



34th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 34^{ème} Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

Minutes of the 6th meeting

held on 17 November 2016 at 1:30 p.m. in Room I

Council members present: ALMARIO Francis, BALY Mohamed Chiraz, CHANTREL Dominique, CHAOUI Prisca, FUNCK THOMAZ Samuel, GAZIYEV Jamshid, JAMES Elizabeth, KALOTAY Kalman, KELLY Paul, MAGNIN Patrick, MELLET Johnny, NWABUOGU Gloria, PECK ARIF Catherine, POPA Gabriela, RICHARDS Ian, ROUAI Slim, STANOVIC Marko.

Council members absent: APOSTOLOV Mario, BENAYED Slim, DOS SANTOS José, EL GARAH Samira, SHAMSIE Syed, TOUIHRI Mohssen, VESTERMAN Claire, VILCHES Sandrine.

The meeting began at 1:40 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with changes as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 5th Council meeting

The minutes of the 5th meeting were adopted with changes as reflected in the Council's records.

3. Report of the Finance Commission

The Treasurer, Mr. Almario, informed the Council the FC had reviewed the draft budget for the upcoming 2016-2017 financial year following a previous preliminary review by the EB, and that minimal changes based on actual income and expenditures were introduced by the FC in comparison with the current budget. He also informed the Council that the FC is currently reviewing the accounts of the Council from 1 December 2015 to 21 October 2016, to be submitted to the auditors; the accounts of November 2016 will be submitted to them once finalised.

The FC submitted to the Council draft guidelines for the use of corporate credits of the Council, of which the Treasurer and Ms. Chaoui as representative of the EB to the FC are holders, based on guidelines currently used at ITC. Council members were invited to submit comments to the FC for the Commission's further discussion and finalisation of the draft.

The Council held a brief discussion on the need and use of the credit card; it was clarified that they are means of the FC to execute payments.

4. Report of the Executive Bureau

Mr. Richards reminded the Council that EB minutes of the 34th Council have been continuously circulated for the members' information. He mentioned the highlights of the work of the EB since the last Council meeting, including:

- GSDM.
- Issues with the Pension Fund.
- The new Swiss nationality law.
- Implementation of retirement age at 65 on 1 January 2018.
- Recent townhalls held: (1) with cyclists and cycling issues in the Palais; (2) with the Geneva tenants Association, which was very well attended and generated very positive feedback; (3) with CSS staff, where issues of career development and working hours of technical staff were discussed.
- Place-to-Place survey: it was pointed out enough staff filled the survey and deadlines were met.
- Security: the Organization and Member States are currently studying a possible creation of an "S" category for Security staff. Mr. Richards said he held discussions with stakeholders in UNHQ and

raised the issue at the GA; Management is currently waiting for a proposal from staff unions on the issue, which would have to integrate contractual salary issues. (2) Mr. Richards reminded the Council that a mid-term review with Management has to be carried out in January 2017 on the implementation of the new shifts/working hours of Security staff.

- Mid-term review of the Council's work programme.
- eBike Day, UN Staff Day, Memorial ceremony for staff killed in service.
- OHCHR change initiative.
- Composition of the G1-G4 group which is now composed of the following persons: Ms Peck Arif, Ms Chaoui, Ms James, Ms Atiki and M.Chiraz Baly.
- Floating holiday proposal: currently liaising with Management seeking implementation in Geneva following success in New York.

Mr. Mellet left the meeting at this point.

5. Adoption of the 2016-2017 budget

Mr. Almario mentioned the proposed budget for the 2016-2017 financial year. A discussion followed where the members of the Council deliberated on the budget lines, i.e. the possibility of creating a line for outreach/advocacy, identifying earmarks/breakdowns more specifically, how the bank interest income has decreased due to low interest rates. The Council then decided to adopt the 2016-2017 budget as presented by the FC.

6. Update on SHP

Ms. Chaoui noted that the joint staff-Management working group on SHP has not met due to difficulties to liaise with the Administration on the subject. She also noted with regret to have learned that the company Gensler will be engaged to conduct a technical study of the current use of work spaces, for which the Council is yet to be contacted to review the TOR of said engagement – she said further liaison with Management is currently being attempted. The Council subsequently held a discussion on how the way forward, and it analysed the possibility of inviting experts in the field of work space and agreed on launching a staff petition against certain aspects of the SHP projects

Mr. Stanovic left the meeting at this point.

