



## 35<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 35<sup>ème</sup> Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

### Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting

held on 16 March 2017 at 1:15 p.m. in Room IX

**Council members present:** ALMEIDA Patricia, APOSTOLOV Mario, BALY Mohamed Chiraz, CHAOUI Prisca, FEGLI Catherine, GAZIYEV Jamshid, JAMES Elizabeth, KELLY Paul, NWABUOGU Gloria, PECK ARIF Catherine, POPA Gabriela, RICHARDS Ian, STANOVIC Marko, TAPORAIE Amos, TOUIHRI Mohssen, VESTERMAN Claire.

**Council members absent:** ALMARIO Francis, ASFAW Tensai, BEN AYED Slim, CHANTREL Dominique, FUNCK Thomaz Samuel, KALOTAY Kalman, MELLET Johnny, NOBLAT-PIANTA Virginie, ROUAI Slim.

*The meeting opened at 1:25 p.m.*

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda of the meeting as reflected below.

#### 2. Election of the members of the Finance Commission (FC) 2017-2018

The Council was presented with the EB's recommendation to elect three members to the FC: **Mr. Kalman Kalotay, Mr. Samuel Funck-Thomaz and Mr. Francis Almario.** Seeing no opposition, the Council elected them members of the Financial Commission. It was noted that the fourth member of the FC would be **Ms. Prisca Chaoui**, who had been appointed by the EB as per the Regulations. The Council thanked the Polling Officers for being readily available to assist the Council in elections.

#### 3. Adoption of the Minutes of the 1st Meeting

The minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting were adopted without changes, as logged in the Council's records.

#### 4. Report of the Executive Bureau (EB)

Mr. Richards, Executive Secretary, briefed the Council on the different issues covered by the EB since the previous Council meeting, including:

- The development of the work programme;
- Reviewing the staff satisfaction survey results and how to address concerns raised in them, namely following up with each department;
- Reactivation of the Joint Harassment Board;
- Organisation of the spring children's party;
- GSDM and its implications for Geneva;
- Delegation to the next SMC (New York, 26/4 to 3/5 2017) which represents no cost for the Council;

Mr. Richards also presented the proposed delegation of the next CCISUA General Assembly (Addis Ababa, week of June the 5<sup>th</sup> 2017), and asked for approval. The delegation proposed by the EB: Mr. Ian Richards, Mr. Gaziyevev, Mr. Baly, Ms. Peck Arif, and Ms. Chaoui. Seeing no opposition, the Council accepted the recommendations and proposals of the EB.

Ms. James recalled the importance to work actively on protection against retaliation. Mr. Taporaie enquired about a proposal to set a Christmas children's party, but it was clarified that said discussion would be held under a different agenda item.

## 5. Report of the outgoing Finance Commission (FC)

Ms. Chaoui, on behalf of the outgoing FC (2016-2017), reported to the Council that guidelines for the use of the Council's corporate credit cards had been adopted; the FC had ensured that all payments respected the Regulations; and Auditors are currently reviewing the Council's 2015-2016 accounts and working on their report.

## 6. Discussion and adoption of the work programme of the 35th SCC

Mr. Richards introduced to the plenary the draft work programme (DWP) that had been developed in the EB, mentioning it included the points that came out as clear mandates following the elections. A discussion began whereby members exchanged comments on the contents of the DWP, and several proposals to amend the text were made.

At one point concerns were raised on whether the work programme would become filled with each department's issues rather than points which englobed categories of concerns of all staff. An argument was made to allow the programme to include items that allow the Council to address multiple issues.

Following the discussion, Mr. Richards noted the proposed amendments. Thus, the 35<sup>th</sup> Council adopted its work programme as amended.

