

The 35th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

Year in Review

2017-2018

22 January 2018

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Preface

This was a very busy year for the Council, dominated in time, effort and impact by the campaign against the ICSC-imposed pay cut. It brought together a large number of staff, on a scale not seen before, included demonstrations and rallies, and culminated with a work stoppage.

This was also a year in which a new Secretary-General announced important reforms. Working with the other staff unions of the UN system we have been analysing the reforms and their impact, finding pro-staff solutions and ensuring staff-management consultations are properly respected.

We were also able to make some important gains at the General Assembly on the Pension Fund and retirement age, while reversing some harsh post cuts that had been put on the table.

This was also a year to improve staff facilities, including at the UN Beach, to anticipate future commuting trends by improving cycling facilities and to safeguard proper workspace in the Palais ahead of the renovations.

Looking ahead, we must remain vigilant. Member states continue to push an austerity agenda, and the reforms may have negative consequences that need to be resisted. The work must go on!

Ian Richards
Executive Secretary
UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

Throughout a hectic 2017 the Council did its best to defend staff interests on various fronts, with three items for me being keystone in that context. Firstly, it was the pay cut for P staff in Geneva, on which the coordination between all the Geneva unions and strong staff support allowed us to be heard in New York. Although this matter was not completely closed as there will be still be a pay cut in February 2018, it will be much less significant than the one ICSC originally wanted to impose without much justification. We will continue to fight against this pay cut.

The second item is the persistent "Strategic Heritage Plan" project, and what the implementation of "smart working" means, which is just another name for "hot-desking"; grouping various organizations on campus, yes, but not at the expense of staff well-being. Plus, a crèche was finally not integrated into the project despite the Secretary General's word to have a crèche in every duty station.

The third key item is the Pension Fund and its management, where only after a legal battle certain elected staff representatives were able to have access to the Board of Directors to make the staff voice heard. The fight is not over but the Council will continue representing your interests in the Pension Fund.

Whilst these three items mainly occupied the Council throughout the year, you saw through our emails and the various meetings we organized during the year that the Council is doing its best to defend you and make your voice heard in the management of the Organization.

Thank you for giving us your trust, we are doing our best to defend your rights while trying to have constructive exchanges with the Administration both in Geneva and in New York.

We are always motivated by the protection of your rights. We have done our best to do so this year again and hope you will renew your confidence in the future. You may continue to count on your staff representatives.

Dominique Chantrel President UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

Composition of the 35th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council

Staff representatives

Dominique Chantrel President Paul Kelly Vice-President

Ian Richards **Executive Secretary**

Prisca Chaoui Deputy Executive Secretary Catherine Peck Arif Executive Bureau member Gloria Nwabuogu Executive Bureau member Jamshid Gaziyev Executive Bureau member Kalotay Kalman Executive Bureau member Mohamed Chiraz Baly **Executive Bureau member**

Francis Almario Patricia Almeida Mario Apostolov Tensai Asfaw Slim Ben Ayed Catherine Fegli Samuel Funck Elizabeth James Johnny Mellet Virginie Noblat-Pianta

Gabriela Popa Slim Rouai Marko Stanovic Amos Taporaie Mohssen Touihri Claire Vesterman

Polling officers

Astrit Sulstarova President Tor Bothner Vice-President

Ahmed Darwish Amelia Delle Foglie Liang Guoyong Madeleine Cieniewicz Mark Pryce **Neil Cumming** Oleksandr Svirchevskyy Rafik Fathi Yenlin Zhang

Auditors

Joycelyn Tay Sophie Linehan Hamed El Kady

Assistant to the Council

Froylan Silveira

Mission Statement

This year's Council has worked hard and has accomplished many things. Despite some diverging views, which are source of enrichment, all Council members have worked together as a team, with transparency and full cooperation. We believe that we should be accountable to you, the staff who have elected us. This is a summary of our year's accomplishments and achievements for you to see if we have well represented you in the way you wished.

Staff representation is an honour, a privilege and with that it brings a duty to serve responsibly and to perform. We have worked hard to implement our work programme and act in your interest.

II. Membership

While all staff are represented by the UNOG Staff Coordinating 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.

The Council aimed at increasing the number of members who contribute financially. To that end it renewed and maintained a series of partnership deals offering discounts to staff at local vendors such as Manor, Apple Store, Tamoil, Zurich insurance, Pharmacie Populaire, Europear, Mycolorphone, Curves gym, Silhouette gym, among others.

The 35th Council saw an increase of dues-paying members of 14.2% percent compared to the 34th Council (for a total of 384 dues-paying members as of the date of the present report). 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.

The Council provides a membership card for its dues-paying members. With your card, on top of the reductions offered by our partners, you also receive the following benefits:

- Access to the Council's legal assistance;
- Free use of the Council's classified notice boards;
- Participation in the Inter-Agency games is subsidized;
- Three times a year, SAFI organizes a 13 percent discount day dues-paying members are entitled to the discount one day before;
- Free access to the children's party for your children;
- Free drinks and meal vouchers during the Staff Gala;
- If you are member of a club, with 15 dues paying members, your club becomes eligible to receive financial support from the Council.

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

III. Defending staff interests

As the representative union of UN staff in Geneva, the Council has a right to be consulted on all issues affecting the careers, welfare and working conditions of staff in any secretariat department. Based on this principle, the Council assumed a proactive role in defending staff and engage Management where there had been staff rights violations and/or lack of consultation.

Meetings with Management in Geneva took place through formal channels, such as the Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC), and meetings with the Director-General, UNOG's Director of Administration, the Chief of Human Resources, and the various department heads and executive officers in Geneva.