7. External hiring freeze for General Service staff

The Council was reminded of the current G5-G7 external hiring freeze and discussed the possibility of requesting the Administration to extend it to recruitment of G1-G4 posts, which would increase the possibility for current staff to find alternative posts to apply for if/when they face post cuts vis-à-vis GSDM and budget cuts. It was noted that this proposal had already been raised and agreed to in the EB. Without prejudice of discussing the proposal at a future JNC, the Council agreed to address a letter to the DG formally requesting the extension of the current hiring freeze to G1-G4 recruitment.

8. Developments at the General Assembly on staff-related matters

Mr. Richards briefed the Council on issues currently being discussed at the level of the GA 5th Committee, which he addressed with Member States:

- Pension Fund issues: delays, performance of the CEO, OIOS investigation.
- Possibility of separation payments for staff who have held fixed-term contracts for +10 years.
- P and GS salaries
- Mobility, lateral reassignment
- Recruitment of retirees
- GSDM, an issue on which Mr. Richards said he had raised concerns when recently addressing the 5th Committee, requesting a better study of the impact of Umoja before taking decisions on GSDM.
- Flexible working space (hotdesking)
- Administration of justice: Mr. Gazyiev explained they had met with OSLA to discuss its funding, issues of harassment, protection of witnesses, whistleblowing protection and access to justice of non-staff. Mr. Gazyiev explained they also discussed with the Chief of OSLA their current criteria to take on staff cases and how they determine the staff's "reasonable prospects of success"; how

staff can support OSLA and meeting staff who get assistance refused by OSLA; and the issue about the opt-out of staff from the OSLA contribution via payroll. Mr. Gaziyeu said collaboration with OSLA could be strengthened in favour of staff by involving said Office in Council townhalls on legal issues.

9. Update on OCHA and UNISDR

The Council recalled the financial problems which OCHA is currently facing which has led to its restructuring. It also recalled the ongoing restructuring in UNISDR and agreed in liaising with staff representatives in New York to ensure staff rules on downsizing are followed by Management.

10. Survey on private schools

The Council was reminded that the new rules on Education Grant will enter into force by 1 January 2018. It was informed that a survey is being drafted to send out to staff in order to gather information on the most frequented private/international schools, which will allow the Council to contact those schools and explain to them the situation staff are facing with the upcoming reductions of the entitlement.

11. Interpretation at Council meetings

Mr. Magnin raised a proposal to the Council to help increase the chances of having interpretation services at its meetings, which would entail having a fixed calendar of meetings pre-programmed for the entire year. He also raised an alternate proposal to hire interpreters for Council meetings at the Council's expense, which would implicate setting aside approximately CHF 3,200 per day, a total of approximately CHF 10,000 for three pre-planned meetings, or CHF 50,000 for the normal amount of meetings the Council holds during one year.

Mr. Rouai joined the meeting at this point.

The Council subsequently discussed the proposals. It noted that English and French are both working languages of the Secretariat and all staff are given the right to express themselves in both languages. Mr. Magnin also suggested the Council could ask DCM to set up aside a special budget to provide interpretation at Council meetings, but the Council agreed such option would be extremely unlikely. It was also recalled that as per ST/AI/293 the Administration is obliged to accord certain facilities to staff unions and if the Council should pay for what the Administration should provide, it would mark a wrong precedent. The Council finally agreed that Mr. Magnin will write to the DG highlighting the difficulty of the Council of getting interpretation at its official meetings, and open the subject for discussion at the Council once a reply is received.

Ms. James left the meeting at this point.

12. Staff Gala

Mr. Rouai briefed the Council on the preparations for the Staff Gala of 9 December 2016, to take place in Bar Serpent as in previous years; two different bands, a DJ and Karaoke are being engaged. Mr. Rouai explained how the expected expenditures for the 2016 Gala – which the members present reviewed – fall within the approved budget. A brief discussion followed on the details of the Gala, and the Council thanked Mr. Rouai for his efforts in organizing that event.

13. Any other business

No issue was raised under this item.

The meeting ended at 15.05