



## 37<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 37<sup>ème</sup> Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

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

held on 13 March 2019 at 1.15 p.m. in Room IV

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

**Council members absent:** ALMARIO Francis; DAN Lin; LEONI Brigitte; POPA Gabriela; RIOUKHINA Evelina.

*The meeting opened at 1:20 p.m.*

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes as reflected below.

#### 2. Adoption of the minutes of the 1st meeting

The minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting were adopted without changes as recorded in the Council secretariat.

#### 3. Report of the Executive Bureau

The Executive Secretary began by congratulating all Council members on their election. Council members were informed that most of the work since the beginning of the 37<sup>th</sup> Council had been on the work programme, which along with two other matters (SMC and a financial request for IAG 2018 subsidy) would be discussed under separate agenda items. The Executive Secretary invited all Council members to take a proactive role in its work and to contribute their time and efforts to reach the common goals.

#### 4. Work programme

The Council began a discussion on the draft work programme proposed by the EB, which had been circulated earlier. It was said that the draft was made to be as inclusive as possible of the different objectives that the lists had put forth during elections, bearing in mind the need for specific goals to be realistic. The main points of the draft were explained.

A suggestion was raised to put on hold the discussion to give more time to Council members to review the draft work programme (WP). It was counter argued that the adoption of the WP was statutorily time-bound to 5 April and due to multiple commitments it was unlikely to hold another Council meeting by said date. It was recalled that the draft had been reviewed by the EB to include all realistic goals and was made public beforehand.

The discussion on the text continued, and editorial changes were suggested, as well as inclusions or modifications on various subjects (e.g. taxation of pensions, activities for children of staff, support to clubs, temporary staff). It was recalled that the WP was meant to reflect goals, not particular activities.

Further discussion was held on the subject of communications. It was raised that the Council should look into creative ways to get messages out to staff besides broadcasts, especially looking at increasing attendance at general townhalls. Departmental townhall meetings were suggested. An exchange of ideas on communications continued, and it was raised that a separate discussion should be held on that subject in the coming weeks. A proposal was put to floor whereby the different elected lists should have

official UN email account as groups, which was not agreed. Caution was raised on how official communications of the Council to staff should be carried out, noting they should be channeled through the officeholders.

The work programme was adopted as amended (see annex below).

## **5. SMC**

The Council recalled that the upcoming SMC VIII would take place from 8 to 14 April in Sarajevo. Council members were informed that the EB was working on several papers to be submitted to SMC, namely concerning: administration of justice, fixed-term and temporary contracts, travel policy, delegation of authority, selection policy. Council members were invited to contact the Executive Secretary to coordinate/submit contributions for the papers or to prepare papers on topics of their choosing.

It was recalled that the Administration covered the travel costs of 2 staff representatives. The proposed nominations were Ian Richards, as Vice-President of SMC, and Prisca Chaoui as Executive Secretary. Since many important issues were set to be discussed and various papers submitted, the EB recommended to the Council to cover the travel costs of a third member to the Council's SMC delegation, nominating Iain Bald given his experience on the issue of harassment and others. The Council agreed.

The Council recalled issues concerning the SMC framework, evoking the letter sent to SG earlier that year expressing worries on how the Administration was circumventing SMC protocols to enact policy changes. The staff unions, having met with Management on the matter, had received assurances that all policy matters would be brought to SMC. The staff unions would need to ensure that the commitment was maintained moving forward.

On another topic to be discussed at SMC, the Council was briefed on a delegation of authority (DoA) issue, whereby an SGB was issued without consultation which allowed departmental heads to make exceptions to Administrative Instructions, citing the case of a recent communication from OCHA's executive office that affirmed so. When confronted about it, the Administration alleged the SGB was not consulted with staff as it did not imply a policy change. It was noted that staff unions were looking into the legality and how to approach the issue, noting it impacted both financial and HR policy. Common agreement of Council members was that whilst DoA was very important and conducive to a functional administration, a line should be drawn at some point and the message should be clear to avoid abuse and countering of the SMC mechanism. It was said that staff unions were looking forward to get proper clarification from Management at SMC.

The Council agreed in its position that walking out of SMC in protest was not discarded as an option, in case staff unions would consider that the SMC process was being undermined.

## **6. Inter-Agency Games (IAG) subsidy**

The Council was informed of a request from the Sports Commission to subsidize the participation of UNOG staff at IAG 2018. It was noted that a provision in last year's budget had already been established at CHF 6,700. The EB had reviewed the request, noting 33 dues-paying members attended the games. It submitted its recommendation to the Council to approve a subsidy of 80% of participation costs per person, which would imply keeping the same level of individual subsidy as the year before. Such recommendation entailed an increase in the provision by CHF 2,750. The increase would be registered as an expenditure of the current year.

A query was raised as to why the subsidy should be 80% when grants to clubs were currently capped at 50%. It was clarified that financial assistance to clubs is an entirely different matter to IAG subsidy of dues-paying members, as the first related to assisting the functioning of staff clubs in the Palais, whilst the latter was an individual subsidy.

