

The 37th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

Year in Review

2019-2020



January 2020

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Preface

The past year was another busy year for the Staff Coordinating Council. The ILOAT judgement declared the pay cut introduced by the ICSC in 2016 to be illegal, has created an unprecedented situation of injustice for UNOG staff who now earn less than their colleagues doing the same work in specialized agencies. For this reason, a campaign for equal pay was launched during the year under review. Added to this was the liquidity crisis, which led to a climate of uncertainty among staff members, although this crisis is to be distinguished from the budgetary one, whose long-term consequences could be more detrimental. This has not prevented the Council from remaining vigilant to the various policy changes on working conditions as introduced by the administration in New York, as well as the well-being of staff which remains at the heart of the Council's priorities, especially with the ongoing renovation project in the Palais. All our achievements throughout the year have been possible thanks to the support of each and every staff member. Together, we have taken up many challenges and we will continue to do so.

Prisca Chaoui Executive Secretary

This was one of the Council's busiest years in recent memory, during which we were able to demonstrate the strength and unity of staff in the face of adversity. Your actions set in motion some important reforms and changes that we are now consolidating to the benefit of staff. This therefore is your report, a report that shows that the staff council is nothing but for its staff. I hope you enjoy reading about the Council's work and we look forward to seeing you at one of the many events and meetings that shape our agenda.

Ian Richards President

Composition of the 37th Staff Coordinating Council

Staff representatives

Ian RICHARDS President Olivier MEYER Vice-President Prisca CHAOUI **Executive Secretary**

Mohamed BALI **Deputy Executive Secretary** Francis ALMARIO Member of the Executive Bureau Member of the Executive Bureau Jamshid GAZIYEV Member of the Executive Bureau Elizabeth JAMES Kalman KALOTAY Member of the Executive Bureau Catherine PECK ARIF Member of the Executive Bureau

Dominique CHANTREL Treasurer

Mario APOSTOLOV

Iain BALD

Yaroslav BULYCH

Lin DAN

Philippe DUPARC Cédric JAQUIOT Paul KELLY **Brigitte LEONI** Gabriela POPA

Evelina RIOUKHINA (until 19/12/2019)

Ngoc NGUYEN (as of 19/12/2019)

Angelique RUHANA MUKAMUSONI

Nzété Da SAMA ITOUA

Bradford SMITH Marko STANOVIC Amos TAPORAIE

Polling officers

Astrit Sulstarova President Tor Bothner Vice-President

Guoyong Liang Khanam Jauhan Madeleine Cieniewicz Oleksandr Svirchevskyy

Rafik Fathi Djurabek Aripov

Auditors

Myra Carandang Vivian Clemente Ronald Quero

Debbie Jill Francisco

Froylan Silveira

Assistant to the Council

I. Membership

While all staff are represented by the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council (the Council), as a union, it depends on members' contributions. By becoming a dues-paying member, not only are you taking a real stake in your union, but you are also showing strong solidarity to the cause of staff rights.

As a dues-paying member you benefit from:

- Legal guidance in job-related cases (if refused by OSLA);
- Free meal and drinks at our annual staff party;
- Free attendance for your children at our annual children's party;
- Subsidized participation at the Inter-Agency Games;
- Free adverts on our public bulletin board;
- Additional 13% discount days at SAFI;
- If you are member of a club, with 15 dues paying members, your club becomes eligible to receive financial support from the Council.

The Council aimed at increasing the number of members who contribute financially. To that end and in order to further encourage staff to become dues-paying members, it (1) solicited staff to become dues-paying form at all events and meetings organized by the Council and (2) renewed and maintained a series of partnership deals offering discounts to staff at local vendors such as Manor, Apple Store, Tamoil, Pharmacie Populaire, Europear, Mycolorphone, Curves gym, Silhouette gym, among others.

The 37th Council saw an increase of dues-paying members of 4 percent compared to the 36th Council (for a total of 434 dues-paying members as of December 2019). Membership dues are paid monthly and are automatically deducted from payroll, for which staff only need to fill out a form provided at the end of this report. This form can also be found on our website. Contribution is only CHF 10 per month for all staff.

If you wish to become a dues-paying member, kindly find the membership form at the end of this Report (Annex 2).

II. Summary of work programme implementation

To protect pay, jobs and promote careers, the Council will:	Status
Work with other unions to improve how pay for G and P staff is calculated.	This task was conducted within the ICSC framework and is still ongoing.
Maintain its challenge of the Geneva pay cut before all fora, including the tribunals.	An important campaign to ensure equal pay for UNOG staff was launched. There has been close follow-up to the ongoing legal process.
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.	The Council continues to work with other staff unions within the ICSC, SMC as well as CCISUA, to uphold ILO standards.
Advocate Geneva as a high-quality regional hub and ensure that staff whose jobs are affected by budget cuts and offshoring are protected.	As a result of the lobbying efforts of the Council, the final decision regarding GSDM was postponed till spring 2020.
Promote greater contract security through granting of five-year fixed-term appointments.	The Council worked within the context of the SMC as well as locally and reminded management of the importance of respecting relevant policies. The policy on contracts is currently under review by management.
Address the use of temporary appointments for ongoing functions.	Discussions took place with management on interpreting the financial rules more flexibly to more easily create fixed-term posts.
Advocate equal leave for staff on temporary appointments.	The Council obtained the agreement of management to request the General Assembly to align days of leave for staff on temporary appointments with the ones of fixed-term staff.
Campaign to make performance a requirement for promotion, reduce vacancy times and promote measures for internal preference.	The Council made of this issue one of its main priorities within the SMC Working group on mobility and selection.
Advocate that G staff be able to apply directly for P posts.	A petition was launched calling on the Secretary-General to put in place a pilot programme to allow GS staff to apply for P positions without delay.
Address the growth in consultancy contracts for staff functions and its consequences.	This issue was raised with management at the global level. The policy on contracts is currently under review by management.