With Management in New York, the Council communicated through ad hoc meetings and video conferences, with the Secretary-General, the SG's Chef de Cabinet and Deputy Chef de Cabinet and the Under Secretary-General for Management, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and their staff plus the Assistant Secretaries-General at the Pension Fund

The Council has also informally engaged with Member States in Geneva and at Headquarters in order to promote and defend staff interests.

1. Fighting the pay cut

In March the ICSC decided to impose a 7.7 percent pay cut for P and D staff in Geneva on the back of dubious post-adjustment calculations.

The Council was quick to react and organized a "no pay cut" campaign together with other Geneva-based unions of international organizations. The campaign included packed townhalls, rallies, demonstrations, a work stoppage and a petition with almost ten thousand signatories, showing the strength and unity of staff in Geneva and around the world.

Management has also played an important role in negotiations with the ICSC and consistently argued that they have a duty of care to staff and a managerial responsibility to implement decisions based on evidence. Staff and Management thus maintained a common position and a united front, and many Geneva-based agencies decided not to implement the cut for the time-being.

More information about the campaign, including photos and videos is here (campaign).

The campaign persuaded the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) to reconsider the issue at its summer session in Vienna.

Given the importance, staff unions from Geneva participated at the session in large numbers, including a delegation from the Council. Senior management was also well-represented, led by UNOG Director-General Michael Møller, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder, his deputy Greg Vines and WHO Assistant Director-General Dr. Hans Troedsson. Also present were two of the three expert statisticians who raised questions in this paper with regards to the ICSC's calculations, statistical rigour and application of the methodology. Together with Management, we asked that the ICSC reintroduce the gap closure method, freeze implementation for all duty stations including Geneva, Rome and Madrid, as well as review the calculations and methodology.

Consideration of the issue took place over four days. The ICSC's final decision was to:

- Reaffirm its calculations (despite the concerns raised by the expert statisticians) for all of the HQ duty stations surveyed in October 2016.
- Reintroduce a gap closure measure (mitigation buffer) of 3 percent on top of the new pay index, thus reducing the original net 7.7 percent cut by 2.7 percent.
- Implement the change from August 2017 instead of May 2017 for new staff.
- Introduce a further delay in implementation for existing staff, making the new effective implementation date February 2018.
- Conduct a review of post adjustment methodology for the future.

The delay until February 2018 for existing staff was designed to allow possible increases in the pay index thus further reducing the cut, by adjusting for:

- A pay increase for US federal civil servants, against whom our pay is benchmarked, of 1.9 percent.
- Inflation in New York that could reduce the supposed gap between purchasing power of Geneva and New York.

It should be noted that the decision by the ICSC to review its earlier decision is unprecedented and the effective reduction in the pay cut important. Also, through our collective action in Geneva, we have benefited staff in other duty stations, facing similar challenges.

However, we remain disappointed that:

- The reintroduced gap closure measure is only 3 percent, when the one that was removed in 2015 was 5 percent.
- The ICSC did not decide to review its calculations despite the many concerns raised about possible errors that would by themselves have significantly reduced the cut; this leads us to question the ICSC's role and working methods.
- The precise size of the cut is not known and that our organizations subscribe to a system that allows the pay of staff worldwide to be cut on the basis of untested calculations, and, absurdly, by the level of inflation in New York.
- The scope of the review of post adjustment methodology is vague. The ICSC's
 decision therefore doesn't address the root cause of the problem the
 methodology and its way of applying it.

In summary, the ICSC was unwilling to accept feedback from Management's statisticians and would not revise its findings that have been shown to lack robustness. This undermines the technical credibility of a body that sets staff pay. Gap closure measures do not make indefensible survey results acceptable.

The final cut, estimated to be in the region of 2 percent, will be subject to legal appeal and staff will be informed shortly about this.

2. Good news at the UN Dispute Tribunal on the compensation review

You will recall that changes were implemented in January last year to P and D compensation. Among those changes, staff with a spouse earning more than a G-1

step 1 salary and with at least one dependent child, would see year-on-year reductions in their pay.

In February 2017, having taken legal advice, we encouraged affected staff to challenge this at the UN Dispute Tribunal, with representation by OSLA.

We are pleased to inform you that your cases were heard at a specially-created three-judge panel, which met in Geneva and delivered its judgement at the end of December, and that these cuts to salary were declared illegal. You can find one of the judgements <u>here</u>.

We are following up with UN Management and the ICSC to determine next steps.

We have also asked the Secretary-General not to appeal the judgement in order to remain consistent with his earlier position and have sent him this letter.

The judgment is worth reading, particularly paragraphs 112 to 115. The judgement goes into some detail on acquired rights and we are examining whether these arguments could be used against the Geneva pay-cut being imposed by the ICSC this February.

3. All staff can now retire at 65

At the end of 2017, the General Assembly accepted a change of rules to implement the new mandatory age of separation at 65 for all staff and with immediate effect. This new mandatory age of retirement does not apply to those who were due to retire before 2018 but were exceptionally extended beyond retirement.

This was the outcome of a long and ultimately successful campaign by staff unions that received your strong support. It reflects demographic change, takes on board realities in the outside world and benefits the Pension Fund.

As we requested and the General Assembly accepted, for those who joined before 1990 or 2014 and therefore having a normal retirement age of 60 or 62, you will retain the right to a retirement benefit upon reaching 60 or 62 (subject to the usual conditions and calculations) and an early retirement benefit upon reaching 55.

If you choose to work beyond 60 or 62, the increased years of participation will simply be reflected in your retirement benefit, when you choose to take it, in line with the standard calculations.

