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Geneva, 10 February 2020

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

**Equal Pay for UNOG Staff - Two years and still waiting**

It is now two years since the imposition of the illegal pay cut on UNOG staff. During this time, loyal, hardworking UN employees have suffered significant financial losses, impacting heavily on family life in one of the world's most expensive cities. Unsurprisingly, the effect on morale has been considerable, as evidenced in our comprehensive staff survey conducted at the end of 2019.

The disaffection felt by so many people in Geneva was communicated to you directly at the town hall meeting on 16 December. You witnessed the anger and frustration of people who are working alongside colleagues from other specialized agencies, doing the same value work, yet being discriminated against simply because they work for the UN.

We were encouraged by your initial response to this meeting, as you reaffirmed your commitment to the principle of equal pay, stating it is "a norm that should be respected everywhere". However, nearly two months later and staff have yet to see any action to address this injustice and the discrimination goes on. Just when we thought matters could not get any worse, we have discovered that the General Assembly have passed resolution 74/142 establishing International Equal Pay Day.

The text of the resolution "*invites all Member states, relevant organizations of the United Nations system (...) to observe International Equal Pay Day in an appropriate manner, in order to celebrate the efforts of all stakeholders to achieve equal pay for equal value and urge the further action required to achieve the goal of equal pay for equal value work for all, and encourages all stakeholders to continue to support the goal of equal pay for work of equal value*".

The appalling irony of the UN calling for equal pay for equal value work whilst denying it for its own employees is not lost on UN staff in Geneva. For people working here, it seems that we are being deliberately prevented from receiving the same rights that the UN are so ready to proclaim for others. Such double standards are a disgrace and it is no wonder staff are so disenchanted with UN management.

For two years UN staff in Geneva have had to live with the consequences of an illegal pay cut. It is to the UN's immense shame that throughout this time it has failed to right this wrong, instead choosing to prevent a satisfactory resolution by taking the issue to the UN Dispute Tribunal.

Mr Secretary General, it is time to put our own house in order. Failure to deliver equal pay justice for UN staff will destroy any credibility the UN may wish to have on such matters. No amount of lofty resolutions or finely crafted words will save the reputational damage from denying your employees equal pay.

I look forward to your response.

Prisca Chaoui  
Executive Secretary

Mr Antonio Guterres  
UN Secretary-General

CC: Ms Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Chef de Cabinet  
Ms Tatiana Valovaya, UNOG Director-General  
Ms Catherine Pollard, USG for Management Strategy, Policy, Compliance