



37th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 37^{ème} Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

Minutes of the 3rd meeting

held on 29 April 2019 at 1.30 p.m. in Room VIII

Council members present: ALMARIO Francis; APOSTOLOV Mario; BALD Iain; BULYCH Yaroslav; CHANTREL Dominique; CHAOUI Prisca; CHIRAZ BALY Mohamed; DAN Lin; DUPARC Philippe; GAZIYEV Jamshid; JAMES Elizabeth; JAQUIOT Cédric; KALOTAY Kalman; MEYER Olivier; PECK ARIF Cathy; POPA Gabriela; RICHARDS Ian; RIOUKHINA Evelina; RUHANA MUKAMUSONI Angelique; SAMA ITOUA Nzété Da; SMITH Bradford; STANOVIC Marko; TAPORAIE Amos.

Council members absent: LEONI Brigitte; KELLY Paul.

The meeting opened at 1:35 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with changes as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 2nd meeting

The minutes of the 2nd meeting were adopted without changes as recorded in the Council secretariat.

3. Report of the Finance Commission

The Council was informed that the FC had voted Dominique Chantrel as Treasurer and signatures in the Council's UBS account were updated. The FC had also discussed membership dues and possible alternative collection options. The FC continued to review investment alternatives and welcomed any suggestions from Council members. It was noted that some Council members were not dues-paying members and were encouraged to sign up. A suggestion was raised for the FC to present periodic written reports on expenditures and balances.

4. Report of the Executive Bureau

The EB reported on its activities since the previous Council meeting, notably on the following items:

- Recent meeting with the Director-General where several issues were raised, e.g. harassment and abuse of power, and actions to address those issues; geographical representation, which Management was noted to be taking it seriously; SHP and the lack of staff consultation on report of the Secretary-General; GSDM, where the Council ongoingly looked into options to limit the "damage" of open space.
- Letter sent to the UNCTAD Secretary-General signalling out issues of harassment, to which he replied agreeing to work with the Council in addressing those issues. A meeting was expected.
- Recent ECE townhall, at which the issue of particular recruitment case was highlighted.
- Medical service: a case had been presented by several staff of the Service against their management on the basis of abuse of power, to be raised with the Chief of HR.
- Summer camps: a broadcast was sent out informing staff of offers negotiated with service providers.
- Children's party: the Administration informed that the Assembly Hall would not be available in December as scheduled due to renovations, and the EB would look into alternatives.
- The EB continued to assist staff on individual cases.

A discussion followed where it was clarified that the Council did not organize any Summer camps but rather obtained discounts and facilitated tailored offers from service providers, at no cost to the Council.

5. Election of auditors

As per Annex I, Article 6 of the Regulations, the Council held by-elections for auditors and the following nominees were elected: Myra Carandang, Vivian Clemente, Debbie Francisco, and Ronald Quero. The Council members discussed and noted their background in the area of finance.

6. SMC

The Council was briefed on SMC VIII that had taken place three weeks earlier in Sarajevo attended by Prisca Chaoui, Ian Richards and Iain Bald. It was recalled that a detailed report on the mission had already been circulated among Council members and that a general report would be sent to all staff. As a general impression it was said it was a very good session with concrete results for staff, where Geneva played an important role in obtaining those results. Items covered by SMC included: delegation of authority, travel policy, overtime, staff selection system, performance management, career development, contract renewal policy, annual leave for temporary staff, harassment, downsizing policy, parental leave, consultation with staff unions, internal justice, long service awards, rights and recognition for transgender staff.

A discussion followed. It was noted that the SMC was marked by reasonable discussions between staff and Management and that most of the time both were in agreement to move ahead in a common direction. It was further noted that the Geneva representation was on the lead on almost all negotiated items and playing a key role.

F. Almario left the meeting at this point.

The discussion continued on questions concerning the work of the newly created delegation of authority working group (DoA WG), the issue of protection against retaliation, the relations with other staff unions of the Secretariat and the report of the mission, GSDM, whistleblower protection, and harassment. It was further noted that Ian Richards was elected for the 3x3 contact group.

It was highlighted that whistleblower protection had been one of the items of discussion during SMC, and that the harassment policy would be looked at once finally elaborated by Management. It was noted that the Council had good relations with other unions, that on GSDM the 5th Committee of the GA had agreed to postpone it, and that the DoA WG was yet to be integrated.

Further discussion continued on what a mission report would have to look like. It was noted that a full account of the work had already been circulated in the SMC report, and that it was for the Council to provide only a cover note. Some Council members raised that personal mission reports from staff representatives who go on mission should be drafted and circulated to the plenary (with a more personal account than just technical), noting that the report of the negotiations plus a broadcast was not sufficient. A counter argument was raised in the sense that the information provided in the actual report of SMC already contained all the relevant details of the mission and it would be best to avoid duplication of work in a new (personal) report. Prisca Chaoui agreed to circulate a new personal report for the Council members' comments. A suggestion was raised for the Council plenary to be presented with specific cost estimates of upcoming travel/missions.

7. CCISUA GA

The Council recalled that the CCISUA GA would take place on 21-24 May in Beirut. The EB presented its recommendation for an expenditure envelope of four Council members to comprise the delegation, which would include Ian Richards as President of CCISUA. Issues expected to be discussed at the GA were: review of GS salaries, travel policy, ICSC working methods, parental leave, harassment, whistleblower protection, and others. Coordination was said to be key in moving forward together as staff unions in fronts such as SMC, for which CCISUA presents an ideal setting.