(For information, staff who joined after 2014 have the right a retirement benefit upon reaching 65 and an early retirement benefit upon reaching 58.)

As the mandatory age of separation is now 65 for all staff, no further action is needed from you in order to work until then. However, as per the new rules, if you joined before 1990 or 2014 and wish to exercise your acquired right to separate from service at 60 or 62, or anytime thereafter before the age of 65, you will need to give written notice as stipulated in your contract i.e. 30 days before for fixed-term and three months for continuing or permanent.

4. Global Service Delivery Model

GSDM is a proposal inherited from the previous Secretary-General. It would see administrative services centralized and offshored to three global service centres. It is clear that this is likely to have a negative impact on Geneva.

The Staff Council has taken a two-pronged approach.

We have worked with other staff unions, and were ultimately successful, in agreeing mitigation measures with Management. These include proposals for a hiring freeze, retraining, redeployment opportunities, and limiting of offshored posts to those that are transactional rather than decisional.

At the same time, we have been researching whether in 2018 the savings in labour costs of moving posts elsewhere would really outweigh the savings from inevitable technological developments that would occur were the posts to remain in Geneva. At the same time, keeping posts in Geneva while using more efficient technologies, would also allow know-how to be retained and posts to be phased out more gradually while being absorbed by attrition.

The Council has decided to commission a study in order to assess the real cost of offshoring administrative services outside Geneva. At the time of writing the report, the Council is searching for a consultancy company to conduct the study.

5. Pension Fund

New elections were organized by CCISUA for the participant representatives on the Pension Board, enabling staff concerns to be taken to the fund's decision-making body.

However, the CEO sought to prevent two of the duly-elected representatives from attending the Board, putting himself in a conflict of interest situation. The two were known to be critical of the CEO's mismanagement.

A petition was organized by staff unions against this and the two representatives successfully appealed to the UN Appeals Tribunal, which ruled the CEO's actions illegal (see judgment 2017-UNAT-807 and 2017-UNAT-801).

UN participant representatives were active at the Board and ensured that the board's recommendation on the CEO's contract renewal was limited to three years instead of the five he wanted.

They also circulated two OIOS audits.

- The procurement audit focuses on a \$2.2 million contract with consulting firm PriceWaterhouse Coopers (PWC) and notes that of the total, \$1.8 million was not spent on services specified in the contract. Thus costs could have been inflated due to lack of competitive bidding for the \$1.8 million of services and greater use of partners costing \$475 an hour. It appears that procurement rules may also not have been followed.
- The <u>second audit</u> covers the implementation of the new system for paying pensions, called IPAS, whose poorly managed implementation left newly retiring staff with no income for more than nine months. It notes that a number of important elements with IPAS, including relating to payments for widows and orphans, were noted as critical, even as the system was reported to the Board and external stakeholders as being ready to implement. It could be argued that given these issues were known prior to implementation, they should have been addressed, which would have to a large extent avoided the payment backlog.

Just before Christmas the General Assembly passed a <u>resolution</u> that recognized many of the issues staff unions and participant representatives had raised with them and took action:

- It requested an OIOS audit of how the Pension Fund is governed after we revealed the Board's unwieldy structure and failure to provide effective oversight of the Fund's senior management;
- It did not approve new D-1 and P-5 posts, which were superfluous and would inflate costs at a time when many Pension Fund posts lie vacant;
- It expressed concern at continuing payment delays and requested a client grievance redress mechanism, after auditors showed that the fund had concealed a much higher backlog than it publicized;
- It also expressed concern at the slow progress in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors;
- Finally, it expressed concern at the inaccurate data provided to the actuaries, meaning we don't know the exact solvency of the Fund, and requested a strengthening of internal control procedures, after another audit report found that the Fund had misspent \$1.8 million of a \$2.2 million contract.

In December the Secretary-General also made clear that while he would accept the Board's recommendation to extend the CEO of the fund by three years (2018 to 2020) instead of the traditional five, continuation beyond 2018 would be subject to a fresh performance review and he would retain full discretion to terminate. This effectively puts the CEO, whom successive audits have shown to have mismanaged the Fund, on probation.

We must remain optimistic that the Secretary-General will take the necessary measures for any further poor performance in line with his initiative on management accountability.

The Secretary-General also heeded concerns about the Fund's investment performance and hired a new head of investments (called the Representative of the Secretary-General). He took office this month and we wish him success.

This shows that we have been able to ensure that your concerns are listened to and acted upon.

6. Better news than expected regarding impact on staff of budget cuts

Following extensive outreach to delegates in New York, the impact on staff of the budget cuts for the 2018-2019 was much less than originally expected. Proposals from certain countries that would have led to around 100 job losses in Geneva, along with promotion freezes and other drastic measures, were taken off the table.

Our outreach included meeting delegates in New York to convey staff concerns and explain how the cuts would impact programme delivery, particularly in the area of multilingualism. We coordinated this with Management counterparts. We are glad member states listened.

As a result:

- The proposed 2018 hiring/promotion freeze was removed;
- The proposed 2018 freeze on step increments was removed;
- Proposed across-the-board cuts of 10 percent to staff in programme support were removed;
- Proposed cuts of 5 percent of G staff in regional commissions were removed;
- Proposed cuts of 1;5 percent to staff in DGACM were removed;

- A proposal to require the translation of 6 pages a day, instead of the current 5, was removed:
- The proposed abolition of 2030 agenda posts, including a number of statisticians at UNCTAD, was removed;
- The proposed abolition of 70 language, library and administration posts at UNOG was removed.

