Committee on 15 November 2018, in particular any perceived endorsement of the Global Service Delivery Model.

The meeting adjourned at 14:45