A discussion followed on the number of Council members to comprise the delegation. It was noted that past delegations were formed typically by three members. The plenary agreed that the impact of Geneva in fora such as CCISUA was significant and that it played a leading role on many of the key issues for

staff in the Secretariat. Attendance at the CCISUA GA was claimed to be in part an investment on human relations that make such impact possible and carry out more effectively the mandate of representing Geneva staff and fighting for their rights. At the same time several Council members raised the importance of having a diversified delegation. The Council finally agreed on the recommendation of the EB and mandated it to issue nominations, to be informed to the Council members.

8. Rotation in SSS

The Council was informed that the working group on rotation in the Security and Safety Service (SSS), comprised by Council members Prisca Chaoui and Philippe Duparc plus Marius Gologus (President of the SSS Sectoral Assembly), had achieved its goal and adopted a new standard of operation concerning rotation that was agreeable to most staff in SSS. A follow-up meeting would be held soon and the Council would work on overseeing what it hoped to be a clear and transparent way of applying the standard, with open doors for staff to call out any case of non-observance.

The matter of new access control methods at the Nations gate was raised which were said to be creating problems for staff entering especially during peak hours. The matter would be discussed in the EB and concerns transmitted to the Administration.

9. SHP

The Council was briefed on the latest meeting of the working group on SHP. It was noted that the Council was expected to be consulted/involved in next steps including the layout, furniture and resources. It was confirmed that open space would be partially introduced in the older buildings, for which the Council asked the SHP team to provide plans, but the latter argued they were not yet ready. Also, fitness space was noted would be incorporated in the renovations of the E building, where details about potential operation by an external company were still under discussion. A meeting with the SHP team and clubs was expected for the following week. Parking was also an issue raised, noting it would be reduced due to the construction of a temporary conference centre during renovations.

Important efforts by SHP to inform staff on the evolution of the project were recognized. It was regretted that there was not yet certainty on the distribution of departments during and after renovations. It was also noted that GSDM and attrition would perhaps reduce pressure on the need for open space in the coming years.

E. Rioukhina and I. Bald left the meeting at this point.

10. Parking

The Council noted that parking in the Palais would be considerably limited because of the temporary conference centre to be built on parking space during renovations. Council members were briefed on the recent meeting of the working group on parking. A decrease of about 150 parking spaces was expected. The Administration argued that whatever alternative or solution, it would have to come at no cost to the Organization. The staff position was made clear that any alternative would then also have to be at no cost for the staff.

The meeting continued with an inquiry about alternatives. It was noted that there had been a movement in recent years in UNOG towards alternative ways of transport to work which had proven to be fairly effective, evidenced in the recently reduced number of vehicles, plus improvements being carried on the Geneva public transport. Further alternatives included the improvement/increase of FWAs. A discussion ensued on whether it was actually necessary to study and implement measures directly related to parking at that point or wait to see the actual impact in the following one to two years in light of a new railway line to France. Certain members argued for an active campaign to increase parking spaces, especially seeing that more agencies and departments will be transferred to the Palais after renovations. Another argument raised was the fact that there was no shortage of parking at the time and no clarity on the real future issues to address, therefore better to wait. Also, the argument that less parking in the future would contribute to the current pro-environmental trend and increased use of public transport.

P. Duparc and C. Jaquiot left the meeting at this point.

11. UN Special

The Council was reminded that the contract between UN Special and the publisher of the magazine had entered into the phase of yearly renewal. In order to improve the conditions of the magazines publishing agreement, the Inter-Agency Committee decided to notify the publisher of the termination of the contract, expected in August, and call for a tender. A brief discussion followed on an acceptable number of printed copies of the magazine and the type of agreement with the publisher. It was also mentioned that a meeting was held with UNOG's mailing service and it was agreed to review/improve the distribution system of the magazine in the Palais. Council members were invited to write for the magazine and/or find more contributors, as that was key to its success.

C. Peck Arif left the meeting at this point.

12. 1st of May march

The Council recalled that the May Day march would take place in downtown Geneva and a broadcast would be sent to staff encouraging participation. The importance of showing solidarity with rights of staff, contractual precarity, and other matters was highlighted.

13. Missions

A discussion was already held concerning missions under a previous item.

14. Finances

The question of possible investments was raised and the potential increase in reserves, noting it was particularly important due to increasing budgetary constraints for the Council reduced. It was mentioned that the Finance Commission was already discussing the issue and that all Council members were welcome to submit proposals. Partial financial statements for the current financial year were agreed to be circulated to the Council once available.

15. Staff Gala

The question of preparation for the 2019 staff gala was raised, whether a preparation committee was already in place, and the need for the Council to be informed. It was mentioned that the EB would soon begin preparations for the organization of the staff gala and would look into ways of optimizing the approved budget.

O. Meyer left the meeting at this point.

16. Any other business

The new smoking policy in the Palais was said to be too restrictive and a query raised of how the Council could approach the issue. It was mentioned that staff had been surveyed on the matter and most expressed preference to ban smoking in order to avoid passive smoking. Noting that a total ban would have been too restrictive, staff representatives argued at the time for a softer measure to allow smoking only in designated areas, which was the issued policy by the Administration.

The meeting closed at 3:45 p.m.