However, the final resolution does contain:

- Approval of the post abolitions originally proposed by departments (although these posts had already been vacated in anticipation);
- Cuts of 10 percent to staff travel and purchase of IT equipment and furniture;
- Cuts of 25 percent to the travel of high-level experts and intergovernmental committee members (possibly a good thing);
- A delay in consideration of a regional restructuring plan for OHCHR, first proposed two years ago;
- The non-approval of the movement of seven OHCHR posts to New York even though the staff had already moved.

We are pleased that Member States listened to our concerns. At the same time we will remain vigilant with regards to the impact that the forthcoming Global Service Delivery Model and the restructuring of Departments of Management and of Field Support, will have on administrative posts in Geneva, as well as continued threats across the board to extra-budgetary funding.

7. Gender strategy

In September 2017, the Secretary-General published a UN system-wide strategy on gender policy. A full implementation plan of the strategy including policy changes will be developed in due course.

The Council has stressed that the strategy's implementation plan should aim to develop a truly enabling environment for gender equality and empowerment in the organization. Specific issues that we have flagged include:

- Address the growing trend of precarious contracts that have deleterious impact on workforce gender parity;
- Improve work-life balance to better meet the needs of staff career and their families:
- Strengthen paternal leave to match the best practice of WHO and UNICEF, which have two additional maternity leave;
- Make mobility policy more flexible, incentives-based and linked to career growth
- Tighten recruitment practices to ensure transparent, merit-based and fair selection.

In general, the Council impressed on the Secretary-General that true gender parity requires more than statistical targets. It will require change of culture, increased resources and strong political will, so that the Organization becomes one of the most progressive employers, as was intended by the UN Charter.

8. Protecting whistleblowers

We have kept true to our promise to ensure continuous review of the whistleblower policy in the UN. It is critical that we get this important issue right. In 2017, we

negotiated a revised policy (ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1), a considerable improvement on the original 2005 policy and slight adjustment from the earlier 2017 version.

Key improvements obtained by staff unions include:

- Decisions not to provide protection from retaliation can now be reviewed by the alternate Chair of the Ethics Panel, whose recommendations are to be implemented; We will monitor closely how this appeal mechanism works;
- Reporting breaches of rules or misconduct, if done in good faith and in accordance with the procedures, is a protected activity; Management had originally wanted only reports in the public interest to be protected;
- The act of whistleblowing now applies not only to staff but also to a contractor or UN partner, which prevents gaps in protection or in scope of the policy;
- The Ethics Office can take preventive action so that it can act before retaliation occurs; This was a criticism we made of the old policy;
- The review of a request for protection is reduced from 45 days to 30;
- The burden of proof is tightened up to the benefit of staff;
- The staff member who complains of retaliation will now be informed of sanctions taken against the retaliator.

We continue our advocacy concerning the outstanding issue of protection from retaliation for staff who testify at the UN tribunals as part of our broader demands in reforming the internal system of administration of justice.

9. Fighting sexual harassment

In November we took the lead to prepare a letter (below) with the Secretary-General on eliminating sexual harassment at work. We issued the letter because we believe the issue needs to be taken seriously, while acknowledging that sexual harassment is just part and parcel of the overall problem of harassment, abuse of authority and prohibited conducted at the UN workplace.

The aim of the letter is not just to state our position on this matter, but more importantly to encourage us all to reflect on our behaviours, of which we may not always be aware. Sexual harassment is far more widespread than we may think, and many of us, men and women, witness it without saying anything.

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Dear colleagues,

Today we write to reiterate our personal commitment to eliminating sexual harassment from our organization.

The United Nations has a clear policy on sexual harassment and a process to investigate allegations in a fair and confidential manner, with firm sanctions at the organization's disposal.

However, this in itself is not enough. We all have a duty and an obligation to create an environment that is welcoming to all, where everyone feels valued and where each colleague can perform at their best regardless of who they are or where they are from.

We should therefore reflect on our everyday behaviour and what we can do better as staff and as managers. Key to this is understanding that harassment covers a wide range of actions; that this includes unpleasant and inappropriate comments or suggestive remarks; and that colleagues who receive such remarks may be offended, humiliated or discouraged, even if they don't say so. Many staff, both victims and witnesses, accept this as an everyday reality. But this should not be so.

Let's support colleagues who are harassed and let's call out harassment where we see it. Staff representatives and the staff at the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Service, as well as the Ethics Office and the Staff Counsellor's Office, can assist and advise in full confidence on informal resolution or on how to make a formal complaint. Links to all these resources are below.

Harassment in any type or form offends the very principles of what we stand for as an Organization and undermines the core values of integrity, competence, and professionalism expected of all. Together we must fight it. Join us in making that change.

10. Downsizing at OCHA

New head of OCHA and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, recently announced a far-reaching restructuring plan for the department. Not only would the organigramme change, but posts would go with some offices closed entirely.

The Council, working with other staff representatives at OCHA, successfully obtained agreement for the draft downsizing rules be used in order to ensure clarity and fairness in the process.

The restructuring is ongoing at the time of writing. Staff representatives have been working hard to ensure the downsizing rules are enforced correctly and have been meeting with many staff to understand their concerns and address them.

Ultimately OCHA also needs to review a management culture that has ensured a vast number of temporary positions for ongoing functions, which by their nature, lie outside the scope of the downsizing rules. This has resulted in a large number of staff unable to exercise their rights effectively in this restructuring.

11. Internal justice

The Council has redoubled its efforts to defend the independence and effectiveness of the internal systems of justice. The membership of the Internal Justice System, mandated to advise on improvements and make judicial recommendations, includes Geneva staff representation.

