UNOG Staff Coordinating Council



ONUG Conseil de coordination du personnel

The 39th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council



Year in Review

2021-2022

January 2022

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Preface

As the new Executive Secretary, I must say that it has been a busy year with a steep learning curve. I strived to keep the Council and staff at large informed of all activities and developments concerning staff-management issues. As part of a dynamic Bureau, we represented your interests at all levels of management, including at United Nations Headquarters and in various fora, including the JNC, SMC and the ICSC with respect to, *inter alia*, contractual frameworks and job security; salaries, post-adjustment, and entitlements; staff safety; career development; delegation of authority and accountability; gender and racism; the performance management system, and the pension fund. We made progress through our advocacy with respect to a number of issues, for example, the issuance of continuing contracts, roster exercises, reimbursement of quarantine costs for official travel, the establishment of a transparent case tracking system for cases before the United Nations Dispute Tribunal and improvements to the pension fund. We worked tirelessly and with dedication to protect your interests and hope to continue to do so in the future.

Bradford Smith Executive Secretary

2021 was another exceptional year for all staff, a year full of professional and personal challenges. The past has taught us that exceptional times might be used to introduce changes that can be detrimental to staff. That is why the Staff Council has remained seized of all matters that pose threat to staff conditions of work, such as the attempts to change the contractual arrangements.

Defending your working conditions did not prevent us from looking after your well-being that is at the core of our mandate. That is why, we have relayed your concerns to management regarding the impact of the imposed teleworking on your work-life balance. We have also maintained a direct contact with you through the organization of regular town hall meetings as well as through regular communication via broadcasts and social media. We hope that 2022 will be a year where a gradual return to normal could be envisaged.

Prisca Chaoui President

Composition of the 39th Staff Coordinating Council

Elected staff representatives:

President	CHAOUI Prisca	
Vice-President	PECK ARIF Catherine	
Executive Secretary	SMITH Bradford	
Deputy Executive Secretary	BALI Mohamed	
Other members of the Executive Bureau	DUPARC Philippe JOHNSON Laura KALOTAY Kalman (until 2 September 2021)	MEYER Olivier POPA Gabriella (as of 3 September 2021) RICHARDS Ian
Treasurer	ALMARIO Francis	
Other Council members	ABDELLAOUI Naima ALEKSANDROVA Anna ALLEK Meriem APOSTOLOV Mario BATAC Cecilia CHANTREL Dominique COLANGELO Roberto DAN Lin	HERMELINK Ursula JACQUIOT Cédric NGUYEN Ngoc KHAN Anjum LEWIS-LETTINGTON Nicole OUAFFO WAFANG Caroline (until 25 April 2021) MONNET Aminata (as of 26 April 2021)
	GAZIYEV Jamshid	

Polling officers:

Auditors:

None elected.

SULSTAROVA Astrit (President) BOTHNER Tor (Vice-President) SRINIVASAN Divya ARIPOV Djurabek CIENIEWICZ Madeleine SVIRCHEVSKYY Oleksandr FATHI Rafik ZHANG Yenlin LIU Ying

Assistant to the Council: SILVEIRA Froylan

I. Summary of work programme implementation

	protect pay, jobs and omote careers, the SCC II:	Status
1.	In the context of the Secretary-General's reform agenda (A/72/492) and the new global human resources strategy (A/73/372), work to protect and promote contract security, address the increase in consultancy and the use of temporary appointments for ongoing functions.	We have successful prevented the introduction of a new flexible and less secure type of contract to date and will continue to advocate for maintaining the current contractual arrangements. We have also raised the issue of temporary appointments for ongoing functions with several heads of entities.
2.	Work with other unions to improve how pay for G and P staff is calculated.	We continue working within the context of the ICSC to protect salaries and other entitlements, including by opposing the use of external data for the purposes of calculating the salary of the GS category and we asked for the inclusion of all staff in locally recruited categories in the staff statistics. We also asked to ensure that in case of the lowering or discontinuation of an allowance, staff who are on board will continue to receive the allowance in the same amount for no more than 12 months and after, the allowance would be discontinued, or its level aligned with the survey results. The ICSC endorsed all the recommendations reached in the working group. A new compensation package for staff in the P and above categories has been in place since 2016 following a review of the package in 2015, which resulted in discontinuation of certain entitlements. We will continue to closely follow-up these issues and oppose any further cuts to your entitlements.
3.	Work to prevent further decreases in salaries, including by advocating for a postponement of the cost-of- living survey scheduled for 2021.	Although we advocated for a postponement of the cost-of-living survey, the ICSC was under tremendous pressure by the GA to address the two post adjustment multipliers in use in Geneva. We held discussions with the ICSC raising concerns about the lower post adjustment for our staff in Geneva and expressed the need for a fairer outcome from the ICSC. We hope that the cost-of-living survey, which is currently taking place, results in an increase in the post adjustment for our staff.
4.	Advocate for the inclusion of ILO standards and labour rights in how our conditions of service are set and improve the consultative process regarding new policies impacting working conditions of staff, including the Performance Management and Development System.	We have been working within the SMC to ensure that consultations take place on all administrative issuances relating to conditions of work and staff welfare. We have strengthened ties with our sister staff unions and the federation to which we belong, CCISUA, to better coordinate our positions vis-à-vis management.
5.	Protect jobs from arbitrary downsizing and unnecessary offshoring.	We have continued to advocate for a more humane downsizing policy ensuring that staff subject to downsizing are provided alternative employment options within the system. This matter has been discussed within the SMC and management has been receptive to staff representatives' views in this regard. We have also held discussions with heads of entities on downsizing in the context of reorganizations and offshoring to limit the impact on jobs.

6.	Address the impact on jobs, workload and working conditions in relation to the introduction of new technologies on certain categories of staff.	We have been advocating both in Geneva and at United Nations Headquarters for safer working conditions for interpreters in the context of hybrid meetings and the need for ISO compliant platforms along with other measures to address their health concerns. We have also been advocating both in Geneva and New York with respect to numerous concerns of translators and revisers in light of the new workload standard established by the General Assembly and the shortcomings of eLuna, a translation interface specifically developed for the translation of United Nations documents.
7.	Continue to advocate equal leave for staff on temporary appointments.	We have made progress regarding this matter. Staff representatives have been advocating for this change for quite some time and the ICSC has now made a recommendation to the General Assembly to increase the leave from 1.5 to 2.5 days.
8.	In the new human resources policy, advocate for merit- based and non-discriminatory staff selection and promotion processes with a view to ensuring diversity in all its forms, as well as advocate for voluntary mobility.	We have made inputs along these lines at the SMC plenary and ad hoc meetings. The Performance Management Framework was launched in October 2021 and will eventually result in changes to the performance management system, including performance appraisals, recruitment and selection, competency-based interviews and other areas. It is still very much a work in progress. The new framework will also seek to eliminate/minimize bias from the recruitment and selection processes, which is linked to diversity. We will continue to follow-up on this area.
9.	Continue to advocate for career prospects for all staff, including General Service staff and Young Professional Programme staff (YPP-NCE), as part of a strategy for greater diversity and geographic representation.	We continue to advocate for the elimination of the G-to-P barrier and greater career prospects for G staff within the SMC. The Working Group within SMC dealing with this issue now had a broader mandate to gather and analyse data and to make recommendations. We also advocated for better career prospects for YPPs, especially those stuck at the P-2 level, within the SMC as well as with heads of entities. AT SMC, it was reported that the YPP programme is being reviewed. We will continue to follow-up both of these issues.
10.	Advocate for the greater independence of the internal justice system.	We have pushed for changes to the internal system of justice both within the Internal Justice Council (IJC) and within the SMC. We are happy to report that a new case tracking system has been launched pursuant to General Assembly resolution based upon a recommendation of the IJC. Another proposal to strengthen rescission or reinstatement as a remedy in the case of unlawful termination was rejected by management at the SMC. We will continue to push for changes to the internal system of justice with the aims of improving efficiency, transparency and fairness.
11.	Maintain our solidarity with the Fair Internships movement.	CCISUA asked for the payment of stipends for interns. The General Assembly requested the ICSC to identify good practices and provide advice to common systems organizations, including by measures to support interns from developing countries.

To improve the work environment and support staff welfare, the SCC will:	Status
 Ensure that measures adopted in the context of the COVID-19 and post-COVID- 19 pandemic do not negatively impact staff health and welfare. 	We have engaged with management on this issue, first and foremost, to ensure the health of staff. We supported all hygienic measures and discussed other possibilities to protect staff at UNOG. We conducted a survey to obtain a better understanding of the views of staff on this very sensitive matter. We pushed for vaccine certificates for the dining area of the cafeteria as no other mitigating measures were possible and this was the least restrictive measure that would ensure the safety of staff while eating without a mask. We also engaged with management on the Secretary-General guidelines on the return to work and mandatory vaccinations for certain categories of staff. We urged management to take a very narrow approach with respect to this delegation of authority, to involve Medical Services as well as to accommodate staff who do not wish to be vaccinated. We have had some success in keeping the number of staff subject to mandatory vaccination very limited. We will continue to advocate for accommodating staff where possible.