Examine how to address the job impact of workplace evolutions such as the use of artificial intelligence in administration and translation.	The Council has been engaging with staff, mainly from the Language Service, to seek their views regarding the impact of AI and suggestions to ensure job preservation.
Examine the feasibility of a UN unemployment insurance for all staff.	Discussions have been held with other unions. As such an insurance would require mandatory contributions from all staff, there was not enough interest.
Increase staff employability by encouraging administration to review training needs.	Discussions have been held with management on the skills needed for the future as part of the Future of Work discussions.
Maintain our solidarity with the fair internships movement.	The Council continued lending its support to the fair internship movement through publishing articles in the staff magazine and hosting an event for the launch of the Fair Internship Index.

To improve the work environment and support staff welfare, the Council will:	Status
Continue our work to improve the pension fund's governance and sustainability and better assist staff living with long-term sickness and disability.	Through its representative in the Pension Fund Board, the Council continued pushing for the improvement of Pension Fund governance and for greater transparency on the sustainability of its investments.
Hold management to account on harassment, sexual harassment, misconduct and retaliation, and push for more effective measures to address impunity.	Two surveys were conducted at departmental level (UNCTAD and Pension Fund) following serious complaints by staff of misconduct. Contacts were established with management of the departments as well as with UNOG management to ensure a zero-tolerance policy is put in place.
Campaign for a workplace in which staff have equal opportunities regardless of gender, race, nationality or disability.	Through its interaction with management globally and locally, the Council continued raising awareness about the importance of diversity.

Review parental leave and allow all staff access to flexible working arrangements.	Thanks to the efforts of the Council, a working group was put in place within the ICSC in order to examine a proposal to increase parental leave for both parents to 16 weeks, with an additional 8 weeks for the birth mother.
Request revisions to the travel policy so that staff arrive fit for work.	A proposal was made at the SMC level to improve the travel policy including allowable expenses to improve comfort and well-being.
Push for the Palais renovations (SHP) to serve the needs of staff and the organization.	The Council maintained its engagement with different stakeholders to ensure that the undergoing work under SHP takes into account the needs of staff.
Examine whether the Swiss-US double taxation treaty can provide tax relief on pensions.	No progress was made on this issue.
Support the development of staff recreational facilities, ensure financial support to clubs and increase activities for staff and their children.	The Council continued lending its logistical support to all clubs and is actively engaged with the SHP to ensure that recreational facilities are put in place for the staff.
Explore growth in Council funding through membership dues, the magazine and other sources.	Thanks to an active campaign to increase the number of dues paying members, the number increased 4%. The Finance Commission of the Council has been active in trying to find options to diversify sources of revenues.
Examine the possibility of a permanent memorial in Geneva to fallen colleagues.	The Council drafted a proposal to be submitted to the Secretary-General through CCISUA.

To keep staff informed and involved, the Council will:	Status
Hold regular townhalls and inform staff through frequent broadcasts and other channels.	Many townhalls were held with staff at the global and departmental level to share information and gather feedback. Many broadcasts were sent out to inform staff regarding recent developments.
Survey staff on key issues and developments.	Many surveys were conducted at the global and departmental level regarding issues of concern for staff.
Publish information on the roles and responsibilities of Council members.	No much progress was made regarding this issue.

III. United Nations Common System Issues

1. Education grant

The ICSC recommended a revised sliding reimbursement scale (all seven brackets to be adjusted by a flat rate of +15% in dollar terms) and a revised boarding lump sum of US\$ 5,300 (increase of US\$300). However, the General Assembly, in its last session, decided to defer consideration of this matter and requested the ICSC to provide a detailed review of this issue. It did not approve proposed increases to the education grant. Delegates felt the ICSC had made the proposal a year too early. It would also appear that delegates were not comfortable with the size of the increase, although the proposed increase was a natural consequence of long period since the last increase. The COUNCIL will follow up closely on this issue.

2. ICSC Reform

The way the ICSC handled the pay cut in Geneva made it clear that the ICSC itself needed to be reformed so that decisions could be made by consensus of all parties in a tripartite fashion.

Staff union federations and organizations pressed the ICSC on this matter and the ICSC agreed to establish a contact group with federation, organization and commission representatives to review its decision-making methods.

The group met twice. During that time the Chair of the ICSC agreed that ICSC decisions would be made with the consensus of all parties. This point was repeated at the 34th General Assembly of CCISUA in Beirut in May.

However, the Commission as a whole did not agree to support the Chair's commitments and the matter will go back to the contact group for discussion. CCISUA has requested that the next contact group meeting bring together all 15 commissioners so that a solution can be found.

3. Improving parental leave

A proposal to increase parental leave for both parents to 16 weeks, with an additional 8 weeks for the birth mother, received a good hearing and at our request, the ICSC agreed to establish a working group on the issue.

Closing the leave gap between parents brings the UN common system in line with modern social expectations, allows both parents to bond with their children and addresses discrimination that can occur when hiring managers choose not to select women for positions, as opposed to men, on the basis of leave entitlements. We have asked that the working group also examine a broader concept of family care that includes looking after elderly parents and disabled children.

Further, there was some support to address the situation of pregnant women in the field, who have to leave their duty stations early in order to avoid airline restrictions on flying in the final month. Currently this is being charged to maternity leave, reducing time with the child post-birth, or to annual leave. There was a view that organizations should make special arrangements to support staff.

4. Local salaries review, impacting GS, NO, S, LT and TC staff

Salaries for locally-recruited colleagues are set according to the best prevailing salaries paid locally for comparable jobs. Key to the process is the methodology establishing how comparator data is collected and measured, and for which we have had strong concerns in recent years.

