



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

Draft minutes of the 7th meeting

held on 10 January 2017 at 1:30 p.m. in Room IX

Council members present: ALMARIO Francis, APOSTOLOV Mario, BENAYED Slim, CHANTREL Dominique, CHAOUI Prisca, FUNCK THOMAZ Samuel, GAZIYEV Jamshid, JAMES Elizabeth, KALOTAY Kalman, KELLY Paul, MAGNIN Patrick, NWABUOGU Gloria, PECK ARIF Catherine, RICHARDS Ian, ROUAI Slim, STANOVIC Marko, VESTERMAN Claire.

Council members absent: BALY Mohamed Chiraz, DOS SANTOS José, EL GARAH Samira, MELLET Johnny, POPA Gabriela, SHAMSIE Syed, TOUIHRI Mohssen, 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 6th meeting

The minutes of the 6th 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 that the FC had already submitted the 2015-2016 accounts to the auditors, and that he contacted them the week before to inquire on the status of their review. He said that the auditors informed him they would soon be meeting to discuss the matter, and Mr. Almario would follow-up with them.

Mr. Almario also informed the Council that SAFI contribution for the 2015-2016 financial year was received at the beginning of the 2016-2017 financial year, and that the accrual would be reflected accordingly.

The FC submitted to the Council, for its consideration, new Credit Card guidelines that had been amended following the input of Council members. Following a discussion, the Council approved the guidelines as presented by the FC.

4. Report of the Executive Bureau

The Executive Secretary, Mr. Richards, briefed the Council on matters that the EB had dealt with since the last Council meeting, including:

- Staff Gala: Mr. Richards thanked Mr. Rouai for his hard work in organizing the gala, who informed the Council that the event had been a success and that its cost remained within budget.
- Interactions with the new SG, which have been three until that day (carrying out CCISUA functions in November 2016 during the transition period, a videoconference with the SG and the staff unions, and a recent global townhall).
- Cycling in the Palais: Management was alerted of complaints from staff who cycle in the Palais about how the recently installed speed bumps had imposed difficulties on cyclists, after which Management took appropriate action.
- Floating holidays: the EB is expecting to hear from Management regarding the application of floating holidays in light of the revised IC ST/IC/Geneva/2016/10/Rev.1.
- GA resolutions:
 - Pension Fund: following lobbying efforts and a petition of staff unions, and media coverage on Pension Fund issues, a recent GA resolution blocked proposals from the Pension Fund Board such as changes to financial and staffing rules, condemned the Pension Fund for delays in payments, and refused the creation of new senior posts in the Pension Fund. It was recalled

that although the processing time of new cases had dropped down from 6 to 2 months, it is still far from the two-weeks target.

- GSDM: a recent GA resolution took into account staff unions' concerns – mainly on Umoja performance and effectiveness – and requested further study is carried out before implementing GSDM.
- HR matters: a GA resolution recently rejected various proposals from Management which had been fought by staff unions, i.e. increasing the revenue ceiling for retirees from USD 22,000 to 125 days of last salary, changes in mobility of posts in the field, among others.

The Council also discussed the floating holidays and retirement date issues. It was agreed to request Management to extend the deadline to inform supervisors about the choice of floating holiday beyond 31 January 2017 and send out a broadcast clarifying the issue. It was also decided to remind the Administration of the need to make official the new retirement age and its implementation date.

5. Update on OCHA

The Council recalled the functional review/restructuring currently happening in OCHA and the budget problems the Office is facing, which has led so far to the cutting of 170 posts worldwide. The Executive Secretary has directly inquired with OCHA Management on why certain posts have been cut, how Directors are taking their decisions to cut pots, how the staff rules on downsizing are being applied (including the necessary comparative review), but it was noted that no transparent answer has been received. It was also noted that the Council has received several complaints from OCHA staff about the arbitrary nature of the process, and that the issue is being handled in coordination with the NY staff union. The plenary recalled that a townhall had been organised with OSLA to inform staff of their rights during a restructuring or downsizing process.