2.	Limit the impact of increased productivity requirements on the health and wellbeing of staff.	We have been very much engaged with this issue at both Headquarters and Geneva, in particular relating to new workload standards for translators and revisers. We have held numerous meetings with staff and management, have assisted staff in filing legal challenges, and have also discussed within the SMC. This is a matter that will require additional follow-up.
3.	Support staff in speaking out against misconduct, promote the improvement of investigation mechanisms, and ensure that appropriate measures are taken for accountability purposes.	We have raised issues of misconduct with heads of entities and have also raised this within SMC in the context of the delegation of authority and the need for stronger accountability mechanisms. We have provided information on both informal and formal procedures to staff and have assisted staff in filing complaints.
4.	Combat all forms of discrimination and advocate for a more inclusive workplace in which staff are treated equally regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexual orientation, ability and gender.	We advocated for a strong policy on dealing with racial discrimination and we understand that the relevant administrative issuance is being revised as part of the Secretary-General's strategy on addressing racism in the workplace. We organized two awareness-raising discussions entitled Let's Talk About Race for Geneva staff. We are working within the Geneva Working Group on Combatting Racism in the Workplace to also address this issue, including policy and awareness-raising initiatives. We have raised the issue of gender parity with management and with heads of entities also highlighting that gender parity measures should be balanced with career aspirations of current staff.
5.	Improve work life balance through reviewing parental leave and ensuring that flexible working arrangements are applied fairly.	We advocated for a fairer implementation across all entities and offices of the FWA policy at SMC as well as with heads of entities in Geneva. Management agreed to consider feedback provided by staff representatives at SMC during the revision of the policy. Parental leave was discussed within the ICSC where a working group was put in place, with the staff position being equal treatment for all parents for the non- medical recovery part.
6.	Advocate for a safe and secure workspace in the context of SHP.	We worked with management and the SHP transition team to address staff concerns. The SCC also contacted the Joint Committee on Health and Safety, which issued recommendations to management. Management responded providing information on corrective measures to reduce noise, address issues related to temperature and humidity, as well as hygiene and emergency issues.
7.	Support the development of staff facilities and ensure support to clubs.	The SCC has continued to support the operations of UN Port. It has and continues to push for space to be provided to clubs despite building closures due to the renovations.
8.	Explore growth in Council funding through membership dues, the staff magazine UN Today and other sources.	Due to the pandemic, our income from Safi is down, but we have had some modest success with income from advertisements in the staff magazine UN Today. Membership dues remain stable.

	b keep staff informed and volved, the SCC will:	Status
1.	Hold regular town hall meetings and inform staff through frequent broadcasts and other channels, including the staff magazine UN Today.	We held a general town hall, which focused on contractual arrangements, the cost-of living survey, SHP and the SMC. We also held town hall meetings on the pay cut and on the cost-of-living survey. We assisted in organizing a global town hall for interpreters and revisers. We held two briefings for staff on racism in the workplace entitled "Let's Talk About Race". We sent out numerous broadcasts to staff as well as communications to relevant entities updating staff on all relevant matters.
2.	Survey staff on key issues and developments.	We have conducted a number of surveys, including on the Future of Work, health and safety issues regarding the H building, staff moral and welfare in the context of COVID-19, on strengthening health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as assisted in organizing a global survey of translators and revisers regarding the impact of new workload standards.

3.	Publish information on the roles and responsibilities of Council members.	The Regulations of the Council and the Rules of Procedures both contain information on the roles and responsibilities of Council members and are available to staff. Both documents are outdated and need to be revised to reflect current working methods. This is something that we are currently working on.
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II. United Nations Common System Issues

1. International Civil Service Commission

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), which makes recommendations on our pay and conditions of service, met in Geneva from 16 to 27 August 2021. Below is a summary of the meeting and what the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council was able to obtain for you, which was broadcasted to all staff in September 2021. There were many positive developments. However, some important areas of concern remain.

2. Post adjustment issues

Despite the fact that CCISUA as well as the Chief Executive Board (CEB) expressed their strong reservations regarding any cost-of-living survey round to be conducted in 2021, the ICSC decided to launch the cycle for 2021.

We reiterated our main concerns, namely that staff consumption patterns have been distorted due to the pandemic, making it risky to have a cost-of-living survey at this time as the results of the survey will be implemented over the next 5 years. The ICSC was of the view that each Local Salary Survey Committee (LSSC) would decide if such a survey would take place based on the assessment of criteria decided during the spring session of the ICSC.

3. Comprehensive Assessment of the compensation package

As you know, a new compensation package for staff in the P and above categories has been in place since 2016 following a review of the package in 2015. The ICSC was tasked by the General Assembly to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the compensation package. The ICSC concluded that the objectives of the review were met overall.

CCISUA along with the other two staff federations conducted a survey in August in this regard. Based on the results of the survey, we indicated staff dissatisfaction mainly with the discontinuation of the annual step increments and the accelerated step increase linked to language proficiency as well as the discontinuation of the accelerated home leave cycle for C, D and E duty stations.

4. Education grant

The ICSC decided to recommend to the General Assembly to adjust the reimbursement scale and boarding lump sum as of the academic year in progress on 1 January 2022 to reflect the increase in school fees.

We expressed our concerns regarding the changes in the list of admissible fees and the discontinuation of the payment of the boarding assistance to dependents of staff in H duty stations.

5. Salary survey methodologies for staff in GS category

The ICSC considered a report from the working group on GS salary survey methodologies, in which staff federations took part, and that was tasked with reviewing how GS salaries are calculated.

In the deliberations of the working group, we were opposed to the use of external data for the purposes of calculating the salary of the GS category and we asked for the inclusion of all staff in locally recruited categories in the staff statistics. We also asked to ensure that in case of the lowering or discontinuation of an allowance, staff who are on board will continue to receive the allowance in the same amount for no more than 12 months and after, the allowance would be discontinued, or its level aligned with the survey results. The ICSC endorsed all the recommendations reached in the working group and agreed to continue discussing other issues in relation to the GS salary survey methodologies during an upcoming session of the Working Group.

6. Geographic diversity

The ICSC encouraged the organizations to widen the base of posts available for equitable geographical distribution in those organizations that had targets or desirable ranges and the organizations that did not have targets to ensure equitable geographic representation to establish clear indicators to track progress in this regard.

In view of the importance of this issue, we have asked for the creation of a working group that deals with this issue and makes recommendations to the ICSC, but this proposal was not accepted.

7. Gender Parity

The ICSC noted that modest progress has been made in the common system organizations. The ICSC noted with concern the slow pace and the disproportionate parity between the West and the rest of the world. The ICSC encouraged the organizations to continue implementing existing gender policies.

We mentioned the importance of avoiding a binary definition of gender in order to have an inclusive approach to gender. We also insisted on the fact that gender parity should benefit all women regardless of the region to which they belong.

8. Age distribution

The ICSC recalled the importance of the age diversity in the common system organizations and called on the organizations to review their recruitment policies in their efforts to rejuvenate the workforce. The ICSC took note of the different initiatives and programs to support generational diversity, including the YPP and the interns' programmes.

We raised our concerns regarding the YPP program whereby some candidates have to wait for a long period before being selected and some others once selected do not have many possibilities for career advancement. We also mentioned the importance of financially supporting interns.

The ICSC encouraged organizations to financially support interns and similar programmes for candidates from developing countries

9. Payment of amount in lieu of settling-in grant at category E duty stations that are not designated as non-family

As you may be aware, based on ICSC recommendation, the GA approved in 2018 the payment on a pilot basis, of the amount of \$15,000 dollars per year for staff members with eligible dependents in E duty stations that are not designated as non-family. The ICSC decided to recommend to the General Assembly to formalize the pilot measure and to extend it to D duty stations.

10. Mobility Incentive

A mobility incentive was introduced in 2016 in lieu of the mobility allowance. The same eligibility criteria remained except for the fact that the mobility incentive is no longer payable to staff moving to H duty stations. We argued about the need to reintroduce the mobility incentive for H duty stations in order to foster a culture of mobility. The ICSC decided to keep the mobility incentive and reassess the need for it in 5 years with the expectation that by then all organizations would have a fully developed mobility culture. The ICSC encouraged the organizations to further consider linking mobility to staff development and career progression to the extent possible.

11. Hardship classification

The ICSC was of the view that the revised criteria introduced in 2017 were fit for purpose in classifying duty stations and requested its secretariat to work with all stakeholders to improve data collection modalities, in particular to better support assessment of the health factor and present proposals for revisions to the methodologies of classification in order to take into account the impact of pollution and environmental degradation.