Together with the Office of Staff Legal Assistance, we organized townhalls dedicated to assist staff with their queries on ways to legally challenge unlawful decisions by managers. We have also undertaken to review how legal assistance to staff could be further improved. We carried out a survey of staff who self-represented at the Geneva UN Dispute Tribunal, and are in discussions with OSLA on the results of the survey. The Council has also worked closely with Ombudsman to help individual cases of mediation and conflict resolution at workplace.

Many staff members still do not fully appreciate the importance of the internal justice system. From our experience, it is one of most important tools to challenge unfair individual decisions and improve the overall Organization's functioning in the process. The recent example relates to the reduced salaries of staff, due to the change in unified salary scale. The changes implemented in January 2017 reduced the pay of P and D category of staff with a spouse earning more than a G-1 step salary and with at least one dependent child. We advised colleagues to challenge that decision at the UN Dispute Tribunal. A three-judge panel delivered its judgments at the end of December, which declared those pay cuts illegal and reiterated the principle of acquired rights of staff.

Besides addressing individual wrongful acts, our internal justice system also helps us to rectify systemic concerns in our policies or their implementation. We rely on independent judges to interpret our sometimes contradictory and inconsistent policies

and to hold managers accountable for their decisions, creating a more responsible decision-making. The Council will therefore continue its advocacy to strengthen the independence and effectiveness of the internal justice system.

12. Strategic Heritage Plan

Three Joint Negotiating Committee meetings were held in relation with the SHP. Due to the lack of transparency from Management concerning the nature of the workspace to be implemented in the new H Building, the SCC decided to write to the SG expressing its concern about the lack of proper consultation and communication concerning the Plan. Following the letter, Management informed the SCC that flexible workspace will be implemented in the new H Building and that there was no room for any negotiation. That is why, during its 9th meeting held on the 10th of October, the Council voted unanimously on a non-confidence resolution in the SHP as it is being designed and currently implemented.

The Council participated as an observer in the collection of data by consultant company Gensler regarding office occupancy and in the focus groups that were formed. It expressed to Management its concerns about the way the observation process took place. The commissioned study conducted by Gensler revealed that individual office workspaces were utilized throughout the day at an average rate of roughly 51 per cent.

In the Fall, the ACABQ in its report to the General Assembly (A/72/7/Add.25) recommended to implement flexible workspace strategies in the new H building with a ratio of up to 1:1.25 (5 staff assigned to every 4 workstations). However, the ACABQ recommended, for the moment being, against the idea of implementing flexible workspace strategies in the old building as this will imply additional costs due to the introduction of ventilation and cooling systems.

Therefore, for the old building, as things stand today, most cellular offices (one window) will remain, although they will be renovated. There will be a few open-plan offices for up to 12 people (three windows), which departments may allocate for transient personnel as they see fit and apply hot-desking if they wish. Most staff will work in the standard offices, with two staff to an office. Senior staff will be one to an office.

Most staff will likely keep assigned desks as now.

The Council has supported ECE staff who were opposed to move to the new H building, including at senior management level. That is why, following a referendum conducted by ECE Executive secretary, the majority of staff voted against this move. The Council argued that useful substantive synergies could be created by having ECE in the same building as UNCTAD, particularly in light of the SG's proposals for development pillar reform. It also noted that Administration had been vocal in supporting hot-desking and may be disappointed not to be able to work in flexible workspace.

The Council called for a meeting between representatives of clubs and the SHP team to ensure that their needs are taken into account. Following that meeting, the plans have been reviewed and better spaces will be allocated to the Clubs, including a gym.

Despite the resolution adopted by the Council, it is maintaining its engagement with the SHP team to make the best of what is being proposed to staff in term of workspace. A local working group on SHP was established in 2016 and it is holding regular meetings whereby details of the project are being discussed and reviewed. It is clear that there is a need to remain vigilant.

On the global level, the Council pushed for the composition of a working group with Management. Its main mandate is to adopt guiding principles that apply to all renovations projects. The working group is on the verge of finalizing its work.

13. Mobility paused

Mobility was first introduced in 2016 with staff in the Polnet job network (mainly OHCHR, OCHA, DPA, DPKO), then IT staff in 2017. A decision was then made by Management in New York, without consultation, to proceed to Devnet (UNCTAD, DESA, UNEP, regional commissions) in 2018.

However, following our advocacy, the Secretary-General took the decision in October to pause mobility pending a review.

We had noted that over the last two years, since mobility started, we received a large number of complaints about the system.

These complaints include:

- arbitrariness in which posts are included;
- slowness in filling vacancies, slowing career development and leading to a concurrent rise in temporary appointments to fill the gap;
- recurrent instances of OCHA and OHCHR keeping certain posts out of the mobility system, resulting in an unequal treatment of staff;
- devaluation of specialized knowledge;
- hours of online testing backed by deficient IT;
- lack of support for gender equality;
- over-centralization; and
- the concurrent reduction in mobility and field related allowances by our friends at the ICSC on the basis that with a mobility policy in place, it no longer needed to be incentivized.

Further, the system proved to be particularly inefficient. The last time a managed mobility exercise had taken place, which was in July 2016, it was only able to move 22 of the 241 staff that wanted a new assignment - a 9 percent success rate. This despite the large number of staff assigned to make it work.

We took the opportunity to relay staff concerns to Antonio Guterres, arguing that it was clunky, slow and expensive. At the global townhall in July we paraphrased a former British prime-minister by saying that "never in the history of the UN have so many people spent so much time to move so few people at such great cost."