The Council went on to discuss the possibility of setting up a joint working group with Management on restructurings in the context of SMC, to which so far the Administration has refused, and of establishing guidelines for managers who take part in restructurings. It was noted that the Organisation is expected to issue an AI on restructuring. The Council agreed to look into the above to determine the way forward. The issue of a possible restructuring in ECE in light of coming budget cuts was raised as well, and will also be looked into. Concerns were also raised on contractual issues, mainly what may seem as a tendency to increase hiring of extra-budgetary staff in detriment of regular budget posts.

6. Update on UNISDR

Mr. Richards recalled the current restructuring of UNISDR which followed the arrival of its new Special Representative, and includes moving posts to the field and changing functions. One of the issue followed closely by the Council, Mr. Richards explained, is the regularization of 20 UNISDR staff on UNOPS contracts into UNOG contracts, who will be given a chance to apply to posts within the regularization process and to that end – thanks in part to facilitating efforts of the Council – will receive useful SDLS training.

7. Update on OHCHR

Mr. Richards presented the outcome of meetings with OHCHR staff. This included on the Change Initiative, which proposed to move people laterally to field offices. It had been blocked two years in GA, creating uncertainty for staff in OHCHR. The Council had also received feedback from staff on their first experiences with mobility. Issues included the general abilities test and lack of transparency. These will be taken up at the SMC WG on mobility. The meeting also covered the Global service delivery model.

8. Update on SHP

Ms. Chaoui informed the Council the Working Group on SHP had its first meeting between staff representatives and the Director of Administration and the SHP team where several points were discussed. In said meeting, the Administration made clear that implementation of hotdesking will depend on the functional review that will be carried out by the company Gensler, which was the same company engaged in New York for a similar review. Said review – which will start in January – will determine the methods of work in Geneva. This will form the basis to determine the implementation of hotdesking, and will consist mainly on visits to offices and on information gathered within focus

groups. Ms. Chaoui reminded the Council that a petition against hotdesking is now circulating, and invited Council members to engage themselves in the process of collecting signatures. She also reminded that the final Ergorama report had been received and will be broadcasted to staff soon. The Council then discussed on the approach to the petition and how Council members can participate in Gensler review.

9. Results of the survey on private/international schools and the education grant

Mr. Richards informed the Council that 420 replies to the survey on international/private schools and education grant had been received. He mentioned there was important feedback from the survey, mainly that the education grant changes will surely impact staff with children in said schools, possibly making them reconsider sending their children there. A report will be put together to distribute to staff on the matter and a townhall will be organised. Currently the Executive Bureau is looking forward to approach schools on how they do their billing.

10. IAG subsidy request

The Council was briefed on the request of the Sports Commission to subsidize the participation of staff members at the Inter-Agency Games (IAG) 2016. The Executive Bureau had already reviewed it and agreed on a calculation of the subsidy on a double occupancy basis, at a rate equal to the average of the 2*, 3*, 4* and 4* premium rates available for IAG 2016.

On the double-occupancy basis, the average rate to determine each individual subsidy is the following (in Euros):

$299 (2^*) + 344 (3^*) + 396 (4^*) + 469 (4^* \text{ premium}) = 1,508$ divided by 4 = EUR 377 per person.

As per past practice, the Council approved the subsidy of 50% of participation costs of dues-paying members. Having identified 26 dues-paying members who participated in the IAG 2016, the total subsidy amounts to:

50% of EUR 377 = **EUR 188.50 per dues-paying member participating in the IAG 2016.**

EUR 188.50 x 26 = **EUR 4,901.00 in total.**

11. Haiti collection

Ms. Chaoui reminded the Council of the collection organised by the Haitian community and facilitated by the Council, which had raised CHF 4,427.95. As per past practice, the Council is asked to match the amount, to be all transferred to the Haitian Red Cross. The Council approved the matching of the collected funds.

12. Polling stations

It was recalled that staff in the Environment House no longer have UNOG contracts but are instead administered elsewhere, mainly where the Organisations concerned (UNEP, UNDP) are headquartered, and are thus represented by staff unions in other duty stations. At the same time, it was noted there are 40 to 50 UNJSPF staff in the Dupont building who have UNOG contracts and are therefore represented by Council. In that sense the Council was presented with the proposal to recommend to the Polling Officers to move the polling station from the Environment House to the Dupont building in order to maximize the number of staff who can vote.