12. The Coordinating Committee of International Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA)

The UNOG Staff Coordinating Council (SCC) participated in the CCISUA Mid-Term meeting in November 2021. CCISUA is the federation of global staff unions to which the SCC belongs. It provided an opportunity to discuss issues of concern among the global staff unions to establish agreed positions as well as to meet counterparts. Discussions focused on UN reform and the Future of Work, the pension fund (including investment strategy, cyber-security, client services and governance of the Pension

Board, ISCS matters (Including contractual arrangements, cost-of-living survey and parental leave), safety and security of staff in the field, racism in the workplace, responses to the Covid pandemic, human resources, among other issues. Meetings were held with the ICSC Chairperson, Larbi Djacta; the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, Catherine Pollard; representatives of the Pension Administration; the UN Ombuds; the Assistant-Secretary-General for Human Resources, Martha Helena Lopez; and the Director of Regional Operations (DSS) regarding security and safety of staff in the field, particularly following the events in Afghanistan. Additional meetings took place with UN Globe on LGBTI issues, the Global Lead on UN System Workplace Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and of the Office of Legal Affairs of the jurisdictional set-up of the common system. An update on the meeting was broadcasted to all staff in December 2021.

Over the last months, we have been working hard, through CCISUA, in order to get the best outcome from the General Assembly regarding your conditions of work. Please find below a summary of what was achieved as well as where more work is needed:

- Increased education grant: The reimbursement scale has been increased by 14 percent and the boarding lump sum to USD 5,300, following CCISUA's request that these reflect fee movements worldwide. The change will be applied to the academic year in progress on 1 January 2022.
- Better entitlements for staff in the field: CCISUA asked to continue the pilot project of granting 15,000 USD annually for staff members who opt not to install eligible dependents in category E duty stations not designated as non-family and to extend it to D duty stations. The General Assembly agreed to continue the pilot project for E duty stations and to undertake a pilot of granting 14,000 USD annually for staff in D duty stations through to 31 December 2024.
- Use of data purchased from third parties to calculate General service salaries: The ICSC has been pushing to use untransparent data purchased from third parties to calculate GS salaries. CCISUA was of the view that this should be done with extreme caution and only where no other data could be collected. The General Assembly has requested the ICSC to conduct a pilot application of external data.
- Review of staff pay and benefits: As you may recall, the compensation package was modified in 2016 and led to some losses in entitlements. CCISUA was of the view that the compensation package should not been further eroded and should remain competitive. However, the General Assembly asked the ICSC to present a comprehensive assessment and review of the compensation package in 2026 taking into account the context in Member states and in common system organizations. This has come as a surprise and CCISUA will remain vigilant to any attempt to further weaken the attractiveness of the compensation package.
- **Payments for interns:** CCISUA asked for the payment of stipends for interns. The General Assembly requested the ICSC to identify good practices and provide advice to common systems organizations, including by measures to support interns from developing countries.
- Geographical distribution: CCISUA requested that more attention is paid to geographic distribution in order to address current imbalances. The General Assembly requested the ICSC to identify good practices and provide advice to common system organizations on ways to promote geographical diversity.

We will monitor developments regarding the above and will continue defending your conditions of service through CCISUA.

III. Global Secretariat issues

1. COVID-19 pandemic

At the Staff Management Committee (SMC) plenary meeting in October 2021, there were a number of issues discussed under this item, including reimbursement of quarantine costs linked to official travel, vaccinations and return to premises. Management agreed to the staff representatives' proposal to pay for mandatory quarantine costs during home leave, education grant and family visit travel backdated to 1 January 2021. It was also agreed that UNLPs may be used for official travel, including home leave,

education grant and family visit travel under conditions established by the organization. Staff representatives requested an update on plans for disclosure of medical data, mandatory vaccinations, and guidelines from the Secretary-General on minimum standards for all duty stations. Management clarified that general guidance on these matters needs to remain flexible to allow global and system-wide application. Management confirmed that guidance had been issued for UNHQ in New York on mandatory vaccinations for certain categories of staff where mitigating measures may not be possible and that similar guidance would soon be issued for all entities. Management confirmed that the decision to mandate vaccinations in certain circumstances is made by the Secretary-General under his authority to ensure all necessary safety and security arrangements. This information was provided to staff through a broadcast in November 2021.

2. Future of work

A report on the 'Future of the United Nations System Workforce' submitted by the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) has been a source of concern for the SCC as it contains plans that, if implemented, would negatively affect long-established, secure standards of employment. One crucial section of the report speaks of a new model contract supporting "a more agile organisation that can rapidly adapt to changing needs and opportunities and scale up and down as needed".

The rationale for the plans is that the UN needs to have greater agility and responsiveness in dealing with challenges and world events and deliver this in the context of funding constraints and a downturn in the global economy.

The SCC has been active within both the SMC and CCISUA as part of a campaign to oppose any attempt to change the current contractual arrangements. In 2020, discussions took place within the HLCM regarding the different aspects of the report and the ICSC decided during its October 2020 session to establish a working group to look into the current contractual modalities. The SCC conducted a survey of staff on the Future of Work initiative in March 2021 and provided an update by broadcast in May 2021. It organized a town hall meeting with staff in September 2021 to brief staff on developments regarding the "agile" contract proposal. During the CCISUA Mid-Term meeting, global staff unions also met to discuss UN reform and future of work in order to establish agreed positions. At the recent ICSC Working Group on the Review of Contractual Arrangements, the Working Group concluded that the current contractual arrangement was fit for purpose and that there was no need to introduce a new type of contractual arrangement. The SCC was very pleased with this recommendation and will continue to follow this issue. Staff were updated through a broadcast in May 2021.

3. Career Satisfaction Framework

Management had shared a paper on a framework for career satisfaction noting the low level of career satisfaction from earlier surveys of staff. Management acknowledged that they need to set more realistic expectations and shift perspectives to include other aspects of career satisfaction and upward progression. The framework will focus on the need for staff to be agile, proactive, adaptable, mobile, and multi-skilled and will apply to P staff, G staff and national staff. The framework builds upon ideas already contained in the Future of Work and new performance management framework; however, more emphasis will be placed on the responsibility of managers for career development of their staff. Management is also developing a new career support centre.

The staff representatives indicated that they are looking forward to contributing to this work in order to increase career satisfaction for staff. They said that it was a good starting point and appreciated the openness to look at career satisfaction in a more structured manner. As the framework was only being discussed, staff representatives noted the need for consultations at the implementation phase with possible changes to existing administrative issuances.

The staff representatives raised the issue of long-term serving staff who are stuck in their careers and whose qualifications, which have been obtained during their UN careers, are not being sufficiently recognized. Management explained that while the new framework does try to address aspects of career development, they stressed that career development is a shared responsibility. As this initiative is very much in the early stages of planning, the SCC will keep you informed of all developments.

4. Continuing contracts

Continuing contracts are supposed to be awarded every year following a review conducted to that end. All staff with five years of continued service are eligible. However, there is a limit to how many staff can have a continuing or permanent appointment at any one time. This limit, called the post envelope and decided by the General Assembly, is calculated as 75 percent of the total number of posts that at the time of the review have existed for at least five years. Given that many staff already have continuing or permanent appointments, it can happen that not all eligible staff get continuing appointments during a particular review exercise.

Following the SCC's persistent demand, management undertook in 2020 the review which pertained to 2015, meaning a delay of five years, during which it was supposed to calculate the post envelope for that year and therefore how many staff were eligible for a continuing appointment.

The SCC has consistently raised with management this issue within the SMC. Following a review of the methodology used, corrections were made and as a result, the envelope saw a reduction in the negative gap for Professional staff and an increase in the number of slots for General Service positions. At Session IX of the SMC in October 2021, staff representatives requested an update on the delay of the review and urged management to expedite the review in recognition of staff's dedication to the organization. Staff also regretted that changes to the Inspira system were not prioritized to accommodate a yearly review. Management confirmed that the 2015 continuing appointment review was underway with an expected finalization by March 2022. It was indicated that for the 2015 exercise, there are no available slots for P staff. For G staff, there would be no point allocation process as there are 636 available slots and 294 potentially eligible G staff. Management is exploring the possibility of proceeding with the 2016 exercise as soon as feasible after the conclusion of the 2015 exercise. Management informed the staff representatives that the new exercise to grant continuing appointments for the whole Secretariat will take place as at 1 December 2021. Staff representatives expressed regret that the exercise comes with a six-year delay as it only takes into account staff eligible as of 1 July 2015. The SCC will continue to raise this matter with senior management at the SMC along with the other global unions. Staff were updated on the continuing contract exercise by broadcast in November 2021.

5. Temporary appointments

The SCC has been concerned at the proliferation of temporary appointments in Geneva, even when more stable contracts are possible with the funding available, and the inherent unequal leave and other conditions. At 2019 SMC meeting, 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 did not respect said agreement and did not submit such a proposal. Recently, staff representatives at the ICSC meeting supported the proposal to increase the number of annual leave days for temporary contract holders to 2.5 instead of the current 1.5 days to harmonize leave entitlements among staff. The ICSC recommendation will go to the General Assembly for further consideration, and we will keep staff updated in this regard.