A working group has been examining this in depth, particularly with regards to how the data is collected, whether it is appropriate to use data from external providers, the number of employers, the appropriate ministry for the government comparator and the possibility of a separate salary survey for S category staff.

The review remains ongoing and we are participating actively. A key concern for us will be ensuring greater visibility for local salary survey teams on how the data is collected and processed.

IV. Global Secretariat issues

1. Career prospects for General service staff

The COUNCIL has worked with other staff unions of the Secretariat, within the framework of the Staff-Management Committee (SMC), to abolish the G to P barrier, thereby promoting the career prospects and equal opportunity for staff in the General Service category.

A proposal was agreed between staff and management, but its proper consideration has been continually delayed at the General Assembly and the Secretary-General has yet to develop a proposal for a pilot program regarding this matter as per the recommendation of the ACABQ.

On 13 December 2019, the COUNCIL and the staff unions of the secretariat launched a petition calling on the Secretary-General to put in place a pilot programme to allow GS colleagues to apply for P positions without delay.

2. Delegation of authority

With the issuance of ST/SGB/2019/2, a new delegation of authority framework has been introduced. The aim is to better facilitate decentralized decision making, as well as to establish clear accountability requirements. Unfortunately, staff unions were not consulted in the shaping of this policy as per Regulation 8.1 (a) of ST/SGB/2011/1 and ST/SGB/2011/6/Rev.1. During SMC VIII, the COUNCIL raised serious concerns regarding the risks of misuse of the delegation of authority, mainly when it comes to the interpretation and implementation of the UN's human resources policies and making exceptions to any of the important administrative issuances that have been so painstakingly negotiated between staff unions and administration. As a result, management agreed to establish a WG that is due to start its work in the coming weeks.

3. Global Service Delivery Model (GSDM)

GSDM is a proposal inherited from the previous Secretary-General. It would see administrative services centralized and offshored to two to three different locations. The COUNCIL worked with other staff unions and was ultimately successful, in agreeing on mitigation measures with management which were formally adopted in February 2018.

The COUNCIL representatives lobbied a number of delegations during their missions to New York and expressed their concerns about the GSDM, including the lack of French-speaking duty stations in the selection and the long-term financial cost to the Organisation. The locations initially chosen were changed and up to now Member States couldn't agree on final locations for the centres. As a result, the General Assembly deferred again the discussion to its resumed session in the spring of 2020. As things stand now, it seems that the GSDM will be discontinued or implemented in a different way as initially foreseen.

4. Pension Fund

At its Rome meeting in 2018, the Board summarily rejected the findings and recommendations of a comprehensive internal governance audit that the General Assembly called for in 2017,

which found conflicts of interest between the Board and the Fund Secretariat management and serious shortcomings in oversight (A/73/341). Piling insult on to injury, the Board reported the auditors to the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (IAAC) for an alleged flawed and unprofessional process.

Last August, in a letter to the Board Chair, the IAAC firmly debunked the Board's allegations, stating that it found no evidence that the auditors had not followed accepted professional audit practices and standards.

As for the new CEO, the Board selected in July, Ms. Rosemarie McClean, former Chief Operating Officer of the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan. It appears that there were negotiations over her title. While the press release of 26 August lists her title as Pension Benefits Administrator, the General Assembly decided in its latest resolution on a new title of Chief Executive Pension Administrator (CEPA).

In its 2018 resolution, the General Assembly requested the Board's governance working group to review and report on a number of important audit recommendations that the Board had rejected, including adjusting the composition and size of the Board, and proposing modalities for directly electing retiree representatives.

At its Board meeting last July in Nairobi, the UN participant representatives, who include former whistleblowers and have consistently advocated for reforms and supported the governance audit's recommendations, reported that they were intimidated and physically threatened.

Last month's Assembly resolution makes no mention of the anemic recommendations of the Board's governance working group, but requests that the Chief Executive Pension Administrator engage an independent expert to conduct a comprehensive and objective analysis of the issues, and make recommendations to the next session.

In extending the mandate of the governance working group, the Assembly insists on adherence to the Board's tripartite structure, comprising representatives of governing bodies, executive heads, and participant groups – which excludes FAFICS.

While noting the temporary deployment of a Director from Geneva, the Assembly requests the Board to expedite the selection and nomination of a Secretary to the Board; ensure his or her independence; and develop a code of conduct, and procedures to address questions of ethics and confidentiality.

On the investment side of the fund, while Representative of the Secretary-General for Investments, Sudhir Rajkumar, reported record-low revenues for 2018, the market value of the fund rallied in 2019 and is currently at its highest level, at \$67.8 billion.

There are concerns about environmental and social policy, the possible impact of policy shifts on inflation, and staff management concerns about which the Representative of the Secretary-General has stated that he welcomes an audit. The Assembly's latest resolution refers to a planned internal audit of the governance of the Office of Investment Management and requests submission of the audit along with the Board's comments in its next report.

5. Mobility

The COUNCIL conducted a survey in June 2019 regarding mobility. Results showed that 74% supported a voluntary mobility policy in which all P and D staff would be helped to change duty stations or departments when and how they wanted. These results informed the position of the COUNCIL in the Staff-Management Committee working group that was mandated to draft proposals that the Secretary-General will send to the General Assembly for approval. However, since the issue of mobility was postponed, the work within the working group was suspended. The COUNCIL has recently called for the resumption of the work of this working group due to the importance of the mobility policy for staff. It is to be recalled that the ToRs of the working group as initially set, were reviewed and the working group was also entrusted to look into the issue of selection that is of great interest for staff.

6. Temporary appointments

The COUNCIL has been concerned at the proliferation of temporary appointments in Geneva, even when more stable contracts are possible with the funding available, and the unequal leave and other conditions.