We are now participating in the review of mobility and are bringing staff concerns to the table. In line with Guterres's call for greater flexibility and decentralization we expect that if mobility returns, it won't do so in such a top-heavy nor centralized form, and may not be as universal. Indeed, it is not clear to us how a policy designed to move humanitarian staff around refugee camps should apply to economists, lawyers, statisticians and social scientists with fairly specialized skills and where operational needs are very different.

In the meantime, and pending the outcome of the review, we have been informed that all new Polnet and Itecnet vacancies that are advertised (i.e. those that fell vacant since the last batch of vacancies were advertised) will be advertised and filled the previous way (as per www.undocs.org/st/ai/2010/3).

14. Temporary appointments

We have 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.

Work already began with human resources personnel in Geneva to get a better understanding of how temporary appointments are being used and what could permit better types of contract to be provided by departments when funding permits.

The opportunity to begin discussions on this point with management in New York, in order to push for a change of rules, was delayed by the change of leadership at OHRM and the Department of Management. However, the timeline of the Secretary-General's management reform, means proper discussions can now begin this February.

15. Improving parental leave

Many of you have noted that the Organization's policy on parental leave does not reflect modern practice, including on:

- length of leave and start date;
- possibility to share leave between parents;
- leave for adoption or for surrogacy;
- · donation of leave; and
- conditions for staff on temporary appointments.

To this end, and in line with our work programme, we have set up a global working group with Management to review the policy.

A townhall organized on the subject collected a number of important and useful ideas from staff that will be used as inputs for the working group.

16. Staff selection

The Council continued monitoring the implementation of the new staff selection and mobility policy. We held several townhalls to gauge staff views, especially those who have gone through POLNET mobility and those who were about to become subject to the new rules. We heard staff concerns that the new selection system has not worked well. It has become bloated with disproportionate tests, incapacitated by complex mobility system and painfully slow. As a result, more staff have felt they are moving much less laterally or upward.

The Council has taken staff feedback on board and convinced the new Secretary-General to put the faulty system on hold in 2018 and review it t to make staff selection more agile, staff-friendly and accountable. We are scheduled to have a series of consultations with the Administration in the course of 2018-19. Meanwhile, the old staff selection policy (ST/AI/2010/3) will apply.

17. Staff Relations Management Group

The Council has been an active member of the SRMG that was established by the Department of Conference Management (DCM) in 2015. It collected views and concerns of staff from the Division and submitted them to the SRMG to be examined and reviewed. Main achievements of the SRMG can be summarized as follows: possibility offered to GS staff members to take part in a cross-assignment for a three-month period; launch of a pilot project to evaluate DCM senior management;

issuance of quarterly communication from the DCM Director to all DCM staff members on issues of concern (staff development, gender equality, selection processes); clarification of language classes policy for GS staff members in LS; introduction of a "spouse recusal" memorandum in order to protect staff members from potential conflict of interest; more transparency on mission assignments in PSS and CPCS through the development of lists of staff members having already participated in missions; managers have been instructed to provide feedback to internal candidates who have been unsuccessful in a selection exercise.

18. Security

Last year we saw a change at the leadership level of the Security and Safety Service. The Council has tried to establish good relationships with the new leadership to be able to deal with individual as well as systemic problems.

The Council assisted many staff from the Service who were in conflict with Management. It also looked into issues related to the renewal of contracts, the way investigations are conducted as well as the psychological tests conducted among G2 staff. The Council also covered the cost of external legal representation for a group of G3 staff who were in conflict with Management I relation to a selection process.

Through its representative in the Joint Committee for Health and Safety at the Workplace, the Council succeeded in convincing Management to conduct tests at the entrances of the Palais to assess the level of risks to which security staff are exposed as a result of the inhalation of toxic gases during the car boots checking. An expert from SECO was due to conduct the tests in December, however the date was postponed due to bad weather conditions.

19. G1 to G4 Group

The G1-G4 group has been established by the Council and endorsed by Management in 2014. Its mandate is to review selection cases for the G1-G4 categories. The group which is currently composed of 6 elected members of the Council has been very active in reviewing cases that have been submitted to it, making comments and requesting clarifications when needed and thus ensuring that selection processes for the G1-G4 categories are just and fair.

20. 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 Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA).

21. Private schools in Geneva and the education grant

The new education grant system changes the lists of reimbursable and non-reimbursable items. As a result, only tuition and capital assessment fees are now reimbursable.

Aware of the impact this would have on parents, we met with the Association genevoise des écoles privées, which includes international schools.

During the meeting we discussed the impact that changes to the education grant and Geneva post adjustment would have on staff. According to our calculations, those

changes will particularly affect staff with younger families, who are also more likely to be at more junior grades.

Following the meeting, two issues will be examined further:

- The method of billing currently items which are compulsory such as lunchtime supervision and compulsory courses, continue to be billed separately when, in our opinion, these are related to tuition and should therefore be part of the core education grant. The separate billing is done to conform to the needs of multinational enterprises, which continue to remain important customers for private schools;
- The pricing of more junior grades in view of the purchasing power of parents with young children.

We will keep you updated on this matter.

22. Better facilities for cyclists

The Council has been active in the UNOG mobility working group to ensure facilities for the increasing number of staff who come to work by bike. As part of the working group it held two townhalls with staff on the issue, which showed concerns regarding entry points, signage, cycling lanes, parking and proposals for maintenance facilities.

The working group has submitted a report to administration on the matter.

23. Swiss tax

Following the success of the Townhall held about the French tax regime, the Council organized a Townhall on the Swiss tax regime entitled: Swiss Taxation of International Civil Servants: Selected Issues". The townhall was facilitated by Mr. Philippe Ehrenstrom (Lawyer at the Geneva Bar and expert in international taxation matters). His presentation triggered a number of questions that were of great interest to all participants. The feedback given has been very positive.