## 7. Membership of the G1-G4 Group

Ms. Chaoui informed the Council that the EB reviewed the composition of the G1-G4 group as follows: Mr. Dominique Chantrel, Mr. Mohamed Chiraz Baly, Ms. Prisca Chaoui, Ms. Catherine Peck Arif, Mr. Kalman Kalotay, Ms. Elizabeth James, and Ms. Patricia Almeida as alternate. The Council agreed to this revised composition of the G1-G4 group.

## 8. Membership of the Club committee

Mr. Richards recalled to the Council the current procedure for clubs to request financial support, whereby clubs would submit their applications through the Council's secretariat for the analysis of the EB and further of the Council, if required according to the guidelines. He brought for the consideration of the plenary a proposal of the EB to create a club committee that will (1) conduct of a screening of the applications, (2) liaise with clubs to support them in their applications, (3) present its conclusions and recommendation to the EB.

The Council discussed concerns whether this initiative would possibly constitute an unnecessary new layer of bureaucracy, yet arguments were put forth supporting the EB's proposal as it would ensure the needs of clubs are met by supporting them directly with their applications. Following the discussion the Council approved the creation of the Club Committee, to be composed of Ms. Chaoui, Ms. Fegli, Ms. Almeida, Mr. Taporaie, and Ms. Popa with Mr. Apostolov as alternate.

## 9. Subsidy for electric bicycles

Mr. Richards presented the Council with a request from Management for the Council to provide a CHF 2,000 subsidy to the Genève-roule initiative which makes electric bicycles available to international organisations' staff at the Place des Nations. This initiative is financed by the City of Geneva and international organisations, where UNOG contributes CHF 6,000, which would be divided equally between the Administration, the Mutuelle and the Council. It was recalled that the Council has made this contribution for the past two years. The Council then approved the contribution of CHF 2,000 to the Genève-roule initiative.

## 10. Establishment of calendar of Council meetings

Mr. Taporaie suggested for the Council to elaborate a schedule of monthly Council meetings for its entire 12-months term, since the Regulations indicate meetings should be held at least once a month, and having pre-established dates could favour Council discussions. A discussion followed.

Mr. Gaziyeu argued that a fixed calendar of meetings will not necessarily improve what he considered had been so far to be a good functioning of the Council. More arguments were raised against the proposal by other members: it was not possible to foresee absences of Council members months in advance;

meetings should be called for when there are substantive issues to discuss and not convene meetings for the sake of it; the importance of flexibility to ensure quorum.

*Mr. Touihri left the meeting at this point.*

The discussion continued with exchanges of favourable and counter arguments. Ms. Popa argued for the benefit of a more organised Council thanks to a planned schedule of meetings, although understanding the difficulties to plan much in advance. However it was argued that the Internal Rules of the Council recognize the need for flexibility when they specify that meetings will be held “once or twice a month” (Article 2.1), which had been the common practice for years. Mr. Baly reminded Council members that the Regulations allow for one third of Council members to call for a meeting. Finally another proposal was raised for establishing a calendar of meetings with a shorter 3-months’ notice.

The Council proceeded to vote on both proposals:

- The proposal to establish a calendar of meetings for the full 12-months term of the Council obtained 5 votes in favour. - The proposal to establish a calendar of meetings for 3-months in the future obtained 7 votes in favour. None of the proposals obtained a majority of 8 votes out of the 15 members who constituted the quorum, therefore none were carried.

#### **11. Establishment of a children’s Christmas party**

Mr. Taporaie brought forth a proposal to reestablish the children’s Christmas party in December arguing that the Council should do it for the celebration and recognition of the staff’s children. It was clarified that this proposal did not go in detriment of the spring’s Children’s party. It was recalled that originally the annual children’s party, traditionally held in December, had to be moved to spring three years ago due to the renovations of the Assembly Hall. This had triggered a positive feedback from parents saying that it was better to have the party in the spring because children could enjoy the park outside, and that the many events children normally have in December makes it more complicated for parents to bring them.