During the meeting of the Staff-Management Committee held in 2018, the COUNCIL submitted a paper in relation to this issue but no agreement was reached and management committed to look closely into this issue and to revert back. During last SMC meeting that took place in Sarajevo from 8-14 April, management agreed to propose to the General Assembly an increase of the leave entitlements of staff on temporary appointments to the level of staff on fixed-term appointments. It is regrettable that management didn't respect said agreement and didn't submit such a proposal. The COUNCIL will continue exerting pressure in order to ensure such a proposal is made to the General Assembly.

As for OHCHR, which is the Department that counts the highest number of temporary staff members, and following our active engagement with Human Resources, a number of long serving staff on temporary contracts have recently gotten fixed term contracts, though not everybody. A rostering-exercise was launched in order to put in place rosters. However, not much has happened since the last screening test that took place a few months ago. The COUNCIL will continue pushing to have the exercise completed.

7. Administration of justice

Given the lack of national redress mechanism for staff to resolve labour disputes, we have continued to prioritize administration of justice in the UN and advocate for it to be more independent, impartial, effective and efficient.

In 2019, we have continued advocating for more resources for the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, who provide free legal aid to staff. Due to limited resources of the Office and the importance of some cases of emblematic nature, the COUNCIL continued to provide legal representation at its expense on several occasions, e.g. in the case of gender focal point in OHCHR. The Council has also challenged the legality of the decision to impose a pay cut at the UN Dispute Tribunal, our court of first instance. Yet after a year following the filing of the case and several gentle reminders with the court, the UNDT has not rendered its judgement on the case which is important to most of our staff. The COUNCIL is following up on expediting the judgement and improving judicial efficiency because as it is rightly said - justice delayed is justice denied.

The COUNCIL's advocacy has also prioritised improvements in the protection of staff from retaliation and prohibited conduct, including of those who have engaged or testified at the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) and the United Nations Appeals Tribunal (UNAT). As a result, the GA in its last resolution 74/258 on the administration of justice in the UN requested the Secretary-General to report in 2020 on progress made in protecting staff members who lodge cases before the UNDT and UNAT against retaliation. Our position remains that litigation for justice before the Tribunals should be considered as a protected activity, so staff litigants and all witnesses should be accorded protection by the Organization and the Tribunals should have the authority to make orders for their protection.

Following our advocacy efforts, the General Assembly has granted some of our requests at its last autumn session of 2019. In resolution 74/258, Member States stressed the importance of judicial efficiency and urged the UNDT and UNAT to review and amend their respective rules of procedure with a view to streamlining and harmonizing their approach to case management, including by ensuring that the first judicial action in a case is taken no later than 90 days from the date on which an application is filed. They also requested the Secretary-General to report back on the accountability of managers whose decisions were grossly negligent and have led to litigation and financial loss.

Even if we are pleased with some positive outcomes of our work, there is still more work to be done to ensure that staff are not afraid to seek justice, and when they do, justice is served in an impartial and efficient manner. The COUNCIL will continue empowering staff to redress their concerns at the UN tribunals and consult staff on challenges they may face in the internal judicial process in order to address systemic shortcomings in the administration of justice.

8. Travel policy

Following extensive feedback received, we presented a proposal to management at SMC on improving the travel policy. Points raised, which we are tackling with management, included:

- Counting of travel time when part of the journey is not by air, for example when a plane journey is followed by an arduous road journey.
- Travel expenses to ensure reimbursement of food and beverage costs when DSA is not provided (for example the last day) or while on the plane or in the airport (including lounge access).
- Defining minimum standards for air travel given the introduction of low-cost airlines.
- Reasonable alternate routes to strike a reasonable balance between route length and cost.
- Clarity on personal deviations
- Compensating travel time over the weekend or official holidays or avoiding travel in that period altogether.
- Clarity on lump sum calculations
- Clarity on rental car use.

We look forward to a swift conclusion on this matter.

V. Geneva issues

1. Cash preservation measures

Due to the cash flow crisis facing the Organisation as a whole, a series of measures were taken by UNOG administration as of October, including switching off lifts and escalators as well as the changing of meeting hours for Conference Services. As a result, the COUNCIL requested management to dedicate one item on the agenda of the meeting of the Joint Negotiation Committee that took place in November.

The COUNCIL made it clear that in its view, some measures such as switching off lifts were not making much of a difference while inconveniencing staff, particularly disabled colleagues and those with reduced mobility. Administration noted that they were working to ensure that adjustments were made so that accessibility inside the Palais was not hindered.

The COUNCIL requested that security staff who work on holidays (Christmas and New Year) be compensated through the payment of overtime and not only through compensatory time off (CTO). It further requested that any accumulated CTO be converted into cash and paid retroactively once the measures are lifted. It also asked that the calculation of overtime revert to normal practice once the measures are lifted.

As a result, the administration agreed to pay overtime for security staff who worked Christmas and New Year. The COUNCIL is still awaiting administration's answer on the two other requests.

2. Pay cut

The 5.2% pay cut decided by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for staff in the P category and above following the cost-of-living survey conducted in Geneva in 2016 was introduced in two phases, in February and June 2018. On 3 July 2019, the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (ILOAT) issued its judgement in respect of complaints filed by staff from five specialized agencies, namely ILO, WIPO, IOM, WHO and ITU, declaring the cuts illegal. ILOAT noted that the ICSC had erred in its calculation, and that the involved agencies had therefore been wrong to apply the pay cut. Furthermore, ILOAT found that the reduction of the gap closure measure from 5 to 3 percent was also legally wrong. It ordered the specialized agencies to revert to the pre-cut salary and to pay the staff retroactively with interest of 5%.