IV. 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. The Council received one request for funding from Ex-Tempore poetry magazine, which was approved. Logistical support was also provided for different clubs for booking spaces and sending broadcast. At the time of writing, the Council is trying to ensure adequate space is being given to the Chess club. Moreover, the Council has continued to provide drinking water in the sports room located on the 8th floor.

The Council requested that a meeting be held between the SHP team and clubs' representatives in order for them to communicate their needs in terms of space. The Council collected clubs' inputs and transmitted to the SHP team. This resulted in ensuring that proper spaces will be given to clubs in the renovated and new building.

2. UN Special

Un Special magazine is a staff magazine owned by both UNOG Staff Coordinating Council and WHO Staff Association. The Editorial Board of the magazine made tremendous efforts to encourage UNOG staff to contribute to the magazine. As a result, the magazine saw an increase in the numbers of articles written by staff and of interest for staff. Moreover, the magazine was extensively used during the campaign against the pay cut as a tool to raise awareness in the international Geneva about the impact of such cut. The overall feedback of staff has been quite positive.

3. Improvements at UN Beach

The Council and Management worked closely together in order to manage the beach club during the summer season of 2017, following changes to the statutes.

Improvements included:

- A new caterer running the restaurant following significant complaints last year;
- A new bar set up by the changing rooms, allowing you to buy drinks without going to the restaurant;
- A pétanque pitch was created;
- The paddle boards, many of which were in a poor state, were repaired;
- Payment at the entrance was restricted to debit and credit card only in order prevent cash leakage; This also allowed the purchasing of memberships directly at the door;
- The paddle boards and pedalos are now for members only and will no longer be rented out;
- Summer sailing courses for children and sunset cruises for adults were organized;
- New Italian-style sun loungers were purchased;
- All guards received first aid training;
- The entrance to the club was improved and shelter provided for the guards;
- New fencing was put in to prevent unauthorized access;
- Paddleboard yoga classes were introduced.

The Council has also approved a new paddling pool, that will include filter, pumping and cleaning systems, and play equipment. This will provide a much-needed facility for young parents with restless children, and also diversify the beach's users. Planning permission has also been sought for a floating pontoon that will provide additional sunbathing space, a slide that goes into the lake and additional boat spaces.

Additional improvements foreseen for the summer 2018 season include more afterwork parties, windsurf classes, sailing classes for adults, and sports competitions.

4. Discounts for staff

The Council has been very active in trying to enlarge the scope of the discounts provided to staff. That is why, better discounts were negotiated with important local service providers like Tamoil, Apple store and Zurich insurance. For more details about the discounts, please consult the Council's <u>website</u>. The feedback received from staff was very encouraging.

5. Children's Spring party

The Children party took place on Wednesday 3 May. Over 200 children participated. A new company was recruited to organize the party which was proven to be very successful according to the feedback received. Many games were proposed in the Park, including face painting and photo shooting. Children enjoyed a theatre play and a snack generously offered by Eldora. The party ended with a disco and children left with a small treasure box, their portrait and a smile on the face.

6. Staff party

The staff party was held on 8 December. Once again it featured the world karaoke stage, which proved to be hugely popular, as well as local band High Lives, and the staff jazz band and a new staff rock band called the Intergalactic Catstronauts.

Staff, consultants, interns, partners and friends enjoyed themselves until three in the morning.

7. 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. These concerts were much appreciated by staff.

8. Inter-Agency Games 2017

This year the Inter-Agency Games were held in Vienna in May 2017. Unlike in previous years where package deals included accommodation, participants had to pay accommodation separately on their own. For that reason, the Council exceptionally agreed to subsidize 100% of registration costs (which exclude accommodation) of its dues-paying members who attended the games – instead of the traditional 50% subsidy which included accommodation.

9. Fundraising for humanitarian emergencies

Upon the request of a Peruvian group of staff, a collection to raise funds to assist the victims of the natural disaster that strongly hit Peru was organized with the support of the Council. The collected amount was matched by the Council as per its usual practice and in line with its guidelines on collections. The matched amount was transferred to the International federation of red cross and red crescent societies (IFRC).

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 doesn't intervene in the relation that may be established between the crèche and the staff members. The feedback received so far was positive.

v. Communication with staff

The Council is accountable to you for its actions, and in turn is made all the stronger by the active support and feedback it receives. We have kept you informed of all our positions and of matters affecting or likely to affect you. We have listened and understood your concerns and most definitely benefited from your feedback. We have made extensive use of the communication tools available to us.

1. Email broadcasts

As of 17 January 2018 the 35th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council had sent out 111 email broadcasts. Our broadcasts have informed you 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. www.staffcoordinatingcouncil.org

The Council's website contains all the news updates on the activities of the Council, important documents, contacts, information on meetings, the services the Council provides and on the clubs and societies, and upcoming events.

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. www.facebook.com/unstaffunions.

vi. Making the Council stronger and more effective

1. Participation

The Council strength stems from the commitment of each if its members. All Council members have participated, each on his/her way, in advancing the Council work programme through taking part in 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 Council member in its meeting is attached as an Annex to this report.

2. Financial management

The Finance Commission, has instituted some new projects to improve the transparency, accountability and financial standing of the Council as follows:

- Use of credit card facilities the Finance Commission implemented a corporate credit card facility to simplify and streamline the requisitioning and payment of miscellaneous goods and services including official travel of Council members;
- CCISUA receivable the receivable, amounting to CHF 22'715 was already collected in November 2017;
- Hiring of external auditors an external auditor was hired, with approval from the Council, to audit the books of accounts and perform detailed testing of the Council's documents. This is the first time that an external auditor has been engaged to oversee the audit of the books. The external auditors have started their work on January 2018;
- Council investments the Finance Commission recommended to the Executive Bureau to look into project in which to invest Council reserves. Options include the crèche project and/or purchasing of real estate, bearing in mind that the overall objective of any investment is to generate staff welfare whilst generating income to the Council.