A discussion followed, in which arguments were raised against the proposal as it could be seen as an unnecessary intromission in Polling Officers affairs and that it was not for the Council to tell Polling Officers where or who they should poll. Also, that the problem of staff in the Environment House not appearing in the electors list was only a technical one. Contrarily, it was said that UN staff rules determine which staff unions represent staff, and given that it was clear that UNEP and UNDP staff were represented elsewhere, staff in their Geneva offices cannot be part of the Council's constituency; hence there was no point in having polling officers where there are no voters. Also, that it was in the interest of all staff and its representation that maximize possibilities for eligible staff to vote.

After the discussion, the Council proceeded to vote on the proposal to recommend to Polling Officers to move the polling station in the Environment House to the Dupont building, where there are more

staff eligible to vote. The Council approved the proposal by 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions.

13. Arbitration Commission

Mr. Gaziyeu called to mind that there are currently two pending applications before the Arbitration Commission (AC) from July and August 2016, on which the Commission is yet to decide. The reason given to the Council for the delay was that it had been unable to organize a quorum of three members in the intervening period, due to holiday and mission schedules. In light of that situation Mr. Gaziyeu raised a motion to put in record the disappointment of the Council on the AC due to its inability to follow its own rules of procedure and Council Regulations by not abiding by its own procedural deadlines.

A discussion followed on the backlog of the AC and whether the Council should pronounce its disappointment in the Commission. Arguments were raised claiming such a pronouncement could be seen as interference in the work of the Commission or an attempt to influence its decisions, or as a way of advancing a political agenda since elections are due to take place soon. It was clarified that the Council continues to trust the AC but its inaction is worrisome and disappointing, thus the need to reflect it officially. It was further explained that said motion is not political in any way, nor is it an intromission in the merits of any particular case, but a call for the Commission to abide by its own statutes and rules, especially on matters of timeliness. Mr. Gaziyeu added to the discussion that with this pronouncement, the Council would be avoiding creating a precedent by which the AC is seen not following its rules.

Mr. Kalotay called for a nominal vote, which was recorded as follows:

Apostolov Mario	Against	Kelly Paul	In favour
Benayed Slim	Abstention	Magnin Patrick	Against
Chantrel Dominique	In favour	Nwabuogu Gloria	In favour
Chaoui Prisca	In favour	Peck Arif Cathy	In favour
Funck Thomaz Samuel	In favour	Richards Ian	In favour
Gaziyeu Jamshid	In favour	Rouai Slim	In favour
James Elizabeth	In favour	Stanovic Marko	Against
Kalotay Kalman	Against		

As per the above record, the Council approved the motion by 10 votes in favour, 4 votes against and 1 abstention, and thus expresses its disappointment at the Arbitration Commission due to its inability to follow its own rules of procedure and Council Regulations by not abiding to procedural deadlines, given that two applications continue to be pending for more than five months.

14. Tennis Club

It was recalled that the International Tennis Club continues to have a conflict with UNOG whereby the Organisation will strip the Club of its courts in order to build an access road for trucks during the upcoming renovations – for security reasons – and the Club was left with what they consider to be unviable options to carry on with its practice and existence. Even though the club is an external entity not affiliated with the Council, there are UN staff who do take part in its activities who would then be affected by the eventual disappearance of the Club. Hence, the Council is asked whether it could politically assist the Club in their dealings with UNOG. It was decided to closely monitor the ongoing legal arbitration process.

15. Any other business

Mr. Rouai raised health concerns brought to him by security staff, whereby air pollution at Pregny gate had been affecting the health of guards conducting the enhanced vehicle searches since December 2016. He noted that guards' exposure to exhaust gases has increased. It was recalled that the Council had already contacted Management on this issue and asked to find quick temporary solutions while increased risks are properly assessed and that the Council had also contacted a specialized company in Geneva to come and carry out those assessments.

The meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.