The immediate consequence of the judgement was the creation of two salary scales for staff members of the UN and specialized agencies, in violation of the Noblemaire principle on which the salaries of staff members in the P category and above are based. The long-term consequence will be the dismantling of the common system, which was initially put in place to prevent competition between the various international organizations. On 5 July, the Council sent a letter to the Chairman of ICSC asking him to align the salaries of UNOG staff members with those of the specialized agencies. On 12 July, a letter was sent to the Secretary-General of the UN asking him to intervene in the same direction and, above all, to prevent the dismantling of the common system. Similarly, a petition calling on the Secretary-General to guarantee equal pay for UN staff members was launched and was signed by more than 6,200 staff members.

The Council sent a delegation to take part in the work of the summer session of ICSC held in Vienna from 29 July to 9 August. Despite our delegation's request to reverse the pay cut, the ICSC decided otherwise and asked instead the General Assembly to reaffirm its own mandate. It also decided to await the judgement of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT).

Following the request of staff for more concrete action, another letter was sent to the Secretary-General requesting him to meet with UNOG staff. This request was not immediately accepted. At the Council's insistence, the Secretary-General finally agreed to meet with UNOG staff at a townhall meeting on 16 December. When asked to commit to ensuring equal pay in Geneva, he replied that it was not within his power to do so.

It should be noted that prior to the Secretary-General's visit to Geneva, a survey on the impact of the pay cut was conducted by the Council. It showed that 95% believe it was unfair to be paid less for the same value work of others. Nearly three-quarters of staff said the 5.2% pay cut had impacted them "a great deal". 80% said the pay cut affected their morale at work. 95% wanted the UN management to recognize the ILOAT judgement and reverse the pay cut.

Faced with this stalemate, the Council decided to send a delegation of three Council members to New York in November 2019 to lobby the General Assembly which was to adopt a resolution concerning the pay cut in Geneva. Leaflets based on staff testimonies were distributed. The resolution which was adopted in December recalled a number of past resolutions and reaffirmed the ICSC's mandate to set post adjustment. This was in reaction to the ILOAT's judgement. It is not clear though how this will change the legal requirement outlined in the ICSC statutes and upheld by ILOAT that agencies should treat ICSC decisions on post adjustment merely as recommendations to be carefully reviewed prior to implementation.

That said, through our interactions with the administration in NY and the ICSC, we believe that there is a willingness to find a solution to this situation and the Council will continue to explore ways and means in the coming months to ensure equal pay for UNOG staff, including by exerting the necessary pressure. The legal process is ongoing and it is important that the judgement is issued in a swift manner.

In the meantime, and thanks to the campaign led by the Council and other staff unions in Geneva, the methodology for calculating the cost of living is being revised and is expected to be applied at a cost-of-living survey that might take place for 2020.

It should be noted that without the perseverance of the Council and the support of the staff for this just cause, the pay cut could have been introduced earlier and it would have been more significant, as the initial cut was of 7.8% but was brought down to 5.2%.

3. Legal challenge to the pay cut

As a result of the Council's active campaign since the announcement of the pay cut, more than 800 staff members (a first in the history of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal) filed a legal challenge before the UNDT. The Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA) is representing those staff. However, in order to maximize the chances of success before the Tribunal, the Council hired a well-known external lawyer who is specialized in international administration to law and who is working in parallel with OSLA team.

The first hearing was held in October 2018 but up to now no judgement was issued. As the judgement became overdue, the Council sent a letter to the presiding judge in September 2019, reminding her of the Code of Conduct for Judges of the Dispute Tribunal and the Appeals Tribunal, which stipulates that a judgement should be issued three months after the hearing. The response received was that the Tribunal was still in the process of finalizing cases dating back to 2017. This was certainly disappointing in view of the political importance of the matter, which, in view of the Council should have been a top priority for the Tribunal.

That is why the external lawyer recruited by the Council submitted a motion in October 2019 asking the court to expedite the issuance of the judgement. As a result, he was invited to a case management discussion that should have taken place the week of 6 January, but up to now the case management discussion has not taken place for unknown reasons.

This latest development raises some hope that the judgment will be issued soon, and it is important that further pressure be exerted on the Secretary-General in order for him not to appeal the judgement, that most likely will be in favour of staff.

4. Fighting all forms of misconduct

Representatives from the COUNCIL took actively part in the SMC working group that was put in place to review the policy on prohibiting all forms of misconduct (SGB/2008/5). As a consequence, a new policy was adopted (SGB/2019/8) with many improvements aiming at having a more victim-oriented approach.

At the local level, the COUNCIL continued through its representatives to actively assist staff who approached them with misconduct complaints. Moreover, an informal working group launched by UNOG administration was put in place in order to develop a strategy to sensitize staff about the problematic and inform them of available resources to assist them in case they need assistance. The working group is composed of various stakeholders, including the COUNCIL. It is the Council's hope that this working group will be able to produce concrete results for staff. It is to be noted that the COUNCIL raised the issue of misconduct with the former and the current DG, who is committed to a zero-tolerance-policy regarding cases of misconduct.

5. Harassment cases at UNCTAD

The COUNCIL was approached by an important number of staff from different divisions at UNCTAD, but mainly from the Division on Technology and Logistics (DTL) with complaints of harassment and abuse of authority. The COUNCIL wrote to the UNCTAD Secretary-General regarding this issue and following his instruction, got in touch with the Deputy Secretary-General. It outlined the problems and asked for concrete actions. Despite this request, no firm action was taken to put an end to the different forms of misconduct. As a result, the COUNCIL conducted a survey in October 2019. The results show that UNCTAD staff are faced with serious issues of abuse, harassment and discrimination, whereby 74% of respondents indicate

having been victims of abuse of authority in the past 12 months, 48% of harassment, 52% of discrimination and 4% of sexual harassment.