6. Performance management

A working group on performance management was established under the SMC to review the current performance management framework and make recommendations to SMC on improvements to the current policy on performance management (ST/AI/2010/5). The working group also has the mandate to evaluate the results of the 'Agile Pilot' on performance management to provide recommendations to the SMC for incorporation into a revised policy on the performance management system.

The working group started its work in the summer of 2020. The SCC is represented in it through two staff representatives. Constructive proposals were put forward which got management's agreement, including the multi-rater 360-degree feedback tool to be rolled out in a phased approach, prioritizing senior managers and focusing in particular on the competency of managing performance. While the working group was about to conclude its review and submit a report to SMC in mid-October, management announced that starting from the 2021-2022 cycle in April, a new approach based on the 'Agile Pilot' project will be introduced Secretariat-wide. This includes 360-degree evaluation for first reporting officers.

Staff representatives voiced their serious doubts about some aspects of the new approach, including the reasons behind removing the core values and competencies and removing the work plan and midpoint workflows from the Inspira tool. In the view of staff representatives, the new approach will not streamline the current process, although it will keep the 360 reviews.

At SMC in 2021, the Working Group informed the SMC that following its interim report submitted in January 2021, a revised policy with relevant agreed elements was issued. At SMC ad hoc meetings, we raised the issue of overly restrictive job openings especially with respect to requirements for field

experience in job advertisements which seemed reminiscent of tailoring. Management acknowledged that while there may be a need for specific experience at times, there was no consistent criteria and many times requisite field experience had no link to field positions. Management noted that guidelines were circulated to heads of entities in 2020 and committed to sending out reminders to heads of entities in this regard. We also raised particular cases with the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources in New York.

With respect to the draft AI on Performance Management and Mandatory Learning, staff representatives made inputs regarding the need to reduce the overall number of mandatory trainings and consolidating some due to overlap, as well as limiting the time that such trainings require to complete. Staff representatives also opposed any linkages between completion of such trainings and the granting of annual leave.

More information was provided in December at an SMC briefing session on the Performance Management Framework, which proposes a shift in organizational culture. It was launched in October 2021 and is centered on the four values of inclusion, integrity, humility and humanity. The corresponding behaviours include learning and development, adaptation and innovation, connecting and collaborating, analysis and planning, and delivering results with positive impact. The new framework will eventually result in changes to the performance management system, including performance appraisals, recruitment and selection, competency-based interviews and other areas. It is still very much a work in progress. The overall aim is to try to make these values and behaviours more concrete and actionable in our work.

The new framework will also seek to eliminate/minimize bias from the recruitment and selection processes, which is linked to diversity. It was recognized that many job openings were not fully aligned with the corresponding responsibilities and competencies, which creates scope for bias. A comprehensive review will be undertaken of all job openings to ensure that they are fully aligned with the respective responsibilities and competencies. It was also recognized that the competency-based interview has a number of shortcomings and management is looking at ways to address these issues. We will continue to update staff on developments in this regard.

7. Human Resources Strategy

At the SMC Plenary Meeting in October 2021, staff representatives raised concerns over various issues affecting human resources management for the period beyond 2021, namely planned changes to human resources-related administrative issuances, strategic workforce planning framework, including the future of work, application of the proposed new competency framework, removal of the G-to-P barrier, centralization of services, including OneHR and GSDM, career enhancement, and advancement and proposals on inclusivity.

The staff representatives called on management to proactively engage and consult with staff representatives in advance before issuing forward-looking strategies so that both sides could coordinate and share priorities that could be incorporated into policy thinking. Staff representatives requested a discussion on the implications of the People Strategy 2021-2025 recently published on iSeek. Management confirmed their commitment to undertake consultations on the implementation of the strategy. This issue was added as a standing item of the meetings of the 3x3 contact group within the SMC and will be discussed at upcoming SMC ad hoc meetings. We will keep staff informed of any developments regarding this issue.

8. Downsizing

A working group on downsizing was put in place in order to review the agreement reached by staff and management in 2016 which never translated into any policy on downsizing. Following an important number of meetings, the working group was able to submit a report to the SMC.

This matter continued to be discussed at meetings of SMC in 2021 where staff representatives raised their concern over the conflict between head of entities' delegation of authority and centralized placement by the Secretary-General in the context of downsizing. While acknowledging efforts made by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources and the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support to address this issue, staff representatives expressed the view that more must be done to accommodate staff members subject to downsizing exercises. The Assistant-Secretary-General for representatives' concerns. At the SMC Plenary Meeting in 2021, staff representatives requested management to provide an update on the status of the ST/AI on downsizing, which is pending since 2016. Staff representatives called on the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy

and Compliance to exercise her delegated authority for the lateral placement of downsized staff. Management confirmed that the issuance of the ST/AI is a priority and explained that further changes to the policy are required in light of recent judgments. Management confirmed that the revised draft would be shared for consultation with the aim to finalize it by the end of the first quarter of 2022.

9. Flexible Working Arrangements

At SMC, staff representatives inquired about revising the flexible work arrangement policy and expressed disappointment that earlier proposals to ensure a fairer application of the policy were not implemented and regretted the delay in reviewing ST/SGB/2019/3. Staff representatives also highlighted the uneven application of the policy across and within entities. Management stated that they would bring a revised SGB to the SMC for consultations taking into consideration the views of the staff representatives. We will continue to follow this issue and will keep staff informed of any developments.

10. Career stagnation

At SMC in October 2021, staff representatives noted issues with career stagnation at all levels, highlighting particularly the situation of P2 staff placed through the YPP programmes, including cases of women with 10 plus years of experience at the junior professional level. It also highlighted the relatively high number of resignations due to career stagnation and lack of career support among YPPs. The staff representatives proposed measures to address career development issues, including an analysis of career dissatisfaction and stagnation, conducting exit interviews, potential automatic promotion to the P-3 level for YPP staff, formation of a working group, creation of a pool of P-3 posts especially for YPP staff, highlighting the status of YPP/NCE status to hiring managers, and allowing P-2 staff facing stagnation to participate in the managed reassignment programme additional times. Staff representatives also requested disaggregated data for all staff on the number of years that staff stay at each grade. Staff representatives noted their appreciation for the lifting of breaks in service from GS to NO and NO to P.

Management indicated that career development is a shared responsibility and that the career framework for the future is anchored in the close linkages between learning and skills development and career fulfilment. Management also indicated that data on staff serving at the P2 level indicated that two-thirds of staff progress in their careers within five years of service at the P2 level. Management also informed that an evaluation of the YPP is in the early stages of planning.

At a subsequent SMC Ad Hoc meeting, management introduced a publication entitled Career Satisfaction: A Support Framework for Staff of the UN Secretariat, which explains the organizational approach and support towards helping staff navigate their own "career journeys". Staff representatives commented that staff do not feel supported in their careers and that many are stuck at the same level, which affects overall career satisfaction. Staff representatives agreed to the overall framework document noting that consultations would be required on its implementation and changes to the relevant administrative issuances.

11. Rosters

At SMC in October 2021, staff representatives expressed concern that some roster memberships are still expiring despite the suspension of the mobility policy (ST/AI/2016/1) and highlighted their position that expiration of roster membership should not be reintroduced. Management confirmed that ST/AI/2016/1 has been suspended and that any expiry of roster membership would be lifted for all currently rostered candidates and will be aligned with the indefinite roster membership period as per ST/AI/2010/3.

12. Mobility and selection process

The SCC has been playing an active role in the SMC working group devoted to this issue. The previous mobility system of compulsory moves was suspended at our request pending a review. It has been decided that mandatory mobility will apply for new staff leaving current staff the option of opting in and out. At the same time, lateral mobility across departments with similar functions will be made easier and a number of incentives considered, including for the field. Other matters are also being reviewed, including how to strengthen central review bodies.

At SMC in 2021, the Working Group on Staff Selection and Mobility submitted its first interim report providing recommendations which led to the revision of the AI on the staff selection system (ST/AI/2010/3) in February 2021. The second interim report will be submitted shortly. Staff representatives reported that the working group continues to discuss all of the items on a list of proposals pertaining to the review of ST/Al/2010/3 with the goal of increased transparency, accountability and compliance with standards that will reduce bias in staff selection. Staff representatives expressed concerns with the management practice of reflecting certain elements in policy guidance and not in the ST/AI, including some SMC agreements in this regard. Staff representatives also expressed concerns that the promulgation of some issuances is prioritized by management over others, and that the delegation of authority was leading to fragmentation in the application of staff rules and related policies. It was agreed to discuss the second interim report at an SMC ad-hoc meeting. We will keep staff informed of any developments in this regard.

