



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

Minutes of the 8th meeting

held on 11 October 2019 at 1.15 p.m. in Room IX

Council members present: ALMARIO Francis; APOSTOLOV Mario; BALD Iain; BALI Mohamed; BULYCH Yaroslav; CHANTREL Dominique; CHAOUI Prisca; DAN Lin; DUPARC Philippe; GAZIYEV Jamshid; JAQUIOT Cédric; KELLY Paul; LEONI Brigitte; MEYER Olivier; RICHARDS Ian; SMITH Bradford; TAPORAIE Amos.

Council members absent: JAMES Elizabeth; KALOTAY Kalman; PECK ARIF Cathy; POPA Gabriela; RIOUKHINA Evelina; RUHANA MUKAMUSONI Angelique; SAMA ITOUA Nzété Da; STANOVIC Marko.

The meeting opened at 1.20 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with changes as reflected below.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the 7th meeting

The minutes of the 7th meeting were adopted with changes as recorded in the Council secretariat.

3. Report of the Executive Bureau

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

- UNCTAD harassment cases: although the UNCTAD SG had previously held a townhall noting there would be zero tolerance for harassment, feedback from staff revealed there had not been real change for staff harassed. Information obtained from senior management was that their only action so far had been coaching sessions. The Council had very recently circulated a survey to UNCTAD staff on harassment and would discuss once results were ready. The EB encouraged filing of official collective claims.
- Decentralisation at OCHA: offices were opening in other duty stations with posts to be moved, notably affecting locally-recruited GS who could not be moved. OCHA management refused staff representatives to be part of the suitability panel which confirmed a lack of transparency.
- The EB thanked Philippe Duparc in his capacity of President of the SSS Sectoral Assembly for his dedicated and thorough work in raising issues within the service. The Council expressed its full support of his actions in pro of staff. It was noted that certain promotion exercises in SSS seemed to be biased and showed a pattern of favouritism. A working group would address this and the EB would write to the DG.
- SMC noted to be very active, with Geneva being also part of the 3x3 contact group. Notable issues under discussion at SMC: part time employment (the elimination of restriction to engage staff at 50%); appointments (type of contracts, shorter break-in-service to 30 days instead of 3 months); new policy on harassment.
- A well-attended townhall was held with Staff Counsellor, Ombudsman and OSLA on conflict-resolution. Examples of work-related problems were raised and evidenced the need for those offices and the Council.
- Support to the SG's Climate Summit: an event was organised which was well appreciated by staff.
- Campaign to increase the number of dues-paying members: the registration form was reviewed and HR accepted to insert it in packages for new staff. The Council was represented at sessions with new-comers.

4. Report of the Finance Commission

The report of the FC, which concerned the Council budget, would be addressed under the relevant item below.

5. Mid-term review of the work programme

The Council noted that the status update of the work programme had been earlier circulated and that all its items continued to be executed since the beginning of the tenure.

6. SHP

The Council recalled that the H building was taking form. News were shared that the Division of Administration, which was due to move to the H building, seemed to be searching for another department to take its place instead. The Council noted that a survey was sent to various departments asking staff their view on a potential move of their departments to the new building and assuming hotdesking as their workspace, something that was broadly rejected by staff.

The Council agreed to continue its actions in favour of the vast majority of staff who did not agree to move to hotdesking, noting the Administration had not listened to the staff since the beginning of SHP. It further noted that the new DG seemed sensitive of the issue, who promised at an earlier meeting with staff representatives to look at what could be done. The Council looked forward to meeting the SHP to discuss further, remarking that a test of the furniture was due in the coming weeks.

The discussion continued. Council members present raised one of the biggest problems for staff in the new building which would be confidentiality issues. The plenary regretted to know that the Division of Administration wanted to avoid being moved to said building in part because of confidentiality issues, when staff in other departments moving there, such as OHCHR, also had those issues but were not being offered a say in the move.

The Council also expressed its concern on what seemed to be high spending through multiple consultants on outreach in an attempt to make the project sound more attractive than it was. It was agreed to write to the DG raising this and other issues.

On a separate note, it was mentioned that staff unions had met via VTC with the Comptroller in New York who gave them an overview of the cash flow situation. The Comptroller noted October salaries were secured for payment and that November and December salaries would depend on the disbursement of regular budget funds by Member States.

7. Revised Council budget

A revised budget for the period Dec 2018 – Nov 2019 was presented by the Finance Commission to the Council plenary, taking into account the actual and expected income and expenses of that financial year so far. The Council members reviewed each budget line and agreed on the submission (see annex).

8. Football Club

The Council recalled that the Football Club had been granted a subsidy of CHF 1'500, and it took note of the EB's recommendation to separately grant CHF 1'300 aimed at purchasing shirts for their practice which carried the logo of the Council. Given that such purchase would have a direct benefit for the Council in terms visibility, and the club's active calendar and strong makeup of dues-paying members, the Council approved the recommendation.

9. Outstanding matters relating to closure of the crèche project

This item was already addressed under the respective budget line upon revision of the budget.

10. Council investments

The Council recalled that the potential investment project to purchase real estate in France had been abandoned due to legal issues and economic viability. All members of the Council were invited to contact the Finance Commission to submit any proposals on potential Council investments for study.

A suggestion was raised for the Council to get ownership and manage a gym for UN staff which could generate profits, for which it may recruit a financial analyst to set up the project. However, the profit potential of said initiative was doubted as it intended to offer reduced or low prices to staff. It was also mentioned that

the possibility of an in-house gym was not yet concrete in the context of SHP and if so, it would severely affect the activities of fitness-related staff clubs who also needed the space.