Further, 85% of respondents indicate having witnessed one or more colleagues being victims of abuse of authority, 63% of harassment, 39% of discrimination, and 7% of sexual harassment. While the survey is self-reported, the size of the participation (103 staff) and trends identified are worrying. Despite all this and based on feedback received from staff, apart from putting in place a "safe corner" for staff, UNCTAD senior management didn't take any concrete actions based on feedback received from staff. By concrete actions, we mean holding managers accountable for their actions. This isn't impossible if UNCTAD management is serious about fighting misconduct. In its last message to UNCTAD staff and contrary to its usual way of working, the COUNCIL proposed assistance to staff who wish to file formal complaints.

6. Strategic Heritage Plan

The Strategic Heritage Plan team attempted to change the initial agreed plan, whereby UNCTAD and DCM staff would remain in the old building once the renovations were complete, by proposing these two to move to the H building. The COUNCIL conducted two surveys in both departments and the surveys showed that 87 to 90 percent of staff would like to work in individual and shared offices in the old building (as opposed to working in a hot-desking setting in the H building). As a consequence, the Council defended staff of both departments who will be remaining in the old building.

A joint staff-management working group was set up a couple of years ago on the SHP project. Despite repetitive assurances that we would be consulted on issues pertaining to staff well-being and that we would provide input to their report to the General Assembly, SHP systematically took unilateral initiatives, which they were then unwilling to amend due to alleged potential additional costs. Recent examples concern the choice of furniture and the eating area in the H building. The COUNCIL was invited to a mock-up session to assess the furniture selected from three different vendors. The COUNCIL views were not sought beforehand regarding the type of desks, the storage space and the height of the separation panels. Similarly, the COUNCIL was astonished to learn that the H building which is due to host 700 staff members has a space of 30 square meters for a "grab and go" type of meal and only a sitting area comprised of 65 seats. As a result, the COUNCIL decided to send a letter to the DG, in her capacity of owner of the project, to intervene in order to put in place a better consultative mechanism with staff representatives.

7. Security and Safety Service

At the request of the Council, a joint working group was set up to examine the issue of rotation and to draft its outline. At the outset, the management of the Security and Safety Service saw rotation as an exercise that included operational positions. At the insistence of the staff representatives, rotation included specialized posts as well. The working group met several times and succeeded in approving the broad lines of the rotation policy. Some adjustments had to be incorporated into the policy following its introduction. The overall exercise was welcomed by the staff of the Service.

With regard to the cash conservation measures adopted in the Palais as a result of the liquidity crisis, security staff had their working hours modified. The overtime work that followed, which would normally have had to be paid as such, was converted into compensatory time off (CTO). At a meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee, the Council indicated the impact of these changes at the operational level and requested that security staff working on public holidays (Christmas and New Year) be paid for the overtime worked and not through the granting of CTO. The Council also asked that, once the measures are lifted, any accumulated CTO be converted to cash and paid retroactively, and that the calculation of overtime be returned to normal practice. The administration agreed to pay overtime for security staff who worked

overtime during Christmas and the New Year. The Council is still waiting for their response on the other two requests.

8. G1 to G4 Group

The G1–G4 group was established by the COUNCIL and endorsed by management in 2014. Its mandate is to review cases of selection for the G1-G4 categories. Its work is similar to that of other joint bodes (Central Review Panel, Central Review Committee and Central Review Board), which review cases of selection for staff of the G5 category and above. The group, which is currently composed of seven elected members of the COUNCIL, has been active in reviewing various cases that have been submitted to it, making comments and requesting clarifications when needed, and thus trying to ensure a fairer selection process for the G1–G4 categories

9. Support to staff

The Council provided assistance to all staff who approached it, to the extent of its capacity, in areas such as harassment, abuse of authority and performance management. The Council represented staff before management when necessary. It resorted in a great number of cases to the assistance of the office of the Ombudsman for informal resolutions, which proved to be a useful way out. In extreme cases, it directed staff to the OSLA with which it enjoyed a very good working relationship.

10. Joint working group on well-being

The joint working group on well-being was put in place by the previous Director-General as a group that brings together all stakeholders who are in charge of staff well-being, including HR, the Staff Counsellor's office, the Ombudsman's office, the Medical Service, the Council and the Centre for Learning and Multilingualism. The group is supposed to meet to deal with systemic issues. As a result of the issues identified, a local policy regarding return to work after long sick leave was drafted and it is yet to be issued. The last meeting of the working group dealt with the following issues: UNOG strategy to fight moral harassment, implementation of the mental health strategy at UNOG, and the issue of the use of sick leave and unused annual leave.

11. Parking and commuting

Within the context of the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) and in anticipation of the future increase in staff at the Palais des Nations, the COUNCIL and the administration established a working group on parking to plan and further develop a strategy to rationalize the parking within the Palais des Nations to ensure optimized utilization. The position of the COUNCIL is to ensure free access and parking to all staff while encouraging alternative modes of transportation.

The work of this working group is ongoing.

The Council has been working with administration on commuting issues by bike and public transport. This has involved recommendations on access points, safety, bike parking, pedestrian crossing and information campaigns on the new railway to France.

We have also reviewed the current parking situation in the Palais, particularly in light of the upcoming renovations and additional staff moving to the compound. The shift of staff from cars to other forms of transport and increases in telecommuting mean that parking places remain adequate and no further action nor rationing measures will need to be taken.

12. Decentralization process at OCHA

In the year under review, OCHA underwent a decentralization exercise which led to many positions from the professional category being moved from Headquarters toward regional hubs and some general service staff positions being cut. As a result, the COUNCIL took part in the drafting exercise of the HR alignment document that was put in place to guide staff in the decentralization exercise. However, the COUNCIL wasn't in a position to endorse said document as its request to take an active part in the suitability panel was rejected, spelling more doubts about this objectivity of the exercise. Many staff members from OCHA approached recently the Council and were directed to OSLA, as some of the cases clearly constitute a breach of the rules and regulations.