13. Pension Fund

The SCC sent out a broadcast on 25 November to update staff on the latest developments concerning the pension fund:

- **Pension advances in case of late payment:** The UN participant representatives have been pushing this issue so that if incorrect paperwork delays your first pension payment, an advance can be paid. After much discussion, the board decided to study a 50 percent advance under certain conditions. This is an important matter that UN Participants have been requesting for the past 4 years.
- Ethics policy: At the request of the General Assembly, the board approved a new ethics policy. However, we have concerns about certain aspects, namely that it will prevent board members raising their concerns with the ultimate decision-maker of the fund, the UN General Assembly. We believe that such a policy increases fiduciary risk. Further, it also excludes staff who are involved in any aspect of pension administration from being elected to the board, which removes vital institutional knowledge from the fund's governance.
- Legal jurisdiction of the fund: Despite our concerns, the board voted for the fourth consecutive year to request the General Assembly to remove itself from the legal jurisdiction of the UN Appeals Tribunal. This creates a fiduciary risk.
- Ability of beneficiaries on disability benefit to work: The board agreed that recipients of the disability benefit should be able to work part time, for example if it helps with their professional recovery or mental wellbeing. It fixed a ceiling for income from work of the higher of \$30,000 gross or the G-2, step 1 net remuneration in the recipient's duty station. This is an increase on an earlier proposed ceiling of G1, step 1, and is therefore a good step forward.
- **Financial situation of the fund:** Taking into account the fund's assets and its future liabilities (which include an ageing population) the fund remains in balance. However, we do remain concerned at the fund's budget growth and what we see as limited effort to control costs.
- Investments: The fund's investments underperformed its comparators. We believe this may be
 related to the findings of a recent OIOS report, commissioned following earlier concerns raised by
 UN participants, that pointed to poor management in the Office of Investment Management (OIM).
 We were informed that many of the issues were being addressed. However, we note the continued
 concerns raised in this summer's OIOS report on OIM human resource. The UN participants noted
 concerns regarding the pilot project to use mortgage-backed securities, swaps and forwards. We
 have been informed that this will not increase risk. However, we remain vigilant on this matter. The
 UN participants also requested greater transparency on the fund's application of environmental,
 social and governance standards, which we have so far found to be somewhat superficial.
- Review of the governance of the fund: Over the last three years the fund has been reviewing its setup and working arrangements. The initial goal was to review the board so as to make it more representative of its membership (the UN makes up two-thirds of participants but only has one-third of board votes), have more frequent meetings and reduce the number of people in the meeting room (last measured at 93). The board agreed on more frequent meetings, although with some reluctance on using those meetings to hold the fund's leadership more regularly to account. The number of people in the room was reduced to some extent. However, the imbalance between the UN and specialized agencies has now become even more stark after specialized agencies refused to make a similar effort to reduce their numbers. This makes the final outcome far from ideal.

14. Administration of justice

The SCC has continued to prioritize strengthening administration of justice at the UN, especially since staff have little access to national labour dispute mechanisms. We have consistently advocated for our tribunals to remain fiercely independent and impartial, as well as become more effective and efficient.

Within the Internal Justice Council and at SMC in 2021, the SCC continued to push for reforms in the interest of staff, including more resources for the Office of Staff Legal Assistance (OSLA), which offers free legal aid to staff; addressing the backlog in cases; establishing a publicly accessible docket for pending cases to ensure more transparency and better planning for the parties; strengthening protection against retaliation; providing the unions legal standing to file applications in the Tribunals regarding their institutional interests; allowing class actions; and amending article 10(5) of the statute of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) to provide that, prior to opting for payment of compensation in lieu of rescission or reinstatement, that the Secretary-General shall provide satisfactory evidence to the Tribunal that rescission or reinstatement would not be feasible owing to compelling operational, administrative or budgetary reasons. Regrettably, at the SMC Plenary, management rejected any changes to article 10(5) of the statute of UNDT.

We are pleased to note that a real-time case tracking dashboard for the United Nations Dispute Tribunal has been recently launched as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 75/248. This initiative will ensure more transparency and better planning for all stakeholders so that they can see the status of a particular case in the judicial process. This information was provided to staff in a broadcast in December 2021. We also raised the issue of the freeze on recruitment within the Office of the Staff Legal Assistance having a negative impact of legal advice for and representation of staff. With the improvement in the financial situation of the organization, the relevant posts have been mostly filled.

The SCC continued to support legal representation at its expense on several occasions when the cases have broader impact for staff, such as improper use of delegation of authority.

There is still more work to be done to ensure that staff are not afraid to seek justice, and when they do, justice is delivered in an impartial and efficient manner. The SCC will continue empowering staff to raise their concerns at the UN tribunals. It will also monitor the challenges facing staff in the internal judicial process in order to address systemic shortcomings in the administration of justice.

15. Delegation of Authority

The SCC raised this important issue with the Secretary-General with other heads of entities as well as within the SMC on the potential for abuse and the need for a more robust accountability framework. We were successful in assisting a staff member who was removed as the duly elected Department Focal Point for Women by a senior manager in one entity. The United Nations Dispute Tribunal ruled that the decision was unlawful and contravened the provisions of ST/SGB/2008/12. We also highlighted to the Secretary-General, the lack of follow-up by the administration regarding referrals of cases by the Tribunals concerning cases of corruption and maladministration. Staff representatives at SMC in October 2021 raised numerous concerns about the Secretary-General's policy on delegation of authority to heads of departments and how they interpret the rules, which has resulted in differences in implementation and fragmentation of policies across the system. Management confirmed that delegation of authority remains the prerogative of the Secretary-General and that it is not subject to consultation notwithstanding the staff representatives' position that the framework for delegation of authority falls within the scope of staff regulation 8.1(a) and urged management to implement agreement number 35 of SMC VIII on transparency and communication. Management encouraged staff representatives to provide feedback on the application of the delegation of authority and accountability framework and we will continue to follow this matter-up within the SMC Working Group on Delegation of Authority.

16. Unemployment insurance and other insurance issues

During the SMC in October 201, staff representatives highlighted the plight of staff members separated from service and the need to provide coverage to help in mitigating challenges posed by disruption of income and loss of social security coverage and the insufficiency of the termination indemnity. Management agreed to explore separate insurance coverage for unemployment insurance and health coverage for children over the age of 25 years and secondary dependents, noting that the scheme would be separate from the ones provided to serving staff members, that participation would not count towards eligibility for ASKI and that it would be entirely financed by participants.

17. Afghanistan

We raised at SMC the situation of staff in Afghanistan, in particular relating to the safety of national staff. The SCC circulated a petition regarding national staff in Afghanistan on 23 August 2021. CCISUA, the staff federation to which SCC belongs, wrote several letters to the Secretary-General. The SCC wrote to both the High Commission for Human Rights and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Response Coordinator on 1 September 2021 expressing concerns about the safety of both international and national staff members remaining in the country requesting information on measures taken to mitigate risks to staff as well as plans to relocate and evacuate affected staff and their families. Responses were received from both OHCHR and OCHA which provided information in security measures, relocation and evacuation of staff. This matter and the need for better contingency measures was also discussed at the High-Level Committee on Management, at the SMC and with the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance in October 2021. It was also discussed at the CCISUA Mid-Term Meeting in November 2021. In our discussions with the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security at the SMC Plenary Meeting in October 2021, the USG made a commitment that the Organization would continue to work to mitigate risks to UN personnel as much as possible and agreed to review the policies and procedures following the events in Afghanistan. The above information was also broadcasted to staff in August and September 2021.

IV. Geneva issues

1. Covid-19

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the SCC has been in direct contact with senior management at UNOG to ensure that measures taken preserve the wellbeing of staff. It set up a Facebook account 'UN Geneva Community' to provide a forum for staff and others in the community to exchange and assist each other and provided individual assistance to staff who asked for it. The SCC also conducted a survey to analyse the impact of the pandemic on staff morale and welfare. The results were brought to the attention of management to ask them to try, to the greatest extent possible, to take the necessary measures to support staff.

Throughout this period, we have been engaging with management to ensure a safe work environment for all staff as well as on other related issues such as the recognition of vaccination certificates issued from outside of Switzerland that are not recognized by the Swiss authorities, testing for staff, although management made it clear that UNOG would not be in a position to reimburse such costs, and advocating for telecommuting during high infection periods as well as strengthening hygiene protocols and messaging in the context of return to work. We have also kept staff informed of all Covid related guidelines and other information concerning the return to work in the context of Covid.

A subsequent survey was conducted on strengthening health measures for staff in the context of Covid in September 2021. The results of the survey were also shared with management and with staff by broadcast in October 2021. Subsequently, we discussed with management measures that could be implemented to address health concerns. In addition to maintaining the health protocols currently in place, it was also agreed that staff wishing to use the dining area of the cafeteria would need to show their vaccination certificate as this is one area where mitigating measures would not be feasible.

With respect to the guidelines issued by the Secretary-General on mandatory vaccinations for certain categories of staff, we have expressed concern on the way the assessment phase was being conducted, emphasized the need to involve the Medical Services as such information is sensitive and that the assessment should be conducted in the most respectable way possible. We also urged management to accommodate staff members who either cannot be or chose not to be vaccinated. We continue to follow this matter up closely with management to ensure that the concerns of all staff members are considered and addressed to the best of our ability.