3. Representation at the Staff-Management Committee

The Council has played an active role at Staff-Management Committee (SMC). The Council's Executive Secretary was re-elected to hold the position of Vice-President in the elections by UN staff unions at the last SMC in April 2017.

At SMC, unions work together in negotiating with the Administration. We table or contribute to briefs and positions. Our staff reps have chaired or actively participated in a number of working groups, which are currently negotiating on such important policy changes as selection system, mobility, GSDM, flexible workspace and so on.

The Council has also used the SMC to improve the implementation of the current policies, for example incoherent or arbitrary execution of travel policy. This report has flagged other issues that the Council has brought to SMC in 2017.

We have approached the Secretary-General on the urgent need to review the current harassment policy in the UN, which requires urgent improvements. The Secretary-General has heard our reasons and is about to confirm his decision on when negotiations at SMC will commence.

In July this year, the Secretary-General announced his plans for UN Management review, aiming for more freedom of movement, more decentralization, more effectiveness, and increased transparency and accountability. Staff are important stakeholders in the reform, and we have convinced Administration to have a dedicated session to include staff views in the process. The ad-hoc SMC on management reforms will take place on 6-8 February 2017.

4. Representation through our federation, CCISUA

The Council attended in June 2017 the 32nd Annual General Assembly of the Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During this meeting our Council's Executive Secretary was also re-elected as the President of CCISUA. By now being the lead player in the Federation, we have been better able to contribute to defend your interests in various subjects such as the Pension Fund, the pay cut, the retirement age issue, and the compensation package, among other things.

5. 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 federation in order to advance common causes.

Annex 1

Work Programme

Mindful of the difficult times we face but also aware of the opportunities that a new leadership at the UN can bring, and the clear mandate provided to the Council by staff, we have resolved to prioritize the following objectives this year. In doing so, we will use all forms of staff-management fora that are available to us and take this opportunity to affirm our belief in the importance of ensuring a system of staff-management relations in line with international human rights law and ILO fundamental work rights.

To protect jobs and promote careers, the Council will:

- Advocate for faster and fairer staff selection, more closely linked to performance.
- Review mobility policy so it helps staff get positions that best match their skills and expectations.
- Bring the UN in line with other international organizations by fighting to remove the G to P barrier.
- Identify career bottlenecks for staff and work with Management to try to resolve these.
- Push for the systematic and timely advertising of vacant posts.
- Promote Geneva as a duty station and highlight its benefits in terms of productivity, continuity and attractiveness for staff with families.
- Ensure restructurings, including by Umoja, have staff buy-in, and mitigate job losses through an external hiring freeze in affected sectors, plus on all G positions.

To improve the quality of the work environment and support staff welfare, the Council will:

- Advocate for office space that allows staff to focus on their work and be efficient, such as shared offices.
- Push for the Palais renovations (SHP) to serve the needs of staff and the organization rather than the short term financial gains of the project.
- Challenge demoralizing cuts to our pay at the UN Dispute Tribunal and ICSC.
- Work with schools for fees that reflect the new reality of the education grant with a view to making it more affordable.
- Protect our Pension Fund, keep it in the UN, and improve its governance and sustainability, while supporting its hard-working staff.
- Push for zero-tolerance on harassment and retaliation, and hold Management accountable for misconduct.
- Work with Management to address issues identified in the global staff survey.
- Review parental leave to support gender diversity and non-traditional families. Make flexible working arrangements automatic, not discretionary.
- Provide support to staff recreational activities.
- Advocate for the granting of Legitimation Cards to meet the needs of staff and their families.

To keep staff informed and involved, the Council will:

- Hold regular townhalls.
- Inform staff through broadcasts on subjects of concern.
- Survey staff on key issues and developments.

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		



35th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 35^{ème} Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

Annex 3 Attendance at Council meetings (as of 18 January 2018)

Members of the Council	Council meetings										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ALMARIO Francis											
ALMEIDA Patricia											
APOSTOLOV Mario											
ASFAW Tensai											
BALY Mohamed Chiraz											
BEN AYED Slim											
CHANTREL Dominique											
CHAOUI Prisca											
FEGLI Catherine											
FUNCK Thomaz Samuel											
GAZIYEV Jamshid											
JAMES Elizabeth											
KALOTAY Kalman											
KELLY Paul											
MELLET Johnny											
NOBLAT-PIANTA Virginie											
NWABUOGU Gloria											
PECK ARIF Catherine											
POPA Gabriela											
RICHARDS lan											
ROUAI Slim											
STANOVIC Marko											
TAPORAIE Amos											
TOUIHRI Mohssen											
VESTERMAN Claire											

Present	
Absent/excused	



35th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council 35^{ème} Conseil de coordination du personnel de l'ONUG

Annex 4

Attendance at Executive Bureau meetings (as of 18 January 2018)

Members of the Executive Bureau		Executive Bureau meetings																						
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
BALY, Mohamed Chiraz																								
CHANTREL, Dominique																								
CHAOUI, Prisca																								
GAZIYEV, Jamshid																								
KALOTAY, Kalman																								
KELLY, Paul																								
NWABUOGU, Gloria																							·	
PECK ARIF, Catherine																								
RICHARDS, Ian																								

Present	
Absent/excused	