Mr. Stanovic argued that other international organisations in Geneva host Christmas parties and that it would be thus proper not to deny the children of UN staff such a party. A discussion was held on religious connotations related to the date of the party. Ms. Nwabuogu said she did not see the value added to the whole discussion and echoed comments she had heard from colleagues condemning the Council would enter into such debates when there are other much more important substantive issues. Mr. Stanovic called for a nominal vote on the proposal, which was supported by Mr. Taporaie. The vote went as follows:

ALMEIDA Patricia	No	NWABUOGU Gloria	No	Seeing 5 votes in favour, 9 votes against, and 1 abstention, the proposal was not carried.
APOSTOLOV Mario	Yes	PECK ARIF Catherine	No	
BALY Mohamed Chiraz	No	POPA Gabriela	Yes	
CHAOUI Prisca	No	RICHARDS Ian	No	
FEGLI Catherine	No	STANOVIC Marko	Yes	
GAZIYEV Jamshid	No	TAPORAIE Amos	Yes	
JAMES Elizabeth	Abstain	VESTERMAN Claire	Yes	
KELLY Paul	No			

#### **12. Children's party**

Ms. Chaoui informed the Council that the planning of the spring children’s party is underway, with the oversight of the EB. She recalled that the foreseen date of the event is 3 May 2017 and that the Council had approved a budget of CHF 35,000 for its realisation. The Council was then presented with a call for volunteers from the EB to help organise and carry out the children’s party. Ms. Chaoui, Ms. Almeida and Ms. Nwabuogu volunteered.

#### **13. GS external recruitment freeze**

Mr. Richards briefed the Council on how external recruitment freeze can benefit staff affected by GSDM and restructurings, as a means to safeguard jobs for current (internal) staff who may be affected. He recalled that currently there is a G1-G4 external recruitment freeze, and highlighted the importance of extending it to all GS posts. This was supported unanimously by the plenary.

#### **14. Strategic Heritage Plan**

Ms. Chaoui informed the Council that the Gensler study on office occupancy was carried out, and that the Council participated as observer. Currently, she said, the Council awaits to receive the results from the Administration, including the raw data as it was requested to them. Ms. Chaoui also informed the Council that the petition against hotdesking and open office space had achieved over 500 signatures and continues to grow. A proposal was raised to hold a townhall with external experts on distribution of office space, to which the Council agreed.

A discussion took place on strategic possibilities moving forward with the issue, possible approaches and actions, and on the consultation process of staff (townhalls, petitions, etc.). The importance of helping actively in the recollection of signatures for the petition was highlighted and Council members were encouraged to volunteer to help.

*Ms. Fegli left the meeting at this point.*

Mr. Stanovic agreed to request a meeting with the Administration on behalf of staff representation in the SHP working group to raise a number of issues and concerns.

#### **15. Extraordinary Assembly**

The Council was presented with a proposal to call for an Extraordinary Assembly to elect new Polling Officers as per Article 6.1 of the Regulations, as they could not be elected at the Ordinary General Assembly due to lack of quorum. In that sense, the Council agreed to call for an Extraordinary Assembly for the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April 2017.

#### **16. Any other business**

Mr. Stanovic enquired on the work and responsibilities of Mr. Gaziyeu who had been released at 100% from his official functions to attend Council business. It was recalled that, as per Article 8(b) of GA resolution A/C.5/50/64, an additional officer to the ES and DES can be fully released given that the ES holds concurrently the position of President of CCISUA. It was clarified that the intention of the release, in the same spirit of the GA resolution, was to provide additional assistance to the ES in the execution of his mandate due to the increased responsibility of being the head of CCISUA.

Mr. Taporaie enquired about the involvement of the Council with the Mutuelle and why the latter is not making contributions to the Council. It was clarified that the Council is directly involved with the Mutuelle as member of its Board, and the relation between the Council and the Mutuelle is governed by the relevant statutes where no contribution of one to the other is prescribed.

*The meeting closed at 3:40 p.m.*