2. Carte de legitimation

At a meeting with the Director-General of UNOG in May 2021 as well as with the Human Resources Management Section, the SCC raised the issue of recent changes to the carte de legitimation (CDL) and the need to draw both individual cases and general issues to the attention of the Swiss authorities, including the urgent issuance of CDLs in cases of force majeure, the shortening of waiting times, extending the validity of the CDL beyond the contract term, reinstating the system of certificates and

providing CDLs for children of staff studying abroad but maintaining residence in Switzerland. Management confirmed that it continues to issue attestations if needed and that the CDL is valid for two months after the expiration of the contract. Management also confirmed that children up to 25 years of age who are studying abroad are an exception and they are able to keep their CDLs. Management requested that individual cases be brought to the attention of Human Resources Management Service and also noted that the Swiss mission holds monthly information meetings.

3. Pay cut

As you are aware, on 29 June 2021, the UNDT rendered its judgement after 22 months of being seized of the issue. The judgment upheld the pay cut. In rendering this judgment, the UNDT has taken a contrary position to the ILOAT and has thus perpetuated two pay scales for equal work within the Geneva duty station.

Immediately after the issuance of the judgement, the SCC contacted both the OSLA lawyer and an external lawyer for their assessment of the chances of success at the appeal level. A town hall meeting was organized during which the OSLA lawyer explained the judgement and informed staff of the decision to appeal the judgement despite the fact that the chances of success were slim. UNAT upheld the decision of UNDT in this regard and this information was provided to staff in a broadcast in April 2021.

Meanwhile, the ICSC decided to conduct the cost-of-living survey in 2021. Within the SMC, staff representatives opposed conducting the cost-of-living survey at present due to the distortion of consumer spending patterns due to the pandemic. The SCC also wrote to the Director-General of UNOG and the ICSC stating our views on the matter. As you are aware, the ICSC is going ahead with the survey and it held a town hall meeting on 20 October 2021 in this regard. The SCC also held town hall meetings in September and December 2021 to brief staff on the survey and its possible impact on the Geneva post adjustment, as well as sent out broadcasts to staff in December 2021 providing practical information to staff on completing the survey.

4. Racism

The Secretary-General established a global task force where staff are represented though two staff representatives. The task force is entrusted with the mandate of putting in place an action plan to be implemented at the level of the secretariat. The action plan should be issued shortly.

The SCC conducted a survey in July 2020 and the results were shared with management. These findings were discussed during a meeting held with the Director-General of UNOG who agreed to put in place a working group to discuss this issue. In April 2021, we raised the issue of racism in the workplace at a meeting with the Secretary-General, and again with the Director-General in May 2021. The UNOG Working Group on Racism in the Workplace has since been constituted and its terms of reference approved. The Working Group is meeting and is preparing a workplan. Information sessions are being planned to provide staff with information on how to address racism in the workplace using both the informal and formal tools available. Previously, the SCC organized two informal discussions in June and September 2021 on racism in the workplace, which provided a forum for staff to talk about their experiences, sensitize and support colleagues and foster a better understanding of this important issue.

5. Gender parity

The SCC has raised the issue of gender parity with the Secretary-General, the Director-General and heads of entities. While some entities have made very good progress, other entities were encouraged to do better to meet the targets set by the Secretary-General. We also highlighted that at certain levels, women were now the majority and efforts should be made to reach parity for men and women at all levels underscoring that merit should be the paramount consideration. The matter was also raised at the SMC in October 2021, where staff representatives acknowledged the progress towards gender parity but underscored the need to improve representation of women from under-represented countries as well as considering the legitimate career expectations of men. Staff representatives highlighted the importance of retaining and enhancing career prospects for currently serving female staff, including in the field versus external candidates. We requested continued engagement on this issue, including on data gathering and analysis and outreach at senior levels. With regard to the requirement to seek exceptions from the Secretary-General to select male candidates, staff representatives were informed that such exceptions were being granted when properly justified. The SMC agreed to establish focal points within SMC to follow-up on these issues.

6. Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP)

The SCC has opposed the open-space design of the new H building since its inception. At a meeting with the Director-General in May 2021, we again raised our concerns of the design in the context of the pandemic and the need to maintain alternative working arrangements for staff until their health and safety could be ensured. We also conducted a survey of staff regarding the H building in July 2021 and shared these concerns with management. We held an urgent meeting with the SHP transition team and requested them to provide concrete solutions to address staff concerns. The SCC also contacted the Joint Committee on Health and Safety which issued recommendations to management. Management responded providing information on corrective measures to reduce noise, address issues related to temperature and humidity, as well as hygiene and emergency issues. The SCC briefed staff on developments in this regard at a town hall meeting held in September 2021 and also updated staff through broadcasts in June, July, August and September 2021.

7. UNOPS contracts

Previously, the SCC noted with alarm the increasing use of Individual Contractor Agreement (UNOPS contracts) for regular functions of an ongoing nature. These types of contracts do not provide any benefits and entitlements.

Following the SCC's request, a review was conducted by UNOG in the Library and ICTS regarding the use of UNOPS contracts in 2020. The SCC raised this issue with management at a Joint Negotiation Committee (JNC) meeting in June 2021. Subsequently, it was confirmed that for the library, the functions were project-bound and thus justified the granting of UNOPS contracts. For ICTS, the review took place and the matter is being addressed through the establishment of new posts. The SCC requested management to accommodate UNOPS contract holders in the posts to be created to the extent possible. Management assured the SCC that UNOPS contract-holders would be given due consideration in the recruitment process and that the break in service would not be applicable for them. Updates on the JNC meetings were provided to staff through broadcasts in June and September 2021.

8. General Service Staff

The G1–G4 group was established by the SCC 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 bodies (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 SCC, has continued being 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.

At SMC in October 2021, staff representatives underlined the importance of removing the G-to-P barrier. It was also agreed to update the terms of reference of the Working Group on General Service Career Prospects to include compiling relevant data, elaborating scenarios and building compelling arguments for the removal of the G-to-P barrier and other issues to create opportunities for workforce rejuvenation, diversity, and mobility.

SCC also encouraged General Service staff to take the survey launched by the UNOG Centre for Learning and Multilingualism (CLM) in October 2021 with the aim of assessing ways to make General Service Staff feel more valued and to improve career advancement.

9. Support to staff

The SCC provided assistance to all staff who approached it, to the extent of its capacity, in areas such as harassment, abuse of authority, performance management and other issues. Demand for assistance continues to rise and the SCC has assisted staff both through informal and formal channels, including assistance with filing applications with the tribunals and with OIOS.

10. Decentralization process at OCHA

SCC continued to follow-up with the decentralization exercise at OCHA, which led to 23 positions from the Professional category being moved from Headquarters toward regional hubs and 7 General Service staff positions being abolished. As a result, a comparative review exercise was conducted for the General Service positions. We requested feedback from staff and met with several staff members in June 2021 on this issue. As a result of our advocacy, OCHA Human Resources organized a briefing on the relocation on 8 July, which provided an opportunity for staff to ask questions and clarify concerns.

The SCC also met with the new Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to raise the concerns of staff on the decentralization process. The USG stated that he did not foresee further decentralization exercises. The USG also committed to strengthening the Geneva office by appointing a head of office and suspending the decision to transfer a D-2 position from Geneva to New York. We also discussed the inappropriate use of temporary contracts and the importance of reviewing this practice to ensure that the issuance of TJOs conform to the administrative issuances. We additionally discussed restrictive job openings, and the negative work environment. The USG confirmed the necessity of ensuring that staff feel comfortable in expressing their views freely in the workplace and welcomed a continued dialogue with the SCC to address issues of concern.

11. UNECE

The SCC also engaged with staff and management at UNECE relating to staff morale, lack of career advancement, gender parity, recruitment issues, flexible working arrangements, the internal mobility initiative, and performance management. We conducted a survey of staff on issues of concern and communicated the results to management. We held a follow-up meeting and provided information to staff on both informal and formal procedures to address various issues. These concerns were also raised with the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance. We followed-up with staff in September and October 2021, including providing information on the available administrative, legal and oversight tools provided by the Organization, including OIOS, MEU, UNDT, UN Ethics Office and the Ombuds and Mediation Services.

12. OHCHR

The SCC met with the Deputy High Commissioner in May 2021 to raise issues relating to the lack of career advancement for YPPs highlighting that YPP recruitment also assists in improving geographic diversity; the situation of long-term temporary contract holders; the roster exercise, an uneven application of the flexible working arrangement policy by some managers; and the United Nations Dispute Tribunal decision holding that the removal of the duly elected Departmental Focal Point for Women by the former Deputy High Commissioner was unlawful. SCC assisted the staff member concerned with filing an abuse of authority complaint with the United Nations Dispute Tribunal over the improper use of delegation of authority regarding her removal as Departmental Focal Point for Women in violation of ST/SGB/2008/2. We also conducted a survey of staff on the selection of the Departmental Focal Point for Women and this information was conveyed to management. Elections were held and the matter has been satisfactorily resolved in consultation with the OHCHR Staff Committee and the current Deputy High Commissioner.

