

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

Minutes/Actes

Meeting No: 45/70
Date: 30 November 2018
Time: 13:15
Venue: Room F
Quorum: 20/27 Units

45th Staff Council Meeting Minutes

The meeting was quorate at 1:30 pm with 15 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: 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 37, 38, 39.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as drafted.

2. Adoption of the minutes

Minutes for meeting 69 were adopted with no changes.

3. EB report and President's summary of communications

Eugenia Beldo (Unit 38) expressed concern regarding the new MoU between the UN and UN Volunteers (UNV). The MoU did away with the 6-month "cooling-off" period, which was additionally worrying in view of the impending loss of jobs. First Vice-President Patricia Nemeth had consulted with the Administration, who said that the revised MoU with was drafted under a GA mandate. She had expressed her concern that UNVs would enjoy preferential access to job openings and might perform functions reserved to staff. Deputy Chair Andraž Melanšek added that ST/AI/2010/ 3 on the Staff Selection System was still in force and retained the 6-month lag. There was therefore a legal clash between the MOU and St/AI. He suggested a specific meeting to discuss the details of the issue. The EB would follow up on the matter.

Assistant Treasurer Rosemary Lane pointed out that the delivered version of the statement on behalf of all Unions to the 5th Committee supported the removal of restrictions on interns and consultants. Council Members expressed concern that various drafts of the statements sent a mixed message.

William Bly (Unit 23) added that his division had been asked to hire an intern to replace a G6 on leave. There was no way to refuse. Assistant Rapporteur Kenneth Rosario pointed out that the move was illegal.

The First Vice-President asked reps to remind their units of the Disabilities event the following day. She thanked Sarah M'Bodji and Danielle Henripin (Unit 31) for their support in organising the event. She also reported on ongoing work in the G-to-P issue.

Rapporteur Camille Beydon spoke about the email issued by DM at 9:30 am on the day after the 15 November catastrophic snowstorms. The late authorisation for managers to exercise flexibility added insult to injury, since by 9:30 most staff members were already on their way to work after an exhausting commute home the night before. She recalled that Department USGs were able to release their staff in cases of extreme weather without waiting for DM, and suggested that Reps work with their chain of command when similar situations occurred in future.

4. Holiday recess

The Staff Council agreed that it would not hold meetings on the weeks of 24 and 31 December, resuming on 10 January 2019.

The First Vice-President and Deputy Chair, who would be remaining in New York, would alert those present if there was an urgent matter requiring a meeting.

5. Access to the Podium at the GA Hall

Kenneth Rosario (Unit 39) had looked into the matter. Access to the podium was not a right, but a privilege. Staff members' visitors had created unpleasant situations that led delegations to request that they not be allowed onto the podium. The President of the General Assembly had issued the ban. The decision was not disputable by staff. The First Vice-President pointed out that an ST/IC would be published on the matter.

6. GSDM / Management Reform

Eugenia Beldo reported that DM reps would request another meeting with USG DM and ASG OHRM. All staff had been placed, but many people were not sure of their functions. They would be requesting further clarification and would share the outcomes with the Staff Council.

Deputy Chair Andraž Melanšek asked the EB to take up the issue of GSDM as a matter of principle. Eugenia Beldo added that GSDM was in fact a cost-cutting measure supported by Member States and would move ahead. Our focus should be on its implementation.

7. Staff Legal Assistance Committee

The Secretary introduced the topic and presented a draft resolution. A debate ensued regarding the question of how “dues-paying” members should be defined, and their level of access to legal support funded against the Union reserves. The Council amended the text to specify that financial support for litigation would be provided only to staff members who had contributed dues for the previous six months or more. In addition, William Bly suggested a legal liability protection for Union officers.

The resolution was adopted unanimously as RES/STC/45/50.

Council Members designated to the Committee were: Michelle Rockcliffe (Unit 6), Jesus Parado (Unit 11), Kegham Tamamian (Unit 25), Shirley Abraham (Unit 37) and Jaime Garreta (Unit 37). There being an equal number of candidates and positions, a vote was not required. The Secretary would serve as ex-officio Secretary to the Committee.

8. Status of the Second Vice-President [closed item]

The Council Chair reported that the Chair of the Arbitration Committee had tendered his resignation from the Chair of the AC effective November 30. The AC would elect its next Chair. The AC continued to work on the case. Assistant Rapporteur Kenneth Rosario asked that the above information be provided in writing. He disagreed with verbal exchanges between the Chairs of the Council and the AC. Eugenia Beldo recalled that the Council Chair should not be blamed if the AC Chair had not done his due diligence. Michelle Rockcliffe asked for a status report on the pending cases. She also asked who kept the records of the Arbitration Committee. Andraž Melanšek praised the Chair’s engagement. He also recalled that the rules entrusted the Chair with interacting with the AC. The Council agreed to come back to the issue of procedure vis-à-vis the Arbitration Committee at a later date.

The Secretary then introduced a resolution submitted by the Executive Board intended to suspend the Second Vice-President from Union activities pending investigation. A debate ensued around the terms of the Resolution. In absence of an agreement, Unit 25. Rep moved to suspend the meeting at 14:45 and suggested a dedicated meeting on the matter the following Monday.

Meeting 70 resumed in CR 9 at 1 pm on Monday 3 December. The meeting was quorate at 1:30 pm with 14 units present.

The resolution was adopted unanimously as RES/STC/45/51.

Given the sensitivity of the matter, the Staff Council decided that the Resolution would be shared on a need-to-basis and would not be published prior to a decision from the Arbitration Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.