It was noted that at the time when the Council approved its budget, it could not know how many dues-paying members would participate in the upcoming IAG as well the conditions for participation and costs. The Council approved its subsidy for dues-paying members who attended IAG 2018 as follows:

# of d-p. members:	Cost p/p (without accommodation):	% of subsidy:	Total subsidy:	Subsidy per dues-p. member:
33	€ 315.00	80%	€ 8,316.00	<b>€ 252.00</b>

## 7. Extraordinary Assembly

The Council agreed to hold an extraordinary assembly to elect Polling Officers, as per Annex I, Article 6 of the Regulations, on 4 April 2019 at 1.15 p.m., and to inform staff via broadcast.

## 8. Composition of the Finance Commission

The Council was informed that as per the Regulations the EB had appointed one ex-officio member to the Finance Commission, **Francis Almario**. Nominations were called for the remaining three seats. The Council elected **Dominique Chantrel**, **Yaroslav Bulych** and **Mohamed Chiraz Baly** to the Finance Commission, who will be signatories in the Council's bank accounts.

## 9. Composition of the G1-G4 review group

Nominations were called for to renew the membership of the G1-G4 review group. The Council elected **Dan Lin**, **Philippe Duparc**, **Elizabeth James**, **Cedric Jaquiot**, **Dominique Chantrel**, **Catherine Peck Arif** and **Marko Stanovic** to the group.

## 10. Composition of the SHP working group

Nominations were called for to renew the staff-side membership of the SHP working group. The Council elected **Prisca Chaoui**, **Ian Richards**, **Olivier Meyer** and **Mario Apostolov** to the working group.

## 11. Any other business

A suggestion was raised to look into ways to improve financial situation of the Council, for instance limiting the number of missions which was one of the biggest costs for the Council. Also a query was raised about investment proposals that had been discussed and if they would be looked at by the FC. It was argued that priority in spending should be in defending and representing staff, for which missions were essential and therefore should not be capped. The importance of using videoconferencing means to save on costs was highlighted although it was also mentioned that significant costs were already being saved thanks to almost weekly staff unions meetings carried via videoconference. It was further raised that the FC could look into new revenue streams.

*The meeting closed at 2:45 p.m.*

## Annex: Adopted work programme of the 37<sup>th</sup> Council



### **37<sup>th</sup> UNOG Staff Coordinating Council** **37<sup>ème</sup> Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG**

#### **Work Programme**

*The UNOG Staff Coordinating Council is a union that represents UN Secretariat staff in Geneva. In discharging its programme all 25 members of the Council shall contribute their time and efforts to reach our common goals.*

#### **To protect pay, jobs and promote careers, the Council will:**

- Work with other unions to improve how pay for G and P staff is calculated.
- Maintain its challenge of the Geneva pay cut before all fora, including the tribunals.
- Use upcoming reviews of ICSC and SMC working methods to advocate the inclusion of ILO standards and labour rights in how our conditions of service are set.
- Advocate Geneva as a high quality regional hub and ensure that staff whose jobs are affected by budget cuts and offshoring are protected.
- Promote greater contract security through granting of five-year fixed-term appointments.
- Address the use of temporary appointments for ongoing functions.
- Advocate equal leave for staff on temporary appointments.
- Campaign to make performance a requirement for promotion, reduce vacancy times and promote measures for internal preference.
- Advocate that G staff be able to apply directly for P posts.
- Address the growth in consultancy contracts for staff functions and its consequences.
- Examine how to address the job impact of workplace evolutions such as the use of artificial intelligence in administration and translation.
- Examine the feasibility of a UN unemployment insurance for all staff.
- Increase staff employability by encouraging administration to review training needs.
- Maintain our solidarity with the fair internships movement.

#### **To improve the work environment and support staff welfare, the Council will:**

- Continue our work to improve the pension fund's governance and sustainability and better assist staff living with long-term sickness and disability.
- Hold management to account on harassment, sexual harassment, misconduct and retaliation, and push for more effective measures to address impunity.
- Campaign for a workplace in which staff have equal opportunities regardless of gender, race, nationality or disability.
- Review parental leave and allow all staff access to flexible working arrangements.
- Request revisions to the travel policy so that staff arrive fit for work.
- Push for the Palais renovations (SHP) to serve the needs of staff and the organization.
- Examine whether the Swiss-US double taxation treaty can provide tax relief on pensions.
- Support the development of staff recreational facilities, ensure financial support to clubs and increase activities for staff and their children.
- Explore growth in Council funding through membership dues, the magazine and other sources.
- Examine the possibility of a permanent memorial in Geneva to fallen colleagues.

#### **To keep staff informed and involved, the Council will:**

- Hold regular townhalls and inform staff through frequent broadcasts and other channels.
- Survey staff on key issues and developments.
- Publish information on the roles and responsibilities of Council members.