13. UNCTAD

We followed-up with UNCTAD on gender parity, following several complaints concerning a memorandum on temporary special measures on gender issued by the administration in this regard. The SCC met with the UNCTAD Departmental Focal Point for Women team to better understand the situation at UNCTAD and the challenges that they face. While noting the difficulties they face given the low proportion of female applicants for certain positions at UNCTAD, we discussed the hiring process to identify areas of challenge, outreach possibilities and a wider distribution of vacancies, as well as training courses on unconscious bias, mentoring programmes for junior staff and other initiatives to improve gender parity.

We recently met with the new Secretary-General of UNCTAD and had a very frank and fruitful discussion relating to strengthening UNCTAD. In this regard, the Secretary-General stated that her aim would be to address any weaknesses in the organization but not to undergo a re-profiling exercise. She stated that there would be some changes to make the system more efficient but there was no intention to cut staff. She was looking at an expanded budget proposal for 2023. We also discussed vacancy management noting the particularly long periods to fill vacancies at UNCTAD and the SG committed to look into it.

The SCC noted the system-wide policy on gender parity while also noting that the important goal of achieving parity should sit side by side with all staff being eligible for career advancement. The SG said she was taking a medium-term view on gender parity and had told division directors that men could be selected within the overall context of achieving parity in 2024.

We raised additional concerns on career development and noted the importance of working with more closely with regional commissions, DCO and DESA, to arrange assignments as well as medium-term

and permanent swaps. We also raised the need to support P-2s who come through the Young Professionals Programme.

We also briefed the SG on previous harassment problems at UNCTAD. The SG repeated her commitment to stamp out harassment and was working with the Ombuds on raising awareness of dignity and respect in the workplace.

14. Languages and Interpretation Services

The SCC continued to follow up on the issue of the implementation of the new workload standard for translators and revisers, as well as the health concerns of interpreters in the context of hybrid meetings.

With respect to translators and revisers, in March the SCC wrote to the USG for General Assembly and Conference Management sharing the petition of translators and revisers in Geneva calling for implementing the GA resolution in a way that does not undermine the health of staff and the quality of their work. A meeting was held with the staff unions of Nairobi, New York, and Vienna to discuss the matter and to make clear that consultations, as required by ST/SGB/274, did not take place regarding the implementation of the resolution. On 1 April, a meeting was held with the USG at which staff representatives raised the concerns of staff, but no solutions were agreed upon. Subsequently, a meeting was held with staff of the Languages Service in Geneva to solicit views on the way forward. The SCC provided assistance to numerous staff members in filing applications with the United Nations Dispute Tribunal, including paying for a lawyer to assist with their representation. The Tribunal found that the cases were not receivable on procedural grounds and we assisted staff in appealing this decision. The appeals are still pending. The matter was raised at SMC and we have had several meetings with the Division of Conference Management in Geneva. Several updates were provided to the relevant staff. We have raised the issues of the work of the task forces to implement the new workload standards emphasizing that their outcomes are subject to consultation in accordance with ST/SGB/274 and it was confirmed that consultations on the outcomes would take place providing sufficient time for staff to input into the process.

These issues were raised with the Director-General in May 2021. A meeting was held with the ASG for General Assembly and Conference Management on 13 September 2021. The global staff unions conducted a survey of affected staff on the impact of the increased productivity standards since they were introduced in May 2021. A global town hall meeting of affected staff was also held. These issues were also discussed at SMC in October 2021. The SCC met with the Division of Conference Management in Geneva on 27 October to discuss a number of issues of interest for DCM staff, including the results of the survey and recommendations on establishing standard operating procedures, maintaining the reprise credit at 100 per cent, special assignments, and eLUNa. The SCC highlighted the need to find a way to address the concerns of staff while acknowledging that New York remains the decision-making entity. The survey highlighted that staff were working longer hours to meet their targets, were feeling more tired, stressed and less motivated.

A letter from the global staff unions was sent to USG for General Assembly and Conference Management on 16 December 2021 highlighting the results of the survey and making recommendations to address the concerns of staff. The USG replied, stating that the recommendations are under consideration. The SCC will continue to engage with management on this issue and keep staff informed of all developments.

With respect to interpreters, relevant staff unions met on 8 September 2021 to discuss continuing health concerns and options to address these concerns. These concerns were conveyed to the Division of Conference Management in Geneva and a number of positive measures were being taken in this regard, including holding meetings using remote simultaneous interpretation (RSI) for two hours instead of three; focusing on communication packages to delegates and substantive secretariats about best practices, including technical requirements for hybrid meetings; and procuring ISO compliant RSI platforms. The Department of Conference Management has also requested sound technicians to test the sound quality and inform participants of the technical limitations and the possibility that interpretation may not be possible. The Division of Conference Management also stated that they support staff who stop interpreting because of sound quality issues.

The concerns of translators, revisers and interpreters were also raised with the Secretary-General at a meeting in April 2021 and at a meeting with ASG for General Assembly and Conference Management in November 2021.

15. Security and Safety Service (SSS)

The SCC met with management of the Security and Service Services to discuss the roll-out of the new staff rotation system. We also raised the issue of overtime pay and the lack of career advancement for G-3 staff as well as other matters. We additionally raised the issues of overtime pay and career advancement with UNOG management. Paid overtime had been frozen for holidays except Christmas and New Year's Day due to the liquidity crisis. The SCC requested that overtime pay be extended to all official holidays as the financial situation had improved. We were subsequently informed that the paid overtime freeze had been lifted. We continued to raise the issue of lack of career advancement for G-3 staff and management agreed to look into the percentages of different grades across duty stations with a view to their possible adjustment. Management also confirmed that they would offer specific programmes to assist G-3 staff in passing the G-4 examination.

We also intervened on the guidelines for mission service, which contained an English language requirement. We were informed that English was required in the case of emergency situations and it was agreed that special English classes would be made available to staff at convenient times. It was agreed to remove a requirement limiting the number of sick leave days taken and to the let the Medical Services determine if a staff member was fit for mission assignment.

We recently met with the Security and Service Services on the guidelines for the mandatory vaccination of certain categories of staff to highlight the need to conduct the assessment in a tactful and respectful manner, to involve Medical Services and to accommodate staff members who either cannot or do not want to get vaccinated. Following the assessment phase, staff of SSS will not be subjected to mandatory vaccinations.

On many occasions, staff representatives also assisted SSS staff who approached them for support on administrative procedures, assistance with cases of prohibited conduct, and advice on matters affecting their working conditions.

V. Supporting staff welfare activities

1. Clubs and societies

As the Covid-19 pandemic situation improved by mid-2021 and restrictions to access the Palais des Nations loosened, UNOG Administration allowed clubs to organize outdoor activities on the grounds. At the same time, 2021 saw the closure of most of the Palais buildings due to SHP renovations, and the sports room on the 8th floor of building A was closed. Said space will no longer be dedicated to clubs. Instead, as reported last year, a whole new area for clubs will be created in the E building, which will include several rooms, a gym, showers and dressing room facilities. Said area is expected to be concluded by 2024-2025 with the reopening of the E building after it goes under renovations.

In the meantime, however, the closure of Palais buildings still poses a challenge to be able to find available indoor space for clubs. The SHP Transition Team confirmed that seven offices in the A/C building would be made available for clubs temporarily between March and October 2022. The SCC continues to push for alternative options between October 2022 and the inauguration of the new club space in the E building in 2024-2025.

2. Staff magazine UN Today

The SCC has been able to continue producing its staff magazine UN Today despite the challenges of Covid-19. Carrying on the legacy of former magazine UN Special since 1949, all 10 issues of the magazine were published in 2021, serving as a platform to voice staff concerns and shed light on the delicate and controversial issues that affect the UN and its staff.

3. Improvements at the UN beach

The Beach was able to operate during the summer season despite the pandemic. For many staff and their families, especially those who could not travel home, it was a welcome respite. The Committee followed closely throughout the year the evolution of the pandemic and the measures implemented by the Swiss authorities. Among the measures implemented were strict contact tracing data collection, enforcement of physical separation between household units, and the wearing of masks as required. No Covid-19 cases were reported to be linked to any contagion at UN Port. A number of important improvements were also made to the port.

Following the end of the 2021 season, The UN Port Committee decided to launch a tender for the concession of the UN beach management and restaurant, which still ongoing.

4. Long Service Awards

Because of the Covid-19 situation, the Long Service Awards did not take place in 2020. The SCC informed staff by broadcast on 25 August 2021 that the awards would be presented in 2021. Coorganized by the SCC and the United Nations Office at Geneva, more than 1,800 staff members received certificates of achievement for having served the Organization for 10 years or more and medals and certificates of recognition for having served for 25 years or more. A virtual gathering was held to honour staff members with 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 or 35 years of service.