VI. Supporting staff welfare activities

1. Clubs and societies

The Council provided support to UNOG clubs and societies that were able to demonstrate, in accordance with the Council guidelines, that their activities would benefit staff at large. Logistical support was also provided for different clubs for booking spaces and sending broadcasts. Moreover, the Council continued to provide drinking water in the sports room located on the 8th floor.

The Council was active in its engagement with the SHP team to ensure that clubs' requirements in terms of space and other are met. Up to now, the SHP has not brought any answer to the concrete demands made by the clubs through the Council. The COUNCIL is committed however to do its best to ensure that the Clubs will be given the necessary facilities to continue their activities, which are very much appreciated by staff.

The Council carried out a survey among staff to consult them on the potential introduction of a fitness centre run by an external service provider in the area to be provided for fitness-related activities after the current renovations of the Palais. A majority of staff (56 percent) expressed they would be willing to use the services of a privately-run fitness in the Palais for fees between 0 and 400 CHF per year. At the same time many colleagues made comments that show that they favour the continuing existence of staff-run clubs and associations. Following the survey results, the administration informed the Council that they were not able to identify external service providers that would be interested in operating a fitness in the Palais under said financial conditions. Management agreed the new fitness area in the E-building would include space allocated to staff-run clubs and discussions continue on the size and distribution of said space.

2. Staff magazine

On 28 May, the Council decided to put an end to its collaboration with WHO Staff Association regarding UN Special magazine, as it wanted to make its staff magazine more centred on UN staff in general and on UNOG in particular. As a result, a new magazine "UN Today" was created and its first issue will be out in February and will carry on the legacy of former UN Special. The Council is working on the final structure of the new magazine so as to ensure it meets staff interests and needs.

3. Improvements at the UN beach

The Council and management have continued to work closely together in managing the UN Port association (formerly UN Beach Club) since 2017, following changes to its statutes. The UN Port committee has kept staff abreast of the improvement and activities of UN Port. During the 2019 season, the committee continued to reinforce the association's governance and to pursue its objective of converting UN Port into an attractive space for the enjoyment of all staff.

Notably, restaurant menu and services were improved, amenities such as the lounge rooftop and garden areas were refurbished, new furniture and parasols were added, a bar was installed, and work began for the installation of a new lake pontoon that will increase safety for swimmers, paddleboarders, and augment the number of port berths.

4. Long service medal awards ceremony

The Organisation decided to harmonise the long service awards throughout the Secretariat and decided that it should be held in October at the time of the UN anniversary. The administration will issue certificates to all eligible staff for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service, and the Council will continue its tradition of handing out long service recognitions in the form of medals for 25, 30 and 35 years of service, co-hosting the event with the administration. The 2019 long service awards, as a transitional year to the Secretariat-wide implementation of the awards, will exceptionally be held in January 2020.

5. Children's party

The Council organised its children's party over the Christmas holiday taking place on 4 December 2019. The children watched the show of Gaëtan, danced to the rhythm of a minidisco and enjoyed multiple entertainments, culminating the event with the arrival of Santa Claus riding on his sleigh to deliver gifts. The party was provided free of charge to the children of dues-paying members of the Council. Non-dues-paying members of the Council were asked to pay a small contribution of CH 20 for each of their attending children, a fee which represented less than 20% of the cost of the event per child.

6. Staff garden party

The 2019 annual staff garden party took place on 28 June. Its aim was to celebrate the staff, consultants, contractors and interns who make the UN what it is today. Compared to previous years, it was held in two parts: a lunch time gathering in the park featuring a giant picnic, a band, food stands and a drinks tent; and an evening Latin party at the UN beach with a mix of bands and DJs, food and drink stands. As this was all about celebrating the wider UN family, everyone was welcome to bring their families and any former colleagues.

7. Staff party

Due to the cash preservation measures imposed by the administration, which prohibit the use of the premises after 6 p.m., the staff gala didn't take place as initially planned at the beginning of December.

8. Concerts

The Council supported the organization of a number concerts which featured both staff and external musicians. The Council also co-organized a Christmas concert with the support of the United Nations Christian Association and facilitated Christmas performances of the UN Music Club. These concerts were much appreciated by staff.

9. Inter-Agency Games 2019

The 2019 Inter-Agency Games were held in Lisbon, Portugal in April/May. As is tradition, the Council encouraged participation of all staff and subsidized the participation of its dues-paying members by 50% through the UNOG Sports Commission.

10. Crèche places in Geneva

The Council was able to secure places for children of staff members in different crèches located in the Geneva and the Vaud cantons. The Council specified in the messages that were communicated to staff that it does not intervene in the relation that may be established between the crèche and the staff members. The feedback received so far was positive.

VII. Communication with staff

1. Email broadcasts

As of the date of this report, the 37th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council had sent out 108 email broadcasts. Our broadcasts have informed staff of developments, inviting your feedback and seeking your support in our campaigns. We are pleased that you appreciate being informed and engaged on such a regular basis, and the Council will continue improving its communications.

2. Council website

The Council's website (www.staffcoordinatingcouncil.org) contains all the news updates on the activities of the Council, important documents, contacts, information on meetings, services provided, staff clubs and events. The Council is expected to renew the feel and look of its website in January 2020.

We have also continually updated our Facebook page, created in conjunction with the other unions to distribute the information to a wide an audience as possible. http://www.facebook.com/unstaffunions.

VIII. Making the Council stronger and more effective

1. Participation

The Council strength stems from the commitment of each of its members who participated, each on his/her way, in advancing the Council's work programme through working groups, negotiations and networking events with other staff unions. The Council resorted to votes in limited cases and was able all over the year under review to overcome divergence of views to work on the basis of consensus. A table showing the attendance of each member in its meeting is attached as an Annex to this report.