Another suggestion to deposit funds at La Mutuelle was raised, but this was noted as likely not be possible due to La Mutuelle's current financial restrictions on deposits.

The Council recalled that it had established a criterion for any investment, namely three elements: staff welfare-oriented, of passive management, and income generating. Council members present noted how difficult it had been so far to identify viable investment options that would meet all the criteria. It was raised that the Council should look widely at potential investments to ensure the sustainability of the Council, which in turn ensured staff welfare. The Council agreed to look into investment options outside the full scope of the criteria set for potential opportunities.

11. Staff magazine

The Council recalled that, during its meeting of 28 May 2019, it had unanimously decided to separate from WHO Staff Association concerning the magazine UN Special. It was noted that publishing specifications had already been published on the Council website as base to engage a publisher for the Council's new staff magazine, and that a call for tenders would appear in the local press soon.

The plenary noted that an opinion from a Swiss lawyer had already been obtained who clarified that the Council could separate without contravening any of the terms in the UN Special statutes. It was further recalled that the Council had already met with the WHO SA in the context of the Inter-Agency Committee of UN Special and expressed its intention to separate.

Mr. Taporaié left the meeting at this point.

12. Staff Memorial Day

The Council acknowledged a proposal to have the UN Secretariat recognize all staff who passed away whilst on active service with a Staff Memorial Day. The plenary was informed that the Executive Bureau had taken note of the matter and raised that it should be taken to CCISUA (federation level) as it pertained all staff of the Secretariat.

13. End of year events

The Council noted that both the children's party and staff gala were within the approved budget and preparations were already under way. Concerning the staff gala, it would take place on 13 December and ways were being sought to reduce costs, e.g. the fees for the band would be limited to CHF 6'000. Several quotes for the scenery were expected to be lower than in the previous year. A Nations Day parade would also be organised as well as the traditional karaoke. The Council agreed on taking the opportunity of the staff gala to show messages in support of the campaign on equal pay for UNOG staff.

14. Working methods of the Council

The Council plenary called on all Council members to take advantage of their hours of release as much as possible to ensure follow-up of projects and contribute with actions.

Mr. Chantrel joined the meeting at this point.

15. Pay cut

The Council recalled its decision (via email) to seek advice for the campaign on equal pay for UNOG staff, noting planning was underway for actions until December. No news had yet been received on the legal appeal at UNDT, although the appeal of WMO, which had fulfilled its internal (JAB) instance, would then be submitted to UNAT directly. It was noted that whatever the UNAT decision would be on the WMO case, it would have a direct impact on the UNDT case of UN staff. The expert lawyer engaged by the Council for the legal appeal would also be engaged to assist WMO as it was in the interest of UN staff. The Council discussed the legal possibilities concerning the UN staff and the WMO staff cases.

Mr. Taporaié re-joined the meeting at this point.

The Council noted with regret the refusal of the Secretary-General to meet with the Council's Executive Secretary during the time that she would be at the CCISUA mid-term GA in New York. The SG instead referred her to one of his managers. Further attempts to meet the SG (and/or senior management) would be made in time.

16. Membership of staff from other UN agencies in Geneva in the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

The Council noted that the sponsor of this agenda item was not present.

The plenary took the opportunity to express its deep concern in witnessing that certain Council members had contacted other staff associations to complain about internal matters of the Council, namely on the issue of UN Special. It considered highly unprofessional to see those Council members pretending to create discord between Geneva staff associations. The Council recalled that all its members represent UN staff only.

17. Any other business

Council members regretted that two staff members had died the week before. It was agreed to present their families with long-service medals.

The meeting closed at 2:55 p.m.

Annex: revised 2018-2019 budget



Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

2018-2019 budget

All figures are expressed in Swiss Francs

	<u>As reviewed on</u> <u>11/10/2019</u>
REVENUES	
Dues-paying membership revenue	35,000.00
SAFI contribution	170,000.00
Advertisement	4,000.00
Children's party registrations	0.00
Bank interest	0.00
Gain from dissolution of UN Beach Club	100,378.33
UN Special contribution	0.00
TOTAL REVENUE	309,378.33
EXPENDITURES	
Affiliations	
CCISUA annual membership	20,000.00
PSI annual membership	4,000.00
Missions and representation	
Official travel (entitlements, airfare)	30,000.00
Events	
2018 Staff Gala	57,000.00
Children's party	0.00
Other staff events (long service awards)	6,000.00
Garden party	2,467.90
Training	
Tuition fees and travel for training	0.00
Subsidies to UN clubs & associations	
Sports room maintenance	800.00
UN Club subsidy	3,000.00
Inter-Agency games subsidy	10,000.00
Humanitarian donations (collections)	
Humanitarian donations	0.00

No Pay Cut campaign	
ICSC Reform (No Pay Cut) campaign	60,000.00
SHP-related	
SHP-related	0.00
Benevolent Fund	
Contribution to the Benevolent Fund	0.00
Genèveroule initiative	
Genèveroule initiative	0.00
Ordinary General Assembly	
Translation of annual report	2,000.00
Hosting of OGA	0.00
Office/Administration	
General office expenses	1,500.00
External audit of accounts	0.00
Parking	0.00
Financial services	
Bank charges	1,000.00
Loss on exchange rate	0.00
Staff welfare investment in UN Port	
Staff welfare investment in UN Port	100,378.33
Legal assistance in staff cases	
Legal assistance in staff cases	5,000.00
Closure of Council projects	
Closure real estate investment project in FR	3,500.00
Closure of crèche project	5,500.00
Miscellaneous	
Miscellaneous	7,265.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	319,411.23
NET RESULT	-10,032.90