5. Events

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the suspension of most on-site activities in the Palais des Nations, the SCC was not able to organize any event during the period covered by this report, namely its summer garden party, end-of-year children's party and staff gala.

6. Inter-Agency Games (IAG)

The IAG were not held in 2021 due to the pandemic. The SCC remains available to support the Geneva Sports Commission when the IAG can resume, including the possibility of a partial subsidy for the participation of SCC dues-paying members.

7. Crèche places in Geneva and summer camps

The SCC was able to secure places for children of staff members in different crèches located in the cantons of Geneva and Vaud. We also provided information on summer camps and were able to obtain discounts for children of UN staff.

8. Special offers for staff

As part of its mandate to promote staff welfare, the SCC maintained partnership deals offering discounts to all UN staff at local vendors, which include: Taxiphone, the David Lloyd Geneva Country Club, airline discounts, Sunrise, Tamoil, Chaplin's World, Institut Terrabella, Passeport gourmand, l'Assiette genevoise, Pure Sport Club, InterSoccer Football Courses & Camps, among others. Please refer to our website for more detailed information.

VI. Communication with staff

1. Broadcasts

As of the date of this report, the 39th SCC had sent out 59 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 SCC will continue improving its communications.

2. SCC website and online presence

The SCC's <u>website</u> contains all the news updates on the activities of the SCC, important documents, contacts, information on meetings, services provided, staff clubs and events. In the midst of the pandemic, the SCC created a Facebook group: <u>'UN Geneva Community</u>' as a channel of support for staff in confinement. With over 6,200 members at the time of this report, the group continues to consolidate not just as a means of support, but also as a communication channel to voice staff concerns and gather their feedback.

VII. Making the Council stronger and more effective

1. Participation

The SCC strength stems from the commitment of each of its members who participated, each on his/her way, in advancing the SCC's work programme through working groups, negotiations and networking with other staff unions. The SCC resorted to votes in limited cases and was able, throughout all the year under review, to overcome divergence of views and 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. The situation of SAFI and its impact on the Council

The Covid-19 and SHP works have led to a significant drop in attendance at the Palais des Nations by staff and delegates. This has had a negative impact on SAFI, whose turnover was 70 per cent less than in 2019. As a result, the SCC did not receive a share of SAFI's 2020 revenues, given the difficult situation it faced in 2021, which is likely to continue. With the recruitment of a new manager, SAFI has undergone various internal changes to allow the shop to be financially sustainable and to better meet the needs of staff. The online catalogue was not launched due to the delay at the service provider's end, but it is expected for launch in early 2022. Said catalogue is crucial to allow the shop to continue its operations through the course of the pandemic and until the renovation works in the Palais are completed.

3. Financial management

The 2021-2022 period continued to be a challenging year for the Council. Its total revenues increased thanks to the advertising revenues generated by the UN Today Magazine. Operations for the year managed to break-even due to careful planning of expenses. The Finance Commission made efforts to open new bank accounts in Switzerland to minimize the effect of negative interest rates. However, due to the stricter banking measures, the legal standing of the SCC under Swiss laws prevented the banks from accepting our applications. The SCC also engaged the services of an external auditor to audit the 2021-2022 financial statements as there were no voluntary nominations from staff members to perform as internal auditors.

4. Representation through our federation, CCISUA

The SCC participated at CCISUA's General Assembly (GA) which took place virtually from 2 to 6 June. Later in November, with an improved the Covid-19 situation, CCISUA was able to meet in person in New York for its mid-term meeting and the SCC took active part in it with the participation of the Executive Secretary and the Deputy Executive Secretary, with the President of the Council also attending in her capacity as President of CCISUA. The SCC pushed hard to have the interest of UNOG staff duly defended by the federation, regarding the cost-of-living survey as well as the future of work, to name a few.

5. Relations with other staff unions in Geneva

The SCC was able to maintain very good working relations with all staff unions of the Geneva based organizations. The cost-of-living survey was a good opportunity to foster these relations.

VIII. Membership

While all staff are represented by the SCC, 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 SCC.

The SCC saw an increase in dues-paying membership revenue of 0.08% compared to 2020 with a total of 430 dues-paying members as of December 2021. Membership dues are paid monthly and are automatically deducted from payroll, for which staff only need to fill out an online form on our website. Contribution is only CHF 10 per month.

To play an active role in defending staff rights and welfare as a dues-paying member, please register through this form.

Work Programme of the 39th Council

Mindful of the current challenges facing our Organization, 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:

- 1. In the context of the Secretary-General's reform agenda (A/72/492) and the new global human resources strategy (A/73/372), work to protect and promote contract security, address the increase in consultancy and the use of temporary appointments for ongoing functions.
- 2. Work with other unions to improve how pay for G and P staff is calculated.
- 3. Work to prevent further decreases in salaries, including by advocating for a postponement of the costof-living survey scheduled for 2021.
- 4. Advocate for the inclusion of ILO standards and labour rights in how our conditions of service are set and improve the consultative process regarding new policies impacting working conditions of staff, including the Performance Management and Development System.
- 5. Protect jobs from arbitrary downsizing and unnecessary offshoring.
- 6. Address the impact on jobs, workload and working conditions in relation to the introduction of new technologies on certain categories of staff.
- 7. Continue to advocate equal leave for staff on temporary appointments.
- 8. In the new human resources policy, advocate for merit-based and non-discriminatory staff selection and promotion processes with a view to ensuring diversity in all its forms, as well as advocate for voluntary mobility.
- 9. Continue to advocate for career prospects for all staff, including General Service staff and Young Professional Programme staff (YPP-NCE), as part of a strategy for greater diversity and geographic representation.
- 10. Advocate for the greater independence of the internal justice system.
- 11. Maintain our solidarity with the Fair Internships movement.

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

- 1. Ensure that measures adopted in the context of the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 pandemic do not negatively impact staff health and welfare.
- 2. Limit the impact of increased productivity requirements on the health and wellbeing of staff.
- 3. Support staff in speaking out against misconduct, promote the improvement of investigation mechanisms, and ensure that appropriate measures are taken for accountability purposes.
- 4. Combat all forms of discrimination and advocate for a more inclusive workplace in which staff are treated equally regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexual orientation, ability and gender.
- 5. Improve work life balance through reviewing parental leave, and ensuring that flexible working arrangements are applied fairly.
- 6. Advocate for a safe and secure workspace in the context of SHP.
- 7. Support the development of staff facilities and ensure support to clubs.
- 8. Explore growth in Council funding through membership dues, the staff magazine UN Today and other sources.

To keep staff informed and involved, the Council will:

- 1. Hold regular townhall meetings and inform staff through frequent broadcasts and other channels, including the staff magazine UN Today.
- 2. Survey staff on key issues and developments.
- 3. Publish information on the roles and responsibilities of Council members.

Membership form

Membership dues are paid monthly and are automatically deducted from payroll, for which staff only need to fill out an online form on our <u>website</u>. Contribution is only CHF 10 per month for all staff.

To play an active role in defending staff rights and welfare as a dues-paying member, <u>click here</u> to access the registration form or type the following address in your web browser:

https://www.staffcoordinatingcouncil.org/join-your-staff-union.

Attendance of the 39th UNOG Staff Coordinating Council (as of 21 January 2022)

Members of the Council		Сог	ıncil	meeti	ings			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ABDELLAOUI	Naima							
ALEKSANDROVA	Anna							
ALLEK	Meriem							
ALMARIO	Francis							
APOSTOLOV	Mario							
BALI	Mohamed							
BATAC	Cecilia							
CHANTREL	Dominique							
CHAOUI	Prisca							
COLANGELO	Roberto							
DAN	Lin							
DUPARC	Philippe							
GAZIYEV	Jamshid							
HERMELINK	Ursula							
JACQUIOT	Cédric							
JOHNSON	Laura							
KALOTAY	Kalman							
KHAN	Anjum							
LEWIS-LETTINGTON	Nicole							
MEYER	Olivier							
MONNET	Aminata							
NGUYEN	Ngoc							
OUAFFO WAFANG	Caroline							
PECK ARIF	Catherine							
ΡΟΡΑ	Gabriela							
RICHARDS	lan							
SMITH	Bradford							

Present Absent/excused Not a member at this time



Attendance at Executive Bureau meetings of the 39th Council (as of 21 January 2022)

Voting members of		Attendance at Executive Bureau meetings (as of 21 January 2021)																											
the Executive Bureau	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
BALI Mohamed																													
DUPARC Philippe																													
JOHNSON Laura																													
KALOTAY Kalman																													
MEYER Olivier																													
POPA Gabriela																													
RICHARDS lan																													
SMITH Bradford																													

Non-voting members of the Executive Bureau

CHAOUI Prisca															
PECK ARIF, Catherine															

Present Absent/excused Not a member at this time



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