2. SAFI situation and its impact on the Council

Many developments concerning the financial situation of SAFI will have an impact on COUNCIL activities. For memory, SAFI has since its foundation been a Swiss-registered commercial operation that pays taxes. It benefits staff in a number of ways: by providing a convenient onsite store; by providing discounted products; and by funding a number of COUNCIL activities.

While SAFI has been allocated an attractive and central location in the Palais for after the completion of the renovations, it would need, to minimize disruption, to move to a temporary facility during the renovations. This will in itself have an impact on costs and be disruptive commercially.

That is why the SAFI Board is currently working on business planning to integrate these developments, to ensure that the business remains viable and review income and expenditures. At the same time, the given option of relocation to temporary facilities outside of Palais buildings (which would need to be created) involves a likely high financial risk for

SAFI, risking at least 4-7 years of reduced sales and losses, and a possible future scenario where SAFI would not be able to continue without new capital investment from the Council. That is why, the COUNCIL submitted recently a request to the DG office, requesting her to envisage allocating spaces within the Palais buildings during the renovation period, which in itself would be the best option to ensure the continuity and viability of SAFI.

3. Financial management

The Financial Commission has been helping the Council to provide greater transparency and accountability by moving to a new accounting system. The new accounting system is a cloud-based software and can be accessed anytime and anywhere with an internet connection. It is also much cheaper than buying proprietary software and seeking technical support for software updates.

An effort was made to place the Council's cash savings into a revenue-generating time deposit. However, due to the negative interest rates given by the banks in Switzerland and neighbouring countries, the Council had no choice but to retain the cash savings for the time being. The Finance Commission continues to monitor cash balances to avoid thresholds as of which negative interest rates are applied.

The audit recommendations by the internal auditors were carefully implemented during the year.

4. Representation at the Staff-Management Committee

The Council has played an active role at the SMC. The Council's President was re-elected as member of the Contact Group in the elections by UN staff unions at the last SMC in April 2019.

At SMC, unions work together in negotiating with management. The COUNCIL tables or contributes to briefs and positions. The COUNCIL representatives actively participate in a number of working groups that deal with the policy changes related to issues such as delegation of authority, staff selection and mobility, administration of justice and part-time employment.

During the last session of SMC the Council submitted papers individually or jointly with other staff unions on fixed term and temporary contracts, performance management, internal justice, official travel, staff selection, and delegation of authority.

5. Representation through our federation, CCISUA

The Council attended in May the 34th Annual General Assembly of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) in Beirut, Lebanon. During this Assembly the Council's President was also reelected President of CCISUA. As a lead player in the Federation, we have been better able to contribute to defend your interests in various subjects such as the Pension Fund, ICSC reform, the review of the methodologies for cost of living surveys and salary surveys for respectively P and G staff.

6. Relations with other staff unions in Geneva

The Council was able to create and maintain very good working relations with all staff unions of the Geneva based organizations. The pay cut campaign was a good opportunity to foster these relations. The Council took the lead in planning and organizing the campaign. It also strived for coordinated actions with the FICSA and UNISERV federations in order to advance common causes.

Annex 1

2019-2020 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.
- Reguest 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.

Annex 2

YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE STAFF COORDINATING COUNCIL

Registration Form

Why become a dues-paying member of the Staff Coordinating Council?

The UNOG Staff Coordinating Council defends your rights as a staff member of the UN. Your Council makes sure that UN Administration pays attention to the issues that matter to you: mobility, security, salaries, etc.

Thanks to your contribution the Council also finances and makes available to your benefit:

- · Staff Gala (free refreshments)
- Children's party (your kids attend for free)
- Interagency Sports Games (your participation is subsidized)
- Legal assistance (in job-related cases)
- For sale / For rent advertisement (free publication of ads)
- SAFI (access to 13% discount the day before the scheduled date)
- ✓ Plus 10 to 20% dicounts, free services, discounted gift cards and more our partners:

Pharmacie Populaire	5-à-sec	SPORTQUEST
Ardentis-cliniques dentaires	MANOR	MATELAS TEMPUR

Europear MyColorPhone-Online Smartphone Store Léman Pneus Nyon Silhouette easycycle BymyCAR Acacias

More information on the exclusive offers and discounts for our members at http://staffcoordinatingcouncil.org/index.php/member-benefits

Think of paying your monthly subscription of CHF 10 by automatic deduction from your salary.

All you have to do is fill in this form and return it to the Council (room C-527), where it will be forwarded to the payroll office. Thank you.

Yes, I understand how important it is to contribute to my Staff Council and I wish to become a dues-paying member:

Last name:	First name:	Organisation/Division:
Index #	Signature :	•
Monthly contribution: CHF 10		

Annex 3

Attendance of the 37th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council (as of 21 January 2020)

Members of the Council		Council meetings										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ALMARIO	Francis											
APOSTOLOV	Mario											
BALD	lain											
BALI	Mohamed											
BULYCH	Yaroslav											
CHANTREL	Dominique											
CHAOUI	Prisca											
DAN	Lin											
DUPARC	Philippe											
GAZIYEV	Jamshid											
JAMES	Elizabeth											
JAQUIOT	Cédric											
KALOTAY	Kalman											
KELLY	Paul											
LEONI	Brigitte											
MEYER	Olivier											
PECK ARIF	Cathy											
POPA	Gabriela											
RICHARDS	lan											
RIOUKHINA	Evelina											
RUHANA M.	Angelique											
SAMA ITOUA	Nzété Da											
SMITH	Bradford											
STANOVIC	Marko											
TAPORAIE	Amos											

TAPORAIE	Amos						
		Ī					
Present							
Absent/excused							

Annex 4

Attendance at Executive Bureau meetings of the 37th Council (as of 21 January 2020)

